

**Half spaghetti- half Knödel: cultural division through the  
lens of language learning**



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*For my father who believed in me  
and for Eleanor who guided me there*

*'The limits of your language are the limits of your world.'*

*- Ludwig Wittgenstein*

*'Those who do not know foreign languages know nothing about their own language.'*

*- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

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## Glossary of terms

- ASTAT-** South Tyrolean provincial statistics institute
- BA-** Bachelors programme
- BAS-** Befreiungsausschuss Südtirol (South Tyrolean Liberation Committee)
- CEFR-** Common European Framework of Reference for languages
- CLIL-** Content and Language Integrated Learning
- COR-** Committee of Regions
- CPH-** Critical Period Hypothesis
- ESL-** English as a Second Language
- EU-** European Union
- EURAC-** European Academy of Bolzano
- FUB-** Free University of Bolzano
- L1-** mother tongue
- L2, L3, L4-** second, third and fourth language
- LAT-** Language Assessment Test
- LSP-** Language for Specific Purposes
- MA-** Masters programme
- PDS-** Partito Democratico della Sinistra (Democratic Left Party)
- SVP-** Südtiroler Volkspartei (South Tyrolean People's Party)
- TESOL-** Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
- UFS-** Union für Südtirol (Union for South Tyrol)
- UHC-** Urban Housing Company
- Un anno in L2-** A year in the second language
- VKS-** Völkischer Kampfring Südtirols (People's Action Group of South Tyrol)

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## Abstract

South Tyrol, which is situated on the border between Austria and Italy, has been considered a 'peace model' by many nation-states since the creation of the province's autonomy statutes. The objective of these statutes was to allow for minority protection of the German- and Ladin-speaking communities while also permitting Austria to be the 'protector' of South Tyrol even though the province is situated in Italy. Another bi-product of these statutes was the creation of the 'separate but equal' education system, which allowed the German-, Italian- and Ladin-speaking communities to have individual schools in order to protect their culture and language identity.

In the past several decades, there has been an increase in 'mixed' marriages with members of differing language groups producing bilingual children. Additionally, civil service positions now require that all applicants have a mandatory comprehension of the L2, or in some cases L3, in order to apply for certain posts. As the education system tries to adjust to local concerns regarding the insufficient teaching of the L2 in monolingual education, the concept of South Tyrol as a 'peace model' is brought into question.

In this thesis, I examine how the South Tyrolean school system is reflective of society at large as its divided education mirrors the current fissures existent amongst the language communities. With parents looking for alternative measures to instruct their children in the L2, some residents would prefer a bilingual schooling option to encourage inter-group assimilation.

Furthermore, I discuss, outside of education, external social factors in the region which impact L2 learning creating language learning 'blocks' and 'victim' versus 'conqueror' mentalities. The objective of this research is to try and understand how South Tyrol continues to be in transition as the province adjusts to more bilingualism despite the historical need to preserve the language minorities.

## Chapter 1: 'Willkommen in Südtirol'

*'Something may change, but the openings are slow, the steps are minimal, and the repercussions threaten to continue: [there is a] fear that the language of another is a hidden danger...that produces the gathering of languages and diverse cultures. They are, by far, afraid of surviving a real risk and that constitutes the true cross of South Tyrol' (Peterlini 2013: 128).*

*It was the summer of 2005 when my mother and I decided to take a vacation to northern Italy. As we sat in her kitchen plotting our two-week summer adventure, Eleanor, an old family friend, suggested we visit the Austrian-Italian border. 'There', she said, 'is a place called Bolzano, which I think you may find interesting'. While normally I would have dismissed such a comment and opted to visit Florence or Venice, Eleanor's manifold stories of her childhood under Nazi rule in rural Austria, not least her tale of being 'kissed' by the Führer, made me reconsider. Had she not suggested that we visit the province of South Tyrol, I can say with assurance I would never have known that this region even existed.*

*With the South Tyrolean capital city of Bolzano in mind, we arrived in Verona and took the two and a half hour train journey heading north towards the Alps. As the train worked its way from the major cities towards the more isolated mountains, I noticed a shifting change in landscape that was different from what I had expected, let alone experienced, as a foreign exchange student living in Florence several years before.*

*It started with the castles, which began to appear on tiny cliff faces in mountain crevices that with the naked eye looked almost impossible to reach let alone build 500 years ago. From these landmarks I noticed the rise and fall of small mountain ridges as they fell into fertile valleys. As far as the eye could see were rows upon rows of apple orchards, a major commodity that I would later learn supported South Tyrol's German-*

*speaking farming communities. As I surveyed the landscape, I started to take notice of the uniqueness of the alpine architecture. Distinctive as it was with its angulated roofs and window boxes, a familiarity began to take shape in my mind as I realized how 'Austrian' they all looked. Unlike the Florentine houses, which followed a strict code of red tiled roofs with sunburnt yellow walls, it dawned on me that every region in Italy must have has its own specific provincial 'style'.*



**Figure 1.1** South Tyrolean apple orchards



**Figure 1.2** This is typical of South Tyrolean architecture, which is similar to Austrian house dwellings.



**Figure 1.3** Landscape designs in the South Tyrolean villages also show evidence of Austrian influence.



**Figure 1.4** Along with apple production, wine making is a profitable local industry, similar to other regions in Italy.

*But as we crept our way further up the mountains towards our destination, I started to realize with some trepidation that this no longer 'felt' like Italy. Whatever preconceptions I had assumed before this trip of what constituted 'real' Italian life, it did not involve a region with Austrian architecture, let alone farms which grew nothing but apples. Fearful that we may have missed our stop and inadvertently crossed the border I wondered if we would need to turn around, when a rusting PA speaker in the carriage crackled into life and announced our imminent arrival into Bolzano.*

*As we stood on the railway station platform, I became aware that we were not far from the Austrian border. I heard German and Italian on the railway station's loud speakers*

welcoming people just getting off the trains, while German- and Italian-speaking locals eagerly went about their business trying to reach their train before it headed further north or ventured south.

Within 24 hours of our arrival into Bolzano it became quite evident that the city was bilingual. The street signs in the city centre were marked first in German and then Italian while menus in restaurants offered up translations for courses in German, Italian, and if we were lucky, English. Dining options varied from Bavarian Knödel to spaghetti bolognese, with the local wine lists providing a selection of options from the various South Tyrolean vineyards. As I glanced at my surroundings, I noticed German beer gardens set against Italian architecture while old men in blue aprons and Tyrolean hats sold large cow bells with ornate illustrations, as locals drank glasses of beer or sipped the local orange beverage, Veneziano.



**Figure 1.5** and **Figure 1.6** provide examples of the duality of street signs, restaurants and the like in Bolzano.



*Figure 1.6*



**Figure 1.7** Blue aprons and Bavarian hats are stereotypical of the German-speaking South Tyrolean farmer (Peterlini 2013: 150). According to Melissa (an informant), older men wear the blue apron at all times signifying their dedication to the land. 'Men will even wear them to church and won't leave the house without it on. The idea is that once they're done with their public affairs, they'll get back to work on the land.'



**Figure 1.8** The Veneziano, or 'Spritz', is a very popular alcoholic beverage served only in the summer.

*An occasional glance would see some young man or woman dressed in the finest lederhosen or dirndl and speaking in German dialect, just as other women wore fine Italian shades and high-heeled shoes and spoke in standard Italian. From the onset it seemed as if I was staring at a contradiction in terms: two cultures and languages were operating in parallel, whether due to history or coincidence, existing separately within the same environment. Italians went to Italian restaurants and Germans preferred to walk to local bars rather than converge in the same social environment. Although linguistic code-switching between German and Italian did occur,<sup>1</sup> most people*

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<sup>1</sup> I was first exposed to linguistic code-switching during my first visit to Bolzano in 2005. I was sitting at an outdoor restaurant with my mother when we overheard a group of what I assumed to be Italian-speakers sitting at a round table discussing day-to-day activities. Suddenly, one of the members switched to German and suddenly the atmosphere changed so that the once 'Italian table' now sounded like a 'German table'. I was so impressed at the apparent identity shift that I assumed once I returned to Bolzano for fieldwork in 2011 that I would find this to be a daily occurrence. The reality, however, proved to be vastly different in that outside of the European Academy of Bolzano (EURAC) where I worked part-time, most Italian-speakers tended to prefer Italian to German and vice versa. The only exceptions were to be

*preferred to use their own language, as I would learn six years later during fieldwork. But at the time of my vacation I was blissfully unaware that language issues were a concern in this small region. Instead I concentrated on the uniqueness of the city, which immediately brought with it a larger question: Despite the existence of national borders, when does one country's 'culture' end before it becomes another?*

*Five years later and I found myself sitting in a boardroom in a quasi-formal interview at the European Academy of Bolzano (EURAC). Several years of study had indicated to me that very little anthropological research on South Tyrol had been published in the English language. Aside from one outstanding book by John Cole and Eric Wolf in the 1970s,<sup>2</sup> there was little mention of the German-speaking province. So in March 2010 I paid a one-week visit to the region for preliminary fieldwork. At the time I had decided I would focus on language politics in the region, but as I sat in front of Beatrix and her colleague, Carlotta, it was evident that they were not impressed. Yes, sure, they thought the topic was important, well enough, but the topic was too big for one lone researcher. Additionally, I did not speak German, had little experience of German culture and would inevitably have to change my research topic. Despite changing my focus to the South Tyrolean education system, my friend Lucia was adamant that twelve months would not provide me with the necessary time to fully comprehend the complex nature of Italian- and German-speaking relations. 'There's no way you can learn everything there is to know about us in such a short amount of time. You will have to modify your research topic...again.' Three years after fieldwork I find myself wondering if they were right or if I understood them better than they realized.*

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found when conversing with bilingual couples who would code switch from one language to another, especially when talking with their children. However, for the purposes of this thesis, I have opted not to discuss code-switching, but will instead focus on the difficulties surrounding L2 acquisition as experienced by many students in the South Tyrolean education system, and by local residents in South Tyrolean society.

<sup>2</sup> See *The hidden frontier: ecology and ethnicity in an alpine valley* (1974) for more information.

*When Anne Kathrine Larsen conducted fieldwork in a small Norwegian hamlet she was highly aware of her position as 'researcher'. 'The position and disposition of the anthropologist, including age and sex as well as personality traits, may bring about different responses from different people' (Larsen 2010: 75) but this does not mean that the researcher will not be able to comprehend a people because of the 'complexities' existent in their community. To capture a small part of an overarching system is better than ignoring it completely, as Larsen argues:*

*'The hamlet can be compared with a diamond; as light reflects upon it, it shines back. But its colour, intensity and brightness will change according to the type and angle of the ray that hits it. The ideal research tool would have been something equating "sunlight", then, which contains the whole range of visible wavelengths, revealing all aspects of village life. That, however, cannot be accomplished by a solitary fieldworker. She may, through various approaches, be able to grasp some of the important dimensions that constitute the composite character of the community. The alternative is to turn off the light altogether in order to avoid these often subtle and complex, ever changing appearances. Although we can still feel and measure the hard facts of the stone, the shine and beauty of the gem will be lost' (Larsen 2010: 75-76).*

*Taking Larsen's suggestion on board, I decided to concentrate my research on the education system to see how local education influences language group relations and consequently impacts society at large.*

\* \* \*

### 1.1 Aim of the thesis

After the first two months of fieldwork, I accepted a position as an English language teacher (see below). Through the course of several months working in the schooling system, as well as taking language classes at the Free University of Bolzano (FUB), I

observed social divisions in the education system, which were mirrored in South Tyrolean society.

South Tyrol, which is considered a regional 'peace model' (see Marko 2008; Magliana 2000: 119-120; Gresa 2006; Benedikter 2015), has been admired by many nation-states and is held up as a possible role model for eastern European countries. When responding to the Kosovo crisis and the breakdown of the former Yugoslavia, Marko states that:

'When searching for examples and thereby possible "role models" for a "successful" resolution to conflict and peace within an ethnic dispute, the South Tyrolean "model" is time and again referred to in diplomatic negotiations, international conferences or academic symposia. The common sense logic of the model stems from the fact that the population of South Tyrol live today- more than fifty years after Fascist oppression and persecution- in legal security, economic wellbeing and interethnic peace under a democratic government in autonomous self-governance' (Marko 2008: 377-378).

While Marko discusses whether South Tyrol as a 'model' can be 'exported' to other crisis regions within Europe (2008: 378), I question whether South Tyrol is as peaceful as it seems based on my fieldwork in the education system.

Through my work as an English language teacher I became interested in the role of second language learning and how the South Tyrol school system, which is linguistically divided into German-, Italian- and Ladin-speaking schools, reinforces social division through its 'separate but equal' education system. The objective of the school system is to 'protect' the cultural and linguistic identities of each South Tyrolean language group. Although this objective is a long-standing result of historical tensions in South Tyrol, the school system reinforces a sense of monolingualism in a province renowned for its bilingualism.

Consequently, my aim here is to address social division in South Tyrolean society through the lens of second language learning based on my own experience working in a monolingual 'separate but equal' education system. The purpose of my thesis is to examine how the school system and society reinforce segregation, either socially or linguistically through societal factors both within and outside the education system. Additionally, I address how locals have responded to language issues and segregation in society through choosing to work around the divided education system, or to promote a separated, monolingual schooling system.

## 1.2 Demographics and background of South Tyrol

South Tyrol, which has a diverse local economy, is one of the most affluent regions in Italy. In 2012 agriculture,<sup>3</sup> forestry and fishing accrued 691.3 million euro to the region. Industry and services in South Tyrol, particularly tourism, amounted to 14.6 million euro. A GDP per capita of EUR37,000 in 2011 put the GDP in South Tyrol at 22 percent higher than the GDP of the whole of Italy (EUR26,000). In 2011, unemployment rates in South Tyrol were registered at 3.3 percent compared with the rest of Italy, which was registered at 8.4 percent (ASTAT 2013: 28; ASTAT 2014: 319, 330; Eurostat 2014: 5). Additionally, South Tyrol retains 90 percent of its tax revenue. South Tyrol also receives finances from the Italian state and the European Union due to its special status as an autonomous province, like the Aosta Valley in north-western Italy (Magliana 2000: 52-53).

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<sup>3</sup> Apple growing is one of the most important industries in South Tyrol. Of all the apple varieties grown in the region, 45 percent are Golden Delicious, 16.6 percent are Gala, 9.3 percent are Red Delicious and 7.5 percent are Braeburn (ASTAT 2013: 37). In the rural areas of South Tyrol agriculture has declined since the Second World War, however, down to 11 percent from 43. As Lanthaler notes, 'Most people today work in the industrial sector or as craftsmen (about 26 [percent]) as well as in tourism, trade and other services (63 [percent])' (2007: 223).

In terms of social distribution, the three main language groups in South Tyrol are the German-, Italian- and Ladin-speakers. The German-speakers live throughout the province, while the Italian-speakers reside in the cities (mainly Bolzano, Merano and Laives) (Voltmer 2007: 202; Telmon 1992: 79). This distribution, particularly as it affects Italian-speakers, 'is the result of policies and forced immigration, aimed at "Italianization" of the province, imposed on South Tyrol under the Fascist regime' (Voltmer 2007: 202). While the majority of German-speakers live in rural villages (Lanthaler 2007: 223) dotted throughout South Tyrol, Italian-speakers have 'a strong preference for [the] city life' (Kaplan 1999: 50), as was evident when I was living in Bolzano.

Although this research concentrates primarily on the German- and the Italian-speaking communities it is important to briefly mention the Ladin-speakers. Within the province, this group is the smallest. Located in the Dolomites of Val Badia and Val Gardena, they occupy eight communes and represent four percent of South Tyrol's population, compared to German-speakers (62.3 percent) and Italian-speakers (23.4 percent) (ASTAT 2013: 19; Woelk 2001; Alcock 2001).<sup>4</sup> I discuss the Ladin population in greater detail when referring to their education system (see chapter 4), though I have opted to concentrate on the larger language groups (Italian and German) for my doctoral research.<sup>5</sup>

Inside South Tyrol the German schools are considered superior to the Italian-speaking schools. Yet, Italian-speakers have greater access to a variety of high schools since educational institutions are mainly located in the cities (Telmon 1992: 78-79).

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<sup>4</sup> Ciccolone's figures differ. He states that German-speakers represent 69.15 percent of the South Tyrolean population, Italian-speakers 26.47 percent and Ladin-speakers 4.37 percent (2010: 48; see Voltmer et al. 2007: 201 for similar figures).

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the Ladin-speaking population see Cesare Poppi (2001).

South Tyrol's capital, Bolzano, has the highest concentration of Italian-speaking residents (74 percent), and also houses the main campus of the Free University of Bolzano (FUB), which was established in 1997 (see Chapter 5). The rest of the city is comprised of German-speakers (25 percent) and a small minority of Ladin-speakers (0.68 percent) (ASTAT 2013: 16). Although the city is considered technically bilingual, it is subdivided into separate language quarters, with certain portions of the city reserved for Italian-speakers, while Germans live near the city centre or in villages on the fringes of the town (Kaplan 1999: 50).

Since I conducted the majority of my fieldwork in Bolzano, it is worth mentioning its social fragmentation, which was addressed by local journalist Hans Karl Peterlini in his book, *Noi figli dell'autonomia* (2013). In it, he explains that the German- and Italian-speaking neighbourhoods are divided by invisible barriers. He expands on this stating that:

'the confines between the language groups are noticeable: the grandiose backdrop of the historic city centre is a fascinating mix of Italians, Germans, tourists, [and] local dialects, however the languages are isolated [from] each other like [being] under invisible glass bells' (2013: 236).

This isolation refers to language groups in Bolzano which co-exist in their separate social circles. While there is some degree of convergence, Bolzano is socially unique in that the city is more linguistically segmented than other cities in South Tyrol, for example Merano or Bressanone.<sup>6</sup> An example of linguistic discontinuity can also be found in the city lay-out of Montreal, Canada where:

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<sup>6</sup> I was told by one informant from Merano that he found it very peculiar that Bolzano is so linguistically divided since societal division was more common in South Tyrolean cities 20 years ago, but is considered virtually non-existent today.

'the east end is French [and] the west [end] is English [both of which are] divided down the middle by a buffer zone of immigrant areas dating from at least the turn of the century...' (Heller 1982: 109-110).

While this linguistic fragmentation is a societal attribute, which extends throughout the city of Bolzano, the quota system (or proportionality law) contributes to producing more division in South Tyrolean society (Peterlini 2013: 271). This law, which was established in 1972, was based on the Gruber-Degasperi Agreement (see Chapter 2), which was designed to provide better 'equality of rights' (Lantschner and Poggeschi 2008: 220),<sup>7</sup> for German-speakers. During the post-war era (after the Second World War), the majority of government positions were given to Italian-speakers, while less than 10 percent of civil service positions in state administration were given to the German- and Ladin-speakers. Therefore in 1972, when the Second Autonomy statute was put into legislation, the proportionality law 'was introduced as a means to redress such disproportional distribution among Italian-, German- and Ladin-speakers' (Lantschner and Poggeschi 2008: 219-220; Giudiceandrea 2007: 140).

The quota system, which relies on South Tyrol's language census, requires that all three language groups are 'considered in certain fields according to their numerical strength' (Lantschner and Poggeschi 2008: 219). To assess the amount of language-speakers in the region, the language census is conducted every ten years. For example, in 2008 German-speakers represented 69.15 percent of the population and consequently held 69.20 percent of civil service positions. Italian-speakers represented 26.47 percent of South Tyrol's population and received 27.3 percent of civil service jobs. Ladin-speakers, the smallest group, represented 4.38 percent of South Tyrolean society and were allocated 3.5 percent of civil service jobs (Lantschner and Poggeschi 2008: 222, 226; Voltmer 2007: 210; Giudiceandrea 2007: 140; Abel et al. 2010: 275).

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<sup>7</sup> A copy of the Paris Agreement (or Gruber-Degasperi Agreement) of 1946 can be found in appendix A.

The quota system (and subsequently the language census), 'is [designed] to prevent a "dictatorship of the majority"' (Lantschner and Poggeschi 2008: 225; Poggeschi 2005: 325) as well as to provide a 'positive' amount of minority protection (Lantschner and Poggeschi 2008: 219) for the German- and Ladin-speaking groups.

However, not all residents in South Tyrol are content with having to 'choose' a language option when declaring their identity on provincial forms as part of the quota system. Bilingual citizens do not have a bilingual option available on the language census (see Fait and Fattor 2010: 46-47). Despite Kager's insistence that the 1991 language census had an 'others or bilingual' option (1998), Lantschner and Poggeschi stated that as of 2008, the language census only had the option 'other' (2008: 228). Yet, those people who state 'other' still have to 'aggregate' themselves to one of the three language groups, so that they can obtain certain jobs and privileges reserved for Germans, Ladins and Italians respectively (ibid.).

An increase in intermarriage has resulted in more bilingual families and bilingual children who identify with more than one language group. Subsequently, these 'mixed' families face many difficulties manoeuvring their way within society as the education system is currently designed for predominately monolingual children (see Fait and Fattor 2010: 47).

Additionally, since the language census does not recognize bilingual speakers as a language group, this suggests that they are unable to voice their own concerns through bilingual representation in the government. As a result, Ciccolone states that:

'the declaration of [linguistic] belonging seems to represent more of an obstacle to bilingualism than a true guarantee to the rights of single linguistic groups... If the [proportionality law] represented a necessary solution during a period of strong social conflict, now it risks slowing down the development of a concretely

plurilingual society, continuing to protect the rights of single linguistic groups and not developing strategies of integration and intercultural growth. A clear example of it is the teaching of the second language in the complex South Tyrolean school system, that still struggles to insert...methods of immersion teaching both in the German-speaking school and in the Italian-speaking school' (Ciccolone 2010: 47, 52).

According to the ASTAT results of 2006, the data pointed to a large number of families in South Tyrol who '[experience] multilingual traditions within the family' despite identifying with one language group. Many parents believe that their children benefit from knowing and learning other languages and it is common that during childhood South Tyrolean children will have L2-speaking acquaintances and family members. Thus the language census does not seem to represent all members of South Tyrolean society accurately since some have a fluent knowledge of two languages and feel they can identify with both. With Fraenkel-Haerberle stating there is a 'shared need for multilingualism' in South Tyrolean society (2008: 276-277), local government may have to reconsider how it interprets its notion of language identity. Politicians who endorse monolingual education may also have to reassess their policies by supporting more bilingual options in education to appease more members of South Tyrol's constituency.

### 1.3 Methodology

When I began fieldwork in May 2011 I opted to make Bolzano my home base. As I explain in Chapter 4, my original objective had been to conduct fieldwork not only in the city of Bolzano, but also in villages throughout South Tyrol, some of which are only reachable by car. Within a week of moving to Bolzano I decided to rent a car to get a better sense of the layout of the area, and quickly learned that driving through the mountains on its winding roads was a precarious adventure in itself. After observing a three-car pileup and bloodstains on the road, I decided to focus my research on the

cities, and especially Bolzano, which in themselves provided plenty of diversity and interesting material for study.

This decision also proved tactical for linguistic reasons. Prior to fieldwork I had taken German classes at the Goethe institute in Berlin, Germany (February-April 2011). As I was planning to conduct part of my research in the German villages, I thought some lessons in High German would be useful. After two months of language courses it became apparent that my German comprehension was insufficient. The South Tyrolean German dialect also proved to be a substantial barrier to my understanding.

When I decided to avoid conducting research in the villages, I effectively elected to redirect my focus on the Italian-speaking community predominately in Bolzano, which constitutes 70 percent of the city's population. Since I had studied some Italian as an undergraduate student, I found learning the language was far easier. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I was registered as a beginner Italian language learner, but by the time I left fieldwork in May 2012, I had advanced to the upper intermediate level. Consequently, my thesis represents more of the Italian perspective on L2 learning issues as they occur in South Tyrol. German perspectives are not entirely neglected, however.

While initially I was concerned that I would not be able to conduct interviews with German-speakers, many German-speakers whom I interviewed proved to be partners of Italian-speakers, or they worked with me. Others were German-speaking politicians who were fluent in Italian, while other German-speakers were competent in English. This allowed me to obtain more German points of view on the local schooling system.

To meet my informants, I thought it would be wise to look for part-time work in South Tyrol. I had already been given a post as an English language proof-reader at the European Academy of Bolzano (EURAC), but my job was very isolated since I mainly

worked in an office located in their basement library. So, within one month of fieldwork, I started posting flyers in ice cream shops as well as local pubs throughout Bolzano asking if students and parents wanted part-time English lessons since I was TESOL (Teaching Languages to Speakers of Other Languages) certified and had ESL (English as a Second Language) training.

That was when I met Maria, who is originally from Scotland, and had moved to Bolzano ten years earlier. She ran an English language school not far from where I lived and knew of a private Italian school in Bolzano that was looking for a native English-speaker who could teach part-time to middle school and high school students. It was through teaching English that I developed relationships with parents, students, teachers and staff. While EURAC was able to put me in contact with researchers and politicians involved in education, the private school provided me with on-the-ground relations with locals impacted by L2 learning.

Although I had been advised by one researcher in London to avoid concentrating on education, I soon realized that there are opportunities to study education by becoming a member of the school system. Reading through ethnographies about education systems I noticed that there could be complications when entering a school building as a foreign observer rather than as a registered school teacher. One researcher had told me of one failed research attempt by a student to observe a school in Italy. The parents at the school were uncomfortable with having an ‘outside’ visitor observe their children. Eventually the parents had the school remove the researcher because the anthropologist made them uncomfortable.

By opting instead to work as a registered teacher, I found myself in a better position. Since my school was quite content to say that its local students were being taught

English by an Oxford scholar, the school administrators were very supportive of my research, which in turn allowed me to conduct my fieldwork.

Nevertheless, I was wary of conducting external research in other schools located in the province. In my attempt to try to build relations with a German school on the outskirts of the city of Bolzano it became apparent that my 'foreignness' made other teachers wary of allowing me to investigate their school. Rather than run the risk of upsetting certain schools, I decided to concentrate on where I worked and through my relations with teachers, I met other local parents who had children who attended German schools.

As for interviewing students, I decided to forgo interviewing those who were under the age of eighteen. Since my students often failed to return signed statements of approval from their parents, I decided, from an ethical point of view, to concentrate on students who were eighteen years old or older. Being an English-speaker proved useful for engaging informants.

In South Tyrol, English has become a popular third language (see Chapter 6) and is now taught as early as year one. As a native English-speaker, I was a neutral source since I did not represent a South Tyrolean language group. If I had brought forward my research as a 'German' or 'Italian' my informants may not have been as willing to discuss their experiences in the education system. Indeed, I learned of two German-speaking researchers who had wanted to investigate the South Tyrolean education system but in the end had been forced to abandon their focus because the government would not support their research. Language learning remains a sensitive issue and reactions are divided amongst locals. Thus being American proved advantageous as I was not a 'suspect person' since my identity was not tied to the region.

Many of my informants, most of whom were from the cities of Bolzano, Merano and Bressanone, were bilingual, or in some cases, multilingual in English, German, Italian and/or Ladin. While the majority were German- or Italian-speakers, there were a few English-speakers in the region who had moved to South Tyrol for a variety of reasons and had assimilated into South Tyrolean society.

At the beginning of my fieldwork I decided to conduct all of my interviews in the English language, starting with the English-speakers and then progressing on to South Tyroleans who were able to speak English. Interviews conducted in Italian were largely postponed until the last few months of fieldwork when my Italian competence was at a B2 level<sup>8</sup> and I did not have to rely on language translators.

Of the fifty interviews I conducted, I completed twenty of them in Italian without translators. I met with my informants in their homes, offices and cafés, and sometimes in the music room of the Italian private school since it was normally empty during the day. The interviews would last from twenty minutes to two or sometimes three hours. Most interviews were recorded using my dictaphone with the exception of interviews with politicians. Additionally, two of my informants chose to communicate via email rather than meet in person.

As for the interviews themselves, I chose to treat our meetings as two-way conversations. Rather than provide my informant with a series of questions, each interview was more open-ended. Normally I would state the objectives of my research so that there were no misunderstandings, and would then commence our interview with

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<sup>8</sup> According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standards mentioned in Chapter 5, the B2 level equates to an upper intermediate comprehension of a second language.

a general question asking informants what they thought of the school system. Other possible questions were also addressed during the course of the interview:

- 1) Do you think that the school system will change in twenty years time into a bilingual education system?
- 2) What are the pros and cons to the education system? Is there anything in the South Tyrolean education system that you would change?
- 3) Do you think that the 'separate but equal' education system adequately prepares students for the multilingual Free University of Bolzano (FUB)?

Finally, I would close the discussion by asking my informants if they had any questions for me. Not only could this open the door for further discussions, but it also allowed my informants to feel valued.

Overall, the methods used during my fieldwork research consisted of participant observation through teaching local students and attending university language courses, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews. I also had access to EURAC's library, which was connected to the Free University of Bolzano, which allowed me to find secondary references on the region that were not available in the UK.

For the purpose of this research, most of my informants' names have been anonymised. Only a handful of informants have been referred to by their real names. I have also chosen to use local labels to refer to people groups in South Tyrol. Labels such as 'German' or 'Italian' are synonymous with the terms 'German-speaker' or 'Italian-speaker', which I use interchangeably throughout the thesis. Terms such as 'Austrian' or 'Austrian-speaker' are not used in South Tyrol to refer to German-speakers. One's identifying marker is the language that one uses, along with their local attachment to the

land (see Chapter 3). The only term that I have modified is 'South Tyrolean', which is normally used to refer to 'German-speakers'<sup>9</sup> (see Cole 2001: 109; Giudicedandrea 2007: 23; Alcock 2001: 17). Instead I have chosen to use this umbrella term as a label for all residents of South Tyrol. Additionally, since I conducted most of my fieldwork and secondary research in Italian, I have chosen to refer to South Tyrolean places (i.e. cities) by their Italian names, rather than their German names.<sup>10</sup> I should also mention that all of the quotations in this thesis, which have derived from Italian secondary sources, have been translated by myself into English.

#### 1.4 Limitations

When reflecting on my fieldwork as well as my experience of obtaining literature on the region, I soon learned that there were not a lot of academic resources on South Tyrol available at Oxford University. The majority of references in Oxford's database, when I began research in 2009, referred to flora and fauna located in South Tyrol province, none of which was relevant for my own research. I only found three books at Oxford, which discussed South Tyrolean history and local tensions between Germans and Italians, namely research by Rolf Steininger (2003), John Cole and Eric Wolf (1974) and Anthony Alcock (1970).

One benefit to having a unique research project that is little studied in the English-speaking world is that the researcher can contribute to anthropological literature by observing an 'unknown' border region. However, issues arise when the researcher is required to accumulate a large amount of secondary data, which can only be obtained from the fieldwork site and/or bought directly from small publishing companies.

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<sup>9</sup> In South Tyrolean literature, the term 'südtirolesi' or 'South Tyrolese', depending on the language, is normally used to refer to German-speakers from Südtirol (or South Tyrol). Italian-speakers are referred to as 'altoatesini' (i.e. members of the Alto Adige- the Italian translation of South Tyrol).

<sup>10</sup> Most place names in South Tyrol are double-barrelled in German and Italian. Therefore, Bolzano would normally be referred to as Bozen-Bolzano.

Thankfully, during fieldwork I had access to EURAC's library and was able to make scanned copies of their books. I also found that some informants were willing to assist by mailing me reading material from abroad. Politician, Dr Oskar Peterlini, also kindly sent me several of his books. While Oxford has improved its collection since 2009, by the time I was aware of these secondary references, I had collected the resources that I needed.

Another item to consider was the difficulty faced keeping up-to-date with issues on the province after I returned from fieldwork. While it was possible to read local newspapers online, like the *Alto Adige*, the local news only reflected a small proportion of what was happening in education on the ground. Sometimes I would find out about a government initiative based on the news available online only to find that my informants had never heard of this initiative, implying that the policy had never passed. Therefore, I had to rely on the material that I obtained during my fieldwork in the hopes I could provide a small glimpse of issues faced in South Tyrol and its education system.

### 1.5 The remainder of the thesis

In the following chapters, I explain in further detail the societal make-up of South Tyrol and how its history has impacted the social tensions reflected in South Tyrol today. Although there have been efforts by parents and local teachers to improve group relations through education, Voltmer explains that:

'...old conflicts [in South Tyrol] cannot be solved, but they can be transformed and elaborated, and each generation is called upon to elaborate them anew in its present context. As a consequence, the protection of the minority languages [i.e. German] has to be constantly reinvented, well aware that new solutions often bear the seed of new challenges' (2007: 199).

Therefore, I start the next chapter by providing the reader with a brief history of South Tyrol province. Tensions between Germans and Italians escalated after the First World War. In Chapter 2 I explain how the ceding of South Tyrol from Austria to Italy after the 1919 Treaty of St. Germain affected the German-speaking community. I also describe how the Italian-speaking community was subsequently encouraged to move to South Tyrol when the Fascist government attempted to Italianize the province and eradicate the German language from the area. The result led to a conflict between Germans and Italians as both tried to make their way in society, with the Germans vying to protect their language identity despite efforts by the Fascists to erase their heritage.

Chapter 3 reviews relevant literature, including theoretical material involving identity and the role that language plays in determining border relations. By focusing on second language literature, especially by Rod Ellis, Susan Gass and Larry Selinker, I explain how L2 learning can affect one's identity in response to an L2-speaking group. Motivation and an interest in the L2-speaking group can assist in breaking down social barriers, but if the language groups are convinced that their cultures are too different, this could result in societal distinctions. Additionally, I consider how attachment to the land can impact local identity by examining the German concept of *Heimat* and the Italian concept of *disagio*.

Through looking at material on nationalism by Ernest Gellner and Pierre Bourdieu, I explain how language functions as a societal marker and/or symbol of national identity, while education can be used by the state to reinforce a nation's language as a symbol of state power. These concepts of identity eventually segue into discussions regarding regionalism and how boundary identity is manifested in South Tyrol in response to the Italian nation-state.

In the ethnography part I (i.e. Chapters 4 and 5), I describe the education system and how the monolingual 'separate but equal' model was designed to protect language groups from assimilation. Consequently, German- and Italian-speaking students are educated in separate school environments, reinforcing segregation between the language groups, which is reflected in South Tyrolean society. With civil service jobs now requiring that locals have a fluent knowledge of both German and Italian, this has caused some Italian-speaking parents to find ways to place their children in German education.

Another concern students face as a result of being unable to speak fluently in the L2, is that those students who attend the trilingual FUB are ill-equipped for multilingual university. Even though the FUB wants to establish a successful multilingual learning environment, the disadvantages caused by the school system suggest that students are unprepared for the L2 challenges of university.

In the ethnography part II (i.e. Chapters 6 and 7), I observe how societal factors outside of education have also contributed towards linguistic segregation in society. By examining the role that history has played in influencing the language learning 'block', I proceed to re-evaluate how history can lead to 'victim' versus 'conqueror' mentalities. Aside from the structure of the education system, I examine how other social factors, like teacher quality and topographical distribution, may discourage students from learning the L2.

Finally, I conclude the thesis by discussing how residents have dealt with L2 issues in society by either opting to work around the established education system or by promoting the importance of monolingual education. By dividing Chapter 7 into four main components, I concentrate on parents, students, teachers and politicians and how

the members of each group react to monolingual learning in a region known for its bilingualism. The objective of this chapter is to recognize that there is no current solution to this L2 learning problem, but there are ways to understand how individuals choose to respond to the education system.

## Chapter 2: A brief history of South Tyrol

South Tyrol, which is situated in northern Italy just south of the Austrian border, has historically functioned as a sort of 'conflict zone' between German- and Italian-speakers. The region, which is home to three linguistic groups (i.e. the Ladin-, Italian-, and German-speakers), has experienced social conflict since the nineteenth century, when the area was under Habsburg rule (Eichinger 2002: 137-138). Territorial friction between Austria and Italy occurred during and after both World Wars when part of Austria was annexed to Italy (Alcock 1970; Alcock 2001) a year after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Before this border shift, South Tyrol and Trento province (south of South Tyrol) originally formed a part of the region of Tyrol in the south-west region of Austria (see Cole and Wolf 1974: 1). On 3 November 1918 after the ceasefire between Austria-Hungary and Italy, Italian troops began to occupy South Tyrol (Steininger 2003: 4). At the Paris Peace Conference in September 1919 the Treaty of St. Germain was signed ceding parts of the Austrian Tyrol to the Kingdom of Italy (Kager 1998; Peterlini 2009; Alcock 1970; Alcock 2001: 1; Steininger 2003: 5; Cole and Wolf 1974: 25, 56; Fait 2007). According to the treaty, South Tyrol and Trento province became the northernmost part of Italy, while the rump of Tyrol remained with Austria. The German-speaking inhabitants of South Tyrol who became a part of Italy were not provided with autonomy or minority protection, even though 'public appeal by political parties characterized South Tyrol as a "victim of a peace treaty"' that denied the right to self-determination (Steininger 2003: 6; Alcock 2001; Kager 1998).

The decision to cede South Tyrol to Italy was in direct conflict with the Fourteen Points drawn up by American President Woodrow Wilson after the First World War calling for

a 'just peace' (Alcock 2001: 1; Kager 1998). In Point IX of the Fourteen Points, Wilson called for the 'readjustment of the frontiers of Italy along clearly recognizable lines of nationality' (Alcock 2001: 1). According to Alcock:

[t]o Austrians and [Tyroleans] the border between overwhelmingly German-speaking South Tyrol and overwhelmingly Italian-speaking Trento was clear. It lay at the Salurn Gorge, in the south of [Bolzano, or South Tyrol province]' (ibid.).

The Italian government, however, did not consider themselves bound by the Fourteen Points (Alcock 1970: 19; Alcock 2001: 1). Instead Italy took the position that Trento and South Tyrol were 'geographically one' (Alcock 2001: 1). As the Italian-speaking population of Trento was larger than the German-speaking population of South Tyrol, the Italian government stated that the Trento-South Tyrol region had an Italian-speaking majority and should be ceded entirely to Italy (Alcock 2001: 1-2).

As a result, South Tyrol was eventually annexed to Italy on 10 October 1920. The annexation, according to Steininger, was considered an "abomination" before the eyes of history' (2003: 6). Political representative Eduard Reut-Nicolussi stated that the cession of South Tyrol would signal the beginning of a desperate and unequal struggle between German- and Italian-speakers (Steininger 2003: 5-6).



### The Partition of Tyrol after World War I

The map shows the area where German, Ladin, and Italian are spoken and the new Austrian-Italian border following the Treaty of Saint Germain in 1919. The victorious powers do not draw the new border along the linguistic boundary south of Salurn, but rather arbitrarily at the Brenner Pass, which creates a long-term problem.

Source: Provincial Bureau for South Tyrol set up in 1945 by the government of the Province of Tyrol, Innsbruck, Austria.

Figure 2.1 (Steininger 2003: 8)

## 2.1 Ettore Tolomei and the Italianization of South Tyrol

Nevertheless, this change of borders does not fully explain why the Italian government was determined to lay claim to a German-speaking region. The answers lie just north of the former South Tyrolean border in the area of the Brenner Pass. In 1890 two Italian geographers, G. and O. Marinelli,<sup>11</sup> developed a theory that the Brenner Pass was the 'natural' frontier that divided Italy from the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Alcock 1970). This watershed theory, or 'natural boundary theory' (Steininger 2003: 15), was based on the belief that the Brenner Pass was part of an Alpine chain that connected the Black Sea to the Adriatic. The larger reason, however, was that the Brenner Pass could provide 'a far superior natural barrier' (Alcock 2001: 2) than the Salurn Gorge, further south, which would have been preferred by the Austrian government. When Austria lost claims to the area just south of the Brenner Pass under the Treaty of St. Germain, an Italian geographer, Ettore Tolomei, took steps to ensure that South Tyrol became 'Italianized'.

As early as 1915, Tolomei began 'disseminating detailed and comprehensive concepts' regarding the 'possible annexation of South Tyrol' (Steininger 2003: 17) to the Italian state. Originally from the city of Rovereto, in Trento, Tolomei (1865-1952) made constant visits to South Tyrol to visit his relatives in the Dolomite mountains, who owned a family-run hotel. Born into a 'nationalistic oriented Italian family' (Steininger 2003: 14), Tolomei adopted the Italian nationalist and cultural positions of the Dante Alighieri Society. He founded and co-edited the propaganda publication *La Nazione Italiana*, which, following the ideals of the Dante Alighieri Society, was designed to contribute to the Society's emerging nationalism and the irredentist ideas associated with the organization (ibid.). Their main objectives focused on the irredentism of two

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<sup>11</sup> The first names of G. and O. Marinelli are not mentioned by Alcock (1970).

areas: the capital cities of Trento and Trieste in the Balkans,<sup>12</sup> issues that later provided the platform for Fascist nationalism in creating 'the dream of a Mediterranean empire' (Steininger 2003: 14-15).

By 1906, Tolomei had established another journalistic undertaking, namely the annual journal *Archivio per l'Alto Adige* (Archive for South Tyrol) (Alcock 1970; Steininger 2003: 15-16), which was designed to act as an authoritative and scholarly resource that would 'prove and propagate the "Italianness" of South Tyrol' (Steininger 2003: 16). In his annual journal, Tolomei stated that the German-speaking residents of South Tyrol were not, in fact, the descendants of German immigrant families, but that their origins stemmed from 'pre-german elements...that had been Germanized over the centuries by [a] dominant German-speaking administration' (Alcock 2001: 2; Alcock 1970: 14). It was therefore necessary for the Italian population to 'liberate' these supposedly Germanized Italians 'to their rightful culture' (Alcock 2001: 2) and reintroduce them to their neo-Latin origins (Alcock 1970: 14).

In Volume 11 of the *Archivio* in 1916, Tolomei published his *Prontuario dei nomi locali dell'Alto Adige* (Handbook on the place names of South Tyrol), in which he 'discovered' approximately 10,000 village and place names that he 'translated' from German into Italian (Alcock 2001: 2; Kager 1998; Steininger 2003: 17). As stated by Steininger:

'[t]hese...superficial translations, often [displayed] not even the slightest idea about the etymological significance of the German name; in some instances, an Italian ending was merely appended to a German designation' (2003: 17).

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<sup>12</sup> For more information on the historical annexation of Trieste, see Maura Hametz's book, *Making Trieste Italian, 1918-1954* (2005).

From 1916-1917, Tolomei also created maps of South Tyrol, which he sent to the Istituto de Agostini, and eventually to the Italian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, which gave the impression that South Tyrol was originally part of an old Italian region (Steininger 2003: 17-18).

After Fascist party leader Benito Mussolini replaced the democratic Italian government in October 1922 (Alcock 2001: 2; Kager 1998), Tolomei was appointed senator on 3 March 1923. This new position enabled Tolomei to influence South Tyrolean policy-making. On 19 March 1923, Tolomei and Giovanni Preziosi were assigned by leading Fascist, Giacomo Acerbo 'to put together a catalogue of measures for the Italianization of South Tyrol' (Steininger 2003: 18). This resulted in what was later called the *relazione Tolomei-Preziosi* (Tolomei-Preziosi report) (ibid.). Within two weeks of the *relazione's* approval by the Italian Council of Ministers, Tolomei presented his 32 *provvedimenti per l'Alto Adige* (Provisions for South Tyrol) at the Bolzano Municipal Theatre. As part of these measures, Tolomei 'called for...the unification of [South Tyrol] and [Trento]' (Steininger 2003: 18-19). He also asked for the Italianization of all public signs, streets and German family names (Steininger 2003: 19; Kager 1998; see Cole and Wolf 1974: 58 for more information; Fait 2007; Alcock 2001: 2; Lepscy et al. 1996: 76). Like steps taken in the Basque region by the Spanish to eliminate the Basque language (see Judge 2000: 55), these 32 measures were used to eradicate 'German culture in South Tyrol' (Steininger 2003: 19). At the same time, the Fascist party hoped to assimilate all German-speakers into Italy.

## 2.2 The Fascist occupation of South Tyrol

*'If one's aim is to cause a minority to lose its national identity, then one must first deprive it of its language' (Steininger 2003: 23).*

Levy states that during the Fascist period (1922-1943), those in power wanted to 'stress the centralization and homogenization of language...' (1996: 10). In his words:

'The Fascists merely took this [language] policy to extremes by enforcing monolingualism in the ethno-linguistic peripheries [of the Italian state], purging foreign words from dictionaries and officially suppressing "dialects" [like those spoken in South Tyrol]' (ibid).

Mussolini began implementing Tolomei's 32 provisions with the help of the author. The programme was intended to extend Italian control over the lives of the German-speaking group, creating a living situation which Steininger has referred to as 'unbearable' (2003: 20). He noted: 'By April 1923, Italian place names had already been introduced in South Tyrol' thanks to Tolomei's maps of the Italianized region, which he had made for the Istituto de Agostini (Steininger 2003: 21). By 1925, the name 'Tyrol'<sup>13</sup> was banned from all newspapers, written documents, named products, etc. (Alcock 2001: 2; Steininger 2003: 21, 23). If the words 'Tyrolean', 'South Tyrolean' and 'German South Tyrolean' were used in South Tyrol, violators could receive up to one month in prison or up to three months by 1931 (Steininger 2003: 21). Pressure was exerted upon German language newspapers. With the Fascist authorities on a mission to suppress 'tendentious anti-Italian reportage' (Steininger 2003: 25), German newspapers were required to submit their articles to strict censorship by the Fascist party.

Eventually, Mussolini also began to incorporate his fascist objectives into the South Tyrol school system. The School Law of 1 October 1923, known as the 'Lex Gentile'

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<sup>13</sup> According to Cole and Wolf, 'The very name "South Tyrol" was prohibited; the South Tyrol became [the] Alto Adige' (1974: 57).

after Mussolini's minister of education, Giovanni Gentile, was promulgated with the understanding that it would be applied to the whole of Italy. This law, however, had a detrimental impact on the German-speaking education system as it mandated closing down all German intermediate and secondary schools by 1927-1928 (Steininger 2003: 26). Fascist policies like these resulted in a form of 'cultural genocide' for its German-speaking students (see Kager 1998; Alcock 1989: 4). Additionally, the Italianization campaign attempted to eradicate all forms of 'German-ness' from the South Tyrol province.

The Fascist authorities tried to suppress the German language further by requiring elementary schools to only teach in Italian (Alcock 2001: 2; Clark 1984: 252; Ruzza 2000: 174; Kager 1998). According to Lepschy et al.:

'The regulations concerning the school-teaching were particularly inept, in as far as [the Fascists] imposed the use of Italian...in schools for children who were German [speaking].... The Fascist attitude tried to impose, even though inconsistently and half-heartedly, a measure of artificial linguistic unification, sweeping under the carpet the fact that most people, in Italy, normally communicated in dialect' (1996: 76).

Nevertheless, Italianization was advanced year by year into the education system. As a result of the 'Lex Gentile', German teachers were dismissed (Steininger 2003: 26-27) and replaced by Italian-speakers from other parts of the country. But as German-speakers were being forced to cope with changes in the school system, Italian-speakers who had moved to South Tyrol were dealing with cultural confrontations and readjustments. 'Frequently lured to South Tyrol with false promises', Italian-speaking teachers were attracted to the province as the government provided them with a free apartment alongside a mileage allowance (Steininger 2003: 27; see Cole and Wolf 1974: 58). However, Italian educators were surprised at the lack of Italian spoken in the

region, while at the same time having to adhere to the strict teaching plan to make the German-speaking children 'well-behaved little Italians...irrespective of the linguistic, cultural and social traditions of South Tyrol' (ibid.). Those who moved to the region were ostracized by German-speakers and found themselves marginalized. Italian-speakers in the villages 'lived in isolation...and were met with scorn, intolerance, and hostility, despite the fact that they were often better [teachers] than their reputation' allowed (ibid.).



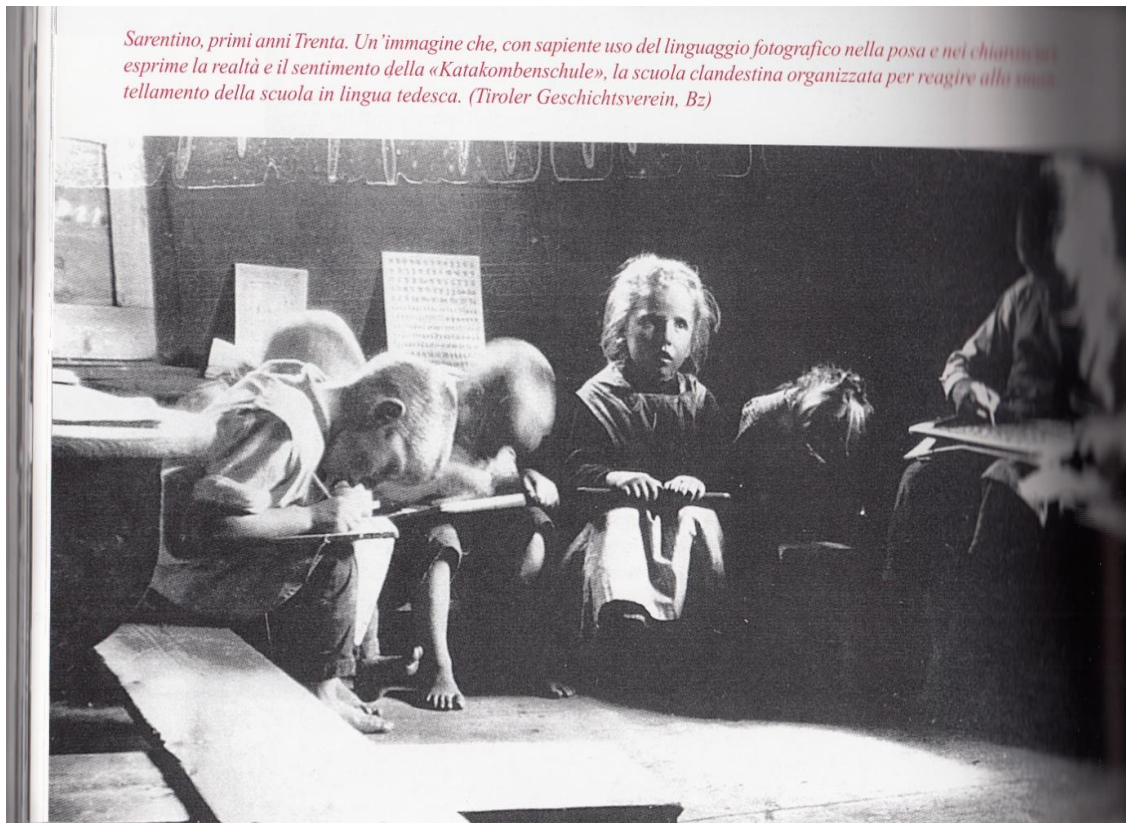
*Sfilata di «Piccole Italiane», Merano 1936 [E14]*

**Figure 2.2** Underneath the picture it reads 'Procession of "Little Italians"', Merano [South Tyrol] 1936' (Romeo 2005: 64).

When comparing South Tyrol to the 'Frenchification' in Belgium of the Dutch-speaking community, Treffers-Daller explains that:

'for half a century after Belgian Independence, most teaching in Brussels was offered in French to generations of Dutch-speaking [students], most of whom understood little or nothing of what was said in the classroom [as Dutch was the language of the poor and backward]. In addition, many of the [presumably French] teachers did not understand Dutch' (2002: 57).

As the German-speaking students were required to attend classes in a language they did not understand, there was resistance to these changes in the form of secret schools, also known as the 'catacomb schools' (Ruzza 2000: 174; Steininger 2003: 29; see Kager 1998).



**Figure 2.3** The inscription above reads 'Sarentino [South Tyrol], in the early 1930s. A picture that, with [the] skilful use of the photographic language [of] exposure and light and dark contrast, expresses the reality and the sentiment of the "catacomb school", the secret school organized to respond to the dismantling of the German-speaking school' (Agostini and Romeo 2002: 242).

A local German-speaker, Michael Gamper,<sup>14</sup> became the driving force behind these clandestine, underground schools, which were created with the intention of maintaining the German dialect and culture of South Tyrol (Steininger 2003: 29; Alcock 2001: 3).

<sup>14</sup> For more information on Michael Gamper and his contribution towards the catacomb schools see Cole and Wolf 1974: 58-59.

As an editor of the journal *Volksbote*, Gamper stated his concerns regarding the 'Lex Gentile':

'What should be done now? In addition to the loss of German schools, we are to lose our national customs and traditions as well? Those who hold power today would like that. A high administration official justified this measure with the explanation that the government must make the effort to raise a young generation of Italians in our land as quickly as possible. Could [the Fascists] possibly succeed? Let's hope that our people are capable of preventing it! Now we have to imitate the early Christians. When they were no longer safe from persecution while holding religious services in public, they withdrew to the privacy of their own homes... And when they were not safe from harassment even there, they found refuge among the dead in the underground burial chambers, in the catacombs' (cf. Steininger 2003: 29).

Through his role as chairman of the Tyrolean People's Party, Gamper gained access to contacts in Austria and Germany, who were able to provide reading material for 'emergency schools' throughout South Tyrol. Gamper worked through various local organizations such as the Nazi *Völkischer Kampfring Südtirols* or VKS (People's Action Group of South Tyrol) and members of the German nationalist association, *Nibelungen*, to gain access to German-based books, literature and folklore that were sent across the border through secret channels (Steininger 2003: 29-30). 'Often...parish houses and churches were used as hiding places for these items before they were distributed to South Tyrolean [students]' (Steininger 2003: 30).

However, as one South Tyrolean journalist, Claus Gatterer, wrote, the German-based schools only added to the 'lack of identity on the part of the children' (cf. Steininger 2003: 32). With lessons taught in 'barns, attics, cellars and farmhouse kitchens...opportunities for proper instruction were severely limited' (ibid.). As the Italian school system taught one set of histories, the German 'catacomb' system taught another. The situation in the public schools also became chaotic due to the frequent

personnel changes caused by Italian teachers leaving of their own accord (ibid.). Consequently children not only had to cope with a confounding of their own identities (see Schmidtke 1996: 275; and Kager 1998 for more details),<sup>15</sup> but they also suffered from high illiteracy rates as well (Steininger 2003: 32), which had long-term repercussions.

Eventually by 25 November 1925, these 'catacomb' schools had caught the attention of the Fascist party. In 1926, Fascist attempts were made to search private residences to confiscate German schoolbooks, as well as to interrogate individuals suspected of involvement in the creation of these underground schools. Steininger explains that this maltreatment lasted for many years 'in an effort to destroy the catacomb schools'. As a consequence, two German-speakers died returning from exile, supposedly as a result of deportation (2003: 31). It was only in 1940 when the schools were discontinued that German became 'officially permissible' (Steininger 2003: 32).

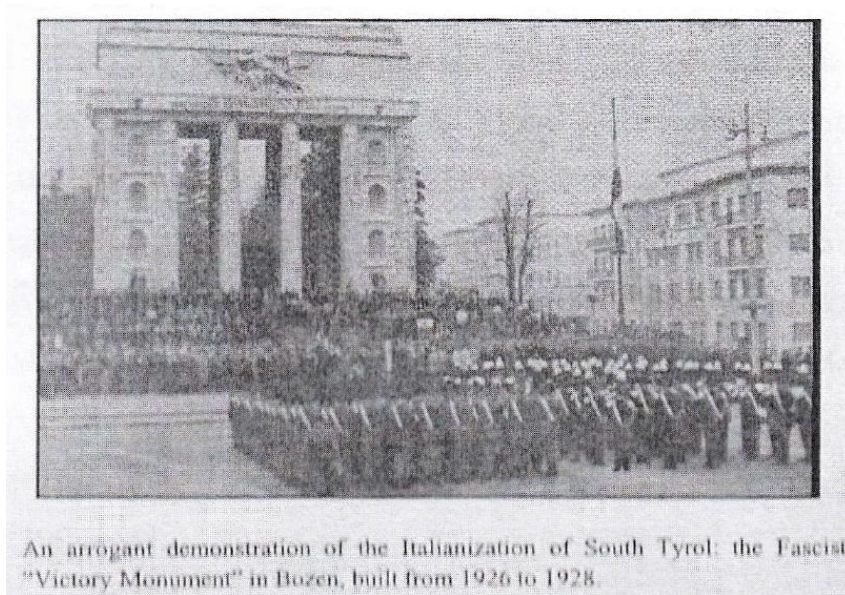
As further measures were created to reinforce the suppression of the German-speaking community, 'an arrogant demonstration of the Italianization of South Tyrol', according to German historian Rudolph Lill, was made in the form of the Fascist 'Victory Monument' (cf. Steininger 2003: 35). Designed by Mussolini as a monument to the consolidation of South Tyrol:

'The monument not only intended to represent the Italian victory over the enemy from beyond the Alps; rather, Mussolini also wanted a symbol for the process of Italianization he had been pushing forward, and this was to become an integral element in the new city planning being done in [Bolzano] in conjunction with the colonization of South Tyrol' (ibid.).

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<sup>15</sup> Kager, citing Schmidtke (1996: 275), states that '[f]or the generation of today's grandparents, suppression by Italy was part of their collective identity and especially of their own personal identity' (1998).

The monument was built over an already existing 'exterior shell' of an Austrian memorial dedicated to Austrian soldiers who had died during World War I. The Austrian structure was 'dynamited and removed' and replaced by the 'Victory Monument', a humiliating reminder of the Italian take-over of the once German-speaking region (ibid.; Kager 1998). The laying of the corner stone on 12 July 1926 became an Italian political demonstration that was seen as an affront to the Austrian government (Steininger 2003: 36). As the monument was nearing completion, the following words were inscribed upon it in Latin, along with a sculpture of the 'Vittoria Sagittaria' (Victory Sagittarius) with an arrow facing north towards Austria: 'HIC PATRIAE FINES SISTE SIGNA HINC CETEROS EXCOLUIMUS LINGUA LEGIBUS ARTICUS' ('Here are the borders of the fatherland. Put down our weapons [i.e. stop our advance]. From here, we brought to the others language, laws, and arts') (Steininger 2003: 37). The objective of this message was to inform the German population that the Italians had brought them 'culture and civilization' (Kager 1998). South Tyrol now belonged to Fascist Italy and Austria had to refrain from interference.



**Figure 2.4** Taken from Steininger (2003: 36), this picture shows a demonstration conducted by the Fascist army shortly after the creation of the 'Victory Monument'.



**Figure 2.5** This photo was taken during preliminary fieldwork in March 2010. Although debates were conducted from 2001-2002 over whether to change the name of 'Victory Plaza' (where the monument is situated) to 'Peace Plaza', the changes were never made (see Peterlini 2013: 243-244). Additionally, there were political struggles over whether to alter the Fascist monument into a peace monument (Kager 1998).

### 2.3 The Option, the Paris Agreement and the Autonomy statutes

By 1939, however, Mussolini's attempts to 'Italianize' the German-speaking population had failed as 'seventeen years of fascism had not succeeded in assimilating them' (Alcock 2001: 3; Kager 1998). Changing tack, Mussolini tried to Italianize Bolzano by establishing an industrial zone and encouraging work opportunities for Italians from neighbouring regions. The objective behind hiring many Italian-speakers from communities not far from Trento province was to create a linguistic and regional identity in South Tyrol to outweigh the German-speaking community. The irony, however, was that the many Italians coming from Veneto, Belluno, Padova and Verona brought with them their dialects and distinct cultures, creating a diverse community rather than a homogenous one (Steininger 2003: 43). Additionally, many Italians moved to South Tyrol from southern Italy so that by the start of the Second World War, Italian-speakers accounted for as much as 25 percent of the South Tyrolean population (Alcock 2001: 3; Kager 1998; Steininger 2003: 20).

Employee numbers grew, and by 1942-1943 there were 7,000 Italian-speakers working in Bolzano; by 1947 that figure had increased to 19,000 (Steininger 2003: 43). As more Italians arrived in the area, Germans developed a heightened awareness of their own identity as a minority, especially in response to the Italian state (Kager 1998). Indeed, Feiler has argued that 'the pressure to which the [German-speakers] were suddenly subjected had an identity-creating effect, leading to dissociation rather than integration' (Feiler 1997: 11; cf. Kager 1998). With the Fascists banning German inscriptions on gravestones 'which henceforth had to be in Italian' (Steininger 2003: 33; Ruzza 2000: 174), the Germans wanted to preserve their language and culture in order to continue their traditions. Eriksen refers to German language conservation in response to the Italian state as 'linguistic retention', which 'enables a minority to remain distinctive, and

simultaneously it prevents the [language] group from achieving equality in a country with another official language' (1993: 144).

As Nazi propaganda grew in South Tyrol, the Italian Fascist government became aware that '[n]one of the measures of language, schools, and public administration was able to make Italians out of German-speaking South Tyroleans' (Steininger 2003: 47). Therefore, in 1939 Mussolini developed a scheme jointly with Adolf Hitler to deal with the South Tyrolean problem. Rather than focus attention on Italianizing Germans, Mussolini agreed to the Option plan to relocate the German-speakers (as opposed to the Ladin-speakers, who the Fascists considered to be Italians) out of South Tyrol (Alcock 2001: 3; Kager 1998; Giudiceandrea 2007: 139). The Option plan, which was considered a form of 'ethnic cleansing' (Fait 2007; Kager 1998; Steininger 2003: 20) or 'human resource reallocation' (Steininger 2003: 50) by the Nazis, gave the German-speaking minority two choices: either stay in South Tyrol and become Italianized, or leave the province and join Hitler's Reich or a territory that Germany had conquered (Steininger 2003: 49; Alcock 2001: 3; Giudiceandrea 2007: 139).

Steininger states that, '[i]f one wants to rob a minority of its identity, then one must also deprive it of its symbols' (2003: 39). This applies all the more to one's homeland, perhaps the most important symbol of all. Considered a taboo topic in South Tyrolean history, divisions emerged in the German-speaking communities between those who chose to leave their homeland, now a part of Italy, and those who chose to stay. In the end, 86 percent of the German-speaking population opted to take German citizenship and elected to leave northern Italy. The less than 20 percent (or 70,000 German-speakers) who chose to remain in South Tyrol were considered *Dableiber*<sup>16</sup> or 'traitors'

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<sup>16</sup> The German term *Dableiber*, literally 'those who stay there', acquired the connotation of 'traitor' as it was used to describe those South Tyroleans who chose to face the living conditions of Fascist Italy rather

and were ostracized by the rest of the German-speaking public (Steininger 2003: 49; Giudiceandrea 2007: 139; Feiler 1997: 12; Kager 1998; Fait 2007: 99). To provide a visual of how the 'traitors' were treated by those who opted to join the German Reich, Steininger states that:

'On the facade of a [traitor's] inn in which a Jewish fruit dealer had spent the night, "Hotel Israel" was painted; another was smeared with liquid manure; some barns went up in flames; [traitors'] children were pelted with stones, window panes smashed, and houses were smeared with [faeces] and dirt. Friendships, [neighbourhoods], and families were ripped apart' (2003: 59-60).

Additionally, South Tyrolean politician Friedl Volgger, explained that "What the Jews were in the Third Reich is what some of the [German-speakers] became in the eyes of their countrymen"(ibid.).

But even as the Option plan was being implemented, of those 170,000 to 200,000 German-speakers who opted to move to the German Reich (Fait 2007; Alcock 2001: 3), only 75,000 were in fact able to relocate successfully due to the eruption of the Second World War (Alcock 2001: 3; Feiler 1997: 12; Kager 1998; Giudiceandrea 2007: 139).<sup>17</sup>

By 1943, following the overthrow of Mussolini, Germany managed to occupy South Tyrol with the general support of the German-speakers who wished to be liberated from Italy (Kager 1998; Steininger 2003: 68; 75). From 1943 to 1945 the Nazis:

'denationalized the Italian population. Italian workers [who] recently found work in the new industrial zone in [Bolzano] feared having to leave their new home. This created on the Italian side an awareness of living in a borderland of dispute' (Kager 1998).

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than to join the Third Reich of Nazi Germany and leave their homeland, or *Heimat* (Giudiceandrea 2007: 139; Fait 2007: 99).

<sup>17</sup> Fiorenzo Toso states that it was closer to 185,000 German-speakers who voted to leave South Tyrol, but only 77,000 were able to move because of the Second World War (2008: 78).

Nevertheless, the Nazi take-over permitted Germans and Italians equal status in South Tyrol. Both languages could be spoken in public spaces and used for official government business. German schools were also reinstated (see Chapter 4) much to the pleasure of German-speakers. But the 'Fascist Party was outlawed...[which f]or the Italians...meant the collapse of any and all infrastructure contributing to public life in South Tyrol' (Steininger 2003: 71). The immigrant Italians who had moved to the province had no established familial local roots as none had grown up in South Tyrol having instead moved there over the course of several years. Nonetheless, many remained in the region and continued to increase in numbers, a process helped by the fact that the Italians were not called to participate in military service (ibid.).

But even with the German Reich's occupation, South Tyrol was not annexed to Austria (Steininger 2003: 68). At the end of the Second World War, on 8 May 1945, Erich Amonn, a Bolzano businessman, established the Südtiroler Volkspartei (SVP) or South Tyrolean People's Party, with several other 'traitors' from the province (Steininger 2003: 75; Giudiceandrea 2007: 141; Alcock 2001: 4). His aim was to reintegrate South Tyrol with Austria and to help the South Tyrolean people exercise their right to self-determination (Steininger 2003: 76; Holzer and Schwegler 1998; de Winter and Türsan 1998; Alcock 2001: 4). Additionally, the SVP also stated its aim:

'To fight for the recognition of the cultural, linguistic and economic rights of the [German-speaking community] on the basis of democratic principles after twenty-five years of oppression by Fascism and National Socialism [i.e. the Nazis]' (Steininger 2003: 76).

Erich Amonn, who had supported neither the Nazi regime or the Option plan (Peterlini 2013: 192), became a major driving force in supporting the German-speaking minority and its identity in South Tyrol.

Despite Amonn's efforts autonomy was not achieved overnight. Post-war negotiations between Austria and Italy about the South Tyrolean problem resulted in a treaty between Austrian Foreign Minister Karl Gruber and Italy's Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi in what became known as the Paris Agreement of 1946<sup>18</sup> (Giudiceandrea 2007: 130; Steininger 2003: 101; Alcock 2001: 4). The Agreement, which was signed on 5 September of that year, shifted the South Tyrolean problem from an internal Italian affair to one of international importance, but it did not provide South Tyrol with self-determination or permit the province to reunite with Austria (Alcock 2001: 5-6; Steininger 2003: 99-100; 104). Instead, the treaty indicated that Italy was to ensure 'the safeguarding of the ethnic character and the cultural and economic development of the German-speaking group' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 130). Additionally, the Agreement stated, as part of the Allied Peace Treaty with Italy, that Austria would be South Tyrol's 'protectorate' so that in case Italy did not fulfil its obligations as required by the Paris Agreement, Austria could 'intervene to see that the clauses of the Paris Agreement' were followed through by the Italian government (Alcock 2001: 5; Steininger 2003: 104). Nevertheless, Steininger states that:

'the Italians went on to renege on their commitments to the great disappointment of the [German-speakers] and the Austrians. [The Italian government] interpreted the agreement in [an] extremely restrictive fashion, and that began with the implementation of [South Tyrol's] autonomy' (2003: 109).

Since South Tyrol remained a part of Italy, with Austria nearby as the 'protector', the specifics of where the autonomy framework should be drawn were not made clear for the German-speaking province. Instead, in 1947 Italy established a constitution creating the autonomous region of Trentino-Alto Adige [i.e. Trento-South Tyrol] (Steininger

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<sup>18</sup> This agreement is also referred to as the De Gasperi-Gruber Agreement, the Treaty of Paris or the Paris Treaty (Steininger 2003: 101; Alcock 2001: 4).

2003: 104; Alcock 2001: 6). This inclusion of South Tyrol with the province of Trento prevented the German-speaking South Tyroleans from establishing their own autonomy by ensuring they would be outnumbered by Italian-speakers in this larger province. Steininger explains that De Gasperi, who was from Trento, knew that Trentino citizens inclined towards separatism from the Italian state, and so he promised them their autonomy by uniting South Tyrol with Trento province (2003: 106). Within the new province, German-speakers numbered 200,000, and Italian-speakers 500,000. At the time of the amalgamation, Trento was not only larger in geographical terms, but was also made up of 99 percent Italian-speakers. By comparison, South Tyrol was only two-thirds German-speaking, meaning that the combined region possessed a two-thirds Italian majority (Alcock 2001: 6).

The First Autonomy statute, created in 1948, was thus applied to the Trentino-Alto Adige region, as opposed to only South Tyrol. The objective of the statute was to 'ensure that the cultural, economic, and social development of the South [Tyroleans remained] in Italian hands' (Kager 1998). As two-thirds of the region had an Italian majority, Italian became the official language of the region, but the German-speakers could use German 'in public life', administration and 'in meetings of the various levels of political bodies' (Alcock 2001: 7).

Alcock goes on to state that although South Tyrol did not obtain full autonomy, the statute did provide for institutional power-sharing between the regional and South Tyrolean provincial governments. This meant that while two-thirds of the Trentino-Alto Adige regional government consisted of Italian-speakers, two-thirds of the Bolzano parliament was made up of German-speakers. The objective was to allow each governmental body 'to have the support of both linguistic communities' (ibid.).

In terms of education, as we shall see in Chapter 4, South Tyrol was granted a three-part schooling system, with 'separate administrative divisions' for each language group (i.e. the German-, Italian- and Ladin-speakers). While teaching was conducted in the students' mother tongue, the second language was taught by L1-speakers. However, while:

'it was obligatory for the German schools to teach Italian...it was not obligatory for the Italian schools to teach German. And relatively few Italians were taught it or bothered to learn it. In their own land they felt no need to learn German; it was not an official language' (Alcock 2001: 7).

By the early 1950s, regardless of modifications towards the use of German in public life, full autonomy, let alone self-determination, had not been granted to the South Tyrol province. Many German-speakers wanted 'a better social balance' in a province known for its agriculture and felt that German-speakers would benefit from switching jobs from agriculture to administration or commerce. However, most of these jobs were located in the cities and those who could not obtain those particular jobs ran the risk of having 'to seek work in Austria or Germany', which could reduce the number of Germans in the province. But as the provincial government could not provide housing for German-speakers moving to the cities, over time 'the crisis changed from an economic and social [situation] to a political one' (Alcock 2001: 8).

In September 1956 the first bombs were thrown by German-speaking activists who were determined to draw international attention to the border conflict in South Tyrol (ibid.). According to Steininger, the bombs were targeted at an army base in Bolzano by German-speakers seeking self-determination (2003: 123). Four months later, the province saw several more bombings and 17 people were arrested. The members of the

terrorist group, *Befreiungsausschuss Südtirol* (BAS), were responsible for the bombing attacks (ibid.).

The following year, Silvius Magnago, who eventually became the SVP's party chairman, started a demonstration at the Sigmundskron Castle calling for the separation of South Tyrol from Trento 'and withdrawal of the [German-speakers] from the Regional Government coalition' (Alcock 2001: 8; Giudiceandrea 2007: 142; Steininger 2003: 114). Approximately 30,000-35,000 German-speakers gathered at the castle on 17 November protesting 'against pseudo-autonomy' shouting 'Los von Trient!' ('Let's break with Trento!') and 'Enough of the Pseudo-Autonomy!' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 115; Steininger 2003: 115). At the demonstration, the BAS submitted several flyers and passed them out to German-speakers at the castle. The flyers stated:

"We want to remain German and not become slaves of a people that used treason and fraud to occupy our land without a fight and for forty years has been carrying on a system of exploitation and colonization that is worse than the methods the colonists once used in Central Africa" (cf. Steininger 2003: 123).

While the term 'colonization' could be contested (see footnote 74), on 4 February 1958, the SVP 'introduced a proposal for a constitutional law for South Tyrol in the Italian parliament'. In the bill, it stated that the First Autonomy statute had "not put autonomy into operation". Therefore, the SVP asked for the Paris Agreement 'to be completely implemented' in South Tyrol by granting the province and the German population "'true and actual autonomy'". The Italian government, however, ignored the bill fearing that the proposal could endanger the *italianità* (Italian character) of the province by creating 'a state within a state'. As a result, the SVP eventually resigned from the Trentino-Alto Adige regional government (cf. Steininger 2003: 116-117; Alcock 2001: 9).

By 1961, German-speaking activists had blown up Ettore Tolomei's home in Glen, South Tyrol. The bombing was in response to failed negotiations between the Austrian and Italian foreign ministers over how to implement the Paris Agreement of 1946 with the Italian government stating that 'provincial autonomy for South Tyrol was absolutely out of the question!' (Steininger 2003: 122-124).

As the bombings continued, Peterlini made a point of addressing the German-speakers' concerns. In his book he states that while the bombers of the 1960s were against Italian politics, or more importantly the former Fascist government, the German-speakers were never against the Italian people per se, in fact some Italian-speakers had supported the Germans' efforts. The bombings of the 1980s seemed to suggest reactions against the Italian state from the German-speaking perspective, while some Italian-speakers voiced their concerns over the prospect of South Tyrol's autonomy. Eventually, German distrust of the Italian government led to distrust of the Italians as a group, who came to represent the Italian state and all things anti-autonomy (Peterlini 2013: 97-101).

Consequently, after the bombings of 1961, the Italian government created a commission of eleven Italian-speakers and nine German-speakers, which was later called the 'Commission of Nineteen'. The commission was 'assigned the task of examining the [South Tyrolean] problem from all points of view and giving the [Italian] government suggestions for a solution' (Steininger 2003: 125). The Commission was set up with 'the intention of forcing Austria out of the "South Tyrol business" and enabling the Italians to settle things on their own' (ibid.).

Eventually, the Commission created the Package, which was passed in 1969. The objective of the Package's 137 measures was not to ask for separate autonomy from Italy, but to undermine regional autonomy. The Package was also designed to revise the

1948 First Autonomy statute so that it was more favourable and protective of the German- and Ladin-speaking communities (Steininger 2003: 129, 33; Alcock 2001: 9; Kager 1998; Giudiceandrea 2007: 130). The Package also allowed for the expansion of South Tyrolean autonomy, which had not been provided previously in the First Autonomy statute (Steininger 2003: 133). 'Once the Package had been fulfilled, Austria...[filed] a declaration with the [United Nations] that the dispute [between Austria and Italy] had been resolved' (Steininger 2003: 134; Alcock 2001: 9).

The most important part of the Package was the eventual creation of the Second Autonomy statute in 1972 (Steininger 2003: 135; Alcock 2001: 9). This provided South Tyrol with the provincial legislative power to control the local education system, commerce, tourism, agriculture, public works, industrial development, etc. (Alcock 2001: 10; Steininger 2003: 135). This new statute guaranteed that power was transferred from the Trentino-Alto Adige region to the two provinces. While normally the region in Italian politics had the final say in governmental affairs, Article 3 of the new statute indicated that "'Autonomy of a special type and including certain particular provisions is granted to the provinces of [Trento] and [Bolzano] on the basis of this statute'" (cf. Steininger 2003: 134). Since the region was now under the authority of two provinces, this meant that South Tyrol 'was in the hands of the German-speaking majority "for the protection and preservation of its ethnic and cultural uniqueness"' (cf. Steininger 2003: 134-135). Additionally, instruction of the L2 was also made mandatory from year two and year three onwards as an 'important precondition for achieving the goal of making the entire population of South Tyrol bilingual (Article 19)' (Steininger 2003: 135). However, as we shall see in Chapter 4, these language objectives were never fully met by the education system.

Since 1972, more measures have been added to South Tyrol in order to provide further autonomy in the creation of constitutional reforms (see Alcock 2001: 11). However, the objective of this chapter has been to provide the reader with a brief historical background to the province and demonstrate how societal tensions have contributed towards language divisions in South Tyrolean society. In the next chapter, I will examine how language identity has manifested through local group relations and how the role of history, as well as attachment to 'place' can impact second language acquisition.

### Chapter 3: The various types of identity and its effects on language group relations

*'The acquisition and use of language expresses, embodies and symbolizes a cultural reality, thus a worldview. Language, just as every other part of culture, is a dynamic entity that evolves and changes with time. It is not an abstract and artificial artefact, but very specific to the reality...it refers to. In South Tyrol, there is hardly any area of public, and to a considerable extent also private life, that is not covered by a complex network of norms, guarantees and remedies. The whole institutional design of South Tyrol is based on the separation of the two main linguistic groups: German and Italian' (Alber 2011: 10).*

Why do we learn a second language? And what compels or deters us from eventually progressing in the L2? In early February 2013, I was invited to speak at a Friday seminar hosted by the Linguistics department at the University of Umeå in northern Sweden to discuss my fieldwork. Having conducted this presentation previously with a group of high school and postgraduate students, I asked the lecturers and assistant readers to quietly prepare two lists: one list was required to state which languages they had an interest in and the other needed to describe which languages they tended to dislike and why. After a few minutes I had several members from the group read off their language lists and similar to my audiences in the past, their responses were the same. Some liked certain languages largely because they liked how they sounded and more particularly they evoked a kind of emotion that associated it with a specific culture. Other times some languages brought to mind a negative association, which inevitably prevented the listener from wanting to invest in the L2. In my case I explained that when I was in high school I had opted to study French largely because I had an aversion towards the Spanish language. The reality was that it was not so much the language that I disliked but the Hispanic construction workers who worked in my village who wolf-whistled at teenage girls. It was only when I became an English

language teacher in southern California and was required to work with Hispanic children to teach them the English alphabet that I realized my misgivings towards learning Spanish had been based on stereotypes that did not adequately describe a culture and all the members who lived within it.

In his article, 'On bilingualism and its discontents' Pérez- Firmat eloquently states that:

'[L]anguages not only inspire loyalty; they also provoke fear, resentment, rage, jealousy, love, euphoria- the entire gamut of human emotion. From the undergraduate whose difficulties with the subjunctive make him complain that he "hates Spanish", to the exile who clasps her mother tongue in a tight embrace, tongue ties are every bit as knotty as our other affections' (2005: 91).

He goes on to explain that second language learning requires an opening up of oneself to another culture and subsequently towards other people. As an example Pérez- Firmat refers to the Spanish poet, Pedro Salinas, in a letter Salinas wrote to his American muse, Katherine Whitmore: "If I like English, if I read English, it is only by its similarity with you. I read English as I would look at a picture of you" (ibid.). From these words we can infer that perceptions towards L2-speakers can influence whether we learn another language, but more importantly determine the extent of our relations if we allow ourselves to speak in the L2.

In a more extreme example in the region of Alsace on the border between France and Germany, Bister-Broosen reveals that for years the region fluctuated between Alsatians being required to speak in German or French. It was only in 1940 when Alsace was occupied by Nazi forces that German became the 'language of the adversary', who like the Fascists in South Tyrol, only permitted their forces' language to be used in the school system and official domains. High German, it was felt, was 'the language of the Nazis, of occupation, of collaboration even...' As a result, the Nazi invasion did more

for the promotion of the French language than any French patriot had done in Paris up until 1939 (2002: 100).

When trying to make sense of a major border region that has been steeped in historical divisions, there are many avenues that one can take to understand its people from a variety of literature and resources. In the case of South Tyrol with its linguistic demarcations as evidenced in schools and its topography, comprehending group identity in relation to another is one way to grasp dynamic group relations. Identity formation can also help explain why a bilingual province has many monolingual speakers. Second language literature can also provide alternative angles to interpreting why language groups are still divided.

For the purposes of this chapter, I would like to emphasize the role of second language acquisition and show how it relates to identity formation specifically within South Tyrol's unique context. There are three leading components that I plan to discuss throughout this chapter by firstly addressing how second language acquisition can have an impact on identity as historically some German-speakers do not want to learn Italian lest they start to lose their culture, while some Italian-speakers may feel that they should not have to learn another language since the province is in Italy. As Gal and Irvine state:

'Although it is now a commonplace that social categories- including nations, ethnic groups, races, genders, classes- are in part constructed and reproduced through symbolic devices and everyday practices that create boundaries between them, this analysis is only rarely extended to language' (1995: 969).

Secondly I want to examine several aspects of identity in relation to nationalism, language and border regions. From an anthropological perspective concepts of identity are pertinent to understanding one's sense of self along with comprehending divided communities as they respond to certain forces from the state and local government. By

concentrating on national, regional, boundary and language identity I want to connect all of these themes as they relate to the German sense of *Heimat* and the Italian sense of *disagio* which determines local relations with the land.

Therefore my third aim is to try to bridge the gap between second language literature and identity theory. Since the literature on second language learning focuses largely on quantitative data as it relates to student motivation, it fails to address the role of history, culture, nationalism, regionalism, language and boundary identity as relative factors which can affect second language learning. My objective is to demonstrate how second language literature compiled alongside identity theory can investigate the same concerns when addressing group relations within the confines of second language acquisition.

### 3.1 Second language learning on identity formation via motivation and interests in one's neighbour

When I originally started working at an Italian-speaking high school I was informed that I had the 'good class'. I was told that I had a huge advantage not only because I was teaching English rather than German, but also because I was an American who had lived somewhere near London, so my image brought with it a certain glamour. As I started my class lessons, I never had a problem in motivating my students to learn English. The students wanted to learn more about New York and 'L.A.' and were fascinated, albeit disturbed, by gangster culture. But for my German-speaking colleagues, who also taught the English language, they said that teaching German was a problem. As one co-worker explained, 'You can have one group of Italian students and teach them English and they'll be fine. If you take those same group of students and try to teach them German the class will turn into a disruption'.

In my early days of fieldwork I quickly started to realize that group perceptions of a culture are connected with language. Since my Italian students thought that Americans were rather 'cool', learning English was considered a global trend in which the students were willing to invest their precious time, if they thought that it would give them some advantage. Learning German, on the contrary, did not have the same appeal, and yet it was the language spoken by their neighbours. More importantly, to work in the civil service students needed to have a fluent comprehension of both German and Italian. Unfortunately this was not enough to persuade students into adequately learning the L2, which led me to conclude that motivation is a key element in encouraging second language learning. There also needs to be an interest in the other culture to create a positive learning environment. Negative perceptions of the L2-speaking group (due to history or local politics) could prevent students from becoming more L2 proficient by impacting their chance to become bilingual.

When examining the mass of second language literature one finds various techniques and approaches on how best to learn a second language in a foreign context (see Gilbert 2008; Richard-Amato 2003; Richards 2008; Gross 2010), such as through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and the communicative approach (see Dooly and Moore: 2009; Argondizzo et al. 2009; Coonan 2012). There is also theoretical work on verbal usage and the role of gender and ethnicity within language and society (see Gumperz 1982) . But my objective in this section is to learn the reasons why local students have trouble learning the L2 and how those difficulties relate to second language learning issues which affect local relations in the region. While many theorists focus on the role of aptitude, intelligence, personality, etc. (see Gass and Selinker 2001; Lightbrown and Spada 1999) and the impact of these characteristics on L2 learning, I concentrate on two components that I believe are most relevant to my specific research

in the region: the role of motivation and interest in the other culture, and how these contribute towards engaging with the second language.

### **3.1.1 Interests in neighbouring communities in promoting L2 learning**

Austrian educator Dietmar Larcher said that 'nothing is more difficult than to learn the language of your neighbour', for by learning another language one essentially is opening oneself up to another culture (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 74, 81). In a way, the attitudes that learners have to their L2 are a reflection of their own sense of identity and how they feel about the target-language culture in response to identity reflections of one's self. Monolingualism, which can be construed as a failure to learn the L2, consequently relates to a strong identity with 'negative attitudes towards the target-language culture' as a consequence of monolingual living (Ellis 1994: 207-208). Ellis further states that "'distance" between cultures' plays a part in determining one's language learning levels in that the more removed the cultures are in terms of group distinctions, the more of a challenge L2 learning can become (1994: 207). Therefore, I ask whether this reference to 'distance' subconsciously hinders local students in being able to immerse themselves in the second language, especially when they are outside their comfort zones.

When reflecting on this 'distance' during my own fieldwork, I could not help but notice the distinctions between Germans and Italians in that, aside from language, the two groups varied in terms of culture. Even when it came to advertising within South Tyrol it was clear that adverts had a target audience. A poster advertising Birkenstocks would show a model wearing outdoor sandals in bright, white socks, a fashion statement that by Italian standards would be appalling, but was not as the advert was in German. Transportation also had a distinct cultural divide in terms of how trains were presented

in public. When standing on the platform of Bolzano train station, and talking with a Tibetan monk, I jokingly observed that one could always tell the difference between a German train and an Italian train. The German trains were pristine, not only inside but out, while the Italian trains looked like they had not been cleaned in years. Whilst admittedly these stereotypes were sometimes made in jest, in reality the distinctions were quite clear. Whether at a festival where German-speakers were dressed up in lederhosen or in fancy dirndls or during the Christmas markets when the stalls were advertising wooden *Krampus* masks alongside miniature versions of *La Befana*,<sup>19</sup> there were moments when the cultures diverged within the same environment showing both sides of South Tyrol's divide.

### **3.1.2 The role of motivation: both integrative and instrumental**

Motivation is comprised of various aspects which affect the impulse to learn the L2,<sup>20</sup> but at the same time 'the exact nature of motivation is not so clear' (Gass and Selinker 2001: 349-350) within the context of L2 learning. While Gass and Selinker believe that motivation largely entails a personal drive to progress in something new, they refer to Gardner when he states that motivation has four components that make up the elements of one's ambition. In his words, motivation involves having a specific goal, as well as an 'effortful behaviour', and "'a desire to attain the goal and favourable attitudes toward the activity [that is] in question'" (Gardner 1985: 50; Gass and Selinker 2001: 349-350). Gass and Selinker also maintain that motivation is the second strongest predictor of L2

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<sup>19</sup> 'Krampus', whom I shall refer to as the Christmas devil, is normally found throughout German-speaking parts of Europe. He normally assists St. Nicholas on the night of December 5th and 'punishes' the bad children, while St. Nicholas gives treats to the good ones. 'La Befana', the Christmas witch, is found throughout Italy and is celebrated on January 6th. Like Krampus, she punishes the bad children with her broom and gives treats to the well-behaved children.

<sup>20</sup> Richard-Amato states that motivation is not merely a matter of 'integrative and instrumental factors, but also temporary expectancies, interests of the moment, curiosities, ego enhancement factors, personal satisfaction, and much, much more...' (2003: 115). However, for the sake of simplicity, I have opted to forgo trying to define the exact parameters of what constitutes as 'motivation', since at present it has no universally accepted definition.

learning, following behind aptitude as the main factor which determines a person's L2 learning achievements (2001: 349).

Further research on motivation indicates that there are two distinctive types of inclination: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation, which assist with L2 learning acquisition. Integrative motivation, hypothesized by Gardner and Lambert, refers to a personal desire to want to learn the second language 'for personal growth and cultural enrichment' by integrating into the L2-speaking group. Instrumental motivation is an external pressure to learn a language for immediate employment-related reasons and/or because an individual is required to learn the language for social and professional ambitions (Lightbrown and Spada 1999: 56; Gass and Selinker 2001: 352; Richard-Amato 2003: 114-115; Norton and McKinney 2011: 74).

When comparing the two motives it is felt that integrative motivation has a powerful effect on L2 learning as there is something to be said about learning a second language based on perceptions of the target-language community. Richard-Amato, Gass and Selinker, for example, firmly believe that integrative motivation is far better at promoting L2-learning compared with instrumental motivation (Richard-Amato 2003: 115; Gass and Selinker 2001: 352). Moreover, Lightbrown and Spada provide additional commentary on the effects of external motivation, as well as how identity ties in with second language learning and its impact on self and personal distinctions:

'an individual's identity is closely linked with the way he or she speaks...when speaking a new language one is adopting some of the identity markers of another cultural group. Depending on the learner's attitudes, learning a second language can be a source of enrichment or a source of resentment. If the speaker's only reason for learning the second language is external pressure, internal motivation may be minimal and general attitudes towards learning may be negative' (1999: 56).

To expand on these points Ellis states that positive impressions of one's self along with L2-speaking neighbours allows the L2 learner to improve their second language without fear of interfering with their L1. It is when the L2 learner is part of an insular L1-speaking group where divergence is a possibility, that inhibitions can prevent success in the second language when the L1-speaking group will not 'converge [with] L2 norms' (1994: 210-211).

Even if the L2 learner does not have certain opinions towards an L2-speaking target community, negative impressions of the second language can prevent fruitful second language acquisition. In the case of Finnish university students who were required to study Swedish as part of their coursework, the Faculty of Information Technology had students who displayed adverse opinions towards Swedish. Compared to other faculties where students were more inclined to have positive opinions of the L2, low proficiency in Swedish was linked to low motivation along with resisting attitudes towards the L2 (Palviainen 2010: 14).

While in hindsight, these results might seem quite obvious to readers, it should also be noted that alongside motivation there are many external and internal factors that impede or promote second language learning. Some factors are specific to the region that I worked in and provide a sense of localized identity, but also show that L2 learning can be tied to land attachment through German *Heimat* and Italian *disagio*.

### 3.2 Expressions of identity through *Heimat* and *disagio*

In the beginning of my doctoral studies I had originally set out to concentrate on Italian-speaking identity as compared to the German-speaking community's cohesiveness in response to the historical influx of Italians to the region. After the first two weeks of fieldwork I was consciously aware that this idea of a 'disadvantaged' Italian-speaking

identity was not expressed by all members of Italian-speakers who had migrated to the region of South Tyrol. And yet there were a few Italian-speakers who felt as if they were members of a disadvantaged community in comparison to German-speakers, whom they thought received minority protection from the EU and Italian government.

Conversely, there were tales of this German-speaking *Heimat*, which in English I have translated as 'homeland', where German-speakers felt a stronger attachment to their provincial land than the Italian-speakers would ever experience.

Either way, there was a sense of local identity that for some members was manifested in the form of attachment to the land, which made me wonder whether association with the land played a part in second language acquisition. Just as the German-speakers were more inclined to be located in the rural valleys, away from Italian-speaking cities, one's location in a remote or urban setting had an impact on social transactions, which affected the use of the second language.

Therefore, rather than forgo focusing on the Italian sense of self as expressed through *disagio* (i.e. a disadvantaged state) I have opted to reflect on this identity marker within the framework of second language acquisition. As well, I plan to discuss how the German sense of *Heimat* may discourage Germans from using their Italian.

### **3.2.1 Heimat (i.e. homeland)**

According to Giudiceandrea, *Heimat* refers to the place where one is born and where one comes from. It is a 'sentiment of belonging and of territorial identification without political contamination' (2007: 138). While German-speakers may consider South Tyrol as their *Heimat*, or the location where they are born, the land of Austria is said to be the German-speakers' 'Vaterland' (fatherland). It is only due to the changing of territorial

borders that South Tyrol has become a homeland that is 'politically loaded', as historically the German-speakers were forced to become part of a nation that was not their own. Nevertheless, the *Heimat* represents a 'precious love' or private asset reminding locals to protect their region, even at the expense of the globalized outside world which threatens to contaminate the ideals of the German-speaking psyche (ibid., Fait 2007: 104).

While realistically not all German-speakers subscribe to these 'ideals', there are more extreme members who feel entitled to concentrate on German protection against the Italian state, as evidenced through the German-speaking Schützen.<sup>21</sup> But even for those who are not members of this former German-speaking military unit, it is said that *Heimat* equates almost with a 'nest' and with security, routine, and most importantly familiarity in response to things that are foreign and obscure (Zoderer 1999: 52-53).

Yet even as the sense of *Heimat* is traditionally seen as a term that is specifically for Germans, mountain identity in Italy also has a reserved nature towards outside people who are perceived differently than them. As I state in Chapter 1, in my first week of fieldwork I debated whether to conduct fieldwork in a multitude of places, with my home base in Bolzano, while I did daily excursions to villages located within an hour of the city. When I mentioned to my landlord that I wanted to conduct some fieldwork in a neighbouring community, he boasted of his village and wanted to invite me there, but said I could not go alone without a local. For this reason, he offered to accompany me to his family's village located in Val di Non. At our arrival he introduced me to his cousin who ran the family shop, which was situated in the centre of the village and then took me to his family home where I met with more extended family who offered me coffee and several treats. When I returned to the village approximately a week later, I visited

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<sup>21</sup> For more information on the Schützen identity see Hans Karl Peterlini's book, *Capire l'altro* (2012).

his family shop to see his cousin. I asked if I could use their restroom since I knew it was located in the family home at the back of the store. Without the presence of my landlord to vouch for me and confirm that I was a 'safe person', I was given the cold shoulder and told to use the village 'outhouse' and was essentially escorted from the premises.

Although not all the villages were as closed off as this, especially in tourist-friendly parts of South Tyrol, I opted to stay in Bolzano lest I run the risk of overstaying my welcome in a remote community. More than that, I learned that there was a desire for group preservation and that for some people this was of great importance. If one looked overtly 'foreign', whether in language or in appearance, this could result in a frosty welcome from some village locals.

At the same time there was a need to protect rural identity as manifested in response to urban life. As Fait explains:

'...the implicit assumption is common that the authentic South Tyrol is rural and that genuine [German-speaking] South Tyroleans are healthy and sturdy mountain farmers. Those who have to leave the countryside for urban settings are presumed to be eager to reconnect with their rural roots whenever possible. This belief recreates and commercializes a mystique of the natural and redeeming authenticity and purity of the Alps as a getaway from the pressure of urban daily life and from the corrupting influence of modernity, especially Italian modernity. The Alps are then viewed as an ideal space of subversive nostalgia for those longing for a more genuine identity. It is through this psychological transference that environmental conservation...and "homeland protection"... become closely intertwined in the South Tyrolean self-narrative' (2007: 104).

In light of this it must be asked how countryside identity can relate to second language acquisition, and it seems that within South Tyrol some locals tend to use the L2 only when they have to. For those German-speaking farmers who are required to travel to

Bolzano for tax reasons or to sell produce, some will use the L2 just enough to handle their affairs before returning to their remote part of the province. In some instances these German-speakers will only use Italian once or twice throughout the course of a year, similar to Transylvanian Hungarians who will only use Romanian in official circumstances or if the other speaker is Romanian (Kiss 2009: 140).

Subsequently this leaves room for speculation that not all German-speakers feel fully compelled to progress in the L2 if they are located in a village that historically is devoid of L2-speakers. At the same time, Fait believes that this 'geography of avoidance' perpetuates a cycle of division, which is 'economically unfeasible and politically unwise...in times of mass immigration' in response to globalization (2007: 100; see Peterlini 2013: 179-190).

### **3.2.2 Disagio (i.e. the disadvantaged)**

*'We are just lost. Our families left their regions of origin, but it is like they had never arrived here. We are outsiders in and to the land in which we live, while many of the German-speakers feel like they belong to it. In this sense our "uneasiness" is the exact opposite sentiment to that which ties the German-speakers to their homeland' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 128).*

Just as German-speakers are dealing with forms of *Heimat*, and in some instances so are Italian-speakers, the concept of the 'disadvantaged' Italian *disagio* adds another element to the equation. When meeting with a professor from Rome at the FUB, we discussed the concept of local *disagio* and whether all Italian-speakers felt displaced in South Tyrol based on historical divisions in the region. From her experience as an outsider she felt that the Italians had an identity flaw and social problem in that they 'just kind of exist' as foreigners in their own land and that as people they do not really belong. Additionally it was thought that some Italians did not even realize that they are socially

displaced because this is what they are accustomed to when living amongst Germans and having raised children in a German-speaking province.

Nevertheless, Kager explains that Italian-speakers are no longer in a position to be viewed as the 'invaders'. Having lived in South Tyrol since at least the 1930s, the region is part of their homeland too. As their offspring have been born there and have attended the local schools, over time Italian-speakers have evolved from outsiders into Italian-speaking South Tyrolean citizens (Kager 1998), who are proud to be a part of their own region.

However, not all Italian-speaking locals are content with their own social status, especially after the passing of the Second Autonomy statute, which gave more privileges to German-speaking citizens. According to Pierangelo Giovanetti, starting in the 1980s 'the Italian community found themselves at the margins of [local] politics and culture, with a pained sense of [abandonment] on the part of the [Italian] state and the [provincial] region' (1998: 893). Before the passing of the statute in 1972 the Italians 'felt protected by the state' since they worked as public servants representing the nation-state as temporary implants in the German-speaking region. Over time the state decided to reduce some of its power as the region became somewhat more autonomous, resulting in an orphaned feeling of 'forsaken' identity in a region that they felt was not their own (Giovanetti 1998: 894).

[The Italian-speakers] were transferred to South Tyrol [originally] because they needed to reinforce Italian identity. They did not need to set up roots. They did not worry about [getting involved] in the local market of ideas, work and local culture... Many of these Italians were never worried about integrating themselves, learning German, knowing the territory [and] the history of South Tyrol. Many remained in Bolzano 30 to 40 years [living as] immigrants. They always thought, "We'll live here for 20-30 years and then we'll return home"... And in many cases

their attitude was of superiority: I am in Italy and therefore I will speak in Italian' (ibid.; see Peterlini 1988: 123).

This reflects several examples in South Tyrol of the hesitation to learn the L2 as Italian-speaking students related L2 learning issues to historical relations in the region. Not only older generations, but also younger generations still maintain linguistic distance from each other as expressed by Cassidy and Giovanni when describing their experiences growing up in South Tyrol. Giovanni explained that:

'German people in some cases don't want to study Italian because of the historical backlash associated with World War II, especially as a result of the impact of Fascism to the region... Italians, on the other hand, don't want to study German for a variety of reasons. Sometimes these reasons are primarily personal in that some Italians view Germans as unfriendly, etc. [which impact how local groups still view each other].'

Socially, students stated that these language learning tensions were manifested in night life in South Tyrol in that 'on Saturdays you cannot go out with Germans and Italians because they do different things. They go to different pubs and dance clubs [and] it divides our city.' Cassidy further described her concerns as a bilingual-speaker of both German- and Italian-speaking parents in that she sometimes felt in limbo between two diverse communities who are unwilling to converse in their L2.

'If you are out with Italians and you speak German everybody looks at you and starts to question why you are speaking German and not Italian...sometimes this leaves me wondering why I have to choose' [especially since she is proud to be bilingual].

When travelling in the UK with several German-speaking students from South Tyrol through the Erasmus programme,<sup>22</sup> Cassidy said the German-speakers would not talk in Italian, but only spoke to each other in their dialect. For Italian-speaking students:

'the social discontent manifests itself in several manners: above all, and particularly in the young population, there is a resistance to learning and especially to speaking German' (Magliana 2000: 81).

Therefore, when looking at *disagio*, Cassidy was of the opinion that at least from the Italian-speaking perspective, students will say 'we are in Italy so the Germans should learn Italian'. This rejects the need to absorb the L2. Similar to comments made by Peterlini (1988) and Giovanetti (1998), there is a sense of a reinforced identity in that regardless of whether locals are attached to South Tyrol, one's stubbornness can prevent L2 learning.

Unfortunately for L2 learners of the Italian-speaking group the 'German majority [is] almost everywhere in South Tyrol' (Magliana 2000: 80) in that despite Italian-speakers dominating urban cities, in rural suburbs and villages they are the minority. Subsequently, it is common for Italian-speaking locals to feel marginalized in German-speaking areas (*ibid.*), but this does not explain the resistance to learning the L2 if they require fluency in German to function in society.

Therefore, in the next section I look at the larger picture of how nationalism impacts L2 learning and how this reinforces one's identity in contrast with one's relationship to language and the Italian nation-state.

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<sup>22</sup> The Erasmus programme, or Erasmus programme plus (as it is called now), functions as an exchange programme run by the European Union for students who want to study at various universities and high schools located within Europe. For more information see: <<https://erasmusplus.org.uk/about-erasmus>> [Accessed 2 June 2015].

### 3.3 The many sides to national identity

*'All identity...is constructed in the double sense of similarity and difference with respect to "Others"' (Kavanagh 1994: 76).*

In July 2011, after two months in South Tyrol, I enrolled in Italian evening classes. As it was apparent that my knowledge of the L2 had suffered after several years of disuse, I attended beginner classes to refresh my language skills. In those first lessons I met Nicole from Renon, a German-speaking village located outside of Bolzano, who had decided to improve her knowledge of the Italian language since her clients did not speak the German dialect. After class one day I asked her if she could explain to me how she saw herself in relation to the Italians and she said:

'It is quite easy. I am a German-speaking Italian citizen who comes from the region of South Tyrol. Unlike the Schützen I am not radical, nor should I have to be. I am Italian but my mother tongue is German.'

Although in theory, one might prefer that all German-speakers saw themselves as German-speaking Italian citizens, I knew this was not the reality for all German-speaking locals, nor was it for the Italian-speaking citizens. In March 2010, during my preliminary fieldwork, I met with political journalist and editor Thomas Kager. He stated that if I wanted to be 'politically correct' I would have to refer to locals as German- or Italian-speaking South Tyroleans. However, these 'P.C.' terms were a mouthful in themselves, which was why locals said 'German' or 'Italian'. In some ways these group distinctions, whether intentional or not, ascribed one to the state or to the region. And this regional association even materialized when it came to choosing a name for one's child. I was told that if I had an Italian surname but wanted my child to attend German schools, it would be wise of me to give them a German-speaking first name so that on paper they would not look 'too Italian'. Since historically, German

schools are quite protective towards preserving their L1, there is a tendency to not accept Italian students lest they impede learning of the German language for German-speaking students enrolled in German schools.

Despite language concerns, South Tyrolean identity has continued to evolve over the decades as German-speakers have become more distant from the Austrian Tyrol in favour of their Italian-speaking neighbours. Conversely, Italian-speakers find the German-speaking locals to be more 'likeable' than their adjoining Trentino neighbours. The result is one where South Tyrol acts like a localized island situated between Austria and Italy (Magliana 2000: 88, 90).

Nevertheless, while provincial statistics still state that almost half of Italian-speakers identify themselves as part of the Italian state, a growing number of the Italian-speaking group identify themselves as South Tyrolean. The result is a 'regional-nationalism, which can only promise to strengthen [South Tyrolean] identity in the face of increased regionalization in Europe' (Magliana 2000: 89, 91). The question now is whether this new 'strength' will promote L2 learning as local groups learn to merge with one another.

### **3.3.1 Nationalism as it pertains to South Tyrol**

*'Geographical images of nationhood depend on boundaries at which the nation inside and the foreign outside are distinguished. Nations need Others, images of what they are not. Nations are made at the conceptual boundaries beyond that which is Other is deemed to lie' (Dickie 1996: 22-23).*

When examining social tensions existent in a nation-state, it is common to concentrate on one's ethnicity in relation to other groups in a multiethnic framework if many groups are living within the same territory. An ethnic group, which is described as having 'common myths and historical memories' as well as a 'high level of cultural norms; and...a shared language' (Barbour 2000: 7), can be based in more than one state if ethnic

groups are spread out in various cross-national environments (Barbour 2000: 8). Don Handelman (1977) describes four types of 'ethnic incorporation' that people use to distinguish themselves from others: 'the ethnic category, the ethnic network, the ethnic association and the ethnic community' (cited in Eriksen 1993: 41). In South Tyrol, the German-speakers' political organization could qualify Germans as part of an ethnic community because the language group revolves around 'a territory with more or less permanent physical boundaries' (Eriksen 1993: 43). Additionally, the more radical members of the SVP or the German-speaking Schützen may state that their objectives are to safeguard South Tyrol's boundaries and '[ensure] the continued control of the territory' (ibid.).

A national group can also expand across many states if one sees nations as 'a named human population' (Smith 1991: 14). However, nations are much larger, involving 'mass, public culture' whose common 'myths' may be more fantasy than fact (Barbour 2000: 7; see Dickie 1996: 20). Nations can also have a common language, as in the case of the United States, where English is considered the dominant language. But unlike ethnic groups there is a united economic interest and 'legal rights and duties for all [of its] members' (Smith 1991: 14; also Barbour 2000: 4; Judge 2000: 45).

I mention these distinctions in order to justify why I have opted to avoid 'ethnic identity' when referring to the German- and Italian-speaking groups as they negotiate their place within the province. While many documents have chosen to refer to South Tyrol as a multiethnic Italian provincial region (see Parkin 1999; Cole 2001; Cole and Wolf 1974), one must be careful with these terms especially since South Tyroleans are becoming more united as time progresses. Particularly as mixed marriages are becoming less taboo and are more frequent than they were fifty years ago, this has resulted in a more homogenous community, even though the region is still somewhat divided.

Consequently, I have decided to refer to these main groups by their language identity within the region as most members associate themselves to at least one language group, if not both languages when coming from mixed families.

In reference to Italian-speakers and their national identity, Italian nationalism is somewhat fragmented, especially as it is a country consisting of many regions, a discussion which I expand on more below. Italian nationalism is a rather new phenomenon since unification did not occur until 1861 (Dickie 1996: 19). Since that time, Italy has developed national components which qualify it as a nation-state. To achieve this end, Dickie explains that there are four elements required to perpetuate a nation: a national narrative of how the nation came to be, followed by the use of national symbols (ex. language). Then there is the need to reinforce national identity through the adoption of an imagined geographical space along with the principle that 'the nation can be *set against* things...[since] the nation is what its enemies are not...' (1996: 22).

In the past, this national identity was 'set against' the German-speakers of South Tyrol with Fascists attempting to replace German from within the province to the detriment of German-speaking locals. As Banks explains, '[t]he nation state has the power and more particularly the authority to promote nationalism through national channels, such as media and the education system' (1996: 154). The Fascists made use of these methods to remove the German language from the public sphere. Additionally, nationalism is a 'traditionalistic ideology' used to glorify folklore and mythological traditions (Eriksen 1993: 100), even if these traditions are simply re-created falsehoods, as with Tolomei's attempts to 're-Italianize' South Tyrol.

Regardless, Cohen believes that national identities are 'unfulfilling in some way', forcing people to become more introspective in their views as a reaction to transnational relations. As a result, people 'reach back to' a smaller locality for which they can express their whole selves (Banks 1996: 147), which may explain the link between *Heimat* and national identity in a more confined familial arena.

### **3.3.2 National identity and its relation to *Heimat***

In considering *Heimat*, it is clear that one's homeland relates to a specific territory and in the case of South Tyrol this territory seems to be the most remote region of the Italian nation-state. While Kaplan claims that Italian-speakers are more orientated towards embracing Italian national identity, '[t]he German-speaking population partakes in a spatial identity that is at once localised' (1999: 52). From interviewing Nicole, it seems that not all German-speakers are opposed to identifying as Italian citizens, which raises the question of whether it is possible to fully identify with the German-speaking homeland whilst remaining faithful to the Italian nation-state.

According to Thomas Eriksen, nationalist ideology conjures up ideas of fatherland and motherland, which mirrors the regional concept of German-speaking *Heimat* when defining one's relation with a region. National identities also invoke a response to other nations (1993: 110; Banks 1996: 154-155). Additionally, if other nations are considered a main threat, there is a need to try to protect one's locality.

When looking further at how nations represent local identities, Kaplan explains that nationalists link themselves to their own land by using 'images of place' to attract people to a specific territory. In his words:

'Territory clarifies national identity by sharpening more ambiguous cultural...markers. Over time, as a group occupies and delineates a particular

territory, a transformation occurs. Instead of the group defining the territory, the territory comes to define the group... There is something about the territory itself- composed of the actual space inhabited by members of a group, the particular terrain that helps define the group, the local context *vis-à-vis* other powers, the historic legacy of a specific area, and the boundaries surrounding the national territory- which adds to the essential component to national identity (Passi 1996). As the territory becomes reified, individual members of the nation become socialised within the territorial unit that exists. The space itself helps to weld together fragmented individual and group experiences into a common nation story. The territory creates a collective consciousness by reinventing itself as a homeland' (Kaplan 1999: 45).

While 'territory' in this sense means a larger area of land, the similarities between *Heimat* and a 'nation' come together when referring to an historic piece of land that is integral to the foundations of a society.

In terms of second language learning between local communities, whether by chance or deliberate observation, German-speakers have found ways to incorporate the nation-state into daily vernacular amongst themselves. As I describe in Chapter 4 when I mention how Italian swear words have worked their way into German-speaking dialect, even if some German-speakers try to refrain from using Italian, their attempts have been in vain. Hofmann states that 'Italian-ness' has crept into German-speaking culture, speech and even diet (1995; Kaplan 1999: 53). Despite this, journalist Hans Karl Peterlini believes that in their heart, German-speakers will always remain Tyrolean.

Whether or not this sense of Tyrolean identity is still a part of the *Heimat* narrative, it seems like national identity has managed to find a place alongside the German-speaking community. While by 'nation' I do refer to the Italian nation-state, Magliana modifies this definition by stating that 'national' identity can be ascribed to boundary communities located within South Tyrol. To Magliana nationalism is not only language

and culture but a strong feeling of territorial identity 'to the land and to the mountains' reinforcing alpine culture as part and parcel to the greater nation-state (2000: 64).

Although Eriksen insists that nationalist ideology imposes stigmatised views of "otherness" (1993: 103-104), it seems like within South Tyrol, this "otherness" can be a virtue if language learners see that the L2 has potential.

### **3.3.3 National education as it applies to L2 learning**

*'Education is the most important instrument of identity-building for a minority...'*  
(Rautz 2008: 283)

Ernest Gellner in his work on establishing nationalism makes it a point to concentrate on education when he states that the crucial factors which make up nationalism are in the form of power, education and culture (1983: 94; Banks 1996: 126). When invading South Tyrol, the Fascist polity made sure to enforce a national education in order to impose the language used by the Italian government in their efforts to Italianize the province. Gellner states that in order to create a homogenised modern society, one must use literacy and education in pursuit of creating citizens of the Italian nation-state as opposed to fragmented communities (see 1964; Hutchinson and Smith 1994). National education is also used to establish a unified language in the schooling system with the idea that it will eventually be transmitted to the home by replacing the language of the minority. A good example can be made of the French education system through their establishment of the Jules Ferry laws, developed in the late nineteenth century during the time of the French Third Republic (Stephens 1976). A unified national language became part of the criteria mandating a secular state education (Weber 1979; Llobera 1989: 251; Tonkin et al. 1989; see Eriksen 1993: 108) to promote 'national unity' for the sake of the French nation through the means of a literate society. If Gellner is correct in

stating that 'identification, loyalty and effective citizenship depends on literacy and education in the one favoured language' (1964: Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 60), then one can assume that in South Tyrol, Mussolini's use of Italian was designed to create state patriotism as well as expand the Fascist empire.

Unfortunately for Mussolini, as mentioned in the previous chapter, his attempts to Italianize the province backfired when German-speakers managed to retain their own language and cultural identity. Subsequently, the school system over time developed into a three-part education school environment (for the German-, Italian- and Ladin-speakers) providing German-speakers with their own unique schooling system, which paralleled Italian-speaking schools. Nevertheless, it should be said that while Gellner firmly believes that nationalism cannot be made by local villages, if we take Magliana's definition of South Tyrolean 'nationalism', in some respects the village can create 'full citizens'. Despite Gellner insisting that 'only a nation-size educational system can produce...fully human men' (1964; Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 55, 58), it seems like nationalism in a very localized context in essence can turn 'peasants into Frenchmen'.<sup>23</sup>

Finally Gellner states that it is the education system which invariably makes a region a homeland (Gellner 1964; Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 58); a rather suitable homage to the German-speaking forms of *Heimat* as illustrated through their separate schooling system.

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<sup>23</sup> The phrase was taken from Eugene Weber's book, 'Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernization of rural France 1870- 1914' (1976).

### 3.3.4 Nationalism alongside language identity

*'Language acts are acts of identity. Who we are is what we speak' (Pérez- Firmat 2005: 90).*

As for the role of nationalism alongside language identity, language distinctions occurred in South Tyrol as early as the nineteenth century when the Bolzano province was ruled by the Habsburg monarchy (Eichinger 2002: 137-138). During that time, nationalism functioned as a doctrine which 'emphasized language as the test of nationality, because language was an outward sign of a group's peculiar identity' (Kedourie 1960; Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 49) in response to the surrounding regions. Language no longer acted as a form of 'ethnic difference' but became a political device and a marker that represented one's national identity, redirecting attention to the nation-state. Ultimately, South Tyrol became a language boundary between the Tyrol and Trento province, acting as a political border dividing the German- and Italian-speaking nations (Kager 1998).

When South Tyrol was annexed to Italy, the reaction from the German-speaking population was one of group defiance in order to strengthen their own identity. Rather than permit their language to be abolished at the hands of Fascist forces invading the province, the German language still remained, albeit for some time underground, despite Fascist attempts to eradicate it completely. Similar to Maryon McDonald's research on Breton identity in response to the French nation-state (see Eriksen 1993: 109), there is an irony 'in seeking to oppose minorities in the name of national unity' (Banks 1996: 139). Especially when language movements hosted by the minority become the response to national invasion, this reaction 'nurtures the very nightmare [which the nation-state] wishes to dispel' (ibid.) defeating the whole purpose of entrenchment.

After all, Judge explains that '[t]o speak a foreign language is to change one's pattern of thought, to enter a new world, [and] to see things differently' (2000: 49). Depending on the culture, there may not be a willingness to speak the language spoken by one's adversaries. Unlike the Gaza Strip, where Hamas schools encourage students to learn the 'language of the enemy',<sup>24</sup> this type of motivation is not always sufficient for all students, especially in cases that are less extreme.

Promotion of a nation's language, according to De Mauro, can have adverse consequences for its speakers in that the policies inflicted can in turn discourage its users from language exploration worldwide. By making a language 'inflexible' to ensure that it is pure, the nation's language is placed 'in a museum' prohibiting cross-cultural exchanges by erecting language ghettos which isolate speakers from their outside neighbours (1996: 94). In some respects this could be said of the German-speaking group in that some members desire to keep the groups divided, which goes some way to explaining why German schools have been historically opposed to permitting non-German students to enrol in their establishments. Consequently, while historically the Fascists were well known for attempting to remove the German language, the response of German-speakers has been to postpone teaching Italian so that it does not 'contaminate' their L1.

Nationalism has a way of using language as a defining marker for a certain group in that together with anthems, flags and oath-swearing ceremonies (along with myths to sustain national identity) languages become the means to differentiate group speakers into insiders from divergent outsiders. Ruzza explains that it is languages which are 'the most powerful symbols of national identity' (2000: 168), while Bourdieu expands on

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<sup>24</sup> For more information see the BBC report, 'Hebrew taught in Gaza schools, but barriers remain' (2013) at: <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-21516956>> [Accessed 8 June 2015].

this by stating that local symbols objectify and represent a person's power. To elaborate, I refer to Bourdieu's commentary when he states that language, dialect and accent provide a sense of social status, 'perception and appreciation', which can be recognized by opposing communities. As for the use of emblems, flags and badges, these objective symbols add another layer to 'self-interested strategies of symbolic manipulation which aim at determining the (mental) representation that other people may form of these properties and their bearers' (1992: 220-221). An example would involve the use of the American confederate flag, which some German-speakers place outside their homes as a symbol which represents their own opinion of their separation from the Italian nation-state. Ergo, one can assume that locals' markers of identity are present in the use (or lack thereof) of the L2.

While in essence, group resistance could become a dialogue and be expanded upon in this specific paper (see Scott 1990), it must be noted that the German- and Italian-speaking groups have made great strides towards becoming more united. Unlike in the 1950s when the German-speaking group wanted to separate itself from the Trentino province, 'the [German-speaking] association with Austria has progressively faded in favour of a new, multilingual and multicultural identity' (Magliana 2000: 64).

Another item to reflect on when it comes to language use is that while languages can be 'powerful symbols', Italy is quite unique in that the use of the state language is a weak marker of national identity. With the 'difficult gestation and the late development of the [Italian] standard language' dialects are still preferred in much of the Italian nation-state (Ruzza 2000: 168), even by German-speakers in South Tyrol province. It is the dialect that helps 'channel feelings of identity' (ibid.) as opposed to the national state language. Unlike the rest of Italy, in South Tyrol the use of dialect is more common amongst

German-speakers as opposed to Italian-speakers, who are not versed in local dialect and prefer to speak in the state language.

In the next section, I will focus on more regional issues and how the region and boundary can impact social group tensions in relation to the centre of state power. In the final section of this chapter I will concentrate on what defines regional and boundary identity and how the German- and Italian-speakers function within these roles and how this reinforces their language identity.

### 3.4 Regional and boundary identity

When examining group tensions along the South Tyrol border it is assumed that national identity is expressed by the Italians while the Germans and the Ladins exhibit regional and boundary behaviour. However, we have seen that the German-speaking group has managed to incorporate the Italian nation-state into their vocabulary, diet and culture despite efforts to hold on to Tyrolean identity. Subsequently this gives rise to local regional identity and its expression by language groups alongside boundary identity when trying to examine provincial legislation in the region. As a result, I have divided both the regional and boundary sections into two main components in order to determine how the concepts of regionalism and boundaries have an effect on German and Italian identity.

#### *3.4.1 Campanalismo, Padania and regional identity*

Antonio Carluccio, the UK based Italian chef, said it best when defining 'Italian' identity that despite the nation's unification 150 years ago Italy is still a country of regions. Italy is now divided into twenty specific regions and has 'retained its regionality', which adds

another element to how its citizens view themselves in relation to the Italian nation-state.

For instance, if you ask an Italian where he is from, he will tend to name his town before he even mentions Italy! In Piedmont, where I was raised, this sense of allegiance goes even further: the first loyalty is to family, then to neighbourhood, then to local town followed by region. In the north, this love of place is called *campanilismo*,<sup>25</sup> which roughly translates as "pulling together to defend the bell-tower" (Carluccio and Contaldo 2011: 28).

The *campanile*, or bell tower, is historically placed within the centre of the town and one can picture during troubled times how someone would ring the bell to warn the villagers of advancing outsiders. This desire to protect the village at the expense of forging relations with neighbouring communities echoes historical divisions between the Germans and Italians during the first half of the twentieth century.

Despite their differences, over time the language groups have learned to coexist with one another, even though *campanilismo* has worked its way into German-speaking villages in response to their Italian-speaking neighbours. According to Forgacs, *campanilismo* only develops when neighbours from two historically close backgrounds attempt to define their identity by drawing distinctions that create differences within the same personal sphere (2000: 145; Blok 1998: 34). This *campanilismo* is another way of expressing how Italian citizens have stronger attachments to their village or town than loyalty to the nation as 'an Italian's sense of geographical identity is...based on a feeling of [village] belonging...than it is on a sense of fellowship with other Italians' (Dickie 1996: 19-20; Forgacs 2000: 145).

Regardless of South Tyrolean village association, globalization is taking centre stage as open border policy within the European Union has led to advancements of major Euro-

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<sup>25</sup> Italics are Carluccio and Contaldo's emphasis.

regions. For South Tyrol, this has resulted in a three-part Euro-region made up of North and South Tyrol and Trento province, which has led to controversy as to whether the 'Euro-region Tyrol' will redistribute power from the Italian nation-state. South Tyrol, which has been a member of the Committee of Regions (COR) 'has made the decentralization of the Italian state and regionalization in Europe the top of the regional agenda' (Magliana 2000: 117). Originally represented by the then- provincial President, Luis Durnwalder as of the year 2000, his objectives were to concentrate on minority issues through representing and protecting language groups. In May 1997, Durnwalder announced that the protection of language minorities and ethnic groups was 'indispensable' for 'peaceful cohabitation both within national borders and among neighbouring states' (Magliana 2000: 117, 119). In reference to the COR:

[It is felt that] South Tyrol stands out as an example of the successful resolution of a minority conflict and of extensive and fruitful cooperation between an autonomous region and the central state to whom it is responsible. These two elements are fundamental to the direction in which the EU...is moving... In addition, South Tyrol serves to illustrate the advantages of European integration, particularly [at] the regional level. The COR has thus allowed South Tyrol to emerge in a more international level as a model case and as an example for which other European regions may learn' (Magliana 2000: 119-120).

Magliana states that there are complications when establishing a region of this stature given historical discrepancies across the alpine border between both Austria and the Italian government. While a Euro-region is intended to extend across state borders for economic EU programmes and initiatives, weaker boundaries between nations 'allows for the revival of cultural ties with neighbouring regions, particularly when the ties are stronger than those within the State' (2000: 120-121). As with the case of South Tyrol, there are concerns that the Euro-region could lead to Tyrolean reunification as the three-part Euro-region has a German majority, which would outnumber the Italian-speaking

group (Magliana 2000: 121). As a result, the Euro-region, until at least the year 2000, did not function as a political and legal entity, but was given a joint office in Brussels in 1995 (Magliana 2000: 122) located a short distance from the COR. In 2015 the office functions as a network for '[s]ustaining officials, offices and territorial associations in the processes of interaction' with EU institutions while also promoting awareness of EU activities, which concentrate on European integration.<sup>26</sup>

As for the German-speakers wanting to reunite with the Tyrol, based on my fieldwork there was little suggestion that German-speakers would rather be a part of the Austrian state than be autonomous and/or remain a part of Italy. Based on the election results of November 1998, the German-speaking political group, the Union für Südtirol (UFS), wanted to separate and be rejoined with Austria, but only received 5.5 percent of the vote. While members feel that 'Italy is...not their country or [their] homeland' those opposed to UFS are of the view that permanent autonomy is not a practical solution nor is there an attitude of abstaining from integration (Magliana 2000: 83-84).

However, South Tyrol is part of a much larger national picture regarding Italy's fragmented social structure, especially when looking at divisions between the north and the south and how these demarcations affect regional identity. The concept of *Padania*, coined by the Northern League, a regionally based political party, refers to the northern part of Italy, which is known for its industrial progress while the south is sometimes viewed as 'lazy and superstitious' (Murphy et al. 2002; Carluccio and Contaldo 2011: 62). With the Northern League wanting to concentrate its political efforts to return 'northern Italy to its "natural" Mitteleuropean cradle' (Bull 1996: 155), this leading

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<sup>26</sup> For more information on the responsibilities of the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol- Trentino office see: <<http://www.alpeuregio.org/index.php/accueil/the-european-region-tyrol-south-tyrol-trentino>> [Accessed 11 June 2015].

political group wants to remove the northern regions from the perceived corruption of Italian political life (Murphy, et al. 2002; Gubbins and Holt 2002).

Situated in the most northern part of Italy, South Tyrol is a very affluent province. Therefore there may be some desire amongst several provincial politicians to have a federal Italy, but as the province is already autonomous it has several unique benefits when it comes to maintaining its own finances. While other northern regions 'are frustrated by the drain on their income caused by the continual subsidy' to southern Italy, South Tyrol is able to retain 90 percent of its tax revenue, while other northern regions can only obtain a small fraction (Magliana 2000: 52-53).

When stepping back and examining the role of South Tyrol as it pertains to regional identity, its autonomous nature reinforces the region as a bounded geographical environment. While not all regions need to be autonomous, a region can never have sovereign status. However, like South Tyrol, it can have an administrative unit, 'but it need not be, nor need it even be officially recognized' (Parkin 1999; Wagstaff: 6). When questioning the role of an 'administrative unit' in an area that is considered a region, Italy has 'an uncommon degree of fragmentation...and a degree of political factionalism' (Lepsky et al. 1996; also Levy 1996; Kaplan 1999: 49). Consequently, Lyttleton states that within the Italian state, local identities are more inclined to be municipal (1996; Kaplan 1999: 49) within one's town or one's city, as opposed to 'regional', reinforcing the concept of *campanilismo*. Whether or not this is the case with reference to South Tyrol, Levy explains that in Trento-South Tyrol, the region is 'effectively ruled by two provinces', which invariably try to regulate themselves (see Chapter 2). In his opinion, Italian-speakers are more supportive of the state while German-speakers identify as autonomists (1996: 16). But as I have previously mentioned, both the German- and Italian-speakers identify with both the region and the nation-state. Additionally, the

region functions as a conduit of state-to-state relationships and as 'a [sub-national administrative] unit occupying an intermediate position between central and local government' (ibid.). For South Tyrol this implies that it is an intermediary, which informs the Italian nation-state of its provincial issues.

As for 'regionalism', Wagstaff states that while the region can represent cultural, historical and linguistic features, "regionalism" can denote the aspirations and activism of the concerned habitants of a region' (ibid.). Parkin states that while regionalism can act as an ethnic mode of maintaining cultural distinctions, regionalism can also have non-ethnic tendencies (1999). Although a region does not always carry linguistic connotations (ibid.), when it comes to South Tyrol, linguistic variations are what separate the province from its surrounding regional and provincial neighbours.

Regional identities are capable of crossing borders with other national boundaries, as with the case of Franco-Provencal and the Aosta Valley, located in the north-west part of Italy. The Aosta Valley, which is recognized as an autonomous French-speaking province of Italy, is also part of the Franco-Provencal regional identity, which crosses over into the regions of southern France and western Switzerland. This means that while the Aosta Valley has a regional identity in reference to its relationship with Rome, it expresses a sub-regional identity when compared to the larger territory of Franco-Provencal (Parkin 1999).

Finally, 'regionalism is not only a popular movement- it can also be a bureaucratic instrument' (ibid.). While governments formed by the state have regional administration, sometimes regional bureaucracies may seek to draw more strength within their own locality in response to the specific nation-state (ibid.). For the German-speaking group, there is the German SVP, which represents their cultural and linguistic interests in order

to represent the language minority in response to the Italian nation-state. As for the frontier, Bourdieu states that it is a 'product of division' dividing regions into language, habitat and cultural forms, but that these regions do not represent an actuality, as not all language groups can be contained in one locality (1992: 222). Just as with South Tyrol, many German-speakers reside on the Austrian and the Italian border. Therefore when the frontier tries to separate out this language group into separate diverse associations, it tries to create 'natural' divisions, which in reality are not there. This is a result of state 'power in the field of struggle over legitimate delimitation' (ibid.) despite the impact it could have on German-speaking group relations on either side of the Italian state border. Since historically the Fascists tried to promote their regime through the eradication of the German language through the education system, Bourdieu explains:

'The frontier, that product of a legal act of delimitation, produces cultural difference as much as it is produced by it: one need only consider the role of the education system in the development of language to see that political will can undo what history had done' (ibid.).

Therefore, in the last section of this chapter, I examine boundary identity as it pertains to frontier societies while also looking at how borders exemplify language identity in spatially bounded communities.

### **3.4.2 Border(land)s, boundaries and boundary identity**

National frontiers are negotiation zones for transnational and international communication. These zones are of varying widths, which coincide with borderlands and are positioned between nations and states, so that cultural relations can exist across these zones in a familiar cross-cultural landscape (Donnan and Wilson 1994: 8). However, cultural frontiers are spheres of negotiation, especially when people live in borderlands. Furthermore, '[n]ations and states have political frontiers which entail all of

these negotiations', as well as delimit the nation's or the state's sovereignty from reaching across state lines (ibid.).

Borders, additionally, are also classified as zones, 'which always extend, to some degree, across borderlines' (Donnan and Wilson 1994: 7). They can also function as the borderlines themselves, which delineate divisions between states. Donnan and Wilson claim that 'the reality of borders' is that they act as 'fringes on each side of the borderline', exhibiting a line which is considered an abstraction, not visible but people know that it is there (ibid.). Parkin explains that borders are undemocratic since they were made in response to past wars, as evidenced in democratic Europe, though liberal democracy still needs them in order 'to distribute rights and duties to [its] national citizens' (2002: 5), as well as to establish governmental control. As 'symbols of the state's powers', borders are peripheral locations representing maximum centre authority, but also demonstrate an 'intense degree of official scrutiny' ensuring that the borders stay firmly intact (ibid.).

As for language within borders, particularly with language groups, language plays a role in shaping one's identity, just as location and/or environment have an integral effect on how people see themselves within a wider, global society. By creating group distinctions based around one's language use, this could result in establishing group borders, which like politics and culture creates societal divisions, as evidenced within South Tyrol. This idea of 'belonging' to a community or origin group, as discussed in the writings of Anthony Cohen (1982) and Bonnie Urciuoli (1995), indicates the importance of identity formation based on one's place in a particular environment. Urciuoli states that '[p]eople act in ways...as "having" a language', similar to belonging to a group. Concerning borders, they become an allegory representing a 'person,

language and origin category', and a nation's borderline, which can be 'fleeting or quite rigid', and at times highly politicized (Urciuoli 1995: 525; see Kavanagh 1994: 75).

The border between the United States and Mexico is a borderline immersed in political debates. With immigration issues involving illegal migrants topped by the fear of international drug smuggling, Spanish-speakers in the U.S. are perceived as stereotypes as a consequence of illegal migration. For Anglo (or 'white') students along the U.S. and Mexican border, the term 'Mexican' is seen as taboo since it represents a word with adverse connotations, resulting in cross-cultural Anglo and Hispanic demarcations. Borders, in this context, represent cultural elements in the form of languages, accents and word associations (Urciuoli 1995: 538-539). They also divide local communities into their own language groups, reinforcing border-making language policies.

[With] [b]order-making language elements [as] locational markers [t]hey assign people to [a] place, often opposing places between those who "have" the language and those who do not. Borders are places where commonality ends abruptly; border-making language elements stand for and performatively bring into being such places' (ibid.).

Compared to South Tyrol, the Bolzano province is divided largely by language into 'insiders' and 'outsiders', who geographically are attached to their own language groups located in certain parts throughout the province. Regardless of social efforts to promote a mixed economy through the blending of German- and Italian-speaking populations, historically '[t]he genesis of the notion of language and borders lies in the shared "imagining" of spatially bounded, linguistically homogenous nations' (Urciuoli 1995: 527).

Due to German- and Italian-speaking locals' living inside a borderland, these language groups have learned to become culturally diverse as the nations coexist with one

another. Borderlands, which are 'symbolic...of nation-state building', function as cultural zones which overlap and where political insecurity coincides with nationality resulting in a blurred sense of identity (Augelli 1980: 19; Kaplan 1999: 47; Donnan and Wilson 1994: 11). Since borderlands are territorial pieces of land, which have fluctuated between different nation-states, they represent the echoes of past historical regimes and their influence as dominant authorities (Kaplan 1999: 56). An example of the effects of a national regime on peripheral regions of the state is found through the national education system as a consequence of nation-state authority. 'All national education systems', according to Donnan and Wilson, 'privilege the times and places where enemies were defeated and/or where the nation's expansion ended or its limits were established' (1994: 11). For South Tyrol, the schooling system became the means through which the Fascists could control the use of enforcing Italian, while for the Nazis, education was a way to re-introduce the German language into the German-speaking South Tyrol school system (see Chapter 4).

Given that the borderland is a hodgepodge of local groups representing different nations across states, borderland identity has an ambivalent nature which consists of different nationalities. Where the borderland is territorially situated at a distance away from the state centre, certain groups may feel a weaker sense of nation-state identity in comparison to group distinctiveness. Conversely, other groups may find that living on the border 'can be the site of intensified activities' as these communities confirm the place of their borderland within the confines of the larger nation-state (Kaplan 1999: 47-48; Radcliffe 1998). Either way, identity, as it is built on borderlands, differs broadly 'from the larger identities of state and nation' as people on the border negotiate themselves amongst a multitude of national identities. As opposed to the secure identities found at the state centre (Kaplan 1999: 48), South Tyrolean identity is fused

into a patchwork of German-, Italian- and Ladin-speaking identities as they relate to their unique provincial boundary.

While borderlands tend to be an area where different nationalities converge, sometimes there can be conflict, as well as ethnic strife, like in South Tyrol after the 1940s. However, the borderland can also act as a 'spirit of cross-cultural understanding, even harmony', depending on local relations. Furthermore, the borderland can preserve smaller identities, such as the Ladin-speakers in parts of the valleys. In these remote regions, relict languages can survive when removed from the centre of state power (Kaplan 1999: 56).

In terms of understanding boundaries as they relate to borderlands, borders and frontiers, Barth categorizes boundaries into three specific models to classify its versatile nature. Firstly, he states that boundaries divide territories located specifically 'on the ground'. Secondly, boundaries can have a more abstract physical nature as they delineate and mark-off one group from another. Finally, boundaries can be found in the minds of individuals working as templates to subdivide one's thoughts (2000: 17). And in the case of South Tyrol, boundaries are not just physical, but have cognitive and social repercussions.

When describing the similarities between boundaries and borders, Kavanagh says it best when he states that boundaries can function not only as a 'line' but as an entity which 'encapsulates the identity of the community' (1994: 75). In his words:

'Of course, these definitions of boundary are not necessarily in contradiction, since borders, especially those between nation-states, are often both boundaries in the sense of lines marked on the ground and in the sense of the symbolic limits of a community. And it is precisely at these "marked boundaries", at the "periphery"

and not at the centre or "core", that the cultural identity of a community is frequently most emphasised' (ibid.).

But more than borders, boundaries function as a means of spatial markers through fences, rivers, signs and law enforcement. One only needs to consider some signs in South Tyrol which state, 'Südtirol ist nicht Italien' (South Tyrol is not Italy) to reinforce the view that boundaries represent identity through visual peripheral reminders (Kaplan 1999: 56).



**Figure 3.1**<sup>27</sup>

Similar to frontier zones, boundaries show the limits of a state's sovereignty within a region, while the edges of the state may sometimes also coincide with the boundary of a

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<sup>27</sup> This photo was taken from the following reference:  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Suedtirol\\_ist\\_nicht\\_Italien\\_-\\_Brennero.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Suedtirol_ist_nicht_Italien_-_Brennero.JPG)>  
[Accessed 17 June 2015].

national identity (Kaplan 1999: 46, 56). Just as borderlands encompass several group identities, a boundary will orient a borderland where unique identities are established and developed, sometimes deviating from the state centre's national identity (Kaplan 1999: 56).

As for international, national and political boundaries, international boundaries function as a line which separates states from each other, while national boundaries divide national groups. Since nations do not always coincide with states, sometimes within states they have inter-national boundaries where a multitude of nations live within a larger state either as ethnic groups or as minorities. These national borders are at times geographical, such as the valleys and cities within South Tyrol, with German-speakers living in remote rural environments while the Italian-speakers live in urban areas. Other times these boundaries also act as provincial borders, distinguishing South Tyrol from other regions. Either way these national borders are just as problematic 'as are the borders between warring [nation]-states' (Donnan and Wilson 1994: 8). As described by Donnan and Wilson:

'In tracing the evolution of national boundaries, other social scientists have analysed the formal arrangements between states, which often do not take into account the needs, desires, and other cultural realities of the people who live at those borders' (1994: 111).

Consequently, German-speakers who historically come from Austria have made sure not only that they receive state support from within Italy, but that Austria still functions as their own 'protector' (see Chapter 2).

Political boundaries, demarcated along state lines, verify relations between nation-states. If states practice open boundaries then relations are deemed 'friendly', while restricted boundaries suggest animosity. Additionally, political boundaries are not only

affected by cultural, psychological and economic factors, they 'embody the edge of identity and so figure hugely in the consciousness of the residents of adjoining states and nations' (Kaplan 1999: 46).

Where political boundaries coincide with national ones, Kaplan states, 'the break is sharp and "clean"'. A 'messy' break is when the political boundary does not correspond to the cultural and national boundary. This results in a borderland transferring into a 'zone of [political] confusion' where residents become the centre focus of conflict and are at times 'forced to choose sides against their will' (Kaplan 1999: 46-47). When reflecting on the Option plan of 1939, German-speakers were compelled to make a choice to either stay in South Tyrol and become Italianized or leave their possessions and join the German Reich (see Chapter 2). Since 'messy' borderlands are where societies overlap, this can result in a clash of local tensions causing some individuals to feel more aligned with their compatriots in another nation-state. As South Tyrol wanted to realign with Austria during the first half of the twentieth century, it suggests there was a need to readjust the political boundary so that it mirrored the German-speaking national identity. 'In this view, borderland identities service larger national identities' (Kaplan 1999: 47), such as with German-speakers within South Tyrol during the early part of the twentieth century who wanted to reinforce and protect their own identity as it pertained to Austrian nationalism.

When examining boundaries as they impact local relations, Eriksen refers to what he calls 'twin concepts' in that '[a] minority exists only in relation to a majority...and their relationship is contingent on...system boundaries'. To be called a minority or a majority is *relative* and *relational*.<sup>28</sup> It just depends on where the boundaries fall amongst divided groups, determining their place within society. Since system boundaries tend to be

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<sup>28</sup> Italics Eriksen's (see 1993: 121).

invariably state boundaries, when the state lines are moved social relations change. A group that was once considered a minority could be absorbed into the larger majority. Conversely, majority groups that are formally included in the territory of another state could become the new minorities within a larger system, such as the German-speakers within the Italian nation-state (Eriken 1993: 121-122).

### 3.5 Conclusion

In exploring the components of the various aspects of identity within a nation-state, it is simplistic to assume that a state majority is the only group with national identity. 'Nations', in this sense, refer to larger population groups, which exist and transcend the state lines. For the Germans and Italians, they both represent a 'nation' when referring to a larger language group. These language groups, especially amongst the German-speakers, also show ties to the Italian nation-state through their absorption of the language, even in a minute sense, as well as through their culture and diet. Italian-speakers, on the other hand, just like the German-speakers, can show attachment to the provincial land by expressing *campanilismo* and certain forms of *Heimat* in relation to their specific village, city or homeland.

Since South Tyrol was created from an exchange of territory from the Habsburg Empire to the Italian state, German-speakers and Italians have had to learn to re-adjust to what it means to be a part of Italy. For many people this involves learning another foreign language, which requires an 'opening' of oneself to the culture one is trying to linguistically incorporate into the South Tyrolean cultural narrative. That said, not all locals have acquiesced in these cultural changes and have refused to bend to the state will, by choosing instead to hold on to their L1 at the expense of learning the L2. Subsequently, language learning takes on a cultural component suggesting that language

is part of one's identity. To 'compromise' the L1 in order to learn the L2 could result in a sense of lost identity.

This is why it is important when examining group relations involving borders within a nation-state to see how identity literature can manifest itself in other forms outside of the traditional literature. Second language literature, through motivation theory, can provide an alternative approach to examining group tensions along a borderline, which has experienced a multitude of issues. Additionally, L2 research can also benefit from a plethora of anthropological analysis to understand in more detail how societal factors can impede or promote second language learning. Through the various components of the literature discussed, the objective is to provide the reader with a more well-rounded approach to how South Tyrolean social tensions may have an impact on language group relations.

# Ethnography section

## Part I:

The structure, complexities and contradictions of the South Tyrolean education system

## Chapter 4: The 'separate but equal' education system

*'...it seems [that with] the problem of cohabitation of diverse linguistic groups in the same territory, one observes that the scholastic separation makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, [to find] a solution to this problem. In particular, one would say that if the knowledge of the two languages, of Italian and German, is an essential condition for cohabitation, it would need to become necessary at least [to establish] a reciprocal approach of the schools of the two groups by experimenting with forms of collaboration, by carrying out exchanges amongst the students and teachers' (Nolet 1984: 63).*

Approximately a year and a half after I returned from fieldwork, I received an email from one of my former high school students, Rachel, an Italian-speaker from Bolzano with a penchant for languages. Considering she was at the top of my class when I taught advanced English language, I was not surprised to discover that she had decided to apply to Oxford, after having studied high school physics while living in the UK. Two years prior she had applied to an Erasmus study year abroad programme because she had wanted to improve her English to a much higher level of fluency. Rather than return to her native Italy, she finished high school in Britain, opting to study physics at a British university.

She was in Oxford for a week because she had been accepted for an interview and had asked if we could meet for coffee. As we sat at a café off the Oxford High Street, I asked how her studies were going and why she had decided to stay in Britain as opposed to returning to Bolzano. More importantly, however, I wanted to understand why she had decided not to continue learning German. 'My German is not great', was the answer that she gave me, despite her many years of having to take lessons. For a student with an ear for learning many foreign languages, German, for some reason, was not one of them.

Unfortunately her opinion of her own knowledge of German was a sentiment I heard from most Italians, who, like the Germans, had a better knowledge of the English language than of the other languages spoken throughout the province. This poor knowledge of the L2 was a linguistic reality that also functioned as a lived experience for both Germans and Italians who grew up in the school system, which adhered to separate language learning policies.

The school system, more importantly for Germans and Italians, functioned as a mirror image of society with a language learning programme that divided local students into three 'separate but equal' schooling systems, the third being Ladin. Since communities in South Tyrol are largely segregated into intersecting, subdivided enclaves, the three-part education system acts as a window to understanding local group dynamics.

The Italian-speaking school, where I taught the English language, was located in the German-speaking part of town, but Italian-speaking students did not use the German language despite the many German-speaking schools throughout the city. It was almost as if the school was situated in a bubble, protecting itself from the outer limits, and yet the German-speaking high schools were equally dismissive of Italian-speaking schools within the province.

The trilingual Free University of Bolzano (FUB), located close to where I worked, was trying to devise a language learning system by encouraging both Germans and Italians from the region to attend classes and learn each other's language, with English as a neutral and international third language due to globalizing pressures within Europe. But based on classroom observations and interviews with former students, assimilation between classmates was a problem as students opted to 'hang out' with their own language group ensemble rather than blend in with L2-speaking students.

Consequently I posed questions to the people I worked with and to citizens within my own community. I also wanted to examine the structure of the education system and the role it plays in language acquisition. By dividing part one of the ethnography section into six main group components (five of which are addressed in Chapter 4), I break apart the three-part education system by explaining how history has affected the school structure, resulting in a school system that was designed to 'protect' minority groups from each other. Along with focusing on German- and Italian-speaking schools and their dividing walls and separate school entrances, I concentrate on the Ladin educational practices and why their schooling system focuses on multilingual learning while simultaneously preserving their own language. Finally I close this section with the trilingual university, which I discuss in Chapter 5. In that chapter I show how it promotes multilingualism by exploring how the university prepares incoming local students who grew up in the separate education schooling system.

My objectives in this section are to focus on three issues regarding second language acquisition. Firstly I ask how elementary and secondary schooling in South Tyrol can denote monolingualism and yet capably prepare its students for the FUB, which functions as a multilingual system. While the university aims to promote language learning through various programmes tailored at students, the concern is for those students who grow up in the school system whose language skills are not quite up to standard. Beillard explains that if their knowledge of the L2 after many years of learning is not proficient enough for the FUB, attempts to assimilate students may be too late once they reach university (2000: 475).

Secondly I try to address whether extra language learning classes for locals enrolled in the FUB add an extra layer of stress for students who are linguistically behind but who want to progress academically. In an article concerning multilingual education on

language policy in Transylvania, Zuzanna Éva Kiss points out an interesting dilemma for minority Hungarian-speakers at her university:

‘Studying through the medium of Romanian or English for those who already speak these languages offers greater opportunities in education, business and employment. In contrast, for those who must reach acceptable proficiency during their university studies, it means a formidable obstacle to successful education and employment’ (2009: 141-142).

While this does not mean that students from the South Tyrol school system should avoid applying to the FUB, Kiss does address an underlying issue and concern for students unprepared for bi- or trilingual university.

Therefore my third objective is to recognize the efforts put forward by the Ladin schooling system by observing its attempts to embrace language learning by encouraging trilingual education. Although there are some concerns as to whether Ladin schooling is a 'perfect model' for preserving culture, Voltmer explains that Germans and Italians 'should learn from [the] Ladins...[and see that] multilingualism is an opportunity. This attitude would give them new motivation for language learning' (2007: 219) and prepare students for work after their studies.

As teachers try to provide opportunities for students by exposing them to multilingual programmes (i.e. through CLIL), locals may want to have a multilingual schooling option, alongside the current education system, to function as another avenue for language learning for students searching for bi- or trilingualism.

#### 4.1 The history and background of the South Tyrolean education system

*'Separation is...the rule in education. Each group runs its own schools, from the nursery to secondary schools. This means that in Italian-language schools, all subjects are taught in Italian, and, conversely, the schools with German language of instruction only teach in German. Teachers must also prove their mother tongue to be entitled to teach in the school of the respective group' (Alber and Palermo 2012: 292).*

Historically the subdivided education system has evolved throughout the course of 80 years considering the turnover of government enforcement from the Fascist occupation to the Nazis. While German-speaking locals tried to establish a series of catacomb schools furthest from Italian-speaking officials, Fascist police tried to enforce Italian education by obliterating underground school efforts. Since German education from 1923 to 1943 was forbidden in the Province of Bolzano (Abel et al. 2010: 274), bitter sentiments developed towards Italian-speaking migrants who were occupying much of local government.

It was only with the Nazi occupation in the region (1943-1945) that German schools were finally reinstated (Nolet 1984: 63). The Nazis also sanctioned German in the Ladin-speaking districts and surrounding areas within the province (Rifesser 1995: 179). The year 1943 provided hope for German-speakers as German-speaking schools were then 're-opened' providing mother tongue instruction at the local schooling level, a luxury that used to be forbidden (Alber 2011: 3). As a result of the re-establishment of German-speaking education, largely due to the Nazi occupation, as of today 'the German school has been the core of language policy...[in] an effort to preserve the German mother tongue against "foreign" influences and "mixtures" with other languages' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 236-237) in order to preserve German identity. Consequently South Tyrol has an education system designed to protect the

rights of the minorities (i.e. German) (Nolet 1984: 63) by promoting linguistic separation in the three-part schooling system with the '*other* language'<sup>29</sup> taught as an L2 (Lepschy et al. 1996: 77).

On 5 September 1946 after the signing of the Paris Agreement, German-speaking South Tyroleans were finally guaranteed the right to German-speaking education (Alber 2011: 3; Baur and Medda-Windsicher 2008: 243; Nolet 1984: 63) in an effort to rebuild their own society. One of the objectives of the Paris Agreement was to re-establish German language and culture, which for several years had been endangered due to Fascist policies aimed at Italianizing all of South Tyrol (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 244). As Abel pointedly explains:

[There were] different measures...implemented to assimilate the German- and Ladin-speaking populations, for instance the Fascist policy established that Italian was to be the only official language in all public offices, therefore not only teachers, but all officials who did not speak or write [standard Italian] were dismissed from their posts' (2007: 238).

As a consequence, Abel believes that 'this historical excursus' explains the reconstruction of the school system and why the German-speaking locals needed to have their own school system (ibid.) in order to preserve their own identity.

From a language learning standpoint, there are many German-speakers who view their language as part of their own culture, and therefore want to ensure that their culture is protected from vulnerable exposure to outsiders.

[Psychologically] the force of the language policies under fascism, the prohibition of German language schools and the use of the German language and its dialects in public and semi-public situations is deeply in the collective memory of the German language group. From this memory stems a fear of assimilation and a feeling of

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<sup>29</sup> Italic's Lepschy et al.'s (see 1996: 77).

endangerment. It is thus understandable why, even today, the German language in South Tyrol is often regarded and described as 'threatened' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 244).

Even though there is a desire amongst German-speaking parents to place their children in bilingual education, the historical relations between Germans and Italians have resulted in monolingual education, especially regarding German language preservation, so that their mother tongue will never be discarded. Another objective in the German-speaking schools is the promotion of monoculturalism (*ibid.*), which functions as a means to avoid assimilation despite living in a bilingual province.

With separate education now enforced in local schools after 1946, this resulted in a two-part education schooling system for German- and Italian-speaking students guaranteeing that elementary and secondary schooling would be taught specifically in their L1 (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 235; Fraenkel-Haeberle 2008: 260-261). In order to reinforce use of the mother tongue in education, students attended schools in their native language. Teachers were also hired based on their mother tongue proficiency and placed in certain schools accordingly. However, both schooling systems were additionally required to teach the L2 as a foreign language (Hannum 1996: 437; Kager 1998), even though the schooling system was initially intended to concentrate on monolingual learning.

In 1948 and again in 1972 the schooling structure changed again and resulted in a three-part schooling system that was 'separate but equal' for the three provincial groups: the Germans, the Italians and the Ladins. The Germans and Italians both had separate schooling systems where their classes were taught in the L1 by teachers who were of the mother tongue. They also learned the second language from L2 native-speakers as mandated by the Second Autonomy statute (Article 19; Steininger 2003: 135). The

Ladin schooling system then became the third component which addressed the issues of Ladin minorities. Unlike the two-part schooling system of the Germans and Italians, which practiced a separate education model, the Ladin schools established the parity model and had their courses taught in German and Italian with Ladin as the language of instruction for preschool and kindergarten until students were of elementary school age (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 235-236; Abel 2007: 237; Peterlini 1997: 198; Peterlini 2010: 158; Second Autonomy Statute 1972 (Article 19); Telmon 1992: 78; Abel et al. 2010: 275).

With the installation of a three-part education system resulting in three independent education offices, Article 19 of the Second Autonomy statute followed by the Presidential Degree No. 116 of 1973 produced a 'largely separated education policy' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 243; Abel et al. 2010: 275). Since the education system has not changed in terms of structure by virtue of the 1972 Second Autonomy statute, today all three schooling systems have their own independent school inspector appointed by the Provincial Council of Bolzano and the Department of Education (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 236; Alber 2011: 1).

Three evaluation boards are now also in existence as of 29 June 2000. The three provincial boards (representing the German-, Italian- and Ladin-speaking school systems) meet at least twice throughout the course of the school year to ensure a common framework is established. Since the German- and Italian-speaking schools are parallel, aside from language, their school objectives should be equal:

[h]owever, it seems that the two authorities [i.e. German and Italian] continue to place differing and sometimes contrasting emphases in the discussion of objectivism, the evaluation of working procedures and results' (Alber 2011: 10; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 245-246).

Based on experience working in an Italian-speaking school, I was told by both fellow colleagues and students of the existing cultural dissimilarities dividing German schools from Italian schools in terms of classroom structure. Regarding discipline, the German schools are viewed as stricter with teachers as the ultimate authority, while Italian-speaking schools provide a more relaxed atmosphere where discipline is not widely emphasised.

Another point well worth addressing is the discrepancy concerning the need for the German-speaking schools to concentrate their efforts on preserving the L1 at the expense of introducing the L2. Unlike Italian-speaking schools, which over time have introduced the L2 starting in year one of education, the German-speaking schools have placed their primary stress in making sure their students maintain their L1 (Telmon 1992: 78).

On 28 July 2003 the majority German-speaking provincial government devised a package of measures for second language acquisition in order to reinforce the mother tongue specifically in German-speaking schools. Point four of the package emphasized the importance of learning the mother tongue in education before the introduction of a second or third language, a provincial policy which still functions as a part of the German-speaking school system today (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 246).

However, criticisms have been made concerning language acquisition by Baur and Medda-Windischer, who consider that this specific policy 'is scientifically and didactically unfounded' (ibid.) based on the research available on multilingual families (Egger 1985).

'There is no doubt that the promotion of the first language is of great importance to learning additional languages but it is by no means a prerequisite. Languages can be learned simultaneously during infancy, as demonstrated in the scientific

literature and the language experiences of children...' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 246)

A good example of early bilingual acquisition is best expressed by Dr Patricia Kuhl, who specializes in the speech development of infants. At a non-profit conference in October 2010, she spoke about her research under the title, 'The linguistic genius of babies'. In this presentation she explains the brain's capacity for learning by emphasizing how infants are better equipped to learn languages as soon as they are born. By studying Western and Taiwanese babies between six to twelve months old, she describes how both sets of children are able to distinguish the sounds existing in Mandarin and in English, but that by the time they reach the age of ten months, those children who are less exposed to the L2 have a much harder time distinguishing certain sounds. Kuhl refers to this language learning shift as one where the children transition from being 'citizens of the world' (i.e. easily influenced language learners) to 'culturally bound listeners' where older infants' brains become wired to listen for certain sounds specifically reserved for their L1. After the age of seven, the critical period for learning languages becomes increasingly more difficult, so much so that after the age of puberty 'we fall off the [language learning] map' (see Lightbrown and Spada 1999: 60).<sup>30</sup>

The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), or Sensitive Period Hypothesis, suggests that younger age groups are more proficient at learning a second language than if learning is postponed until puberty or adulthood. According to Lightbrown and Spada, CPH states that there is a time when the brain is predisposed to learning a second language. This is normally when a child or infant is at the age when learning languages is biologically innate. Once children become older, they 'depend on more general learning abilities- the

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<sup>30</sup> For more information on Patricia Kuhl's work on second language learning see 'The linguistic genius of babies' at: <[http://www.ted.com/talks/patricia\\_kuhl\\_the\\_linguistic\\_genius\\_of\\_babies?language=en#t-79134](http://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies?language=en#t-79134)> [Accessed 30 December 2014].

same ones they might use to learn other kinds of skills and information' (1999: 60). These 'general learning abilities' are thought to be not as efficient as the early innate L2 learning abilities found in early childhood (ibid.; see Ellis 2008: 24; Gass and Selinker 2001: 335).

However, there is scepticism regarding this hypothesis, as some studies show that older language learners can progress in the L2 faster than younger students in the early stages of L2 acquisition. There are 'countless anecdotes' of older students becoming highly proficient in the L2 (Lightbrown and Spada 1999: 61). Therefore it should be no surprise that the German-speaking schools are still insistent on postponing L2 learning. As hesitations arise as to whether early L2 exposure could eliminate the students' mother tongue, Lightbrown and Spada caution that early L2 instruction could result in 'the loss or incomplete development' of the L1 (1999: 68).

In an interview with Josep Artigal in 1993 at a convention on bilingualism in Europe, he explained how multilingualism can be well achieved despite linguistic pressures within South Tyrol. Most importantly, however, he stressed that second language acquisition can occur without interfering with the mother tongue.

'Children that speak English, Finnish or Spanish at home that attend schools in another language do not lose, but reinforce and perfect their mother tongue more than children who attend school with traditional language teaching programmes' (1993: 99).

That said, there are still parents in South Tyrol who would prefer to place their children in a monolingual education setting, which is why the concept of 'Free Choice' is a part of legislation and has been since the early 1970s. The 'Free Choice' option in education permits parents in South Tyrol to place their children in a school of their own choosing (Alber 2011: 6-7). However, students can be refused admission to a certain school if

their language skills are not native proficient (Abel 2007: 237; Alber 2011: 7; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 236).

This option in education allows parents from both spectrums to opt for monolingual or bilingual language learning, in the sense that parents from one language group can enrol their children in a school that focuses on the L2, but at the same time '...the school system...substantially promotes a linguistic separation model while granting parents the liberty to choose the school they want for their children...' (Fraenkel-Haeberle 2008: 277).

If students are refused enrolment in a school, parents can challenge the school's decision in front of the Administrative Court, but it is only in recent years that the German-speaking education system has become more flexible towards non-German-speaking students (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 236). Even with the former German-speaking President of South Tyrol, Luis Durnwalder, declaring that German-speaking schools are now open to all South Tyrolean citizens (Peterlini 2013: 237), historically German-speaking schools have had a reputation for closing their doors to those who are not mother tongue German-speakers.

#### **4.1.1 Walscher e Crucco**

As of twenty years ago it was much harder for Italian-speaking students to receive a German-speaking education. Students who were not of German-speaking mother tongue and/or did not have a German last name were less inclined to be accepted into German-speaking schools in order to preserve the German identity in the region.

My friend Melissa was nonetheless an exception to the rule, as she had attended German schools throughout her life. Her Italian-speaking parents decided thirty years

ago that a German-speaking education would be much better for their children if they wanted them to become bilingual-speaking and more attractive for the South Tyrolean job market. As a result, her mother enrolled herself into several German language courses at the Goethe institute in Germany so that she could develop enough of a basis of High German to teach her young children the German language so that they would be fluent enough for nursery school.

The reasoning behind this logic is that many Italian-speaking parents see the benefits of a German education but realize that in order to get their children into the German-speaking school system their children must be fluent in the language. If by teaching them High German at a very early age their children can 'pass' as German-speakers, some Italian-speaking parents hope that enrolling them in German-speaking nursery school will allow them to eventually pick up the local German dialect, an important linguistic trademark of the German-speaking people. It is the dialect that qualifies locals as German-speakers rather than their knowledge of High German. It is also what allows children into German society so that they can continue with a German education.

There is a downside, however, to multilingual education in South Tyrol, namely student bullying. Whenever students have opportunities to torment each other sometimes language plays a role in group selection, determining which students are the 'odd men out' of a particular society and resulting in a form of isolation. For Melissa, German schooling went from focusing on group assimilation in elementary and middle school to concentrating on linguistic segregation once she reached high school, an unfortunate reality which culminated in depression largely because she was Italian-speaking.

During my time in Bolzano, I noticed that distinctions were constantly, if not casually, made between those who were 'German-speakers' and those who were 'Italian-speakers'

as locals tried to place each other into categorical boxes. As an English-speaker I was continually assessed because I looked German but did not speak the language (apart from a few simple phrases), and while I did speak Italian, it was not my mother tongue and I always spoke the language with an accent.

This classifying system in South Tyrol for those who are 'German' and those who are 'Italian' manifests itself in two societal group distinctions: those who are labelled day-to-day as 'Crucchi' and those who are viewed as 'Walsche'. 'Crucchi' (in English, '[Sauer]krauts'), is an Italian term which refers to people who are German-speaking, while 'Walsche' (in High German, 'Welschen') is a dialect word which refers to those who are not German-speaking. Initially used by the Anglo-Saxons (cf. 'Welsh'), this German term for 'strangers' also referred to speakers of the neo-Latin languages and over time was used to refer to the Ladin- and Italian-speakers (Poppi 2001: 5). While the German-speaking South Tyrolean writer and journalist, Hans Karl Peterlini insists that 'Walsche' merely refers to Italian-speakers who come from southern Italy, he does agree, like Oberhammer, that the word takes on derogatory meanings depending on the context in which it is used (2013: 34; Oberhammer 2007: 249).

In the case of Melissa, as I shall demonstrate below, when she attended high school in the 1990s, the term 'Walsche' was used in a negative context in order to distinguish her from the other German-speaking students, which resulted in her feeling like an outcast.

### **Interview 1: Melissa:**

When Melissa initially began attending a German-speaking high school in Bolzano, her intention was to continue with her German-speaking education as she had done since she started school in kindergarten. Having learned the local German dialect at a very early age, she had adjusted to the German-

speaking school system and in her words had found that learning was a positive experience and that her time in German schools had been quite 'fun'. It was only when she reached the later years of education, that her social circle started to shrink resulting in a very lonely last few years of high school and contributing to her mental illness.

Her parents had placed her in a German-speaking Catholic high school with a well-known reputation in the city, but as the high school was a continuation of the adjoining middle school, most students by the time they reached the upper secondary school had already established their own circle of friends. Those new students who felt left out of the inner social circles eventually left after the first month of school, resulting in Melissa's first taste of isolation starting at 14 years old.

Of her five years of high school, she remembered the first two and said that she 'blocked out' the other three. As the only student in her class with Italian-speaking parents, she became a certain target for some students. Some would call her an 'ugly Walscher', which she would try to ignore but by her second year the teasing was much worse. Since her German-speaking middle school had not spent enough time teaching students German grammar, by the time she reached high school, it was evident that her grammar was not sufficient enough for her German language classes. Despite her fluent knowledge of the local German dialect her 'Italian-ness' did not play in her favour and her grades began to slip as her German teachers thought that linguistically she would not pass the class.

After several years of teasing coupled with problems with German grammar, eventually Melissa reached the end of her rope when a student in her class decided to make fun of the recent grades that she had received in class. Whilst turning to a friend he said in a loud voice, 'Hey! You've got a grade like scimmione!', a play on words for 'Simoni', Melissa's last name, but in this case 'scimmione' in Italian means 'ape'. Without thinking she turned to face him as he called her an 'ugly Walscher' and said, 'You don't know German, nor does your mother. You're better off leaving this school!' At which point she took her boot and kicked him in the face and said, 'Now you can learn to say nothing'. Afraid that her parents would be mortified, she came home instead to find that her father was quite proud. Despite the students and staff thinking that Melissa had gone mad, her father said, 'Next time, give him two kicks'.

Even so, that particular incident unfortunately caused Melissa to become a social outcast. While the student who had been kicked had insisted that his bruise was because he had fallen off a bike, the headmaster had made efforts to keep the issue silent rather than addressing segregation in school. Consequently by her fifth year, Melissa stopped attending classes altogether because she was excluded by the other students, resulting in her loneliness as well as her depression, causing her to see a psychologist. In her words:

'All of the problems I have now are due to the fact that five important years were taken away from me while I was a teenager. I didn't have any friends at all, nothing...all of the problems I have now are due to these five years. At the age of 32 I find myself always having to be around my mother and my mother, well, she has her limits... If you don't have a group of friends and/or a boyfriend during your teenage

years, you will continue to search for those things for the rest of your life simply because your teenage years are missing...'

Consequently, Melissa felt that these high school turn of effects led to her mental instability. She explained that despite her several years in therapy her social skills had been affected, preventing her from being an adult, resorting instead to acting like a teenager, even though she was in her early 30s.

While her story may seem like an extreme form of social isolation, unfortunately she was not alone. In an interview conducted with a local anthropologist, she discussed an intense case of village tensions and told me the story of a German-speaking woman who had fallen in love with an Italian-speaking policeman. As he was a member of the Italian police force, her family had forbidden the two to marry. In her distress the woman was admitted to a psychiatric institute because she could not come to terms with her misfortune.

And yet when speaking with a Ladin from the Ladin-speaking districts, I learned that not all districts are linguistically divided. When talking with Caterina, from the village of Ortisei, in the Ladin-speaking valley of Gardena, she claimed that there was no such thing as derogatory terms for the Germans, the Italians or the Ladins. Instead the groups all lived together and attended the Ladin schools and were being educated at an equal level. It was only when she moved from Ortisei to Bolzano in order to attend a German-speaking high school that she noticed the distinctions between the Germans and Italians because the groups are forced to live together.

Apart from South Tyrol, there are other border regions where terminology is used for certain groups. On the French and German border between German Saarland and the French Lorraine, anthropologist Tomke Lask looked at playground politics between

young German- and French-speaking students. In the village of Leidingen/Leiding, a smaller version of Bolzano, the village was divided based on language. Students went to certain schools in their own mother tongue, and even cemeteries were linguistically divided. As an experiment she tried to have the students work together on a group project at an elementary school, but found that once they reached the playground pandemonium erupted, as students from both camps broke into fighting. While the fighting was initially the biggest school concern, Lask reflected on the students' choice of words. The German students would refer to French students as 'baguette heads', while the French students called German students 'spiked helmets', a term which had been passed on from generation to generation since the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. As a result, the playground acted as a small-scale, mock Franco-Prussian war by providing a window into past local relations as reflected through the mouths of younger students (Lask 1994).

While South Tyrol is somewhat different in its historicity, the term for 'stranger' has existed for a millennium, acting as a beacon for society at large in terms of how the local groups still view each other.

#### **4.1.2 One territory, two realities**

Be that as it may, from a language learning standpoint, more parents are expressing their concerns about language learning options in monolingual education in order to encourage the L2. As of 2008 German-speaking parents and Italian-speaking politicians were asking for new teaching methods in L2 acquisition along with the promotion of teaching the English language to act as an L3 in the school system (Alber 2011: 1, 11; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 237). Some Italian-speaking parents, as well as teachers and students, also expressed an interest in trilingual schooling, but the Italian-

speaking superintendent at the time, Luisa Gneccchi, had her objections towards trilingual education. Despite support for the idea from the German-speaking superintendent, Bruna Rauzi, Gneccchi was concerned with the financial costs and knew that adequate procedures to prepare trilingual teachers were outside the bounds of what their schools could offer (Giudiceandrea 2007: 23, 29).

Instead, when meeting with the provincial government on 19 May 2008 she suggested the idea of so-called bilingual language 'sections' directed towards Italian-speaking students enrolled in German-speaking nursery schools. The concept was to involve grouping Italian-speaking students (presumably away from German-speaking students) so that certain portions of their classes could be taught in German and Italian by local native speakers from the province. From her perspective this would resolve some issues with the SVP regarding lingering concerns in education: that Italian-speaking students enrolled in German-speaking schools would impede the learning of the German language.<sup>31</sup> Whether her proposal passed has yet to be determined, as new schemes are frequently written, some of which never make it to the local schooling level even if they are passed by local government.

Nevertheless, there are those parents who encourage bilingual education when they see all the advantages to knowing local languages, especially in terms of the job market. While thirty years ago Melissa's parents were in many ways progressive by introducing her to German-speaking schools, over time there has been an increase in Italian-speaking parents opting to place their children in German-speaking education. Since many adults cannot work in public administration without a fluent understanding of

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<sup>31</sup> See Hell, E. 2008. Sezioni miste. *Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 18 May. Available at: <<http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?p=81>> [Accessed 5 July 2013] and Hell, E. 2008. Ipocrisie linguistiche. *Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 15 May. Available at: <<http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?m=200805>> [Accessed 8 September 2015].

both German and Italian due to the Second Autonomy statute (Giudiceandrea 2007: 23), this has encouraged some families to push for bilingual language fluency at a younger age, as well as support better methods of immersion teaching. According to Enrico Hell, as many as 23 percent of Italian-speaking families in 2008 chose to place their children in German-speaking education,<sup>32</sup> while January 2014 showed a dramatic decrease in the number of Italian-speaking parents enrolling their children in Italian-speaking nurseries for the 2014/ 2015 school year. In the words of the South Tyrolean Provincial Councillor, Alessandro Urzì, Italian and mixed families [i.e. families of both German- and Italian-speaking ancestry] will always be more inclined to gravitate towards German-speaking nursery schools, as Italian-speaking parents are constantly dissatisfied with the L2 learning options in Italian-speaking education. There is a belief:

'that placing children in the German-speaking classroom is a kind of investment for the future and nursery school is considered an ideal context for the initial immersion in the second language'.<sup>33</sup>

Additionally, surveys conducted as far back as the 1970s show that German- and Italian-speaking South Tyroleans were aware of the values of promoting bilingualism in order to '[enhance] cross-group interaction' (Kaplan 1999: 52). But Francesco Palermo, representative of the Trento- South Tyrol region for the Italian Republican Senate, goes even further by stating that Italian-speaking parents (and in some cases, German-speaking parents) place their children in the school of the L2 not necessarily in order to promote better movement between the two cultures, but because there is no satisfactory bilingual option in South Tyrolean education (2012: 71) to prepare students for civil service positions.

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<sup>32</sup> See Hell, E., 2008. Disallineamenti. *Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 16 August. Available at: <<http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?p=88>> [Accessed 5 July 2013] for more information.

<sup>33</sup> See Luca Sticcotti's article, 'A Bolzano scuole materne italiane senza alunni?' (29 January 2014). Available at: <<http://salto.bz/it/article/29012014/bolzano-scuole-materne-italiane-senza-alunni>> [Accessed 8 January 2015].

Similar to personal observations made between 2011 and 2012, these figures partially reflect the demands made by parents for better L2 proficiency in South Tyrolean schools, but they also suggest that the current L2 acquisition methods being taught in some Italian-speaking schools are not being well received by some Italian-speaking parents. As Hell goes on to state, these percentages act as 'a sign that something [in education] is not working'.<sup>34</sup>

And yet in terms of group cohesion in South Tyrolean society, some would suggest that there is a merging of the two groups who are less intent on coexisting as separate entities and more committed towards erasing social friction. This is contrary to the famous phrase made by the former South Tyrolean Provincial Assessor of German-speaking education and culture, Anton Zelger, in 1980:

"the more we are apart, the better we understand each other"...has now come to a point at which children and grandchildren are beginning to say "the better we understand each other, the less we need to be apart" and new sociological studies hint at the following trend...' (Marko 2008: 387; Peterlini 2013: 45).

In a speech in 2000 at the European Academy of Bolzano, EURAC, during their Summer Academy, researcher Stephan Böckler expressed the opinion that in South Tyrol there is:

'[a] necessity [nowadays] to also learn the language of the other group [which] provides one of the essential conditions of a reciprocal understanding and an intensification of social interaction. Indeed, recent sociological research shows that [linguistic] distance especially within the younger and middle generations is decreasing in South Tyrol giving way to a common territorial identification of both groups.'<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Hell, E., 2008. Disallineamenti. *Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 16 August. Available at: <<http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?p=88>> [Accessed 5 July 2013].

<sup>35</sup> Böckler's unpublished paper, 'What can we learn from others? The case of South Tyrol' was given at a conference on Regions and Minorities in Greater Europe in Bressanone/Brixen in 2000. For the exact quote see Joseph Marko's article, 'Is there a "Model" of conflict resolution to be exported?' in Woelk, et.

Given that Böckler's statement suggests that there is a current transition going on in South Tyrolean society from monolingualism to a more multilingual atmosphere, EURAC studies conducted in 2008 nonetheless convey a slightly different perspective. As part of the study by Forer et al., sixteen high profile citizens from the Bolzano area, ranging from media to research-based outlets, were interviewed to discuss their personal perspectives on the perceived bilingualism associated with South Tyrol. When asked if they thought that South Tyrol was part of a supposed 'bilingual reality', their results indicated that the majority of those interviewed thought that the province was in fact monolingual. Bilingual practices were found in public administration, but outside of public positions bilingualism was said to be non-existent. One interviewee even went so far as to refer to this reality as a form of 'sectoral bilingualism', where specific working environments required a certain linguistic knowledge of both languages, but outside of those conditions, bilingualism was uncommon. From one interviewee's perspective:

'if by bilingualism one needs to understand the perfect fluency of two languages and not only the passive comprehension of the L2, then bilinguals would not even represent ten percent of the South Tyrolean population' (Forer et al. 2008).

In reality, the small minority of bilingual-speakers, according to Forer et al.'s research, tend to come solely from bilingual-speaking families, rather than monolingual-speaking ones.<sup>36</sup> While this does seem rather obvious, there have been attempts by German- and Italian-speaking families to push for bilingual education, as evidenced by the figures above. But as the school system is based on the Second Autonomy statute, which

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al.'s edited volume 'Tolerance through law: self governance and group rights in South Tyrol' (2008: 387-388).

<sup>36</sup> Evidence of this was made apparent while teaching English at an Italian-speaking high school in South Tyrol from September 2011 to May 2012. Out of 20 students ranging in age from 16 to 18 years old, only two of them stated that they were indeed bilingual-speaking because their parents were from both German- and Italian-speaking backgrounds. The rest stated that they were more monolingual-speaking because both sets of parents came from Italian-speaking backgrounds.

supports monolingual education, 'South Tyrol does not represent a "reality with two languages", but rather a territory with "two realities"' (ibid.).

#### **4.1.3 Re-Germanization**

When I met with Dr Peter Höllrigl, scholastic superintendent of the German-speaking school system, in April 2012, we discussed the language learning issues evident amongst many Italian-speaking students when they are required to learn German as a second language as opposed to the German-speaking students, who have the same language requirements in elementary and secondary education but whose language skills are still more superior. From his perspective, German-speakers have historically had less difficulty learning the Italian language as they tend to speak more often with Italian-speaking residents, resulting in their knowledge of the L2 (Forer et al. 2008). Since South Tyrolean German-speakers have '[t]raditionally [drawn] considerable self-esteem out of the fact that they [can master Italian]' (Votmer 2007: 218) better than Italian-speaking citizens can master German, in some cases it is expected that the minority of a region (in this case, the German- and Ladin-speakers) will usually be more bilingual than the majority-speaking community (i.e. the Italian-speakers) (Purser 2000: 456; see Ellis 1994: 128). According to Giudiceandrea, the linguistic majority will always have more difficulty learning the minority language as opposed to the minority group who will normally have less difficulty learning the national language. 'To give an example: even in Bilbao it would be more difficult for a Spaniard to learn Basque than for a Basque to learn Spanish' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 30). As Italian citizens, South Tyrolean German-speakers, as well as Ladin-speakers, have had to develop an acceptable understanding, both passively and actively, of the Italian language in order to survive in their society. Conversely, Italian-speakers over the past thirty years have developed an unsatisfactory working knowledge of the L2, even after all their years of

German study (Giudiceandrea 2007: 23-24). Subsequently, this insufficient knowledge of the German language has prevented Italian-speaking South Tyroleans from obtaining higher level positions in banks and businesses, since bilingualism is required for economic posts (Giovanetti 1998: 894).

Recently, however, these results have shifted as Italian-speakers have started to develop an interest in improving their German fluency, an absolute contrast to the German-speaking community who have shown a decline in Italian proficiency (Forer et al. 2008). With Italian-speakers starting to understand the economic advantages of having a fluent basis of the L2, it is understood that whoever knows German (and is bilingual) will find it easier to acquire certain jobs, both in the public and private sectors (Peterlini 2013: 120). As Voltmer explains, 'publically certified bilinguals', aside from getting paid a bilingualism allowance, which amounts to approximately 200 Euros per month, are very much appreciated in the private sector (2007: 215; Abel 2007: 238). Additionally, multilingual families in South Tyrol 'earn more than monolingual ones'. They also tend to be better qualified for well-paid job positions due to their fluency in German and Italian (Alber 2011: 12).

Having said that, from the German-speaking standpoint, there has been a form of renegotiation where some German-speakers rely solely on the German language at the expense of using their Italian. This concept of 're-Germanization' is based on the belief that German-speakers can rely on themselves without having to communicate with Italian-speakers, especially within rural German-speaking communities (Forer et al. 2008). Compared to Böckler's statements that amongst the younger generations there is a 'common territorial identification of both groups' (Marko 2008: 388), this internal tendency to rely on the L1 would suggest that not all language groups acquiesce in the idea of developing a communal, linguistic group identity.

Ellis explains that when a group's 'ethnolinguistic vitality is high', a minority group may display difficulties in speaking the majority group language, as with the case of some German-speakers in South Tyrol. This occurs largely when a community identifies so strongly with their own minority in-group that they develop 'hard and closed' boundaries towards the dominant out-group in order to protect their own identity. Consequently students and locals of the minority in-group achieve low levels of L2 proficiency in order not to detract from their own identity and absorb aspects of the other culture (1994: 34-35; 235).

As Magliana states, while 44 percent of Italians want 'something [to] be done to ameliorate relations between the two groups', only 13.5 percent of German-speakers have expressed a desire to encourage better group relations (2000: 80-81).

As a result, this linguistic self-reliance only reinforces the attachment to the L1, which is partially encouraged by the education system, which has taught communities to stay divided, preventing daily use of the L2 (Forer et al. 2008). While there are those within the school system who are trying to promote an adequate approach to L2 learning, Forer et al. believe that the South Tyrolean school system should work towards creating an environment for Germans and Italians to communicate together in order to bridge the gaps that currently exist amongst language communities in South Tyrol. As Forer et al. state:

'if the school offers contacts only internally to their own linguistic group excluding systematically the relationships with the other group, the development of a context of the use of language also becomes difficult outside of the scholastic environment. Instead of favouring the creation of a space [in order to create] contacts and exchanges, it creates parallel worlds where "one lives next to another without...knowing anything about the reality of the other, not even their name"' (2008).

Therefore the next four main sections (from the Italian-speaking to the Ladin-speaking school systems) function as a further analysis to understand the three-part education system and how the separate schooling system tries to manufacture students for linguistic group cohesion in the region. The objective is to see how school structure impacts language learning as well as preparing students for the FUB, while also seeing how the school systems may differ from each other in terms of second language acquisition.

#### 4.2 The Italian-speaking school system

*'there is a growing desire of innovation in the teaching of the second language, in particular on the part of the Italian-speaking group...the projects of teaching by means of immersion or semi-immersion models struggle to defend themselves, both for practical difficulties in their realization...and for a certain distrust on the part of South Tyrolean politicians, still too worried about the protection of single languages rather than on the promotion of intercultural communication'* (Ciccolone 2010: 130).

The education system in South Tyrol is based on the Italian state model (Abel 2007: 236). But unlike most Italian schools, the learning of the second language is mandatory, starting from the earlier years of elementary education as opposed to other provinces in Italy (Telmon 1992: 78). In 2000, South Tyrol gained school autonomy, permitting local government to make changes to the state curriculum by up to 15 percent in order to promote local school interests. One of the recent changes was to introduce English as a foreign language (or L3) in elementary schools (Abel 2007: 237), since English has become the language of market exchange both within and outside Europe's global economy.

For those attending courses in the South Tyrol school system, education is divided into three parts: elementary education (ages 5-10 years) for the first five years of schooling,

followed by three years of middle school instruction (11-13 years), and ending with five years of high school, or upper secondary school (14-18 years), before students can apply for university (Abel 2007: 236). Preschool and kindergarten are also available from one to three years depending on preference (ibid.), but all school programmes are divided based on mother tongue instruction, which determines where most children go to school.<sup>37</sup> Even in tourism programmes, which require students to be fluent in both German and Italian, tourism institutes are still divided into 'German' programmes and 'Italian' programmes, even though both programmes are designed to prepare students for the same professions (Peterlini 2013: 125).

At any rate, the schools in South Tyrol are required to prepare all of their students for an education in their mother tongue followed by the learning of the second language to fulfil provincial schooling regulations. However, there are some criticisms of the Italian-speaking education system and whether it prepares its students to become 'citizens with an adequate cultural and linguistic foundation' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 25) despite recent trends towards immersion teaching. Giudiceandrea states that on average Italian-speaking students receive over the course of their schooling 2,200 hours of German language instruction but are unable to speak the L2 like their German-speaking counterparts, whose knowledge of the second language is greater. Even compared to other students in regions of Italy where they receive less second language instruction,

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<sup>37</sup> Only recently has an exception been made to the monolingual requirements in German- and Italian-speaking education. In early 2014, a bilingual elementary school for German- and Italian-speaking students was established in Firmian, South Tyrol in honour of the late Alexander Langer, a South Tyrolean German-speaking Green party member and politician who was a supporter of bilingual education.

For more information see Antonella Mattioli's article, 'Bolzano: alla scuola "Alexander Langer" italiani e tedeschi assieme' (2014) at: <<http://altoadige.gelocal.it/bolzano/cronaca/2014/09/09/news/alla-langer-italiani-e-tedeschi-assieme-1.9903885>> [Accessed 16 January 2015] or the Provincial autonomy's article, 'Iniziate le lezioni anche nella nuova scuola Langer nel quartiere Firmian' at: <[http://www.provinz.bz.it/news/it/news.asp?news\\_action=4&news\\_article\\_id=469999](http://www.provinz.bz.it/news/it/news.asp?news_action=4&news_article_id=469999)> [Accessed 16 January 2015].

Italian-speakers from those regions achieve higher marks in the L2, although they may live in monolingual districts (Giudiceandrea 2007: 29-30).

While Giudiceandrea's accounts imply that the Italian-speaking school system should consider revising how it approaches language learning in education, Lanthaler claims that both school systems [i.e. German and Italian] still have issues regarding second language acquisition:

'...despite the large number of second language classes [in South Tyrol]- approximately 2,000 hours from primary school to the end of upper secondary education- the results are not satisfactory either in Italian or in German schools' (2007: 240).

Consequently some Italian-speaking schools, since the 1990s, have started to promote 'immersion teaching' by using the L2 to teach certain subjects, such as geography and maths (Giudiceandrea 2007: 25). Pilot projects have been used to introduce the second language (Abel 2007: 239), such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which allows some courses to be taught through the second language so that language use can have more application. While doing fieldwork there were discussions about the possibility of introducing the CLIL method at the school where I taught the English language, but the majority of teachers did not use immersion methods but relied on grammar books and English textbooks. However, since I had a class that was advanced in English language I was told that I could use 'a CLIL-type method' and opted to teach my students anthropology instead with English as the language of instruction. After I completed fieldwork a couple of my colleagues implemented CLIL-type teaching in their classrooms. They were part of a growing minority that wanted to move beyond traditional teaching methods.

In any case, over the past 20 years there has been an increase in L2 learning opportunities to provide more learning strategies for students who would like to develop their German language skills. In 2000, Legislative Degree No. 12 granted didactic and financial autonomy to Italian-speaking schools by allowing them to use additional methods to improve German instruction. In 2003/2004 several Italian elementary schools, middle schools and one high school were given limited permission to teach subjects in both German and Italian through the use of the CLIL method. Over time this initiative was later expanded to the 2004/2005 school year. Today, those schools that choose to practice the CLIL method can only partially teach different subjects in the L2 in order to fulfil the requirements mandated by the Second Autonomy statute, which does not endorse bilingual education (Alber 2011: 11; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 237, 248).

As for the German-speaking schools, which I examine more fully below, in the past they have been more reluctant to accept the CLIL method in their schools as a possible resource for language learning (Alber 2011: 11). Nevertheless on 8 July 2013, the South Tyrolean Provincial Council drafted a proposal permitting German-speaking schools to use the CLIL method in their schooling system starting from the 2013/2014 school year. In the proposal it stated that the use of the L2 and/or L3 could be used to teach up to two 'non-language disciplines' with the understanding that these courses would not affect the L1 and would meet the EU language learning standards.<sup>38</sup>

But based on my interviews there was only one informant who worked at a German-speaking school who could say with full assurance that she used the CLIL method by teaching history through the English language. The rest of my informants, who either

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<sup>38</sup> See the Provincial Autonomy of Bolzano's *Deliberazione della Giunta Provinciale* 8 July 2013 No. 1034 for further information.

worked in German schools and/or had children in the German-speaking system, were not aware of the CLIL method or immersion language teaching, much to the dismay of those I interviewed. According to Alber:

'In the opinion of school authorities, CLIL is just one possible means to increase the second language knowledge, but not necessarily the best one... [Instead] German school authorities [in theory] actively and successfully support other measures facilitating second language learning (school partnerships, projects among twin schools, summer camps, etc.) [as an alternative to CLIL-based education]' (2011: 11).

Subsequently in both school systems, there is no 'one decision' as to whether certain schools should use immersion teaching, but compared to German-speaking schools, Italian-speaking education seems more inclined to try immersion methods. But based on day-to-day experience of working in an Italian school as well as working alongside several language teachers, I found that many Italian-speaking schools use non-immersion methods in order to teach the L2 to their students. As we will see in the next section, language learning is acquired through traditional foreign language classes.

#### **4.2.1 Language learning from kindergarten to high school**

Before the 1980s, the Italian-speaking schools were required to teach German from year two, but soon afterward they were told that they could teach the German language as soon as students started year one (Abel 2007: 237). Unlike the German-speaking schools, which tried to postpone the L2, the Italian-speaking schools promoted German, much to the concern of the German SVP, which feared immersion teaching would cause problems. By the 1980s, the SVP were making little social effort to encourage linguistic integration. They also took a stand against the Italian proposal, which would allow several hours of German instruction in Italian kindergartens. Additionally, they opposed permitting the enrolment of Italian-speaking children into the German-speaking

schooling system (Magliana 2000: 86). From their perspective, it was felt that Italian-speaking students would 'infiltrate' the German-speaking schools if they were introduced to the L2 starting from when they entered nursery school. Acting as 'little Trojan horses', the SVP was concerned that immersion teaching would erase the barriers between the Germans and Italians in their own separate school systems, resulting in a threat to the minority (Peterlini 2013: 119; Abel 2007: 237).

Eventually a compromise was reached with the provincial government allowing German to be taught as an L2 as well as function as a language for some subjects to be taught within Italian-speaking education. In 1997 the provincial assessor, Bruno Hosp, proposed that German be used in Italian schools for up to one-third of the week provided that the German schools would not have to reciprocate. In his opinion immersion teaching 'constituted an "erosion for the protection of minority schools [on the basis of] international and constitutional right"' (Peterlini 2013: 127), which may explain why German schooling has maintained a certain distance regarding second language acquisition.

Regardless, despite the supposed prospects of introducing limited immersion teaching in Italian-speaking education, the Italian-speaking schools at present have the option of introducing the L2 starting in kindergarten, where children are given a basic understanding of the second language before they enter elementary school (Abel 2007: 240). By the first and second years of elementary education, German is being taught six hours per week, alongside the English language, which is taught as an L3 for one and half hours per week. Once students reach year three, English is increased to two and

half hours per week while German is reduced to five and a half hours per week until students reach year six.<sup>39</sup>

Once students reach middle school, German is taught four to five hours per week, depending on the school that is in question, while English is taught two and a half hours per week as a continuation from year five. In high school these class hours are predominately the same with English taught two hours per week and German taught approximately four hours per week.<sup>40</sup> As a result, even with the slow promotion of the CLIL method working its way into the Italian-speaking education system, teaching a foreign language through a set period of hours per week is the basic format that most Italian-speaking schools tend to follow.

#### 4.3 The German-speaking school system

In German-speaking education, one aspect that must be noted is the schools' adherence to preserving the mother tongue. As Abel explains:

"The topic "German mother-tongue" is omnipresent in South Tyrol, a subject for scientific studies and everyday discussions alike. The fascist prohibition of using the German language seems to be imprinted in the collective memory of the German language group. Although it is nowadays diminishing, the fear of "contamination" of the German standard language through Italian is compounded by the threat of an insufficient command of the German standard due to the widespread use of various Tyrolean dialects. Regarding language contact, the fear of a kind of mish-mash society, "half spaghetti-half knödel" is very much present. Hence the importance attributed by German-speakers to mother-tongue instruction [today]' (2007: 239; Alcock 2001: 17).

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<sup>39</sup> For more information see p. 27 of *Indicazioni provinciali per la definizione dei curricoli relativi alla scuola primaria e alla scuola primaria e alla scuola secondaria di primo grado negli istituti di lingue italiana della provincia di Bolzano*, 2009. (Nr. 1928)

<sup>40</sup> See p. 29 of *Indicazioni provinciali per la definizione dei curricoli relativi alla scuola primaria e alla scuola primaria e alla scuola secondaria di primo grado negli istituti di lingue italiana della provincia di Bolzano*, 2009. (Nr. 1928) for more information.

Therefore it should be no surprise that the German-speaking schools reserve the right to L1 education so that they may safeguard their culture for new generations in order to protect their own identity.

One way to achieve solidarity through language learning is to propose fluency in the L1. Another way would be to discourage immersion teaching in case it might 'affect' the mother tongue. In 2004 the Pedagogical Institute for the German-speaking community and the German school board published an item called the *Sprachenkonzept*, or 'language concept'. In this document the school board emphasises the importance of learning the L1 before the L2 in that students need to have a 'necessary base' in the first language before they can transition to another (Abel 2007: 239). With regards to language learning, Alber mentions '[r]eservations against immersion teaching' in German-speaking education in that there is a belief that the:

'promotion of the first (and minority) language is a fundamental precondition for learning any other language and vital to the development of the German-speaking minority within the Italian State' (2011: 11).

When I met with Dr Günther Andergassen, the German-speaking Director of Distribution at his office located at the Diritto allo Studio, Università e Ricerca Scientifica in Bolzano, and Dr Peter Höllrigl, they were both of the same opinion that the German-speaking schools should reinforce fluent comprehension of the German mother tongue before another language is introduced. For some policy makers there is a need to overcome 'the threat to [mixing] up languages and assimilation' (Alber 2011: 11) and the only way to do that is to slowly introduce the second language after students are fully versed in the L1.

Even as bi- or multilingualism is becoming more commonly valued by the German-speaking community, there is a certain amount of scepticism towards encouraging

immersion teaching, which some policy makers try to uphold, 'as second language education is not of central interest to the German language group's political representatives in their linguistic and school-oriented efforts' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 237).

And yet despite these efforts, research conducted by Melissa Zambelli and Alessandro Vietti suggests that, regardless of the attempts made by school authorities to promote a 'pure' German-speaking environment, German-speaking South Tyroleans are constantly interfacing with some form of the Italian language, albeit sometimes in the most peculiar of places, especially when speaking local dialect.

In an undergraduate study conducted in 2003/2004 at the Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, Zambelli went back to her native town of Bolzano to look at lexical interference to see how the Italian language has worked its way into local South Tyrolean dialect. In an interview with German-speaking friends, she asked them to create a list of as many Italian words as possible. After some negotiation the first words that came to mind were a list of Italian swear words, notably because German-speaking South Tyroleans have a tendency to swear in standard Italian. While most German-speaking dialects tend to adopt bits of English into regular forms of informal discourse, in the province of South Tyrol the Germans adopt bits of Italian, but this adaptation is never done in reverse (Zambelli 2003/2004: 9-11).

When I interviewed Melissa, who grew up in the German-speaking school system, she attested to this use of Italian swear words, especially while working in the German-speaking districts where most German-speakers do not speak Italian.

While conducting research on two university students at the Free University of Bolzano (FUB), Vietti recorded a discussion amongst German-speaking locals as they waited

outside their class for their next lesson. Speaking in German dialect, the students used Italian predominately when they swore. In his recording the swear word 'cazzo', the Italian word for 'fuck' (or 'dick', depending on its usage), was used intermittingly throughout the small transcription (Vietti 2009: 236) supporting Lanthaler's claims that:

'...the numerous borrowings from Italian in the oral South Tyrolean German variety spoken in the cities [i.e. Bolzano, Merano, Bressanone, etc.]...[have given the] overall impression [presumably by linguists and surveyors]...that South [Tyrolean] German [is] entirely Italianised' (2007: 228).

Even Ciccolone refers to Italian interference as it has worked its way into the German-speaking vernacular. Works like *der Karabiniere* (or 'carabiniere'), *Aranciata* (or 'orange' in Italian), *Sugo* (Italian for 'juice') and *Peperoni* ('pepperoni') have surfaced in the South Tyrolean colloquial language, as well as in German written texts (2010: 57, 60).

Subsequently there are those who have felt that the German language has become 'contaminated' by Italian vocabulary (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 84). As a result, there were attempts by the South Tyrolean German-speaking newspaper, the *Dolomiten*, to hunt down any sign of Italian interference as referred to in the local German dialect. In many respects, Lanthaler insists that the *Dolomiten's* campaign was successful almost to a fault:

'...many interferences disappeared both from official and private language contexts. Yet the fight for purification took its toll also on the South Tyrolean German variety itself, involving not only the language as a system, but also a long lasting attitude towards multilingualism... Language contact came to be viewed as a major source of danger. On the one hand, the importance of second language competences was constantly emphasised, on the other, relations with co-citizens of the Italian linguistic group were viewed as dangerous for the South Tyrolean linguistic and [cultural] identity...' (2007: 228).

That said, over time these negative sentiments started to wane when in 2004 a less rigid interpretation of the Second Autonomy statute was endorsed in South Tyrolean education. Soon afterwards, the Italian Constitutional Court enforced a ruling stating that the L2 should be taught starting in year one for all South Tyrolean schools, the result of which was supported by many German-speaking families who wanted early language exposure for their children, a belief which many Italian-speaking families have traditionally supported, as evidenced earlier on in this chapter (Lanthaler 2007: 228-229).

All the same, in terms of second language acquisition teaching, not everyone agrees that immersion teaching methods, or more specifically the use of the CLIL method, is the best solution for L2 learning. Dr Drumbl, professor of the German language at the FUB, believes that the CLIL method has the potential to 'weed out' those students who are not particularly efficient at learning other languages. In his opinion, immersion teaching techniques require students' linguistic expectations to become much higher in a short time, providing more stress for students who are not linguistically inclined to progress in the L2 and resulting in their failing regular course material because it is not taught in the L1. From his perspective, the CLIL method favours students who are already linguistically well versed in the L2, leaving behind the less effective students by up to 25 percent and defeating the whole purpose of immersion language teaching in order to promote the L2.

With regards to immersion teaching in higher education, researcher Marianna Visser of Stellenbosch University in South Africa states that there are some debates within the bilingual university as to whether there should be separate monolingual parallel classes for English- and Afrikaans-speaking students or bilingual-speaking courses for both. For those in support of teaching parallel classes in Afrikaans for mother tongue

speakers, there is a belief '[i]n the choice of separate monolingual classes in Afrikaans and English [which] respectively relates to the view that students learn best in their dominant academic language...' (2009: 151). Researcher Zuzanna Éva Kiss goes even further by explaining that some mother tongue Hungarian-speakers in Romania believe that for the sake of higher education at university, it is almost impossible to acquire knowledge and to think abstractly if it is not done in the mother tongue (2009: 137).

In terms of Drumbl's previous concerns over multilingual learning, in a Ladin survey conducted in 1998, 94 percent of Ladin-speaking teachers in Val Badia and Val Gardena felt that plurilingualism<sup>41</sup> in families could help with language learning, but only 57 percent believed that multilingual education favoured students who were less linguistically inclined (Verra 2005: 127).

Consequently, Luis Durnwalder, during his former South Tyrolean presidency, stated that immersion teaching through the use of CLIL-type methods '[would] not be institutionalized' (Alber 2011: 12). Unfortunately for him, as noted above, CLIL was permitted in German-speaking education anyway starting in 2013 as an optional addition to traditional foreign language classes for those schools which felt so inclined.<sup>42</sup> Other methods in L2 acquisition are also being encouraged (albeit slowly but surely) into the German-speaking education system. During an interview in Merano in 2012 with German-speakers Adelheid and Karl, both acknowledged that despite the lack of immersion teaching methods now offered in some German-speaking schools, there was a time during their high school education where one history class was taught in Italian. Although the class was considered at the time to be no more than an experiment,

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<sup>41</sup> In order to distinguish between the terms 'plurilingualism' and 'multilingualism', Abel et al. state that 'the COE [Council of Europe]...distinguishes "between plurilingualism as a speaker's competence (being able to use more than one language) and multilingualism as the presence of languages in a given geographical area"' (2010: 279).

<sup>42</sup> See the Provincial Autonomy of Bolzano's Deliberazione della Giunta Provinciale 8 July 2013 No. 1034 for further information.

it was a step towards immersion education, even though they both accepted that their knowledge of Italian was still limited during their high school years.

Even so, given the quasi-opposition towards immersion teaching by some German-speaking officials, German-speaking schools are still providing ways to promote language learning through more conventional modes of second language acquisition. Pedagogical forms of teaching via the communicative approach, as well as focusing on the 'centrality of the pupil, autonomous learning and learning by discovery' (Abel 2007: 241) are methods in which the school system can focus on language learning without having to rely on the CLIL method.

Nevertheless, despite these attempts at language learning techniques, there are other linguistic factors in German-speaking education that still need to be taken into consideration. When sitting down with a colleague, Donna, at a café in Merano in April 2012 we discussed some concerns that she had as an Italian-speaking teacher working at a German-speaking high school. One of the main concerns regarding second language learning is that the German-speaking students speak dialect, unlike in German-speaking education, where they are required to have a fluent understanding of High German. As a result, the dialect acts as the students' mother tongue and High German becomes the second language, which makes language learning more complicated when the students are required to learn Italian as essentially an L3. While the dialect issue is a matter that will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 6, what should be recognized at this point is that language learning issues in South Tyrolean education go well beyond the scope of traditional second language learning. As the students who attend Donna's high school come from German-speaking villages located in the mountains and valleys, German-speaking students attend German-speaking schools in the cities with a fluent knowledge of their local dialect but quickly have to adjust to a High German-speaking environment

in order to conform to German schooling policy. The reality is one in which the German-speaking students are 'bilingual' in that they speak German dialect and to a certain degree, High German, but are monolingual in the sense that they speak a German variety but are unable to fully converse in Italian.<sup>43</sup>

#### **4.3.1 Language instruction in German-speaking education**

Therefore this next section acts as a brief description of how language is introduced in German-speaking education through a set number of hours, not unlike the Italian-speaking education system. The objective is to see how language education is taught as a foreign language subject and how it may compare to Italian-speaking education in terms of how the language is acquired.

##### **4.3.1.1 Elementary school through high school**

When I met with Dr Andergassen in his office in Bolzano, we discussed why the German-speaking education system opted to introduce Italian as a second language starting in year one of education. In the interview he stated that there was much resistance from German-speaking politicians who wanted to postpone introducing the L2 in order to preserve the local language. But despite controversial representations from the German-speaking party to delay second language acquisition, in 2004 the German-speaking school system was required to introduce Italian starting in year one of education implementing the L2 a year earlier than the German-speaking schools had desired (Peterlini 2013: 267; Abel 2007: 237). But even with the earlier introduction of the second language, Peterlini states that not enough hours of the L2 are taught per

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<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that this is not the case for every single German-speaking student in South Tyrol, but with regards to Donna's experiences teaching Italian to German-speaking students in Merano, most of them come to her high school after many years of Italian language learning and do not have a basic understanding of the L2, much to her disappointment.

week to provide the German students with enough L2 exposure to immerse themselves in the Italian language (2013: 267).

Subsequently in German schools starting from year one, Italian is taught for one hour per week. In the second and third year Italian language learning is increased to four hours per week in education, while in year four Italian is moved to five hours per week until the students reach year six of the school system. Unlike the Italian-speaking schools, where English is introduced starting in year one of education, English is taught in German schools starting in year four as of the 2007/2008 school year and in years four and five is taught two hours per week in order to fulfil school regulations (Abel 2007: 237; Decreto 2006: 6).<sup>44</sup>

In all three years of middle school, English is taught as an L3 for approximately two hours per week while Italian, the L2, is taught for four hours per week as part of the school curriculum (Decreto 2006: 6).<sup>45</sup> Once the students reach high school, depending on the individual German-speaking school, Italian is taught four to six hours per week while English is taught for only two hours per week in accordance with provincial legislation.

#### 4.4 Dividing walls and separate entrances in South Tyrolean schools

Based on these brief course descriptions of the first two schooling systems it is evident that second language learning is acquired through specific regulation of the hours in which students are exposed to other languages. Regardless whether students live in

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<sup>44</sup> For more information see *Rahmenrichtlinien des Landes für die Festlegung der Curricula für die Grundschule und die Mittelschule an den autonomen deutschsprachigen Schulen in Südtirol* (Nr. 81) (2009: 7).

<sup>45</sup> See *Rahmenrichtlinien des Landes für die Festlegung der Curricula für die Grundschule und die Mittelschule an den autonomen deutschsprachigen Schulen in Südtirol* (Nr. 81) (2009: 10).

neighbourhoods which speak another language than their own, a certain time is set aside for foreign language instruction, which in most cases commences in year one.

But despite the many hours of second language acquisition, Lanthaler states 'the results are not sufficient' (2007: 240) for either Germans or Italians in their own separate school systems to certify them as proficient speakers. Even as the German-speaking students are reputed to perform much better in the L2 than the Italians, based on my own observations, even with fewer English classes, both groups would rather speak in the L3.

One reason for this development might be due to separate schooling, but it also might be due to group division as evidenced not only in divided social networks, but in the lay-out of some education buildings. While doing fieldwork I was told that there were different types of schools in that some buildings housed both Germans and Italians, but that these buildings were divided into German- and Italian-speaking sections so that the students did not mingle with each other. Unlike the school where I taught English, which was specifically designed as a separate building for Italian students, some education institutes were required to contain both German- and Italian-speaking students, with the added complication that the groups must stay divided to fulfil the obligation of the statutes.

One way to maintain group division was to have both sets of students enter through separate entrances at school; one entrance would be reserved specifically for German-speaking students while another would be used by the Italians. According to one Italian-speaking high school teacher, this separate door design was intentionally created to prevent the students from conversing with each other despite some administrators and school officials insisting its design was for coordination and administrative purposes.

Although not all South Tyrolean schools with a 'mixed'<sup>46</sup> cohort of students required both group sets to enter through separate doors, the separate door concept was used enough while I was doing fieldwork that some locals were concerned that it would inhibit second language acquisition.

Another structural component to these 'mixed' institutions was the historical establishment of walls to divide the German students from Italian-speaking students whether in the building or in the playground. While the concept of these walls is no longer in existence, the border divisions still remain the same, with certain sections of the playground reserved for German-speakers only, while other sections are allocated to Italians. Even break times or *pause* are sometimes said to be divided, with separate break times reserved for certain language groups. Lunch times can also be divided so that students may not see each other until sometime after school.

This concept of a boundary wall brings to mind images of the suburb of Cutteslowe, just outside Oxford, England, where in the 1930s the local Urban Housing Company (UHC) decided to erect a wall to create social divisions between the more elite establishment of the Urban Housing Estate and the 'slum families' of Cutteslowe's Estate, much to the detriment of those who were labelled as such, one of whom is now my current Oxford neighbour (Kennedy 1995: 86).

As for the case of South Tyrol, Peterlini goes on to state how his bilingual community in Bassa Atesina in the 1980s was divided despite locals from both groups co-mingling in public and in private. The school buildings and the libraries along with various associations were separated into linguistic divisions 'as if to protect students and citizens

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<sup>46</sup> I use the term 'mixed' in quotes since South Tyrolean students in these types of schools are grouped together in the same building but are segregated into their own separate schooling enclaves once they enter the school's front doors.

from a dangerous ethnic disease', manifested in the form of the L2. Even Bassa Atesina's centre for communal associations, referred to as the Haus Unterland, specifically forbade Italian-speakers from entering its premises, inadvertently promoting linguistic separation (2013: 126).

In Bolzano, Peterlini adds that schools are still divided but that the borders are no longer in existence (2013: 272), but I suppose that this depends on what is meant by social borders as not all demarcations are visible.

In April 2007 a wall was constructed at a newly built kindergarten in Bressanone in order to divide the German sections of the school from the Italian-speaking education sections. While the canteens were united as well as the playground, a glass door was placed between both schooling sections as a dividing marker for the German- and Italian-speakers, which could also function as a 'possible way for meetings between the sections' (Marko 2008: 386-387). Unfortunately not all parents were pleased to discover that dividing walls had been placed in their school, but this did not stop the Vice Mayor Dario Stablum from issuing this statement in the Italian newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*:

'Personally, I would see it as very positive if the school channels were not separated, but we have to be careful with delicate balances. Here all schools are separated like this. The formula for the new kindergarten reproduces South Tyrolean reality. But the door can be left open: nobody will be admonished for it' (ibid.).

His response provides an insight into how the school authorities respond to social tensions in the region despite some parents wanting to reform the educational structure into one that does not have dividing walls.

Nevertheless there are those parents who grew up in the school system and/or have children in the education sector who have certain views towards the use of demarcation markers which several feel segregate some students from each other.

### **Interview 2: Clarissa**

For Clarissa, from New York, she had a few difficulties accepting language tensions in the region, especially when it came to choosing a school in which to place her daughter and her son. While working as a translator she came across a website for a German- and Italian-speaking school, which said it was bilingual and located 30 minutes from her home in Merano. Whilst reading through the informational commentary provided by the parents at the school, the comments read, 'You wouldn't believe it! The students can enter through the same door!' to refer to the school's progressive nature.

In the end, however, Clarissa and her husband Ludovico decided to place their daughter Vittoria in a 'mixed'<sup>47</sup> school for Germans and Italians, where students from both backgrounds were separated into their own L1 classes. But this feeling of segregation permeated through the school despite its reputation in the city, especially after her daughter's first day of kindergarten, when Clarissa saw how students played on the playground.

'Vittoria's school has six to seven sections of German-speaking areas and one section that is Italian-speaking. The school has at the back of its building two playground areas that are around the corner from each other. When Vittoria started school she was terrified, of course. Her friend, Markus, was in the German class, which was good because it helped Vittoria know that someone else she knew was nearby. On the

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<sup>47</sup> See previous footnote.

first day of school Markus saw her on the playground and he ran to her but as soon as he reached the boundary of the two playgrounds it was like he hit an electric fence and he called for her. He knew he wasn't supposed to cross over into the Italian playground. Vittoria said that she wanted to play on the German-speaking playground and I had to say to her, "No, you can't play there. That's where the kids who speak Nonna's [her grandmother's] language play and the kids who speak daddy's language play here". And when I said those words all I could think was "Why are these words coming out of my mouth??"

There were other observations that she made on the playground regarding cultural distinctions between groups in that the German- and Italian-speaking teachers were responsible for students from their own language ensemble. Even if the German-speaking students were causing lots of noise in the playground, Italian-speaking teachers knew that it was not their responsibility to scold them.

When talking to her friend Pietro about the schooling system, Clarissa learned that thirty years ago his school recruited hall monitors who were placed between both language schooling sections. The monitor would blow a whistle if students crossed over into the hall-ways of the other language group so that the students remained within their own language learning section in order to encourage segregation. Even in his town he said that there was an 'Italian block' where no German-speakers would buy a house and that although the children within the town wanted to integrate, society made sure the groups were separate.

According to Ludovico, regardless of school attempts by authorities to keep the language groups divided, 'it's a missed chance that the schools could be bilingual but instead it has to be either or...'

### **Interview 3: Federica**

For Federica her experiences with the South Tyrol school system were similar to Clarissa's own perspectives in that she noticed group divisions when some twenty years ago she placed her son in a 'mixed' school environment. But her observations extended beyond the education system when she moved to Bolzano from Milan for the first time two decades ago and recalled how she was treated in the German-speaking districts because she was Italian mother tongue. She remembered when she entered a German-speaking shop and tried to order something in Italian, that the shopkeepers feigned ignorance and refused to use the language, even though she knew that they could speak Italian. Today, however, German-speaking districts in Bolzano are guaranteed to be versed in Italian, but when it comes to the school system division still remains, despite some measures towards more group cohesion.

As for her son, when he was little she opted to place him in a kindergarten next to her apartment complex where the first floor of the school was reserved for German-speaking students and the second floor was set aside for the Italians. The school also had a garden located on the grounds where students could play during recess hours, but the break times were divided so that students from the two groups did not come into contact during school hours. In her words she stated that 'there was a deep separation between the two groups' and that both families and school authorities reinforced this segregation, so much so that when she placed her son in an elementary school designed to house both Germans and Italians, separate break times

were allotted for each language group, and during lunch the two language groups ate at different times.

Eventually, when her son's school decided to restructure the interior of the school's cafeteria, during renovations some teachers decided they did not want the Italian-speaking students to eat alongside the German-speaking students due to limited spacing, so the Italian-speaking students were required to have lunch at another school located down the road.

In her opinion the current school system did not encourage group assimilation, even if some parents tried to place their children in a school that spoke the L2. Based on her own experience, her son spent his elementary years in the Italian-speaking education system, but because his school had German-speakers in the German-speaking section she had hoped there would be mixed group activities. But only once in five years did the German- and Italian-speaking students participate in a joint group event. The rest of the time students from both camps were segregated into their own group sections in order to encourage the use of the mother tongue at the expense of practicing the L2.

#### **Interview 4: Maurizio**

When I met with Maurizio in January 2012 at a friend's apartment after his English lesson, he told me of his life growing up in Bolzano and his thoughts about the education system. As a Bolzanino (i.e. a person who is from Bolzano), as well as a local pharmacist, there were dynamic relations between Germans and Italians that existed outside the education setting. In his profession there were German-speaking doctors who would only consult

each other for medical advice and similarly only ate lunch with other German-speakers, akin to what was seen in local schools.

With regards to education he insisted that politicians wanted to keep the language groups divided, implying that this was why the schools were always separated so that children did not converse with each other. He was also of the view that local Germans were afraid of disappearing into the abyss, with many Italian-speakers working their way into the province, resulting in a much smaller German-speaking minority.

In a way he felt the segregation was a small reflection of South Africa's apartheid movement, a reference which I felt was an exaggeration but which was expressed by several people in the province. From his perspective there were many things that could be accomplished if the groups were encouraged to work together, especially with border integration within Europe as a consequence of Schengen<sup>48</sup> based initiatives. But he explained that in South Tyrol the people are 'not with the times' as some German-speakers want to maintain distance and that there is a fear that if they learn the L2 'too well' their language, culture and identity will die out. As Silvius Magnago (born 1912), the former SVP's chairman and supposed father of present-day South Tyrol, proclaimed:

'It is useless to continue speaking German if we acquire [the Italian] ways and mentalities... [The German-speaking] minority must never lose its fear of disappearing. Once it does, it will disappear' (Fait 2007: 97).

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<sup>48</sup> 'Schengen' refers to the 'Schengen Agreement' or 'Schengen Area', which permits the 'free movement of persons' across borders zones within the EU (with some exceptions). It allows EU citizens to 'travel, work and live in any EU country without special formalities'. For more information see: European Commission Home Affairs at <<http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/>> [Accessed 22 March 2015].

### **Interview 5: Elspet**

This fear of 'mixing' with the other was a comment that I heard throughout the course of my fieldwork experience. In meeting with Elspet, a researcher, in her office in Bressanone, she told me of her research in the region, especially concerning her work with the German-speaking Schützen, a former German-speaking military unit. Although they no longer function as a part of the army, they represent a form of local extremism in that they do not like to socialize with Italian-speakers and want to keep the German language pure. Their outfits, which consist of lederhosen for the men and dirndls for the women, are identifying markers that distinguish them from the Italians, who would not normally dress in South Tyrolean costumes.

In an interview she told me how she interviewed the women and asked them what they thought of the Italians and if it would make sense to mix with the Italian-speakers, since many of them lived within the region. One woman clad in dirndl said that 'mixing is like an Indian sari. You should never mix the colours lest they become grey. You should let the colours stand alone so that they can be beautiful', suggesting her distaste towards Italians.

At the FUB, where Elspet worked with German-speaking students, they were required to take courses in Italian. At times they would come to her in tears because they found speaking publicly in Italian to be a challenge. Despite their years of learning the L2 she felt there was a 'block' that hindered students from speaking the language, implying that the division markers that were placed in schools may have contributed towards this language problem.

When she was younger these division markers were actually fences and were placed systematically in schools and in her view were 'politically wanted' so that students from both groups would not converse with each other. The fences also functioned as a symbol of fear, preventing students from trans-lingual interactions. This caused added problems for those families who were of bilingual heritage who linguistically could 'fit' on either side.

Consequently there were children who had studied the L2 for twelve years for some six hours per week who could not speak the L2 even if required to do so in order to take courses at the FUB. According to Elspet, this was a fault of the school system, a topic which I will return to later on.

#### **Interview 6: Axel**

Axel was one of the few people whom I knew in South Tyrol who thought the social boundaries within the school system did not interfere with students interacting with each other despite supposed efforts to the contrary. As a student of the 1960s growing up in South Tyrol, he felt that mixing between students was a non-issue. Similar to comments made by Hans Karl Peterlini when he referred to his school years in Bassa Atesina, neither of them felt that the social boundaries within schools prevented them from blending with the other students after school hours (2013: 37-38).

In the 1970s, when he moved from Val Pusteria, a predominately German-speaking valley, to the bilingual city of Bolzano, Axel found that after school he could mix with other students and that was how he came to learn Italian. Rather than the schooling system functioning as a hindrance

preventing him from learning the L2, his parents both encouraged him to meet with Italian-speaking students who spoke the L2 of the region. This open interaction functioned as a 'free market place' where the demarcations ceased to exist so that language learning became quite a natural experience as children interfaced through social play. This play-based language learning mirrored research conducted by linguistic anthropologist Mark Turin, who studied how South African children could learn several native languages just by communication on the school playground (2012).

As for the language barriers inside the school buildings, Axel believed that students are resilient and can move past linguistic social structures as long as students have common points of interest. That way, students can learn about other lifestyles and values that are expressed in the region and learn to embrace social difference, much like he did, for the betterment of second language learning.

In these interviews it was interesting to see how each individual interpreted the schooling system. While several interviewees felt that the dividing walls and/or demarcation barriers were an issue, Axel and Peterlini were of the same view that students can move beyond the boundary restrictions which may exist within some education systems. Just as Pietro stated that there were students who wanted to intermingle with L2 speakers, this speaks to the willingness of some South Tyrolean students to look beyond the traditional education structure.

Therefore, in this part of the thesis I have tried to address the question of how structure may affect L2 learning, specifically within the German- and Italian-speaking schools in their attempts to justify their schooling system. While not all South Tyroleans would

agree that the school structure acts as a hindrance for students to learn, it would be interesting to see how both the Germans and Italians would benefit from the Ladin schooling system, which functions as a strong contrast to monolingual education in that it promotes multilingualism.

#### 4.5 The Ladin-speaking school system

The Ladin-speaking community, unlike the German and Italian ones, has always been extremely intercultural (Alber 2011: 10). As opposed to Bolzano, which historically functioned as a city with linguistically generated social strife, the Ladin valleys are scattered in such a way that the Ladin-speaking locals have learned to work and live alongside Germans and Italians and have equipped themselves with the ability to 'mediate and negotiate "internal" issues' (Poppi 2001: 2; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 4) between the major local groups within the province. Since the Ladins are sometimes classified as a 'minority within a minority' (Marko 2008: 387) due to their minority status within South Tyrol, Poppi states that:

'In short: the [Ladin-speakers] are not- and never have been- grouped together in an independent state, an autonomous region or any other unifying political and administrative formation of their own' (2001: 2).

Conversely they have learned to make the most of their unique status by incorporating an education system where students are required to be educated in German and Italian, with Ladin as the third language component in their schools enabling Ladin-speaking children to be trilingual. As a result, they have managed to survive a rather complicated history through their individual language curriculum. Since the Ladins have a high degree of minority protection due to their shared minority status with the financially influential German-speaking group (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 4; Rautz 2008:

279, 290), the Ladin language has endured amidst the Germans and Italians, who have the most political leverage in the region.

Yet Peterlini claims that the Ladin schooling system took some time to become state recognized so that it could develop into what it is today to preserve the Ladin language in the province. In 1945 the syndicates and Ladin priests of the small village of Piccolino in Val Badia wanted to save their language and asked the Italian government to establish a Ladin education institute. The government, however, refused the request as well as the SVP despite the latter's desire to '[unite] the South Tyrolean people' (2013: 134) through representing the German- and Ladin-speaking interests.

In the same year the Ladin-speakers tried again to start a school where the teaching would occur only in Ladin, which eventually evolved into them requesting a school where teaching could be taught equally in Ladin, German and Italian. But the request was rejected by the Italian education authorities, who stated that comprehensive schooling would be taught almost exclusively by Italian-speaking teachers. As a result, in October 1945, several Ladin-speaking parents opted to boycott placing their children in Italian education by refusing to enrol them in a 'de facto' Italian-speaking school. Ladin-speaking parents were then given the option to place their children in either a German- or Italian-speaking school. In the end, the majority of Ladin-speaking parents admitted their children into South Tyrolean German-speaking schools instead (Peterlini 2013: 134-135).

With the SVP refusal of a bilingual school in German and Italian, matters were made worse when the Paris Agreement of 1946 only offered protection to the German-speaking minority of South Tyrol without any mention of the Ladin-speaking

community even though they were resident in the area (Peterlini 2013: 133, 135; Lantschner and Poggeschi 2008: 220).

Eventually there were concerns over how the Ladin language could be preserved within the larger province since Ladin has always been a 'smaller language' in comparison to its provincial brothers. Peterlini mentions that what was missing was background support to allow Ladin to become an official language. But this would require Ladin to become state recognized (2013: 135) so that progress could be made within their region.

In 1948 the First Autonomy statute permitted Ladin-speakers to teach in their language in elementary education but they were also required to introduce the parity model so their courses were divided in two languages. Half of the course material was to be taught in the German language, the other half would be taught in Italian. Ladin could function as an auxiliary language and would be taught one to two hours per week (Rautz 2008: 279, 282; Rifesser 1994b: 11-12; Forni 2008: 18; Peterlini 2013: 135).<sup>49</sup>

Then in 1972 this model was further expanded with the creation of the Second Autonomy statute permitting German and Italian to be taught alongside Ladin as a language of instruction in Ladin-speaking schools (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 235; Peterlini 2013: 136). Similar to the first statute, Ladin could be used in schools, but more specifically it could be used in nurseries and then once students reached the early years of elementary education, the students would learn both German and Italian. With the majority of lessons in elementary school taught in equal measure through German and Italian, Ladin was used as an auxiliary language and taught as a separate subject for

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<sup>49</sup> While I do realize that two halves equal a whole, in the majority of Ladin documents (for simplicity's sake) the writers have referred to the division of courses in German and Italian as having been divided 50-50 so that an equal distribution of both languages is used in the Ladin-speaking education system.

two hours per week in order to promote trilingualism (Peterlini 1997: 198; Peterlini 2010: 158; Rifesser 1995: 179; Rifesser 1994b: 12; Rautz 2008: 283).

With the Ladin language secured in their education system, Ladin-speakers received cultural and teaching rights (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 4-5; Rautz 2008: 280). By 1989 the Ladin language was considered an official language of the South Tyrol province (Forni 2008: 13, 43).

Today the Ladin-speaking school system in South Tyrol exists in two valleys: in Val Badia and in Val Gardena. Based on the decisions of the school administration in 1996 it was decided that the Ladin-speaking school system should focus on developing the cultural, linguistic and social aspects of the Ladin-speaking community. Additionally, the Ladin school system must guarantee equal awareness of German and Italian in their schools by ensuring that the Ladin schools are plurilingual zones in accordance with the provincial statutes (Verra 2005: 122). Since students attend Ladin schools from various backgrounds (i.e. some students are monolingual while others are not) the languages used in their schools are not called a 'second language' but instead are referred to as the 'teaching [languages]' (Verra 2005: 123).

Since tourism is also rather common in their region and is the major source of income for Ladin-speakers, Rifesser explains that 'students' plurilingualism is in direct relationship with the touristic development of the region in which they live' (1994a: 17; Rifesser 1995: 180). And yet regardless of the inflow of tourists in their two valleys, Ladin is still used widely in their districts.

[E]ven with the increasing number of non-Ladin residents, due to the tourist industry, usually [local residents] learn Ladin in these two valleys. Furthermore, an active cultural life covering Ladin associations, church services, private radios,

museums, libraries and cultural institutes promotes the use of Ladin in public life'  
(Rautz 2008: 288-289).

This suggests that while the Ladin schools are currently designed to teach most of their classes in the L2 and the L3, this has not prevented Ladin-speakers from using their language both within and outside education settings.

In a survey that was conducted in 1993 at the Universities of Vienna and Rome, a test was distributed to Ladin-, German- and Italian-speaking students to assess their linguistic reading levels. The Ladin-speakers were provided with reading assessment tests in all three languages. It was determined that their knowledge of German and Italian was just slightly lower than their German- and Italian-speaking counterparts. The Ladin-speakers also demonstrated a higher competence of their mother tongue in terms of grammar, with the Germans' and Italians' grammatical knowledge of their mother tongue being much lower (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 15-16).

Another survey in the same year was conducted to assess the teaching methodologies in Ladin schools. It was found that Ladin-speaking students received positive results when it came to their knowledge of Italian. In fact their results were so positive they were better than the Italian national average, as well as in comparison with the Italian-speaking students in Bolzano. In German, Ladin-speakers received the same positive results, especially compared to German-speaking students in Bolzano (Verra 2005: 126).

In 2009 results were published by the FUB examining the linguistic writing skills of Ladin students in comparison with Germans and Italians who were registered in the fifth year of elementary school. The results indicated that the students from both valleys of Val Badia and Val Gardena had an awareness of the provincial languages to such a

degree that it was 'almost comparable to those who are mother tongue speakers of German and Italian' (Verra 2010: 96-97).

When taking the Patentino, a bi- or trilingual language exam required for those who would like to work in public office, more than half of the Ladin-speakers who opt to take the exam pass the test based greatly on their own success, 'while these [pass] figures are much lower for members of the German or Italian communities' (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 15).

In the words of Roland Verra, scholastic superintendent of the Ladin-speaking school system, these past results merely confirm that:

'it does not seem that the fluency of one language is a disadvantage to the fluency of other languages, but instead the teaching of more languages produces language reinforcement' (2005: 126).

In the following section I will address how second language learning is achieved in comparison with German- and Italian-speaking schools and will examine the teaching techniques used by the Ladin-speaking school system to encourage multilingual acquisition.

#### **4.5.1 Language instruction in the Ladin-speaking school system**

In Ladin-speaking education, immersion language learning is used methodically within their educational environment. While technically the Ladin-speakers have not adopted the CLIL method as a result of their relations with the Germans, they have worked hard to try to promote multilingualism for reasons of survival and to help their children to be linguistically capable of working throughout South Tyrol within the tourist or the public service sectors.

In 2005 within the two Ladin valleys in South Tyrol there were recorded to be 3,017 students attending Ladin schools, of whom 748 attended nursery school, while 1,309 were enrolled in elementary school and 699 students were registered in middle school. Since there are very few Ladin-speaking high schools in the region, only 261 were enrolled in high school (Verra 2005: 123).

Of the Ladin-speaking teachers, based on Verra's calculation, seventy teachers work in preschool education, while 130 teachers work in the elementary schools and seventy teachers work in the middle schools. Only fifty teachers are required to teach in the high schools due to the limited numbers of Ladin students. But both teachers and students need to pass trilingual tests in order to study and/or work in their school system (ibid.).

Parents who have children who are not Ladin-speakers are permitted to enrol them in Ladin schools; in fact the only schools that are available in the Ladin districts are those within the Ladin schooling system (Alber 2011: 8). The Ladin schools also encourage "equal representation", because the two "main languages" are taught in equal parts' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 245; Rifesser 1994a: 15), as represented in the Ladin schools' parity model.

#### 4.5.1.1 Teacher training

For South Tyroleans who would like to work in Ladin education, the requirements to teach are quite specific. Regardless of their subject, teachers are required to be proficient in Ladin, German and Italian and need to pass a trilingual language examination to be considered for a teaching position (Alber 2011: 8; Verra 2008; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 5; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 245; Rifesser 1995: 180; Rifesser 1994b: 13; Abel 2007: 238; Rautz 2008: 283; Anon. 2007). While Baur and Medda-Windischer admit that Ladin-speaking teachers 'may not always speak

as...proficiently as mother tongue German- or Italian-speakers...they [still] have a good command of all three languages' and in their view this represents 'exemplary multilingualism' (2008: 245).

Since the majority of teachers in the Ladin school system are predominately native Ladin-speakers, the first priority is given to Ladin-speaking teachers who want to work in Ladin education (Verra 2005: 121; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 5, 11-12; Abel 2007: 238; Alber 2011: 8; Anon. 2007).

Teacher training is also provided for all Ladin teachers and has improved over the course of several decades. With the faculty of education for Ladin-speakers located in Persenon, Italy, the Ladin-speaking school system is also equipped with its own administration and pedagogical institute (Verra 2008; Peterlini 2013: 143). This institute is able to provide 5,000 hours of annual refresher teaching courses and has been able to administer extra material for teachers who work in secondary schools. Since there is limited commercial material in circulation for Ladin-speaking schools throughout the province, the institute has been able to find course material for religion, which is taught in all three languages (Verra 2005: 123-124).

For those Ladin-speakers who want to become educators, unfortunately there is no school specifically designed to train Ladin-speaking teachers for a multilingual language learning programme. Instead most Ladin-speakers who aspire to become either nursery or elementary teachers are trained at German or Italian institutes and/or more recently at the FUB. Those studying to become middle school or high school teachers who obtain their education outside the province are required to follow a two year specialization course at the FUB to become qualified teachers (ibid.).

While historically the FUB and other local institutes prepared students for monolingual learning, as of 2001 there is in-service training for Ladin-speakers in the province provided by the Ladin pedagogical institute, as well as in-service training by the provincial school administration or within the Ladin-speaking schools themselves (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 14-15). For instance, those who intend to become nursery teachers must have 400 hours of teacher training, while those who intend to become elementary school teachers need 60 hours per year of lessons in Ladin. The majority of teacher training must occur in Ladin schools as part of the required course curriculum (Verra 2005: 124).

There is also a Ladin department at the FUB which 'is responsible for the Ladin students' curriculum and supervises the Ladin language culture courses and multilingual education' (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 14). As part of the teaching requirements, students who are training to become Ladin-speaking kindergarten teachers must take courses in both German and Italian along with some lessons conducted in Ladin (Anon. 2007).

Although the FUB, unlike the University of Innsbruck, is not equipped with a Ladin institute, the small number of Ladin-speakers can attend courses at the Faculty of Education Sciences in Bressanone. This is where the Ladin-speakers who decide to take part in teacher training can take their courses in German and Italian with two hours of Ladin-speaking classes per month along with teacher training as mentioned above (Peterlini 2013: 143; Forni 2008: 18; Rautz 2008: 283; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 14; Verra 2005: 123-124; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 245; Campisi 2000: 484). Since the Ladin-speaking school system is relatively new, in comparison to German and Italian, as of yet there are no university courses conducted in the Ladin language

(outside of Ladin-speaking teacher training courses) (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 14).

#### 4.5.1.2 Nursery school (i.e. preschool and kindergarten)

For parents placing their children in Ladin-speaking schools, preschool and kindergarten are designed for students between the ages of three to six, when the majority of teaching is in Ladin. The idea behind this method of L1 acquisition is to safeguard Ladin as it is 'endangered', but it is also used to encourage the mother tongue of students under the current provincial belief that a better understanding of the L1 from a student can lead to better fluency in the L2 (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 8-9; Verra 2005: 118-119).

That said, there are still students who attend some Ladin schools who are in fact not native Ladin-speakers, which means the teachers must have knowledge of the other languages, which in this case are German and Italian. The objective is so teachers can address the other students specifically in their mother tongue in case the other students cannot understand the school activities which are conducted in the Ladin language (Verra 2005: 119; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 9).

While most group activities conducted in nursery school are normally done in the Ladin language, students are also introduced to German and Italian in a playful manner through songs and poems (Verra 2005: 119; Anon. 2007). 'In order to integrate children from a multilingual family background and to favour the multilingual experience, special multilingual activities are also offered' by confronting students with the three main languages (Anon. 2007; Alber 2011: 8).

As students attend preschool classes seven hours a day along with lessons five days a week (Rifesser 1994b: 14), students are introduced to early forms of plurilingualism through communicative games and other options, such as distinguishing colours to learning the parts of the body along with learning about animals and role playing. The purposes of these activities are to teach the Ladin children the habitual nature of language learning as well as slowly introducing them to German and Italian, as they will need to know these languages in future (Verra 2005: 124-125).

#### 4.5.1.3 Elementary school

Once students in Ladin schools start the first year of elementary education commencing at age six, they are assessed and placed in Ladin-German or Ladin-Italian classes as part of introducing the L2 (Verra 2005: 119, 125; Forni 2008: 18; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 10; Rautz 2008: 283; Rifesser 1994b: 17; Rifesser 1995: 180). For students who attend classes in Ladin and in German, their classes are taught in Val Gardena. Students who are placed in Ladin and Italian classes are taught by teachers in Val Badia (Anon. 2007).

Initially, for the students who begin year one of education, the first months of the school year are in Ladin as students start to transition into the other language, which they will need to read and write after year one (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 10; Rifesser 1994b: 17; Rautz 2008: 283; Rifesser 1995: 180; Verra 2005: 119, 125). With Ladin reserved as a support language to guide students into transitioning to use the L2, the L3 is used one hour per day for communication to prepare students once they commence year two (Verra 2005: 119, 125; Rifesser 1994b: 17; Anon. 2007; Rifesser 1995: 180).

Once students begin the second year of elementary education the parity model is applied where the lessons are taught equally in German and Italian, while Ladin becomes the

auxiliary language for students who have difficulty transitioning languages or need language assistance in their studies. Ladin also becomes its own subject for two hours per week, while the religion class is taught in all three languages (Anon. 2007; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 10; Rifesser 1995: 180; Rifesser 1994b: 16, 18-19; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 245; Rautz 2008: 283; Verra 2005: 120; Forni 2008: 18). Additionally, students are required to take five hours of German and five hours of Italian per week (Verra 2005: 120).

In terms of how the languages are used in the school system, teachers can switch languages daily or weekly depending on their preference, although most elementary schools prefer to alternate the languages weekly (Verra 2005: 120; Rifesser 1994b: 18; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 10; Anon. 2007; Rifesser 1995: 180).

In the third year of education the students from the Ladin-Italian classes and the students from the Ladin-German classes converge into one group in order to avoid language division or second language preference in the classroom. Just as before, the classes are taught in German and Italian, with a weekly rotation of the second or third language and Ladin as the 'provisional language' in the classroom, although it is used less as such after the second year (Verra 2005: 125; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 10).

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**Timetable for the 4th class, Badia Elementary School, school year 2006/2007**

1<sup>st</sup> teaching week in Italian:

Lunedì	Martedì	Mercoledì	Giovedì	Venerdì	Sabato
Inglese	Matematica	Italiano	Religione (lad-ita-ted)	Italiano	Matematica
italiano	Religione (lad-ita-ted)	Italiano	Inglese	Italiano	Storia
<i>ricreazione</i>	<i>ricreazione</i>	<i>ricreazione</i>	<i>ricreazione</i>	<i>ricreazione</i>	<i>ricreazione</i>
italiano	Italiano	Scienze	Italiano	Ladin	Ginnastica (lad-ita-ted)
Matematica	Materia opzionale obbligatoria (ita-ted)	Ladin	Matematica	Matematica	Canto (lad-ita-ted)
	<i>pranzo</i>				
	Geografia				
	Educazione artistica (lad-ita-ted)				

2<sup>nd</sup> teaching week in German:

Montag	Dienstag	Mittwoch	Donnerstag	Freitag	Samstag
Englisch	Mathematik	Deutsch	Religion (lad-deu-ita)	Deutsch	Mathematik
Deutsch	Religion (lad-deu-ita)	Deutsch	Englisch	Deutsch	Geschichte
<i>Pause</i>	<i>Pause</i>	<i>Pause</i>	<i>Pause</i>	<i>Pause</i>	<i>Pause</i>
Deutsch	Deutsch	Naturkunde	Deutsch	Ladin	Turnen (lad-deu-ita)
Mathematik	Wahlpflichtfach (deu-ita)	Ladin	Mathematik	Mathematik	Singen (lad-deu-ita)
	<i>Mittagessen</i>				
	Erdkunde				
	Bildnerisches Gestalten (lad-deu-ita)				

**Figure 4.1** This is the Ladin elementary school timetable for year four in Val Badia for the 2006/2007 school year. Classes are taught alternatively in both German and Italian. Italian and German language courses are also taught as separate subjects along with Ladin and English (Forni 2008: 19).

When students reach year four they are introduced to English (the L4)<sup>50</sup> with two hours of the language per week, so that when they reach nine years old the students are learning four languages: English, Italian, German and Ladin (Forni 2008: 18). Since English was introduced in 2006, though some documents say 1997,<sup>51</sup> in 2005, 85 percent of Ladin-speaking parents expressed their support for learning English (Verra 2005: 127; Forni 2008: 18).

Along with the introduction of English the students are required to have twelve hours of their lessons in Italian along with twelve hours of their lessons in German. Ladin, as well as English, is taught two hours per week as part of the weekly course curriculum (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 5; Anon. 2007; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 245; Rifesser 1995: 180).

At the end of each school year of elementary education, from year one to year five of the school system, the students in Ladin schools are obliged to demonstrate their knowledge of both German and Italian (Rifesser 1994b: 16). And at the end of elementary education the students must take a state written and oral exam in German and Italian followed by an oral exam in the Ladin language, which is specific to the Ladin schooling system (Verra 2005: 120).

#### 4.5.1.4 Middle school (i.e. lower secondary school)

In middle school (or lower secondary education), the parity approach is used quite differently in that, instead of teaching most subjects in German and Italian, certain subjects are taught in different languages. Italian, for example, is used to teach the following subjects based on these specific hours per week: Italian (six hours),

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<sup>50</sup> Alber states that English is introduced into the Ladin curriculum starting in year five (2011: 8).

<sup>51</sup> Van der Schaaf and Verra claim that English has been a subject in the Ladin curriculum for two hours per week since the 1997/1998 school year (2001: 12).

geography (two hours), technical education (three hours), artistic education (two hours) and physical education (two hours). German is used to teach the other subjects in the same amount of hours per week: German (six hours), history (two hours) and maths and natural sciences (six hours) (Verra 2005: 120; Alber 2011: 8; Anon. 2007; Rifesser 1994b: 21).

In total, students receive twelve hours of German language along with twelve hours of Italian per week with Ladin and English as additional subjects, which individually are taught two hours per week (Anon. 2007; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 5; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 245; Rifesser 1994b: 21; Rautz 2008: 283; Verra 2005: 120). Just like in elementary education, religion is taught two hours per week in all three languages, and occasionally geography is also taught in Ladin depending on the preference of the school (van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 5; Anon. 2007; Rautz 2008: 283). Likewise, Ladin can be used as a supplementary language even if its use is reduced by this stage, but the objective is to encourage the use of the L2 and L3 in order to acquire course material (Verra 2005: 120-121; Alber 2011: 8).

Towards the end of middle school students must take a state exam consisting of four written tests in German, Italian, Ladin and Maths along with two oral exams, one of which is multidisciplinary, while the other is specified as a 'plurilingual oral exam' (Verra 2005: 120-121; Anon. 2007). Despite the many hours of schooling per week (thirty-six in total), including second language acquisition, from 1995 to 2005 only 0.4 percent did not pass middle school. This speaks highly of the success rate of Ladin-speaking schools, despite their requiring additional language essentials (Verra 2005: 120-121).

#### 4.5.1.5 High school (i.e. upper secondary school)

Since there are very few Ladin-speaking high schools in the region, mainly four, although some documents say five,<sup>52</sup> the Ladin-speakers who continue high school education have a variety of options to consider. Those students who prefer to stay in Val Badia or Val Gardena have the option of two technical commercial institutes, an art institute or a linguistic high school (Verra 2005: 121; Anon. 2007; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 12). Otherwise students can attend high school in the other cities by enrolling in German- or Italian-speaking schools. Due to distance some students will stay in boarding accommodation available in many city centres. They will stay Monday through Saturday in school accommodation and will travel home on Saturday afternoons. The only problem with attending a German- or Italian-speaking high school is that they do not prepare Ladin-speaking students for cultural and language courses in the Ladin language to help them pass the Ladin language exam so that they may work in public service positions (Verra 2005: 121).

For the students who decide to stay in Ladin-speaking education, the schooling structure mirrors those of middle school where half of the classes are taught in the German language while the other half are taught in Italian. Ladin is still used as an assistant language, but is taught only one hour per week with the possibility of having two hours per week if granted permission by the local school board (Alber 2011: 8; van der Schaaf and Verra 2001: 12; Forni 2008: 18; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 245; Rautz 2008: 283; Rifesser 1994b: 21; Verra 2005: 121). Students who are not Ladin-speaking, however, can ask to take an alternative course while religion is continued at the high school level but is only taught one hour per week (Verra 2005: 121; Rifesser 1994b:

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<sup>52</sup> As of the 1991 census there were four Ladin-speaking high schools that were registered, but according to Rifesser as of the 1991/1992 school year there were five registered Ladin-speaking high schools: two art schools, one science high school, one professional school and one technical institute (1994a: 8).

23). For students who have handicaps there are school provisions in the form of special teaching assistants to help students assimilate to the school model by tackling the difficulties in coursework (Verra 2005: 121).

At the end of their studies students must take a state exam consisting of two written exams, one of which is in the German language while the other is conducted in Italian. Students must also pass a multilingual oral exam, presumably in Ladin, German and Italian (Anon. 2007; Rifesser 1994b: 16).

#### **4.5.2 The positives and negatives of the Ladin-speaking school system**

##### 4.5.2.1 The positives

While the structure of the Ladin-speaking education system is designed specifically for a small minority, the majority of Ladin-speaking students express their support for the Ladin schooling method. Based on the ASTAT survey results as of 2004 that were published in 2006, 97.7 percent of Ladin-speaking students stated that language learning within their schooling system was a 'positive' or 'somewhat positive' experience in comparison to German- (90.4 percent) or Italian-speaking students (84.4 percent). In fact, when looking at the figures, 78.3 percent of Ladin-speakers called language learning a 'positive' aspect of their school system, while only 25.2 percent of German-speaking students and 47.3 percent of Italian-speaking students thought that learning the L2 was a 'positive' experience when learning second languages in school (ASTAT 2006: 42). Rautz explains that while the majority of Ladin-speakers are in favour of the Ladin-speaking education system:

'The language competences of Ladin-speakers in Italian and German, which are only slightly lower than that of mother tongue speakers, underline the quality of the Ladin school system. In comparison with the separate school system for German-

speakers and Italians, the function of the Ladin school model is more integrative and tailored for a small minority [who] is supposed to speak the languages of the major language groups' (2008: 283).

Although Verra explicitly explains that Ladin education is designed to '[conserve] a cultural equilibrium between Italian and German in the Ladin valleys', there has been a growing amount of interest in the Ladin school model from South Tyrolean bilingual families who are dissatisfied with monolingual education. Regardless of the fact that Ladin-speaking education was established to protect their culture and language, the Ladin education system has been viewed for quite some time as an 'open' model for all language groups. Even if the parity model is limited to the Ladin valleys and cannot extend beyond the Ladin districts, there have been requests by parents for a bilingual schooling system that teaches courses in German and Italian (Verra 2005: 129-130).

That said, in order to achieve a bilingual schooling system outside of Ladin-speaking education, Verra explains that this would require overcoming political obstacles which are designed to keep the language groups divided (2005: 129). Nevertheless he does insist that multilingual education within the Ladin-speaking schooling system, 'is...a positive way out of an excessively monolingual environment' (ibid.) in which 'the spontaneous passage from one language to another does not present...particular difficulty' (Verra 2005: 119).

However misgivings regarding the Ladin schooling system were expressed by the provincial assessor, Dr Sabina Kasslatter Mur, of the German-speaking education system, during a conference in 2002 when she expressed concerns regarding bilingual learning. In her statement she explained that while the Ladin-speakers are required to study in German and Italian, their knowledge of the second language is not as fluent when compared to native speakers of German and Italian. What she forgot to recognize

is their profound ability to learn material in the L2 and L3 and that the Ladin-speakers can converse in German and Italian far better than Germans and Italians can converse in their own L2s (Peterlini 2013: 135-136).

In a survey that was conducted by Lucio Giudiceandrea and Aldo Mazza, it was discovered that the Germans and Italians '[were] far from the level of bilingualism that is desirable' (2012: 76) for the region in which they choose to live. The exception to this issue came in the form of Ladin-speakers, who have triumphed linguistically in the L2. I quote:

'Even if [their knowledge of the L2] is not perfect, the majority of Ladin-speakers are able to express themselves in Italian, German as well as German dialect. One of the reasons for this is without doubt due to the adopted scholastic model in Val Gardena and Val Badia that allows the use of the parity model of the two "principal" languages... [B]eing the messenger of a "minority" culture, the Ladins have always understood how important it is to know the languages of their neighbours for their survival [by] adopting a pragmatic and non-ideological attitude. Italian-speakers and German-speakers, however, cannot boast [the same amount of] competence and similar attitudes. The two groups [i.e. the Germans and Italians] have passed through diverse phases in their relationship with the other language, but they are far from the objective [of reaching] widespread bilingualism' (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 76).

As a result, their comments underline the language aptitude which has developed in the Ladin schooling system by addressing how the Ladin group has learned to make the most of a complicated language learning system. Consequently there are parents who would like to place their children in a school that mirrors Ladin school objectives, but not all people are convinced that the Ladin schooling model is the best system at preserving local language.

#### 4.5.2.2 The negatives

*'The greater the degree to which a speaker masters one system [in this case, the L2], the greater the extent to which one might expect it to affect the other system [i.e. the L1]' (Hentschel 2015: 122).*

When interviewing Beatrix, a German-speaker from the province, she informed me that not all Ladin schools are 'perfect' and that this concept of a sufficient quadrilingual schooling system depended largely on teacher quality. She worked alongside Dr Werner Stuflesser, the president of EURAC and a Ladin-speaker, who admitted that the Ladin school model was very good, but that not everybody was fully trilingual. In his opinion, Ladin-speakers spoke a 'kind of trilingualism', but their knowledge of Ladin, German and Italian was not consistent. For Beatrix the Ladin school system could adequately function only if the teachers were of high standards. In her words, 'I think there is something about the argument that one should first have a basis in one's mother tongue' so that students can eventually transition to another language without forgetting their knowledge of the L1.

In terms of teaching approaches to second language acquisition, despite the fact that Ladin teachers must be trilingual, some Ladin teachers have expressed concerns about immersion teaching, preferring 'traditional' methods in language learning. Verra states that these beliefs stem from the supposed 'dangers' that some feel may come from linguistic 'contamination' (2005: 122) from exposure to other provincial languages in schools when students should be focusing on the L1.

Therefore inside the Ladin schools teachers use partial immersion teaching (ibid.) but do not adhere to the CLIL method, largely because some members of the German-speaking community do not support these forms of second language acquisition. Since the Ladin-speakers have to rely on the German-speakers for financial and minority

support, there are limitations on what Ladin-speaking schools may do by way of introducing the L2.

Just as Ladin-speakers pride themselves on multilingual learning, there are still concerns regarding preservation in that, by having to assimilate the Ladin-speaking students to a multitude of languages and cultures, the latter are much less inclined to be conversant in the Ladin language. The danger of losing their L1 was something that Verra had expressed explicitly during our interview in that there has been a decline in the use of the Ladin language due to Ladin-speakers' use of the L2. That said, this did not mean that Ladin-speakers would try to resort to monolingual education tactics. However, there was still a fear that due to its endangered status, Ladin as a language could become extinct.

In his article from 2005, Verra refers to Ladin youths' language abilities in that the young people are reserving their use of the L1 specifically within the private sphere and are becoming more reliant on German and Italian depending on the situation that they are in.

'On the one hand this hints towards the major linguistic flexibility of the Ladin-speakers, considering the high percentage of Ladins taking part in cultural demonstrations and initiatives that are not expressed in their language. That said, each major opening is often only the consequence of the insufficient presence of the Ladin language in society' (2005: 117).

In 2010, Verra mentioned an increase in the use of German in formal and informal Ladin settings along with a reduction in the use of Italian in the Ladin valleys, except inside the language learning classroom. Especially in Val Gardena, Verra noticed an increase in German language use within the Ladin valley, which he thought could result in the marginalization of the Ladin language within that community (2010: 98). Even in

1998, when a survey was conducted by the Intendenza Scholastica Ladina, 72 percent of teachers noticed that Ladin-speaking students used a 'watered-down', mixed version of their language, while 64 percent of teachers said that the Ladin that was used was 'obstructed' when spoken by the students. Regardless as to whether teachers thought that Ladin-speaking students used Ladin 'naturally' within their classrooms (94 percent), the evidence mentioned above indicates a fluid commingling of L2 and L3 usage within Ladin society (Verra 2005: 127).

Therefore it should be no surprise that the provincial statistics institute (ASTAT) published survey results in 2006 indicating that Ladin-speakers felt that the introduction of English would weaken the other 'national languages' (i.e. German and Italian) while the Germans and Italians (approximately 75 percent of them) did not view English as a danger to their language. This is probably due to the fact that the Ladins have observed the impact of other languages on their society while the Germans and Italians may not know of the effects that global languages could have on their communities (ASTAT 2006: 61).

#### 4.6 Conclusion

When looking at the positives and negatives of introducing multiple languages in Ladin education, in terms of language preservation there is something to be said for conserving and maintaining the L1 without the interruption of the second and third language interfering with students practicing their mother tongue. Yet the opposite position would suggest that Ladin education assists with helping students learn through the L2 (and L3) so that they can be proficient in public service jobs and work outside the Ladin-speaking valleys.

While historically, the Ladin-speaking education system was designed as a survival learning tool in response to the continual linguistic influence of their German- and Italian-speaking neighbours, realistically the Ladin-speakers (compared to Germans and Italians) are the only community in South Tyrol who are versatile enough to be able to manoeuvre linguistically throughout the province. This would suggest that their upbringing in multilingual education, especially when starting from preschool, may have influenced the outcome of their social mobility by giving them a linguistic advantage.

Consequently it would seem on paper that the Ladin-speakers are the only linguistic group within South Tyrol who are capable of attending the trilingual FUB, as opposed to the Germans and Italians. While the German- and Italian-speaking education systems are designed to promote monolingualism, the L2 is sometimes treated like a foreign language rather than a language used throughout the province. As a result, this suggests that German- and Italian-speaking students are unprepared for multilingual learning, which could become a problem for those students who attend the Free University of Bolzano.

## Chapter 5: Tertiary education at The Free University of Bolzano

*'Unlike in primary and secondary education, which substantially promotes a linguistic model of separation, recently in tertiary education the path of linguistic integration has been followed, translating into an extensive use of English in addition to German and Italian...the trilingual...Free University of [Bolzano]... The university breaks for the first time with the principle of segregated education... [with the belief that] in South Tyrol "the collective idea is growing according to which language is no longer simply the symbol of a minority identity and culture but also an element for personal and community enrichment"' (Alber and Palermo 2012: 303-304; Fraenkel-Haeberle 2008: 278).*

### 5.1 The background reasoning for the FUB and its language requirements

When trying to understand at the most basic social level why the FUB was formally established, Purser explains that multilingual universities are a result of 'political and social conditions', as is evident within the region where they are established in response to linguistic social tensions (2000: 451). Accordingly there is a need for multilingual universities to concentrate on having a 'clear mission' to encourage cohesion between language groups within the same territory to participate in educational decisions. In South Tyrol, due to historical divisions in the region, some language groups 'have felt excluded from education and in particular from higher education' (Purser 2000: 453-454), which is why the FUB works alongside these minorities so that it can represent their local interests.

However, when the FUB was founded on 31 October 1997,<sup>53</sup> the university was subject to much scrutiny and was viewed by some locals as controversial. Several German-speakers were concerned that the FUB's creation would sever ties with the University of Innsbruck, while other locals were afraid that a trilingual university would encourage

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<sup>53</sup> According to Hans Karl Peterlini, the FUB was founded in 1998 while Sandra Campisi states that the FUB was founded in 1997 but that it launched its first programmes in 1998 (Peterlini 2013: 237; Campisi 2000: 477).

more Italians to the region (Fraenkel-Haeberle 2008: 277; Veronesi 2009: 207; Campisi 2000: 478; Alber and Palermo 2012: 304; Alber 2011: 9; Peterlini 2013: 119, Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 97). Despite the fact that historically the University of Innsbruck has functioned as the institute for the '[(South) Tyrolean] people of German mother tongue', a major portion of the FUB's new student population comes from Germany (Alber 2011: 9; Alber and Palermo 2012: 304). With the FUB designed as a trilingual institute with courses in German, English and Italian, the FUB '[offers] its students a multilingual, practice-oriented education that meets the demands of the local and European labour market' (Campisi 2000: 477; Alber 2011: 8-9; Fraenkel-Haeberle 2008: 277; Veronesi 2009: 207; Peterlini 2013: 237; Alber and Palermo 2012: 304).

With the FUB divided into five faculties: computer science, economics and management, education, design and art, and science and technology, as of 2009, two-thirds of the Italian students came from the Province of Bolzano, while in 2015, 17 percent of students came from abroad (Veronesi 2009: 207),<sup>54</sup> suggesting local and international attractiveness. Regarding language requirements amongst the foreign teaching staff, of which 35 percent come from other countries,<sup>55</sup> '[they] are not required to be bilingual' (Purser 2000: 456), but must have a B1 knowledge of German or Italian within the first two years of being hired (Veronesi 2009: 209).

Since the FUB is also a multilingual institute designed to '[position] itself as an instrument of "language continuum" and not of "language separateness"' (Purser 2000: 459), it is worth commenting that '[t]he criterion applied by the [FUB] is that of "content and language integrated learning" [i.e. CLIL] with the clear intent to promote

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<sup>54</sup> For more information see the 'welcome' page of the Free University of Bolzano entitled 'Trilingual and international in South Tyrol' at: <<https://www.unibz.it/en/public/university/welcome/default.html>> [Accessed 2 March 2015].

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

integration between language learning and education content' (Fraenkel-Haeberle 2008: 277), which is in direct contrast with the South Tyrol school system. Despite the opposition of the FUB's first president, Luis Durnwalder (Peterlini 2013: 237) to using CLIL in elementary and secondary education, it is interesting that he supported a trilingual institute which adheres to multilingual awareness.

Purser states that when developing a multilingual institution, which represents a multitude of social interests:

'the linguistic policies of these universities [are] never simply an accident, but rather the results of deliberate decisions involving more than simply the academic community' (2000: 452).

Therefore something should be said about the desire to establish a university in South Tyrol which attracts students from several communities in the region, regardless of their cultural and linguistic differences. Purser explains:

'[a]ll universities, bilingual or otherwise, are pleased to see students from the local and regional community stay at home to study, instead of leaving- often permanently- to study elsewhere' (2000: 456).

And in the case of South Tyrol, especially during my fieldwork, I noticed students from the German group who would migrate to Austrian universities in either Innsbruck or Vienna, whereas those students who were of the Italian-speaking group tended to focus on universities further south. These included the Universities of Padua, Venice or Trento, somewhat south of the Province of Bolzano. Consequently the FUB is an alternative to travelling either north or south of the South Tyrolean province. It also allows students to take courses in their L1 while attending courses in the L2. As well, there is the added benefit of learning English, a popular third language in the region.

With these language requirements, the FUB's objective is to ensure students are linguistically able to follow courses that are conducted outside of their L1 to represent their multicultural environment. Since the majority of programmes require students to be aware of English, German and Italian, before starting their courses students must take a Language Assessment Test (LAT) conducted at the FUB's language centre (Campisi 2000: 481; Fraenkel-Haeberle 2008: 277). These LATs assess students' language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) where students are evaluated on their language level from beginner A1 (or 'breakthrough') to near native-speaking C2 ('Mastery') (Virkkunen-Fullenwider 2009: 43). Considering that the CEFR assesses students' abilities for foreign language in three main components (which are further divided into separate sections), the A level for beginners ranges from A0 to A2 depending on one's language entry level. At the B level students range from B1 to B2, or from lower to intermediate language skills. Level C is for advanced speakers of another language from C1 (lower advanced) to C2 (near native fluency).<sup>56</sup> Except for a few courses, such as the Masters in Computer Science, which requires students to be fluent in English, students in the Bachelors (BA) and the Masters (MA) programmes must be highly qualified in at least two of the three university languages.<sup>57</sup>

Students starting a BA degree are required to be at least B2 (upper intermediate) proficient in the L1 and the L2 before they can enrol in their programme. Students can commence their degree without knowledge of an L3 but are required to participate in language learning classes alongside their regular course material. After the first year,

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<sup>56</sup> For more information see: <<http://www.examenglish.com/CEFR/cefr.php>> [Accessed 2 March 2015].

<sup>57</sup> For more information see the FUB's 'Language requirements' at <<https://www.unibz.it/en/prospective/multilingual/requirements/default.html>> [Accessed 1 March 2015] or <[https://www.unibz.it/SiteCollectionDocuments/Advisory%20Service/Language%20Requirements/2014\\_Sprachliche%20Anforderungen\\_en.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/SiteCollectionDocuments/Advisory%20Service/Language%20Requirements/2014_Sprachliche%20Anforderungen_en.pdf)> [Accessed 1 March 2015].

students take another LAT to test whether their L3 is B1 proficient (or A2 - advanced beginner level, if in the Faculty of Science and Technology).<sup>58</sup> Those students who are unable to pass the LAT are not permitted to continue with their university studies (Campisi 2000: 481-482; Veronesi 2009: 208). By the final year, students must be C1 (lower advanced) in their L1, a high B2 (upper intermediate) in their L2 and a B2 in their L3 in order to receive their degrees.<sup>59</sup>

Given that the ethnography section part I concentrates on South Tyrol's school system, I was intrigued by the teacher training programme, which at the time of my fieldwork was designed to represent a 'mirror image' of the divided schooling system (Abel 2007: 242). However, the programme has changed over the course of several years in that it is no longer strictly monolingual. Instead, the five year MA programme<sup>60</sup> in elementary education requires students to have knowledge of three languages.<sup>61</sup> As of 2011, the programme is still divided into three separate language sections for the Germans, the Ladins and the Italians (Alber 2011: 9; Abel 2007: 242),<sup>62</sup> except for the students are

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<sup>58</sup> For more information on the L3 language requirements see:  
<<https://www.unibz.it/en/prospective/multilingual/requirements/default.html>> [Accessed 1 March 2015].  
The BA entry level language requirements for the Faculty of Education for the L1, L2 and L3 can be found here on pages 5-6: <[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO\\_2014-01-08\\_3\\_2014-15.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO_2014-01-08_3_2014-15.pdf)> [Accessed 8 March 2015].

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> For more information see:  
<<https://www.unibz.it/en/education/progs/master/mastereducation/default.html>> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

<sup>61</sup> For the language requirements for the BA and MA at the Faculty of Education see page 3 of:  
<[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO\\_2014-01-08\\_3\\_2014-15.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO_2014-01-08_3_2014-15.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

<sup>62</sup> See the FUB's English page on the MA in primary education at:  
<<https://www.unibz.it/en/education/progs/master/mastereducation/default.html>> [Accessed 6 March 2015] or the MA degree's facts page located on page 1 at:  
<[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/FAQ%20anno%20accademico%202014\\_2015.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/FAQ%20anno%20accademico%202014_2015.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

required to take an admissions exam<sup>63</sup> and validate their knowledge of multiple languages.<sup>64</sup>

To begin the programme, students in the Italian or German sections must have a C1 knowledge of their mother tongue and a B2 knowledge of English or the L2 (which could be either German or Italian). Knowledge of the L3 is not required to commence the courses for the MA degree. But by the end of their degree both the Italians and the Germans must have a C1 knowledge of the L1 and the L2 along with a B2 knowledge of the L3 in order to complete their degree programme.<sup>65</sup>

The Ladin-speakers, conversely, have different language requirements in order to begin the MA programme. There are two options they can choose from in order to fulfil the entry level language requirements. Students must have a C1 knowledge of German or Italian and a B1 knowledge of the L2 (German or Italian), and also be at least B2 proficient in Ladin. The other option requires that students are B2 proficient in German,

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<sup>63</sup> For more information on the admission test see page 3:  
<[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/Informationen%20zur%20Aufnahmepr%C3%BCfung%20BIWI5\\_2014-2015.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/Informationen%20zur%20Aufnahmepr%C3%BCfung%20BIWI5_2014-2015.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

<sup>64</sup> There are a variety of ways to validate the students' knowledge of the L1, L2 and L3 outside of the LAT exam. For information on the accepted language certificates recognized at the FUB see page 2 of the Admission regulations to the MA programme in primary education at:

<[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/Informationen%20zur%20Aufnahmepr%C3%BCfung%20BIWI5\\_2014-2015.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/Informationen%20zur%20Aufnahmepr%C3%BCfung%20BIWI5_2014-2015.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

Also see page 19 of the approved language certificates for the MA programme in primary education at:

<[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO\\_2014-01-08\\_3\\_2014-15.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO_2014-01-08_3_2014-15.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

Finally there is a list of recognized language certificates for all degree programmes at the FUB:

<[https://www.unibz.it/de/students/languagecentre/autolearn/Documents/Esami%20e%20titoli%20riconosciti\\_2012-2013.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/de/students/languagecentre/autolearn/Documents/Esami%20e%20titoli%20riconosciti_2012-2013.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

<sup>65</sup> For more information on the language requirements for the Italian- and German-speaking students, please see page 2 of the facts page for the MA programme in primary education:

<[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/FAQ%20anno%20accademico%202014\\_2015.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/FAQ%20anno%20accademico%202014_2015.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

Also look at page 18 of the admission regulations of the MA degree in primary education at:

<[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO\\_2014-01-08\\_3\\_2014-15.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO_2014-01-08_3_2014-15.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

For general information on the FUB's language requirements for the MA programme in primary education see: <<https://www.unibz.it/en/prospective/multilingual/requirements/default.html>> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

For more information on the FUB language requirements see:

<[https://www.unibz.it/SiteCollectionDocuments/Advisory%20Service/Language%20Requirements/2014\\_Sprachliche%20Anforderungen\\_en.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/SiteCollectionDocuments/Advisory%20Service/Language%20Requirements/2014_Sprachliche%20Anforderungen_en.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

Italian and Ladin. In either case, students are not required to be proficient in English in order to begin their degree programme. To graduate, all students are required to have achieved C1 proficiency in German, Ladin and Italian and B2 proficiency in English so that they are considered qualified to teach within the Ladin schooling system.<sup>66</sup>

'With the exception of a small number of elite schools, primary and secondary education in many "bilingual" contexts often remains divided along linguistic lines for a variety of logistical, pedagogical, and other reasons. Bilingual universities, therefore, also play an important role in the training of teachers, since the teacher training process, including refresher [teacher] training, will be one of the few opportunities for educators at secondary and primary levels to exchange ideas and experiences with their peers from other linguistic groups. This challenge was explicitly mentioned...[at] the [FUB]. Here school teachers are trained in three parallel language groups. The student teachers themselves have requested that there be much closer co-operation among these groups in order to promote a more coherent approach to multilingual and multicultural issues' (Purser 2000: 454).

Since 2000, when Purser published his article regarding the many societal factors involved in bilingual education, there was much to be discussed concerning the divided teacher training programme in South Tyrol. While three years ago it was not necessary for students to be competent in the L2, the MA programme now requires that students participate in didactic activities conducted in their L2 (German or Italian).<sup>67</sup> This suggests a strong progression away from monolingual learning, as has been the case in

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<sup>66</sup> For more information see pages 2-3 of the facts page for the MA programme in primary education at: <[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/FAQ%20anno%20accademico%202014\\_2015.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/FAQ%20anno%20accademico%202014_2015.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

See page 19 of the admission regulations for the MA degree in primary education at: <[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO\\_2014-01-08\\_3\\_2014-15.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/regulations/Documents/ZO_2014-01-08_3_2014-15.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

For general information on the FUB's language requirements for the MA programme in primary education see: <<https://www.unibz.it/en/prospective/multilingual/requirements/default.html>> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

For more information on the FUB language requirements see: <[https://www.unibz.it/SiteCollectionDocuments/Advisory%20Service/Language%20Requirements/2014\\_Sprachliche%20Anforderungen\\_en.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/SiteCollectionDocuments/Advisory%20Service/Language%20Requirements/2014_Sprachliche%20Anforderungen_en.pdf)> [Accessed 6 March 2015].

<sup>67</sup> See page 1 of the frequently asked questions for the Faculty of Education at: <[https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/FAQ%20anno%20accademico%202014\\_2015.pdf](https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/master/mastereducation/Documents/FAQ%20anno%20accademico%202014_2015.pdf)> [Accessed 8 March 2015].

South Tyrol's school system, towards a system that is better at embracing the L2 as well as introducing the L3.

The FUB has also incorporated a one year training programme for teachers who would like to teach through CLIL, which is designed around the concept of teaching non-linguistic disciplines as part of a new approach to L2 learning. To start the course students must have a C1 proficiency of the L2 (either in German, Italian or English). However students may commence the course at B2 level as long as they are certified C1 by the end of the teacher training programme.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, there is a teacher training course for English teachers designed for the elementary school level, which concentrates on creative and interactive teaching, and lasts for four semesters.<sup>69</sup>

As well, the language centre has tried to prepare its students for the language requirements at university by providing language courses alongside their degrees called LSPs (Language [courses] for Specific Purposes). These LSPs help students to develop their vocabulary 'since [LSPs] are geared toward [students'] specific studies and focus on their particular needs' (Campisi 2000: 485; Fraenkel-Haerberle 2008: 277-278). Students may also attend intensive language courses in August and September in order to prepare for LATs, and there are opportunities to take language classes throughout the year, especially for those who must learn the L3 (Campisi 2000: 484). Tandem exchanges are another method used by language programmes both within and outside the FUB that allow students to practice a language with a native speaker through regular meetings outside of school. Since this language service is free, students meet with one another and allow specific time to use each language, making sure not to mix or confuse

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<sup>68</sup> For information on the CLIL teacher training course see:  
<<https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/trainingcourses/clil/default.html>> [Accessed 8 March 2015].

<sup>69</sup> For the teacher training programme for English teachers in primary education see:  
<<https://www.unibz.it/it/education/progs/trainingcourses/english/default.html>> [Accessed 8 March 2015].

the L1 or L2 so students can increase their vocabulary (Fraenkel-Haeberle 2008: 278). When talking to a colleague from Germany about the language learning programmes, she was impressed by the language centre's facilities, but not all local students were content, as we shall see below, with the language requirements for university.

## 5.2 Classroom observations and the B2 entry exam

Even with the teacher training programme's new approach to language learning through the promotion of the L2 and the L3, local students who have grown up in the older schooling system may find they are unprepared for university. In 2011, I decided to enrol in an intensive language course provided through the FUB's language centre. The four week programme was conducted throughout the month of August and was designed for a certain student audience primarily to prepare students for the B2 entry exam in order to attend the FUB. Since the course was in Italian, apart from one Norwegian student and one or two who said they were from Germany, the majority of students came from the German-speaking valleys located outside of Bolzano. As the class was registered at a B1 level, I was surprised by the students' lack of proficiency in that some students had studied Italian for ten to twelve years but could barely articulate a complete sentence. Given that I had studied Italian ten years previously while a bachelors student in southern California, I was taken aback by the profound deficiency of Italian spoken amongst the German-speaking students. As a result, I noticed students were dependent on their German dialect and found speaking Italian to be difficult, suggesting they had not 'blended' with Italian-speaking locals or learned to converse in the L2.

Subsequently I took observation notes during my classes to see how students absorbed the L2. I also tried to see if German- and Italian-speaking students made efforts to mingle with each other.

Observation No. 1 (2 August 2011):

While waiting in the hallway for the start of orientation, before I could commence Italian class, I noticed the other students, who mostly gathered in groups, not on their own. To the left of me were German-speakers conversing with themselves in German dialect, while to my right was a group of Italians. I, on the other hand, was standing by myself, as I was the only native English-speaker. I was told by Mehtab, a Pakistani student, and Franziska, who came from Munich, Germany, that the German- and Italian-speaking FUB students prefer only to 'hang out' with each other.

'At the FUB, the German- and Italian-speaking students do not sit next to each other in class. The German-speakers normally sit at the front while the Italian-speaking students sit at the back. This leaves the international students with little choice but to sit in the middle of the classroom.'

Once I entered the class of my Italian language course I was surrounded by a sea of German dialect. The student to the left of me was nineteen years old and had been studying Italian for ten years but told me that he was concerned that this Italian language course would be too difficult for him to pass. Another German-speaking student, who had just moved back from Innsbruck, claimed that she had studied Italian for twelve years but ever since living in Austria for six years she was certain that she had forgotten her Italian due to the lack of language practice.

Observation No. 2 (3 August 2011):

On the second day of class, we broke up into small groups and were given a specific class assignment. With some paper and a pen the teacher wanted us to make a list of how to practice our Italian. Even though I thought this was a rather ironic assignment seeing as most of the students were Italian citizens, we were told to create a list of eight ways to learn Italian outside of our language learning class. Initially the students would provide suggestions like, 'We could read Italian newspapers' or 'We could get Italian boyfriends!', but when I recommended that the students work part-time in Bolzano, most students thought that the city was German-speaking. What they did not realize was that there are Italian-speaking districts where the locals only converse in Italian. This was a missed opportunity that the students could have explored, but instead they opted to ignore this option.

Observation No. 3 (8 August 2011):

Given that this class was designed to prepare incoming students for the LATs conducted in September, those students who intended to enrol in university were concerned about their knowledge of the L2. Several complaints were mentioned during class to our language teacher about the exam that was to be held in a month's time. Many of the students thought that the language requirements were too challenging for students to accomplish. Since there were students who were planning to begin computer science, they knew that they must also speak in English, which caused anxiety for several of the nineteen year old students who felt unprepared for the FUB.

Subsequently there were students who were somewhat terrified that they would not qualify for university, let alone be able to compete with native L2-speakers in order to obtain their own degree.

Observation No. 4 (16 August 2011):

Earlier in Chapter 4, I discussed how German schools teach courses in High German and how this can cause language issues for German-speaking students who normally converse in dialect. The L2, consequently, becomes High German, while the L1 is the dialect, which is used not just in private, but also in public settings and in professional environments.

So today, when the teachers opted to do a language exchange between Italian learners and German learners, because I could not speak High German, I was told to sit to one side while the other students worked on their L2.

After an hour of exchange my class reconvened and spoke about their tandem exchange, but what was interesting was the complaint that German-speaking students made about having to try to converse in High German. Since the German-speakers normally converse in their own dialect they were uncomfortable with speaking in High German. One student even stated that her partner's High German was much better than her knowledge of the language.

When talking with a German-speaking student from my class, I asked her why German schools taught in High German. She explained that there are multitudes of German dialects located throughout South Tyrol province.

Therefore High German functions as a 'neutral' language since dialects are normally not written (see Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 83).

Observation No. 5 (18 August 2011) 'The class uproar':

Two weeks before the students took their B2 entry exam, an argument broke out amongst the students. It started with a one hour practice B2 exam, which we had to take as part of the course requirements. When we received our results, most of the students failed, resulting in a full blown class discussion. One student claimed that she was tired of doing class assignments involving the use of worksheets for most lessons, while other students complained that we did not focus enough on writing, but concentrated on reading and speaking. Finally the students voiced their concerns about the B2 entry exam, explaining their fears of failing the test, at which point the teacher tried to defend her teaching tactics, stating that the university language courses were 'political'.

With one student threatening to talk to the FUB's director, the teacher had us do a class assignment where we could write a 'pretend letter' to the rector of the FUB describing our concerns with L2 learning. Rather than get involved in a classroom debate, soon afterwards I dropped out of the class, preferring instead to work with a private tutor who was well removed from the university's language politics.

While in hindsight it would have been easy to assume that German-speakers are less inclined to want to learn Italian, based on the evidence that I have given on the schooling system, many factors could contribute to these problems. Division, for example, in the South Tyrol school system could affect how students 'blend' in with one

another since students at the FUB must 'mix' with L2-speakers but are less inclined to socialize together. With Elspet stating that there is a 'fault with the school system', most notably due to division markers, it raises the question of whether school boundaries have a lasting social impact which could affect how students learn another language. In Chapter 4 I cited Kiss warning what could happen when students have to learn a language on top of their studies: 'it means a formidable obstacle to successful education and employment' (Kiss 2009: 141-142). With the FUB attempting to prepare local students for the languages spoken at university, the students' inability to speak in the L2 (and/or L3) may cause problems later on with their studies.

Even though the FUB tries to establish a school system where the professors work alongside language learners,<sup>70</sup> Carlo Romeo, a local historian who used to teach the Italian language, says of the Italian-speaking students:

'...in Italian-speaking schools, if they study German since elementary school, their results are still insufficient because the students have an aversion to the second language. Despite "learning" it, they don't speak it, and treat German like a dead language [resulting in second language learning obstructions].'

Therefore I was uncertain when, in summer 2011, I attended a two day workshop at the FUB where the language centre's director, Dr Christoph Nickenig, conducted a presentation on the 'success' of the FUB's language programme. In his PowerPoint he stressed the university's objectives to provide the region with trilingual learning, but throughout his speech he concentrated more on L2 and L3 learning than on the consequences this could have on local students. While it is admirable to try to provide multilingual learning to a region that is 'fluent' in two languages, my first concern was

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<sup>70</sup> For more information on lecturer-student relationships at the FUB and the lecturers' role on monologic talk on language learning in the classroom see, Daniela Veronesi's article, 'La lezione accademica in contesto plurilingue: prospettive di analisi tra parlato monologico e interazione plurilocutoria' in *Bi- and multilingual universities: European perspectives and beyond* (2009).

with the BA requirements where students can enrol at B2 level. Although it is assumed that students from the local region will at least be fluent in German or Italian, as a high B2-speaker of the Italian language I would be hesitant to say this is enough for non-native speakers to compete with native-speakers in a higher educational environment. While I understand that students are expected to advance in their L2 throughout their course degree, this is further complicated when the students must also learn another language alongside their L2. What is worse is that students have one year to learn the L3 before they must be B1 proficient,<sup>71</sup> which for some language learners can be a rather trying task on top of their regular course assignments.

Although the FUB would like to have a language learning programme that turns students into trilingual-speakers (Campisi 2000: 485), at present students finish their degrees with some L2 and L3 competence but do not have to be near native-speakers. As a result, this brought about another language learning concern regarding how the students are assessed in that I wondered how the L2 (and L3) learners were graded on a scale in comparison to native-speaking students. If by chance the students are assessed based on their comprehension rather than their grammatical mistakes, surely native-speaking students would still have the advantage when compared to second language learners.

To support these claims I read an article by Vietti, who followed an English learner in the sciences who had come from Pakistan but was attending English courses at the FUB's Faculty of Science and Technology. Linguistically, although the student was qualified to attend courses with other English learners, I was surprised by his and other students' insufficient English when required to speak English with one another.

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<sup>71</sup> For more information see:  
<<https://www.unibz.it/en/prospective/multilingual/requirements/default.html>> [Accessed 15 March 2015].

In a dialogue with students from a variety of backgrounds (from the Middle East, North Africa and parts of Asia), the students gathered to eat chicken provided by a Moroccan student and wanted to thank him for his contribution:

[Student 1]: What

[Student 2]: for this (...) for chicken (.) thank you

[Student 3]: do you say there are forty people but (.) there are [only] (...) one two ... three ...four five

[Student 4]: Forty people?

[Student 5]: Fourteen

[Student 3]: Fourteen

[Student 4]: [points at chicken] for chicken

[Student 1]: eh?

[Student 4]: (for chicken) thank you ...' (Vietti 2009: 238)

While linguistically speaking an L2 can be challenging when conversing with non-native English-speakers, these English language students were registered at a minimum B2 level and should have been more conversant in the language. The transcription above would suggest that these students could speak at a beginner A1 level, but realistically they should be speaking in a fluent manner, rather than in fragmented words or phrases.<sup>72</sup> As a language teacher as well as an anthropologist, this makes me question the FUB's L2 requirements and ask whether more attention is spent on students' abilities to read and write than on students' speaking capabilities.

This ties in with an issue that Nickenig brought up regarding English language acquisition in that students are unable to practice the English language with native

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<sup>72</sup> For more information on the CEFR language requirements expected at the B2 level see: <<http://www.france-langue.com/french-pedagogy/french-levels.html>> [Accessed 12 March 2015].

English-speakers in the region. Just as the FUB has several English language classes, the opportunity to use English is limited amongst the student body in the province, where most students are not native English-speakers. Even Jemma Prior, who is an English language teacher at the FUB, has stated that when it comes to tandem activities:

[they] are an excellent means to foster Italian and German language acquisition due to the large numbers of students who have German and Italian as their first languages, but our multilingual university...still has very few native or near-native English-speaking students and academic staff. This, therefore, causes great difficulties in pairing up tandem partners when one of the most requested "received" languages is English' (2009: 278).

Subsequently Prior refers to second language acquisition and the role that 'interaction' has in L2 learning in that, if students want to improve in the L2 and the L3, students should interface with other native speakers (ibid.). But finding native English-speakers can be complicated, resulting in reduced progression in the language.

That said, for German- and Italian-speakers learning the L2, linguistically this should not be a problem since they are constantly surrounded by their L2-speaking neighbours inside and outside education settings. However, interviews suggest that not all local citizens are content with the South Tyrol school system and are unsure whether it can prepare students for a bi- or trilingual university on the evidence of their school experience.

### 5.3 South Tyrolean perspectives on the education system

During my interviews with German- and Italian-speaking South Tyroleans, there were differences regarding L2 learning and whether individuals thought that the local schooling system prepared its students for bi- or trilingual communication. In some instances, concerning linguistic and cultural preservation, some felt that school division

was quite necessary, especially during the years of early language acquisition so that students could acquire their L1. Others thought that the school system promoted further separation, thus defeating the point of the FUB, notably when I would refer to my own class observations with German-speakers at the university.

Therefore I tried to concentrate on five main interviews with respect to second language acquisition to provide the reader with some of their responses, which reflect the concerns stressed by local people.

### **Interview 7: Beatrix**

When talking with Beatrix about the complex schooling system, she insisted that when it came to education, multilingual education and L2 proficiency depended on three basic teaching components: psychological motivation for wanting to learn the L2, teacher quality and perseverance all determined whether students could advance in the L2 within the separate education system.

As a student who grew up in the German-speaking school system from elementary through high school, Beatrix excelled at language when she was in middle school because the language programme was very advanced. The residential school, which also was a Catholic school, was run by nuns who had a strict curriculum. The consequence was that the quality of language learning was positive based on her own experience, so much so that the students learned advanced Italian grammar before they left to attend high school.

Regardless of the fact that Beatrix's elementary school years were spent in a divided 'mixed' school building with separate entrances for German- and Italian-speaking students so that they did not mix with each other, this did not seem to affect her interest in the L2 on the evidence of her later years.

In high school, when she transitioned away from Catholic school because her language skills were still advanced, she found she did not have to study the Italian language as much as other students in her class. That said, the first two years of her Italian language courses were taught by several 'insufficient' teachers. By her third year of Italian language classes, her teacher had to make up for lost time by giving extra class work to assist the German-speaking students so that they could progress in the L2.

As for language exchanges between other local schools, they were not an option offered in her region, let alone within the province, which is something that she thinks would benefit the local schooling system. While she might not necessarily support a multilingual schooling system, there is something to be said for group exchanges, especially amongst the local schools in the province so students can practice the other languages.

"The belief that the minority should be educated in its minority language is completely justified, but how it is administered is what I would question... the school boards should decide how to become more intercultural in favouring the other languages for integration and language learning.

I went to "Italy" [an expression German-speakers use when explaining that they decided to visit a part of the Italian state outside of South Tyrol] when I was maybe fifteen or sixteen years old. For two summers in a row I went to language schools there because I wanted more than I got from the system in South Tyrol. So I went for three

weeks to Florence and then three weeks to Ravenna. But such things should not be done privately. They should be guided by the school boards for ALL South Tyrolean schools.'

In her view, the separate school systems should 'talk' with one another to encourage group relations in the region.

### **Interview 8: Hans Karl**

Hans Karl, a political journalist from South Tyrol province, was one of several interviewees whom I met who was unable (or unwilling) to provide me with an answer regarding his perspectives on the school system.

As for the FUB, he claimed that some German-speakers saw it as a colonialist trap by the Italian government to promote Fascist agendas. It was only when the FUB was finally established in the latter half of the 1990s that the German-speakers thought that their language was protected from the Italian-speaking government. Only then could they 'risk' attending a trilingual university once their language had been consolidated and preserved.

Similar to the French- English Institute in the University of Ottawa, which was designed to promote bilingualism while also preserving and trying to develop French culture alongside the English-speaking culture in Ontario, Canada (Beillard 2000: 471), the FUB has at its core the need to encourage trilingualism to move past the local tensions in the region. However, Jean-Michel Beillard explains that, despite bilingual efforts to advocate and protect Ottawa's French culture, there is:

'nevertheless the expression of both a fear and a hope: the fear that the minority language and culture might disappear, and the hope that the "right", i.e., monolingual French institution might prevent such a thing from happening... It is [also] elsewhere, deeply rooted, in the notion that bilingual institutions are not the right structures for the preservation of the culture of a minority' (2000: 475).

Although Beillard does not agree with these specific statements, the FUB wants to protect provincial minorities by encouraging their language and culture. At the same time, it tries to advocate linguistic assimilation so that students move beyond their social boundaries.

### **Interview 9: Dr Günther Andergassen**

When I met with Dr Günther Andergassen, he was quite passionate about the German-speaking school system and the importance of ensuring students practice their L1 before they are introduced to the L2. A by-product of the war-torn history of the province, he knew the affects that language had had on his father, who was forced to learn Italian and never properly learned High German, meaning that he was illiterate in both. Subsequently, Andergassen was a vocal advocate of promoting a 'separate but equal' schooling system, insisting that the language teachers should be of mother tongue so that students could develop their proficiency.

Seeing as he was a supporter of monolingual learning, I asked him if he thought the schooling system adequately prepared students for trilingual university for German- and Italian-speaking students. Surprisingly, he did not really have a succinct answer and did not know why I would ask that question, so he merely said 'sure...maybe...' before changing the topic by explaining the FUB's language requirements. To justify his response he said

that language preparation depended largely on specific schools and whether students were receiving a higher quality of teachers to prepare them for bi- or trilingual education. From his perspective, students had to 'choose' to want to study, which would affect their language ability and determine whether they would transition linguistically from monolingual to trilingual education.

### **Interview 10: Ilaria**

Ilaria, however, had a different approach to learning as an outsider originally from Rome. She criticized the schooling system based on her own observations working from within the FUB. While discussing her issues with South Tyrol province over coffee, she turned to me and asked, 'What is bilingualism? Does that mean that you can speak and think in both languages flawlessly?' Realistically she thought this was not the case. Yet continuing, she stated that she noticed contradictions that existed from within the schooling system in that the students were growing up with a monolingual sense of how to interact in their society only to be thrust into a multicultural environment as evidenced based on the FUB. Consequently she felt that the South Tyrolean students did not transfer well into the FUB, resulting in a culture clash with Germans and Italians both trying to make sense of their new surroundings.

### **Interview 11: Donna**

Donna was of the same opinion as Ilaria when it came to her views on the school system. When stressing the importance of multilingual learning

through the CLIL method in early education, with reference to the FUB she stated:

'It's a trilingual university. How are local students expected to be trilingual? How are we supposed to do that? In ten years? It's ridiculous. The schools [and students] here are designed to be separated and then suddenly they're supposed to be together once they reach university.'

In her opinion she thought that the 'system' was not realistic and that compared to immigrants inside the province, some immigrant children would come to South Tyrol speaking their mother tongue once they started school, but over time would quickly learn Italian, English, High German and dialect, but were never congratulated for their efforts. Conversely, if a student from the region spoke their mother tongue for the majority of time inside of school and only had four hours per week of the second language, they would never become fully multilingual. This supports observations made by Lightbrown and Spada, who insist that schools should be more pragmatic. One to two hours of the L2 during a school week will not create a wealth of L2-speaking students, regardless of the age of when the student learns the language. To become 'native-like', students should be 'completely surrounded by the [second] language as early as possible' (1999: 68).

Despite there being a desire by some civilians for a 'mixed experience' in South Tyrolean education, Donna felt that politicians were preventing this progression from happening inside the schooling system.

Based on these interviews and other observations, it is evident that there is a diversity of responses. Some locals seem to find that monolingual education is the only way to

preserve one's identity, while others are concerned that 'separate but equal' education may deter students from multilingual learning. Subsequently what I have observed is a variety of people who represent differing points of view reinforcing the reality that it is not easy to appease every community when trying to rectify or rationalize the school system. As a result, there are some locals who would like to keep the system diversified but also separate, while others try to concentrate on better language teaching in order to promote the second language.

There is also a unifying factor in these views in that each person wants to have a strong school system in order to promote language, culture and identity so that students gain the most from education. What is yet to be determined is whether the schooling system can be modified to prepare local students for the multilingual aspects of the trilingual FUB so that students are fluent in all three languages.

#### 5.4 The positives, negatives and suggestions for bi- or trilingual universities

*'There are both positive and negative aspects to [bilingual education], and the main question is whether the balance tilts in the right direction' (Beillard 2000: 474).*

Multilingual education, while it tries to reinforce interaction between different groups, it is not always easily accepted in bilingual regions which are steeped in social conflicts between nations. As with the case of Ottawa, while the bilingual university works hard to help the groups live 'side by side' (Beillard 2000: 474), Beillard admits that some French-speakers are quite hesitant in supporting a bilingual university. In his words:

*'Bilingualism is always a source of irritations... In its most extreme form...a small but vocal minority of Franco-Ontarians [have rallied] for the creation of a French-only university. They view bilingualism at the university as a path leading to the assimilation of the francophone minority. This argument is not too convincing, of*

course, for by the time students are old enough to go to university, either assimilation has already taken its toll, or it never will' (2000: 475).

In other words, Beillard explains that when it comes to language assimilation it may not occur if students are much older, despite efforts by universities to break this trend, as evident within the FUB.

Nevertheless it should be noted that there are positive aspects to a bilingual university, especially when trying to encourage cohesion amongst the language groups of South Tyrol. Although bilingual universities are more expensive than establishing a monolingual system, Purser refers to language efforts at bilingual institutes as an 'acceptable alternative' for multiculturalism (2000: 451). Even at the University of Ottawa most students see the benefits of immersion education 'and will gladly take advantage of it' (Beillard 2000: 474) as cultural exchange is unavoidable within the student campus.

Having said that, Beillard still cautions that:

[i]n any bilingual university in which one language is a minority language, there will always be the fear that the army of the minority is doomed to be defeated [by the majority]' (2000: 476).

Therefore he adds that the majority's true group intentions (presumably to study with minorities) will determine the success of multilingual education based on how the local groups live with each other (ibid.).

Researchers Langer and Imbach are careful to provide language suggestions for bilingual education. One tip they try to suggest is to be culturally sensitive when in a region that has social tensions. If there is no linguistic co-operation between the varied groups, 'it becomes all the more important for the linguistic majority to be cautious and sensitive [of the minority]' (2000: 467). Another point is to try to develop a concept that

incorporates the use of local languages 'for meetings, regulations, information materials, etc.' (ibid.) so that the provincial languages are regulated. Even when it comes to lecturers they must have a passive knowledge of the languages used within the university, especially for new faculty members who are hired as part of a bilingual-learning team (ibid.). Additionally, Purser provides rather sound advice, which could be used for bilingual university mission statements in that:

[at the university], there is a need to facilitate contacts between language groups in order to help overcome some basic historical issues, and contacts between students [which] can certainly create positive outcomes. Such a policy [in theory could help] to ease future relations among groups, rather than to erase past history. In order for this process to be successful, there may be a special need to promote greater awareness and use of the minority culture by the majority' (2000: 455).

Just as Purser states that there are differences in education leading up to bilingual institutions, these distinctions in elementary and secondary education can 'lead to different learning cultures amongst students...organizational differences also appear in non-academic units' (Purser 2000: 457) as has been the case based on my observations.

Therefore I return to Campisi's article regarding the 'success' of the trilingual FUB when she asks if the Free University will prepare students for trilingual fluency in their degrees. Since her article was written only three years after the university was formally established, she insists that 'one cannot...ask: "Did it work?"...[but] "Will it work?"' (2000: 485). But based on my fieldwork observations, local students may find multilingual courses challenging, regardless of the FUB's intentions, especially if they are unprepared for university as a result of monolingual education.

### 5.5 Conclusion: Thoughts to Consider

When considering the impact of the local schooling system in preparing students for a bi- or trilingual university, it is true that local students have the option of enrolling in universities outside South Tyrol. This means that there may be some students who are quite content with attending a monolingual institution, but these opinions tend to alter when they finish with their studies and look to South Tyrol for employment.

Consequently, it would seem that there should be a solution for students searching for a bi- or trilingual learning or at least a schooling system that can adequately prepare them for a multilingual learning environment. Although there are logistical reasons for having a 'separate but equal' education system, there are some students and parents who would prefer alternative approaches to the monolingual education system.

While at present Ladin-speaking education can provide students with quadrilingual learning, the schooling system is reserved for those who grow up in the Ladin-speaking valleys of Val Gardena and Val Badia. As a result, Giudiceandrea and Mazza feel that it is time to modify the three-part education schooling system by providing locals with a fourth option for language learning via a separate bilingual schooling system. Students should be given the option to have classes which are taught solely in their mother tongue, as well as an option for those who would like to have their classes taught in German and Italian (2012: 96-98).

Giudiceandrea and Mazza state they are aware of the limitations and difficulties that must be taken into account to establish a school system that incorporates the needs of local groups. The management of such a school would at a minimum require the collaboration of the German- and Italian-speaking education offices, not to mention

several years to prepare incoming teachers for the requirements of their unique positions (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 97-98).

While Forer et al. (2008) found that several of their interviewees were in support of bilingual education, Giudiceandrea and Mazza realize that despite there being interest in establishing a multilingual option, there will always be students who would still prefer to attend a monolingual education setting so that they do not 'lose themselves' to bilingual education at the expense of maintaining their L1 (2012: 98).

Even so, Josep Maria Artigal states that in spite of language concerns around immersion education:

'An immersion programme, if done correctly, does not contrast with the L1. An immersion programme provides, at the very beginning, communication with the child. This means that s/he recognizes the language used to communicate as if it is that of the mother tongue... [Additionally] [a]n immersion school is a diverse form of teaching and does not set one's sights on altering the habits and cultural identities of its students' (1993: 99, 102).

Therefore, although immersion teaching within South Tyrol may be viewed by some people as taboo (Alber 2007: 240), it is clear that there are those within the South Tyrol school system who would like to transfer to bilingual learning.

Given that 'there is a widely-held lay belief that younger L2 learners generally do better than older [language] learners' (Ellis 1994: 484), some parents may prefer to place their children in a multilingual setting starting in their children's early years of education. While there are still debates over whether the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) is best observed in the beginning years of education, Ellis explains that there is no consensus on whether CPH is 'true' or if there is an L2 learning 'window of opportunity' (2008: 24). At any rate, some may feel that this should not prevent parents from searching for

bilingual language options, especially if it is felt that native-like L2 mastery can be achieved in early education (see Lightbrown and Spada 1999: 63).

But until the opportunity arises for students to have a multilingual education system, Giudiceandrea and Mazza suggest schooling alternatives that can be used within the monolingual system. From their perspective, language learning should not be limited to the confines of the second language classroom in that the teacher should prepare students for language acquisition once on the streets with L2-speaking neighbours. The teacher must also set an example by demonstrating their comfort in living in two different cultures, so that students can learn to be far more open to cultures and live within a plurilingual context (2012: 99-100). Since students should learn not to be afraid of making mistakes when adjusting to new words in the L2, the language teacher should encourage students to take advantage of the L2 spoken in their vicinity by practicing the language daily through tandem exchanges or sports events within their own community (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 103-107).

While some informants would insist that the South Tyrol school system is not as insufficient as my research would suggest, it is important to recognize that there is room for improvement, especially as populations change. In the next chapter, when I discuss other possible factors which may affect how locals do learn the L2, I will address how language learning is affected by society and its historical and educational aspects.

# Ethnography section

## Part II:

Societal factors and locals' responses  
to L2 learning issues

## Chapter 6: Beyond the three-part education system- Eleven societal and educational factors that contribute to L2 learning

*'The social and cultural milieu in which learners grow up determines their beliefs about language and culture' (Ellis 1994: 236).*

*It was 9am on a Tuesday morning and I was running late for work. Before leaving for fieldwork, my mother had insisted that I invest in a wheelie laptop bag. 'With all that walking from the academy to the school, you'll be thankful that you bought yourself one of these!' and yet with all the obstacles on the sidewalk that morning, I wondered if flying would have been easier.*

*I just had just turned the corner heading towards my office when I saw a large, white van parked on the cracked sidewalk blocking my path. 'Of course', I grumbled to myself as I was forced to walk around the van into flowing traffic. As I swerved to avoid an oncoming car, I jumped back onto the sidewalk only to barely avoid stepping into a pile of doggie waste; a sight which I noticed only existed in the Italian-speaking parts of Bolzano. Despite my heavy load of stationary, books, a laptop, and my lunch, I started to consider whether a backpack would have been a better alternative...*

\*

As I sifted through my fieldwork observation notes, I tried to remain objective, but it was obvious that subjectivity was present through much of my research. Given that Bolzano is largely divided into German- and Italian-speaking quarters (see Peterlini 2013: 234-236), I started to notice my negatively biased opinions towards the Italian-speaking parts of the city. With the German-speaking quarters appearing generally much cleaner and their sidewalks noticeably better paved, it was difficult not to feel a sense of resentment towards Italian inefficiency. One evening I called my partner to lament my concerns about my frustrations. I explained how I felt that Italians were

'selfish' and had a 'rat pack' mentality, and the Germans could sometimes be socially closed and disinterested in speakers of foreign languages.

With hindsight, I realize that these observations were based merely on personal irritations, a common affliction amongst anthropologists adjusting to cultural norms. As I started to become accustomed to the language nuances used in the region and the culture, I met local people who clearly did not fit the stereotypes mentioned above. At the same time, as I continued my observations and transitioned to interviews, certain patterns emerged in people's responses when asked to give their opinions regarding language tensions in South Tyrol.

Although initially, at the start of my fieldwork, I had developed preliminary views as to why Germans may dislike some Italians, my reasoning was flawed. Firstly, terms like 'dislike' were not commonly used to refer to a language group, especially as the diverse South Tyrolean communities intermarried and worked with each other. Secondly, I was advised by one local anthropologist to avoid placing my informants' responses into three distinctive categories based on language. By presuming that German-, Italian- and Ladin-speakers maintained their own group perspectives, I was told that I would run the risk of assuming broad generalizations, which in reality may not be there. I might also be inclined to develop a simplistic view of a rather complex situation.

After analyzing some fifty formal (and informal) interviews, I was able to list a variety of responses, reinforcing the idea that locals are divided over how, and whether, to promote the L2. With citizens uncertain over whether the school system should remain linguistically divided, my informants agreed that, as well as the school system, other factors affected L2 learning.

Therefore, when analyzing data from the interviews, I noticed that there is a fine line between whether the researcher should concentrate on the 'bigger picture' or focus on individual responses. Vered Amit explains:

[that] in our pursuit of abstract, generalised knowledge, we smooth out, at some cost "messy inchoate experience, dismissing things as insignificant when they do not fit" (Wikan 1991: 288)...if I want to move from these particular life experiences to more general insights, then I must inevitably distil and select as I move from the particular to the more general' (2010: 211).

In my attempts to provide an authentic account of my experiences working and living in South Tyrol, I have elected to focus on the opinions of the individual, while simultaneously grouping (to the best of my ability) their thoughts into specific categories. The result is an eleven piece congruent account of informants' personal opinions of societal factors, which they feel may contribute to second language acquisition issues.

However, before moving on to these societal 'issues', it is important to examine the theory and how second language theorists interpret the role of social factors in inhibiting second language learning. Rod Ellis, who has written extensively on the study of second language acquisition, states that social factors have an indirect influence on how people learn a second language (1994: 42, 197, 239). Rather than provide an extensive list of what he means by 'social factors', Ellis reveals that one's socio-economic status, as well as a person's ethnic background, 'determine the learning opportunities which the individual learners experience' which may affect their use of the L2 (1994: 197):

[The effect of social factors] is mediated by variables of a psychological nature (in particular, attitudes towards the target language, its culture and its speakers) that

determine the amount of contact with the L2, the nature of the interpersonal interactions learners engage in and their motivation' (Ellis 1994: 239).

Social factors, so it seems, tend to shape a person's attitudes towards the L2 and their language learning outcomes (Ellis 1994: 24) based on their social relations with the target language community.

That said, Ellis is missing an important social factor, the role of history on local group relations. Based on my research, this has directly affected L2 learning, especially in South Tyrol. While Ellis goes on to explain that 'social distance' can affect relations with the target language group (see 1994: 25-26), there is no reference as to how shared history has shaped this group distance, resulting in deficient L2 learning.

Although acculturation with the target language community can help promote high levels of L2 proficiency, assimilation is an element which Ellis does address (along with Schumann) in promoting better L2 learning outcomes (ibid.). If an ethnic group produces a language which is similar to the target language community, the L2 should be easier to comprehend (Ellis 1994: 25), resulting in more positive assimilation. In the case of Catalan versus Spanish, Stephens explains that due to their linguistic backgrounds, Catalans have found it easier to assimilate Spaniards into the region of Catalonia (Stephens 1976: 627). Since both languages stem from the Romance family, Spaniards, in turn, have learned to speak Catalan. The same, however, cannot be said, for Spaniards in the Basque country, as the Basque language is substantially dissimilar (Stephens 1976: 626).

Consequently, Giles and Byrne state that, in order to "'converge" towards the norms of the target language', positive social factors must be involved in L2 learning, so communication can occur in the L2 (Ellis 1994: 26). Additionally, Giles and Byrne

suggest that 'learners are more likely to converge if they perceive their culture to be equal or superior in status to that of the target language speakers' (ibid.). While I agree that a show of equal status could encourage second language acquisition, assuming one group is superior to another language group could result in negative L2 perceptions. As evidenced in Chapter 3, when some Italians opted to not learn German because '[they] live in Italy', it was this rigid attitude which inevitably deterred some South Tyroleans from learning the L2.

Therefore, in the following chapter I try to address a detailed glimpse of the societal factors which pervade South Tyrol, whether subconsciously or apparent within the community. As language researchers have concentrated many of their efforts on the role of anxiety, motivation and student attitudes towards L2 learning (see Ellis 1994; Horwitz et al. 1986; Gardner 1985), they have not explored alternative social factors which impact second language acquisition.

### 6.1 The language learning 'block'

When I initially set about conducting interviews, rather than provide a set of questions for people to answer, I merely asked them their opinions on the education system. Over time, this naturally led to further topics concerning second language acquisition. During one such interview, one of my Italian students, Ashley, told me of a language learning issue. This problem was never mentioned in the second language literature nor discussed in anthropological material, but it apparently existed in the South Tyrol province subconsciously amongst L2 learners. It was a concern she referred to as a language learning 'block', a self-imposed, psychological response system. Placing her hands on her chest, she said it was internal and that this 'block' was what prevented L2 learning.

Intrigued, I asked her to explain in further detail what she meant by this language learning 'block' based on her own observations. Raised in the province of Trento, on the border with South Tyrol, she informed me that when she had first moved to Bolzano in order to attend high school, she noticed contrasts between the Italian-speaking Bolzanini students and Italian-speaking students who came from Trento.

'When I go to Germany I have no problem speaking German, but when I'm in South Tyrol...I don't know...for South Tyrolean Italian-speakers, they have a blocked side and they don't want to speak German even if they can, which I find very strange...'

For many Italian-speaking Bolzanini students attending courses in Bolzano province, there is a psychological inhibition that some locals felt discouraged L2 acquisition. It was this 'block' that prevented them from learning the German language, as opposed to those Italian-speaking students who grew up in other regions of the Italian state, unexposed to negative sentiments associated with L2 learning. According to Ashley, the 'block' in Bolzano existed for a variety of historical reasons, largely due to past linguistic social tensions, as opposed to Trento province, whose history did not involve such disparaging views of German-speaking people. Therefore, Italian-speaking students who had grown up in Trento province showed a greater willingness to learn German and were generally more accepting of the German-speaking population.

Teresa, a student at the FUB who was raised as a Trentino native, agreed with Ashley's observations that local prejudices between the German- and Italian-speaking communities impeded L2 acquisition. Additionally, Teresa felt that the Italian-speakers' had a negative 'mentality' towards learning German. Having studied German from an early age in Trento, Teresa admitted that the Italian school system had gained a reputation for providing an insufficient language learning programme. It was only

through persistence and a natural inclination towards the German language that she was able to develop her L2 fluency by learning High German outside of school.

When she applied to the FUB, it was because she wanted to attend an Italian university with a German focus. One consequence of being an Italian native speaker proficient in the L2, in a community that was culturally divided, was that she was one of the few native Italian-speakers who had both German- and Italian-speaking friends.

In her opinion, this 'block', from the Italian-speaking perspective, was because the German language was difficult to learn. Despite the fact that she thought that the linguistic separation was progressing in a positive direction, the perceived unfamiliarity and/or complexity of the German language was a challenge that Italian-speakers had to overcome.

Dr Drumbl, a professor of German at the FUB, asserted that it was the fault of the students and their parents in not encouraging language use at home that prevented students from progressing in the L2. Furthermore, Drumbl believed that the Italian school system's focus on grammar and memorization skills had interfered with students' understanding the deeper meanings behind the purpose of second language learning. In his view, language teachers in Italian-speaking schools were unhelpful and unwilling to 'think outside the box'. Additionally, he stated that they were reluctant to consider other methods of second language teaching and that these elements were creating an education system that deterred students from L2 acquisition. Italian-speaking students, he thought, were unable to see the application behind second language learning because they had not learned the skills necessary to apply their L2 knowledge of grammar and memorization in the wider social context. In the words of Josep Maria Artigal, 'When one learns a second or third language, one does not learn only the language, but also

learns to recognize those things that go beyond the language' (1993: 100-101). Grammatical and pragmatic approaches to second language learning 'are not different things, but two parts of the same thing' (Artigal 1993: 103), both of which aim to teach the L2 linguistic structure while exposing students to other cultures.

For Giudiceandrea and Mazza, in South Tyrolean education, too much focus is spent on accuracy, and this obsession with precision can hinder students' efforts to improve their own fluency. Instead, efforts should be made to allow students to speak 'freely' without the fear of making mistakes, so that they can become more fluid in the second language and be encouraged to use the L2 outside of school (see 2012: 102-103). The objective, they explain, is for teachers to train students to 'throw themselves' into real-life situations so that they are encouraged to practice listening and speaking, as well as reading and writing, with L2 speakers (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 103-104).

Additionally, they suggest that Italian-speaking students who are hesitant to practice the L2, should seek out a native German-speaker and ask to converse in High German, even though Germans normally speak dialect (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 108). While it is common for German-speakers to switch to Italian when conversing with Italian-speaking locals, it is advisable that Italian-speakers be encouraged to use German instead of reserving the L2 for the classroom. 'Using a foreign language', claims Roberts et al., 'is not experienced as a social practice until students find themselves in an environment where the [second] language is [used] all around them...' (2001: 9).

When examining alternative causes to this language learning 'block', South Tyrolean vice-president Dr Christian Tommasini implied in his interview that this L2 learning 'block' is the result of parents' influence on children. If students thought the relations between Germans and Italians were hostile or disrupted in some way, research 'suggests

that students form their own opinions of intergroup relations in South Tyrol [based on the opinions] of their family' (Abel et al. 2012: 70). Tommasini's parents were Italian nationalists and thought negatively of the German-speaking group. However, Tommasini stepped away from their adverse social conventions and married a German-speaking South Tyrolean. He also became an advocate of bilingual language teaching for children in the South Tyrolean school system. Even though he is aware that there are locals who remain reluctant to accept language assimilation policies, he identified a need for the community to move past this language 'block' in order to be linguistically integrated into an open European Union.

Regardless of the inclination of some to protect one's group identity, Bolzano historian Carlo Romeo explained that there are young South Tyroleans who understand the importance of L2 acquisition. There is a desire by some students to have a 'foreign experience' with speakers of the L2, but in order to bridge the cultural gaps that exist in South Tyrolean society, the community must become multilingual.

'There are a lot of young Italian *mammone* [i.e. mamma's boys] who always stay at home and are afraid of leaving Italy. These young Italians come from a cultural world that is trying to slow down the progress towards having a European identity. This has been an issue for many, many years. Here, specifically in South Tyrol, it would be better if we could [encourage multilingualism] by doing bilingual classes (some in German, some in English), like the Ladins do in their school system.'

In defending the Ladin-speaking education system, Romeo recognized their linguistic advantage. Since the Ladins' multilingual proficiency is acknowledged among both German- and Italian-speakers, Romeo felt that if the L2 was introduced at a younger age, this would prevent the language learning 'block' from forming. 'If a child gets used to learning to speak in more languages...they are capable of learning more languages.' But early L2 introductions would require schooling changes supported by

administrators and politicians. Additionally, the learning of Italian for German-speakers 'is [still] loaded with historical, sociological and psychological preconceptions' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 241), which sometimes results in a language learning 'block'.

Consequently, the 'Free Choice' option in local education (an item, which is addressed in Chapter 4) has provided parents with an alternative to monolingual learning by placing their children in a school of their own preference. Although this concept of 'Free Choice' comes with some political complications, many children attend L2-speaking schools. While some parents would prefer not to expose their children to the L2 of the region, Dr Andergassen estimated that 'out of 5,000 people, only five would choose not to have their children learn another language, and those people are usually politicians.'

Since children in South Tyrol are given a choice as to which school they would like to attend, Dr Andergassen believes that this 'Free Choice' reduces the language learning 'block' to some extent. If the 'Free Choice' option were to be replaced with multilingual schools, then students would be 'forced' to attend courses in the L2. 'It is about equality for everyone', continued Andergassen, 'and if students have the choice over which school they can attend, then students will be more equipped for better fluency, promoting second language acquisition.' In Trento, for example, he stated that there is a greater desire amongst students to learn German due to them being given the choice over whether to participate or not. 'If students *have to* learn a language, then they *won't want to*', suggesting that enforced L2 learning causes further complications in second language acquisition by contributing to this 'block'.

## 6.2 The role of history in the L2 learning 'block' through the 'victim' and 'conqueror' mentality

*'... "culture" is always relational, an inscription of communicative processes that exist, historically, between<sup>73</sup> subjects in relations of power' (Clifford 1986: 15).*

When examining the role of history in L2 learning, Kager states that recent South Tyrolean history has affected relations in respect of local communication between all three language groups. Despite the linguistic richness that pervades the area, along with increasing touristic interest in the region, these factors are undervalued by cultural conditions which cause language communities to 'conserve distance' from each other (Peterlini 2013: 267).

'During the history of the South Tyrol question, both [language groups] developed a strong [linguistic] solidarity. Both groups, and especially the German/Ladin community, were well aware that their chances of survival depended on the unity of the group. German- and Ladin-speakers were opposed to anything which might expose the group to Italian cultural assimilation tendencies. The result was a segregation policy: one goes to a school of one's group...' (Kager 1998).

This residue of anti-colonialist<sup>74</sup> thinking from the German- and the Ladin-speaking groups in opposition to Italian Fascist policies emphasized the linguistic tensions that exist between minority groups and their Italian-speaking counterparts. Since Italians considered the German- and Ladin-speaking cultures to be 'less than equal in the social (un)conscious' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 239-240), this increased conflict between all three language groups and the blocking of language learning attempts that

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<sup>73</sup> Emphasis is Clifford's (see 1986: 15).

<sup>74</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, I have opted not to focus on postcolonial literature. While my informant, Hans Karl, along with other researchers, do occasionally refer to terms like 'colonialized' or the 'conqueror' in reference to German- and Italian-speakers, these terms are sometimes used as symbolic metaphors to explain the difficult relations existing between the language communities which began during the First and Second World Wars. To concentrate on postcolonial literature would involve ignoring the reality that some Italian-speakers have lived in South Tyrol for centuries. Therefore, I would like to focus on second language acquisition literature, alongside anthropological material, as it relates to second language learning in the province.

could otherwise have reduced internal local factions. The 'colonialized' versus 'colonializer' mentalities had continuing social effects that made learning the L2 a more difficult process based on people's perceptions of the social, historical and political circumstances (Lanthaler 2007: 234).

The concept of a 'victim' versus a 'conqueror' mentality was addressed when corresponding with my informant Hans Karl. I asked him about the 'block' and whether he thought this phenomenon could be attributed to historical relations in the region. In his opinion, historical identification markers (i.e. 'victim', 'conqueror') were very much a contributing component of the 'block'.

The reason for these labels, which arose in South Tyrol presumably as early as the First World War, was the result of German-speakers inferring that they were the 'victims' due to Italian occupation in the region. These social labels, he stated, were another set of elements which impeded second language learning when the two main language groups were forced to live together in an environment that was originally part of Austria. The German-speakers were 'the victims' because of their instinctive attitude of defence, especially towards Italian-speakers, while the Italian-speaking group played the role of the 'conqueror', as they worked their way into the province.

Despite this, Giovanetti suggests that there has been a switch in roles since the passing of the Second Autonomy statute, when after 1972 more privileges were given to the German-speaking community. The consequence was one where the Italian-speaking group found itself at the margins of society without much representation in politics and local culture, as compared to the German-speaking group (1998: 893). According to Voltmer:

'Today German-speakers can quite confidently state that they have come back on top since 1972, so much so that some Italian-speakers claim to be themselves the minority in the Province and want to be acknowledged as such...' (2007: 211).

This 'alternation in power' between the two major language groups has resulted in strong collective group identities where 'in-groups' have developed in response to common issues 'such as nation-building or the fight against [a language group] aggressor' (Votmer 2007: 212). This 'stick together' policy is only reinforced when Germans and Italians view themselves as 'victims' whose 'blindness for the viewpoint of the other [language group] and lack of self-criticism persists as each side claims the minority [and victim role] for itself' (Votmer 2007: 213). Fait explains that:

'South Tyrolean identity politics is premised on a victim status that has outlasted its usefulness, and now prevents local people from accustoming themselves to hold multiple, fluid, hybrid identities and affiliations' (2007: 107).

When referring to the 'block' as referenced by the German-speakers as a consequence of historical divisions, Hans Karl states:

'It is a block that is closed, but...in history [the German-speakers] have always made cultural strategies available to adopt on the part of the outsider all that they can take advantage of: to learn the language, to assimilate their cooking and way of life, but inside to [always] remain "Tyrolean".'

This concept of 'remaining "Tyrolean"' is reflexive of the need for German-speakers to protect their *Heimat*, as well as their mountain identity and cultural traditions regardless of outside influences in their region.

When examining L2 learning between the Germans and Italians, 'social distance' becomes an important factor depending on the language group's opinions of the target language community, as experienced through day-to-day relations. Gass and Selinker advise that an affinity towards the L2-speaking group is required in order to reduce the

social distance and psychological barriers which prevent second language acquisition (2001: 332). They also state that 'if learners acculturate [to the L2 community], they will learn [the L2]'. If acculturation does not happen, nor does second language learning, resulting in less L2 using output (ibid.; see Stauble 1980: 43-50; Richard-Amato 2003: 117-118).

Social dominance over another language community can determine whether acculturation takes place. If a language group is dominant, less L2 learning is likely (Gass and Selinker 2001: 332). When illustrating the power Italian Fascists historically exerted over the German-speakers in South Tyrol, Hans Karl equated the occupation by Fascists of the region with the Spanish invasion of Central and South America. Latin American history, according to Hans Karl, is riddled with postcolonial guilt in which Spanish-speaking 'winners' have never been free of the shame and transgressions that resulted from the eradication of Latin American languages, indigenous culture and property. Subsequently, during public debates in South Tyrol, the Italian-speaking group suffers from a 'cultural and linguistic wall.' Although they are unaware of their internal guilt towards the German-speaking community, the idea of learning German would suggest a fallen victory by learning the language of the 'conquered' (Peterlini 2013: 79, 121).

Through understanding the impact of the dominant community in determining ground-level group relations, Bourdieu explains:

'The dominant culture contributes to the real integration of the dominant class (by facilitating the communication between all its members and by distinguishing them from other classes); it also contributes to the fictitious integration of society as a whole, and thus to the apathy (false consciousness) of the dominated classes; and finally, it contributes to the legitimation of the established order by establishing distinctions (hierarchies) and legitimating these distinctions. The dominant culture

produces this ideological effect by concealing the function of division beneath the function of communication: the culture which unifies ([via] the medium of communication) is also the culture which separates (the instrument of distinction) and which legitimates distinctions by forcing all other cultures (designated as sub-cultures) to define themselves by their distance from the dominant culture' (1992: 167).

In maintaining distinctions between the varied language groups, 'symbolic systems' can erupt from domination where one language group can influence other 'smaller' groups through exercising its 'symbolic violence'. With the 'conquering' group commanding its 'distinctive power to bear' on the 'minor' communities, this results in the 'domestication of the dominated' (ibid.), as appears to be the case with the Fascists in relation to the German-speaking people.

Consequently, over time, Italian-speaking children have learned to 'drag behind them the historical weight of the "unjust conqueror"', preventing them from moving beyond these cultural and historical obstructions. As explained by Hans Karl:

'Whoever conquers has difficulty stepping out of the vest of conqueror...to drop these symbols of the "conqueror" would seem like a loss of right to the conqueror's land...'

As a result, his comment suggests that in learning the German language the Italian-speaker is inadvertently relinquishing his or her right to South Tyrol by allowing their sense of space to be shared by two nations instead of one. Although this interpretation of German- and Italian-speaking identity, as expressed through the 'victim and conqueror' mentality, may be construed by some as radical (especially since German is viewed by some Italian-speakers as a necessary language for work in civil service), it is worth recognizing how certain South Tyrolean individuals chose to identify their role within society.

Therefore, Hans Karl proposed that to move past these identity perceptions, attempts should be made to promote group inclusion through encouraging respect and diversity. Former South Tyrolean president Luis Durnwalder also implied that there should be a reawakening of interest in other languages in order to stimulate students, update teaching materials and encourage students from various language groups to interact with each other. Teacher exchanges with other universities outside of the region (i.e. the University of Innsbruck and the University of Trento) could contribute towards promoting improved second language learning within the education environment. Furthermore, my colleague Beatrix mentioned that it was the responsibility of young adults to search for more opportunities to practice the L2 with other like-minded adults in multilingual settings outside of the language learning classroom. Additionally, Peterlini advises that German- and Italian-speakers should learn to incorporate more humour in joint activities in order to move past linguistic and cultural differences by learning to have fun with one another (2013: 261). Jobs that are reserved for the German-speaking group (who consist of 70 percent of the South Tyrolean population), could be given to bilingual Italian-speaking South Tyroleans in order to 'mix up' the social roles reserved for specific language groups (Peterlini 2013: 261-262).

That said, encouraging more social 'mixing' in the region is not as easy as some informants would suggest. Similar to the geographical isolation in Montreal between the French- and English-speaking institutions (see Heller 1982: 110), sports clubs, churches and schools have historically always been parallel but divided (see Kager 1998; Zambelli 2003/2004: 6). Consequently, students may have difficulty making friends who live outside of their L1-speaking bubble. Additionally, some German-speaking parents do not have the time, energy or inclination to encourage their children to join Italian-speaking groups if the former have already made German-speaking

friends with the monolingual German-speaking clubs. In some remote villages there is only one German-speaking club, which means Italian language learning opportunities are far less abundant the further one is from the Italian-speaking cities.

Even though the importance of second language acquisition increased in South Tyrol during the 1980s, many years of second language learning were 'thrown away' due to the absence of L2 exposure. What was missing, stated Romeo, was student contact with each other. There were no mixed sport teams or social groups, and even in 2012, students did not have 'free time together', despite evidence of progress within the region.

Nevertheless, Beatrix insisted that the 'block' was becoming less obvious amongst the language groups. Peterlini added that, while some social clubs are divided by language, this does not restrict clubs from allowing L2-speakers to their organizations. Nor does it permit others from playing on L2-speaking sport teams, or guarantee that the language groups do not get along (2013: 238-239). According to Thomas Kager, of the German-speaking group:

'Unlike the generation of their grandparents and parents, today's [German-speaking] youth [do] not have the [same] experience of discrimination... Their attitude is less anti-Italian than that of their parents. Nevertheless, there is no full integration and because of the influence of parents, school and segregation, their collective identity still has its roots in...tradition (Schmidtke 1996: 296). But the experience of a [plurilingual] society (despite segregation) and the influence of the Italian media [add] to the collective identity an awareness and also an acceptance of multiculturalism' (1998).

This view is starkly different from the one posed by Peter Höllrigl, the superintendent of the German-speaking school system, who contended that the German- and Italian-speaking communities have varied differences, which have always been in existence. 'It is a matter of Goethe versus Dante, of Beethoven versus Vivaldi', and these world

sentiments have coexisted for years. From Höllrigl's perspective, Bolzano is a region where the people are very strong and 'stubborn'. People from outside are impressed by the region because of its multicultural atmosphere, but when one studies the deeper layers that make up South Tyrol, one sees a region that is very proud of its language, historical background and traditions. Even though outsiders are encouraged by the various languages spoken throughout the region, the internal local response cautions: 'Yes, and look how quickly we can lose our identity if we allow ourselves to mix to the point that we do not have a solid foundation'.

### 6.3 The L2 as an obligatory or 'forced' second language

With German becoming increasingly dominant as the language used in both the public and private sectors (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 242), some Italian-speaking residents have expressed their discontent towards the mandatory teaching of German in Italian-speaking education. Maria, a native of Scotland who lives in Bolzano, gave an account of her experience of Italian aggression towards the German language when she was outside playing with her son on a community playground. An Italian-speaking girl had fallen down next to her and managed to cut her knee, so Maria turned to the girl and said in English that she would give her a plaster in order to stop the bleeding. Thinking that Maria was speaking in German, the girl's father confronted Maria, stating that he did not permit German to be spoken to his daughter. Offended, Maria stated that she was speaking in English, and suddenly his manner changed from aggressive to impressed, since he was keen for his daughter to be exposed to English. Although Maria acknowledged this confrontation as a one-off experience, she was more accustomed to hostility from the German-speaking community towards the Italian language. While she admitted that she sympathized with the German-speaking community, it was because she thought that they were historically repressed. This negative display by an Italian-

speaker was not normally seen in public, suggesting that some Italian-speakers are privately less inclined to have their children learn the L2.

When examining the results conducted by EURAC in an assignment known as the KOLPISI project, researchers Abel et al. found that 77.2 percent of German-speaking students thought that Italian should be taught in German schools, while 59.4 percent of Italian-speaking students thought that learning German should be obligatory. This contrasts with 10.2 percent of German-speaking students who insist that learning Italian should not be compulsory, while 23.2 percent of Italian-speakers favour the elimination of learning German in their education system (2012a: 264).

As a German and English language teacher in an Italian-speaking high school, Heidi explained that there were difficulties that come with teaching German to Italian-speaking students when the language is viewed as obligatory.

'The [Italian-speaking] students do not learn [German] that well [because it is an obligation] and also because they do not want to learn it. They see it as something they have to learn. They don't see it as a means to get a better job or to live a more interesting life. It's difficult teaching German here. It's more difficult than when I taught German in Rome.'

This 'have to' obligation is reminiscent of Dr Andergassen's comments, mentioned above. If the students 'have to' learn a language then they 'won't want to', causing the bitter language learning cycle to continue. Heidi claimed that the Italian-speaking Trentino students have fewer difficulties learning German because they see the German language as another part of the curriculum. 'They don't continue arguing with the teacher about it by asking "Why do I have to learn German?", etc.' Romeo also added that Italian-speaking students view German as something that is 'necessary... something that is imposed' rather than a useful language in order to gain employment in the area.

In response to these results, my informant Chiara felt that objectively German was difficult to learn. If an Italian-speaking student was not interested in German, it only aggravated the L2 learning process. However, if an Italian student grew up in South Tyrol, she believed they should more easily understand the advantages of German simply due to the environment that they live in. That said, she confessed that if she did not live in South Tyrol, she would be uncertain as to whether the time put into learning German would have been worth the effort.

'There are more people speaking Chinese and Spanish and 800 million people speaking Malay. Why do you choose a language? Because you like the sound? Culture? Literature? Because you can use it (more than anything else). And German does not sound very inviting. It has very difficult grammar so if you're not into philosophy and want to read Kant in the original language, it's a language that doesn't invite you to study it. Whereas French sounds nice and musical, etc. and maybe English has a relatively easy entry level (in the beginning, it's difficult afterwards). You can survive in English pretty quickly. In German the entry level is much, much higher.'

Conversely, Maurizio talking from the German-speaking perspective, felt that they presumed '[t]he Italian language [was] not useful and...only used in Italy'. English, on the other hand, was conceived as a useful language due to its universal application. The Ladin-speaking people, however, whose linguistic identity is closely linked with the German-speaking population, were more open-minded to the Italian language, even though the language was forced upon them during the Second World War. While Maurizio admitted that he could comprehend why the older generations of German-speakers held negative opinions of Italian-speakers, he could not understand why the younger generation still opposed the Italian language: 'We have open borders, but they do not have open minds', which only damages local relationships.

#### 6.4 Teacher quality

Teacher quality was another social factor that lent itself to criticism based on interviews with parental informants. Forer et al. believed that the Italian-speaking schools were partly accountable for language learning issues, since the Italian-speaking school system was based on the state model used throughout the rest of Italy. While schools in Arezzo, located in Tuscany, teach English and French as foreign languages, Italian-speaking schools in South Tyrol teach German as a foreign language rather than as a second language (2008). As stated by Abel et al., the teaching of the second language is treated as a school subject rather 'than a tool for communicating in everyday life' (2010: 278) due to the monolingual education system.

Only recently have Italian-speaking schools started to propose better L2 language courses, but to revitalize the system teachers need to have a better understanding of the L2. According to Enrico Hell, the Italian school system has a responsibility to promote a better model for bilingualism (2008)<sup>75</sup> since a significant number of teachers from the Italian-speaking school system do not have knowledge of the L2 (Forer et al. 2008; Giudiceandrea 2007: 31). While 86 percent of the German-speaking teachers, as of 2007/2008, had obtained the Patentino (the South Tyrolean language proficiency exam), only 46 percent<sup>76</sup> of Italian-speaking teachers had achieved the same qualification. This indicates that the majority of Italian-speaking teachers at the time were, in fact, monolingual (Forer et al. 2008; Giudiceandrea 2007: 31). The results signify a mixed message regarding bilingualism in Italian-speaking schools: while students are required to study the L2 in order to pass the Patentino, Italian teachers have historically failed to

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<sup>75</sup> See Hell, E., 2008. Test di lingua nelle scuole dell'infanzia. *Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 8 May 2008. Available at: < <http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?p=77> > [Accessed 5 July 2013] for more information.

<sup>76</sup> Giudiceandrea claims that the amount of Italian-speaking teachers who are in possession of the Patentino is at 42 percent as of 2007 (2007: 31).

emphasize bilingualism by focusing instead on monolingualism. Forer et al. explain that '[it's] like promoting an anti-smoking campaign as a smoker, even if you're in good health. What would be your credibility?' (2008).

Nevertheless, Abel et al. found contradictory information in 2012, when their surveys indicated that 90 percent of South Tyrol's language teachers were in possession of the *Patentino A*, the highest level language certificate in the province (2012a: 373). Yet, even with their results, further analysis put their figures into question. Similar to data found by Forer et al., Francesco Palermo states that, 'the lack of qualified teachers to teach in more languages is [still] a real problem' (2012: 72). My informant Florian also insisted that the quality of L2 teaching in South Tyrol was not consistent. Although his wife Chiara confessed that the cost benefit analysis of bilingual learning was better in South Tyrol than in other provinces in Italy, Florian explained that:

'There are German language teachers who are not able to write in High German and there are Italian language teachers who are not able to teach Italian to German-speaking teachers...[they are] unable to and uninterested. So there are too many people who have seven years of second language teaching and aren't able to speak the L2 that they are required to teach.'

When examining the results conducted by Abel et al., they found that 90.5 percent of German-speaking teachers of Italian could understand the majority of the Italian language in comparison to other language teachers. Only 57.7 percent of Italian-speaking teachers of the German language admitted that they could fully comprehend High German. Furthermore, the data suggested that only one-third of Italian-speaking teachers of German could understand the L2 in certain contexts and conversations. Finally, 71.4 percent of German-speaking teachers of Italian were able to express themselves fluently in the L2, compared to only 30.8 percent of Italian-speaking teachers of German (2012a: 373).

These figures support data compiled by Forer et al. whose informants explained that German-speaking students seemed relatively content with their second language teachers in contrast with their Italian-speaking counterparts (2008). The data also supported my own experience when meeting with informants regarding L2 learning issues. When analysing common complaints that I received from several students in terms of L2 acquisition, it became clear that some Italian-speaking high school students thought that their language teachers were linguistically unprepared to teach their courses.

Yet, regardless of these findings, in 1997, a proposal was presented to the local government recommending that a certificate of bilingualism (in both German and Italian) be obligatory for all teachers in South Tyrol. The proposal was supported by the provincial assessor at the time, Romano Viola, who stated that '[b]ilingualism...is a factor of professional qualifications and a cultural and human richness' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 31-32).<sup>77</sup> However, the proposal was rejected as it required teachers to pass the Patentino. The former secretary of the Partito Democratico della Sinistra (PDS) stated that the proposal would cause a 'political crisis, institutionally and socially of vast proportions' and that to make the Patentino obligatory for teachers would be an act 'absolutely outside of the law...a true and proper abuse to power' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 32). All this after admitting that 'the promotion of bilingualism is...necessary, but not [if it is] obtained through coercive mechanisms' (ibid.).

This suggests that while there is an awareness that the schools should encourage more bilingual education, further efforts are still needed from Italian-speaking schools to meet the demands of a multilingual society (see Forer et al. 2008).

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<sup>77</sup> Cited in *Ansa*, Scuola: Ass. Viola su bilinguismo insegnanti, 29 January 1997.

## 6.5 The difficulties of teaching German versus teaching English to Italian-speaking students

In the words of Johanna, a German language teacher who works at an Italian-speaking high school, 'What is true is that we still suffer the present situation where Italian-speaking students have an aversion against learning German.' This lack of motivation to acquire the L2 functions as another language learning issue. With 85 percent of teachers claiming that students are disinterested in wanting to advance in the L2, 79 percent of teachers state that students are impartial to the L2 community's lifestyle and culture (Abel et al. 2012a: 370).

Additionally, Italian-speaking students based in South Tyrol have higher workloads than students in the rest of Italy because they are required to include German language lessons on top of their standard course material. Even though the German language is considered more challenging, Italian-speaking students have more coursework, which means they must balance the national curriculum with requirements that are set by the province.

Therefore, it is important for the German language teacher to play a major role in L2 learning in order to foster an interest in the second language for those Italian-speaking students who are struggling. But some German teachers who are raised in South Tyrol tend to teach as if they have a political agenda by forcing the German language on Italian-speaking students, resulting in a lack of interest in the second language. Johanna explained that she worked with a South Tyrolean German teacher who insisted that his students learn '[his] language'. This effectively resulted in student-teacher conflict due to his demeanour when teaching the class. Although some staff attempted to reason with the German language teacher, others still come to class with 'the wrong message'. As a

result, language teachers like Johanna try and explore better alternatives for promoting the L2.

Johanna and her colleagues realized that they must find incentives for their students to learn German. Rather than prepare their students for the Patentino, which is only recognized in South Tyrol, they tried to prepare them for the German Goethe exam, whose certificate is recognized worldwide. As opposed to treating German as a mandatory language, they wanted to make German more appealing. Consequently, as of 2013 their own students were more positive towards learning German. 'Every year', stated Johanna:

'twenty students from within our department enrol themselves for German certifications. Most of them pass their exams despite the constant turnover of German-speaking teachers at our institution.'

Despite her efforts, as well as those of her colleagues, their concrete results only represent one school. Other complications are manifest in language learning, disrupting German language acquisition. According to Johanna, there are not enough people who are qualified to teach within the province, and those people who are qualified often choose positions that are better paid than general teaching positions. This results in little consistency between their teachers, which further complicates the language learning process.

When referring to Heidi's experiences in teaching German, 'the Italians just want to defend themselves':

'The Italians in this province are in the minority and represent 30 percent of the population. Maybe the Italians don't feel like they are seen as being important enough. Maybe it's a feeling of not wanting to "give in" to the German majority, which is ridiculous. They are throwing away a big chance by not learning German, which they could learn by going overseas.'

Heidi further stated that in teaching the German language the problem is only getting worse.

'The students, in general, don't want to study...they just want to have fun. Work is annoying. Parents and teachers tell them what to do. And most of our students live a good life. They don't see the immediate need to study at school to get a good job because mom and dad pay for everything. People earn very little at normal jobs in this province, so it's easier to say that you'll just stay with mom and dad.'

Since Heidi worked at a prestigious local high school, where the majority of parents have high incomes, it was interesting to see how her views of her students compared to the statistics of the province.

In 2004, research was conducted by the South Tyrolean provincial statistics institute (ASTAT). The main objective of the research was to further analyze the linguistic competencies of the local population. Based on the survey's list of questions, one concentrated on how residents' viewed their L2 learning within school. When asked: 'Do you think that your scholastic experience in the second language gave you an adequate comprehension to express yourself in that language?' only 32.1 percent of Italian-speaking citizens had a positive L2 learning experience. This was markedly different from results that were obtained from the German-speaking people, of which 53 percent of German-speakers were content with the L2 instruction they received. As for the Ladin-speakers, 83.5 percent of them were satisfied with their L2 learning classes (ASTAT 2006: 43-44; Giudiceandrea 2007: 24). Although the researchers explained that these results may depend on the age at which the locals took these surveys<sup>78</sup> (ASTAT 2006: 44), it is evident that within the Italian-speaking group the majority need more L2 exposure.

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<sup>78</sup> The ASTAT figures stated that locals between the ages of 19 to 39 years had a more positive L2 learning experience (quite possibly due to better teaching techniques over the years) than those between the ages of 40 to 59 years or 60 years and over (2006: 44).

A few days after the research was completed by ASTAT another survey was conducted by EURAC. The results confirmed that Italian-speaking students from Bolzano understood German to a lesser degree than Trentino students. Even though Italian-speaking students from Bolzano had more taught hours of High German per week, Italian students from Trento had a better comprehension of German overall (see Lanthaler 2007: 235). Of the Italian-speaking students who were surveyed from Bolzano, 53 percent did 'not voluntarily speak German' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 25), while 94 percent admitted to not using the German language at all, even with their German-speaking friends.<sup>79</sup> According to Abel et al.:

[F]or many pupils, predominately Italian-speaking ones, participation in everyday life in the L2 might be difficult given that linguistic competences are often at an elementary level' (2010: 300).

This complements results obtained from Heidi's interview confirming her suspicions towards her students.

'The students should be bilingual after thirteen years of study, but they aren't... When it comes to teaching German, our students never speak German outside of school. At least 75 percent don't, which is a shame.'

As a result, Heidi explained that teaching English was easier than teaching German classes. When teaching English 'the mind is free and the students are neutral', as was evident within my English classes:

'I like teaching German, but English isn't mandatory for the students as part of the Trentino. For German, the students are a little more critical. They start German early in kindergarten. They do learn it from a very early age. Some of them are at the same level in English (which they have studied for less time). They know so

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<sup>79</sup> More information concerning the results of the survey are published online in the 23 February 2006 edition of the *Alto Adige's* article, 'I bolzanini bocciati in tedesco' at: <[http://ricerca.gelocal.it/altoadige/archivio/altoadige/2006/02/23/AB1PO\\_AB101.html](http://ricerca.gelocal.it/altoadige/archivio/altoadige/2006/02/23/AB1PO_AB101.html)> [Accessed 28 August 2013].

few words in German. How is it possible that they still don't know what these words are? It's everyday words.

It's because they never use it. As soon as they leave the classroom, that's it. They don't practice. If you say, "Why don't you use German?" they say, "If we use German the locals use dialect and we don't understand them." Yes, it's more difficult learning German here, but you also don't have to use it as often as if you were in Merano, which is largely German-speaking. They always have an excuse ready. Always, always...'

As a result of these excuses not to practice the L2, the students close the door to L2 learning, especially those students who are scarcely motivated to practice the L2 outside of school (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 86-87).

Consequently, Salvatore, a colleague of mine, agreed with Heidi's statements about L2 learning, especially concerning his experiences teaching English over German to Italian-speaking students:

'I think it's good with regards to English. If it's German, that's another thing. The history has been quite strange here. There is a German population that lives in Italy and there are a lot of Italians who have been forced to come here and they are now forced to learn German if they want to get certain positions in society. As a result, many Italian-speaking kids grow up with this hate against the German language, so sometimes it's a problem...'

When my other colleague Rita, a German language teacher, was asked to teach an English language class, she discovered that her students preferred learning English to having to learn German. English, she quickly realized, was easier to teach because the students 'don't have this bad feeling towards the language', which may explain why some students felt comfortable speaking English when I conducted interviews for my own research.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> During my interviews with current or recently graduated high school students, some Italian-speaking students preferred to conduct their interviews in either Italian or English. German-speaking students,

Additionally, Federica, a German and English language teacher, stated that students expressed a desire to learn English because of its versatility in the wider global context. Her Italian-speaking students saw the linguistic benefits to learning English because they thought it might assist them in obtaining a job once they leave Bolzano and/or move outside of Italy. German, she felt, limited the students to Germany, Austria or Switzerland, resulting in a reduced interest in practicing their German compared to when they took their English classes.

Similar to Heidi's comments regarding poor German vocabulary, Federica claimed that her Italian-speaking students had difficulty articulating basic German words, despite the fact her students were in high school. German words like *Krankenhaus* (hospital) were a challenge to remember, as opposed to English vocabulary because the students listened to music in the English language and watched American television shows. 'They know the plural of "child" is "children" from "We are the world, we are the children" but they don't know the plural of "Kind" (German for 'child' ).' As a result, even though the Italian-speaking students had fewer hours of English language instruction, the students excelled in their English classes more than they did in German L2 courses.

Subsequently, it should be no surprise that English is the most popular L3 in South Tyrol (ASTAT 2006: 47) with 82.8 percent of people stating that English needs to be understood to communicate in Europe (ASTAT 2006: 58). Moreover, 92.7 percent of Italian-speaking citizens believe that everyone should learn English in Europe, compared to 79.8 percent of German-speaking South Tyroleans and 88.2 percent of Ladin-speakers (ASTAT 2006: 58-59). Finally, it is the young people who reside in South Tyrol who consider English to be important, with 70.6 percent of people between

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conversely, felt more comfortable using English rather than Italian as the preferred mode of communication.

the ages of 19 to 39 expressing their support towards the L3 (ASTAT 2006: 62-63). As a result, these data suggest that there is a value placed on English in the education system, even though it is a language that is not used in regular discourse, despite its growing popularity in the province.

#### 6.6 Topographical and cultural distribution (alongside the role of motivation)

*'...the language contact situation in South Tyrol leads to the conclusion that physical proximity, that is, the existence of several language groups in one territory, "paradoxically does not necessarily accompany a readiness for dialogue. Attempts have been made to justify this partially on historical grounds of forced proximity. In this view proximity does not automatically mean that language learning becomes easier"' (Abel and Stuflesser 2009; Abel et al. 2010: 278).*

A recurring theme that many locals expressed is that there are not many opportunities to practice the L2. Since several German- and Italian-speaking communities are situated within a few kilometres of each other, some outsiders might view 'location' as an inadequate excuse to learn the language spoken by one's neighbour. Yet some citizens believe that the rural and urban divide,<sup>81</sup> which separates most Germans from Italians, prevents locals from communicating with each other regardless of their close geographical proximity. Though the region is predominately bilingual (or trilingual, if one includes the Ladin-speaking valleys), the physical distribution of the groups throughout the province is viewed as a great concern by many.

Since the layout of the province is partially divided between cities and remote valleys, Italian-speakers have historically tended to gravitate towards apartments and city dwellings. Alternatively, German-speakers have had close relationships with the land resulting in landholdings in isolated villages that have been passed down through the

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<sup>81</sup> For more information regarding the cultural and linguistic rural and urban divide in South Tyrol see Cole and Wolf 1974: 92.

generations. These monolingual clusters, constantly developed since at least the First and Second World Wars, have resulted in minimal opportunities for L2 exchanges depending on one's living situation. For many Italian-speaking locals, the ability to practice German depends partially on their location near the mountains and valleys. The same could be said of German-speaking citizens and whether they live in Italian-speaking cities (see Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 240).

This regional displacement of local languages has had an impact on intercultural relations (see Voltmer 2007: 204), as between 40 and 70 percent of most South Tyrolean cities are comprised mostly of Italian-speakers, while the mountain areas are over 90 percent German-speaking and have very few Italian-speaking citizens (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 241; see Giudiceandrea 2007: 130). Subsequently, it is understood that around 60 percent of German-speaking students possess little motivation for learning Italian, as 'their study of this second language is in reality equivalent to foreign language study' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 241, 244; Voltmer 2007: 204-205; see Alber 2011: 11). With 60 percent of German-speakers in the South Tyrol province having 'few or no Italian-speaking neighbours' (Voltmer 2007: 204), Carli states that 'only in a few urban centres can one hear a plurilingual, multicultural and multiethnic society. The rural context is predominately monolingual' (2002: 218; Ciccolone 2010: 52). Even though the majority of South Tyrolean students have friends from another language group, a quarter of German-speaking students and 12 percent of Italian-speaking students claim that 'in the last year, they have never or only very rarely had relations of friendship with members of the other group' (Abel et al. 2010: 294).

In an interview Nicole, a German-speaking dental hygienist, explained the difficulties in learning Italian when growing up in a German-speaking village outside the city of Bolzano. When questioned by her neighbours over why she had decided to attend

evening Italian language courses, she explained that her basic knowledge of the L2 did not prepare her for the Bolzano job market. Although she had studied Italian for five years in high school,<sup>82</sup> her language proficiency was very low because of an absence of Italian-speakers in her village. Regardless of her insistence that she needed Italian lessons to work with her Italian-speaking clients, from her own neighbours' perspectives, learning Italian was not necessary; a basic knowledge of Italian was 'just enough'.

For those South Tyroleans who live in German-speaking villages, it can be challenging to practice the L2 unless an individual has a specific motivation to excel in Italian. Just as Chapter 3 described two types of language motivation through the integrative and instrumental models, it is clear that with Nicole it was the instrumental factor which propelled her to develop the L2.

With most German-speaking villages providing newspapers in German, and each village having its own unique dialect, South Tyrolean villages act as separate German-speaking enclaves located beyond Italian-speaking cities. Even if a German-speaker from a distant village was to move to a bilingual city, this would not guarantee the German-speaker opportunities to merge with the Italian-speaking community. In the words of Magliana:

'This [cultural division] does not limit itself to rural areas, for even within the cities the two cultures are not exactly integrated. Because of the nature of the autonomy, which aims at safeguarding the ethnic, cultural and ambient characteristics of the German and Ladin minorities, there is a "rigid separation of ethnic groups to preserve the integrity of each of them"... Furthermore, there is a separation which encompasses all areas, whether it is the school system, provincial offices, or

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<sup>82</sup> Despite the fact that German-speaking students are required to start studying Italian in the early years of elementary school, Nicole suggests that the more remote regions of South Tyrol teach Italian at a later age since Italian is used far less in the villages.

cultural and athletic clubs; although they do not openly exclude anybody, they cater to one of the three language groups. The two [i.e. German- and Italian-speaking] groups can be said to live side by side, but do not live together' (Magliana 2000: 80).

Given that there are few organizations that encourage bilingual group assimilation, according to Beatrix, in order to reach out towards other language groups the individual has to take the initiative. Exceptions to these rules come from students who are able to move linguistically between language groups. These students generally come from bilingual backgrounds and are accustomed to bilingual code-switching (Forer et al. 2008). Otherwise, the regional structure of South Tyrol tends to reflect the mentality of the people. Demarcations seem to be based on linguistic membership either in school or in public settings. Bars and cinemas are linguistically differentiated, despite the fact that these environments could be used as bilingual social venues for language groups to come together (Forer et al. 2008; see Kager 1998; Voltmer 2007: 205). If sports clubs did not have a reputation in some areas for assimilating varied language groups, there would not be much co-mingling between the language communities outside of the school arena (see Forer et al. 2008).

Lanthaler is of the opinion that L2 contact 'occurs...in the cities and larger towns', despite the emergence of monolingual 'ghettos' (2007: 233) in multilingual cities like Bolzano (see Peterlini 2013: 236). 'In these contexts', Lanthaler states that 'German-speakers usually have good second language competences' (2007: 233), which supports comments made by Carlo Romeo based on his experience of living in Bolzano. 'Italian', explained Romeo, 'is rather alluring for the young German-speaking people because of Italian music and sports.' As for the Italian-speakers who live in German-speaking villages, they have assimilated and speak High German and German dialect (Lanthaler 2007: 233).

However, my informant Lucia stated that while the province looks 'multilingual', the reality is that there is not much communication between the varied language groups. Even though the German-speakers are reported to have a better understanding of the Italian language, some children still have difficulties learning the L2, despite its influence inside the region. As a result, Donna attributed this lack of bilingualism to an absence of pluralism: 'If a German person wants to mingle with another group it is exhausting because the space is monolingual.' Donna explained that when Alexander Langer, the South Tyrolean Green Party political activist, wanted to create an 'other' South Tyrol, he wanted to open the linguistic social boundaries to promote multilingualism. He represented what she called 'a person of the world' who was not concerned with conserving tradition or being 'on the opposite side of change'. Instead, she insisted it was better for the future if the region became 'equal to Europe' by becoming more competitive in multiple languages rather than trying to remain linguistically separate from each other.

For Weronika and Evi, German-speakers from the Merano area, reaching out to the Italian-speaking community was a conscious choice made in order to progress in the second language spoken in the region. Similar to Nicole, they realized the long term benefits of learning the Italian language but they had to search for individual opportunities to advance their L2 proficiency.

In the 1990s, when Weronika attended a German-speaking high school, she described her school as 'half-half' (consisting of both German- and Italian-speakers) even though most of the students were German-speaking. In her class there were 22 students, four of whom came from both Italian- and German-speaking households, while the other students had minimal contact with the Italian-speaking communities. Having moved to Merano from the German-speaking part of Poland when she was sixteen years old,

Weronika had to look for opportunities to practice her Italian in order to progress with her lessons. Through a weekly language tandem- exchange at the local language school, she met with an Italian-speaking student once a week to do homework, talk or otherwise work together. She stated that for years this was her only contact with an Italian-speaker, but as she grew older she discovered opportunities to advance herself in the language. She invested in Italian books because they were more affordable than German books despite taking more time to read than if she had read them in German. Her sister, additionally, learned Italian by studying at the local library. Students from both groups would use the library to study or talk with each other, which meant that Weronika and her sister learned to converse with both Italians and Germans in order to expand their social network. By starting a job and working in Bolzano, this reduced the language learning barriers for Weronika. Visiting bars and clubs also gave her the opportunity to meet people from a multitude of L2-speaking backgrounds.

According to Gass and Selinker, Weronika's own motivations to allow herself to advance in the L2 required her to be:

'[a] learner who is vigilant about instituting many encounters to gain comprehensible input [so that she] is more likely to be successful in second language learning outcomes' (2001: 354).

This integrative approach to second language acquisition was what allowed Weronika to overcome the social stigmas still attached to second language learning issues existing in the region's fragmented communities. As stated by Abel et al.,

'Because of the heterogeneous geographical distribution of the two language groups in South Tyrol, direct contact with the "other" is not always actually feasible; this is particularly true for German-speaking South Tyroleans who often live in practically monolingual areas... [Therefore,] [t]he data gathered...show[s] that those participants who reported to have friends from the other language group

were more motivated to learn the L2... The relationship between contact and motivation also depends on the depth of the friendship: the more intimate the friendship, the greater the desire to learn the L2. This connection between intergroup contact and motivation holds [true] for both language groups. A similar pattern appears with regards to extended contacts: both Italian- and German-speaking pupils are more motivated to learn the L2 if their own relatives and/or friends have significant relations with those who speak the L2' (2010: 293, 298).

In support of these claims, from interviewing Evi, it was apparent that her family encouraged L2 learning. Since she grew up in a village outside of Merano, consisting of 10,000 German-speaking inhabitants, in her early years she had minimal contact with Italian-speakers as the local schools were solely German-speaking. The village kindergarten had one building that accepted both German and Italian language groups, but in the 1990s the language groups were separated from each other; a common practice which still exists today. When she decided to attend a German-speaking university, only three of her classmates knew Italian. Outside of her school and university experiences, there was minimal contact with Italian-speaking locals unless she spoke with her Italian language teacher, or with her Italian-speaking aunt and grandmother. Unlike Weronika, who found opportunities to work and study in other regions of Italy, Evi's L2 exposure was predominately confined to her family or in-school class activities. Fortunately, by having relatives who were Italian-speaking, this allowed her to practice using Italian, which increased when she moved to Bolzano and began working for a trilingual institution.

Nevertheless, there are students who are unable to use the L2 due to their remote location, such as villagers who live in Brunico or Appiano, where 'it is difficult to meet someone who speaks Italian...you have to speak the local dialect if you want to buy things' which, for Weronika, made using the L2 'impossible'. An example would include former students Adelheid and Karl, who attended high school in the predominately

German-speaking city of Merano. From their perspective, Italian is a language that they normally do not use, as their school system did not promote Italian. Fortunately for Karl, after he graduated from high school, he was able to obtain a job that allowed him to practice the L2 far more than when he took Italian lessons. But for Adelheid, who is a village kindergarten teacher, her L2-speaking opportunities are minimal. 'Everywhere in the town where I live, people speak German so I don't need to speak Italian. Plus, there are not many Italian-speaking people in my area. In Merano, sure, but in my village, no', thus limiting her exposure to the L2.

#### 6.7 Opportunities taken, opportunities missed: the role of politics in L2 acquisition

Despite these criticisms by Adelheid and Karl over the school system and their remote location, Chiara felt that they were making 'lame' excuses, several of which were created to avoid L2 learning. Chiara, who grew up in Mantova, Italy, 183 kilometres south of Bolzano, learned High German and the Merano dialect after marrying her German-speaking husband. During her early years of marriage she moved to Germany for several months to develop a basic understanding of High German and, over time through work and developing friendships with other German-speaking locals, she mastered the Merano dialect. While many South Tyroleans state that local dialects are impossible for outsiders to learn, Chiara refuted these claims as she was able to 'pick up' the dialect after moving to South Tyrol. In her opinion, if someone is determined to learn the local language(s) they will find a way, supported by the experiences of Weronika, Evi and Nicole.

The problem with language learning in the education system, as stated through the words of Chiara, is that the local schooling system produces 'a mix of opportunities taken and opportunities missed' by allowing politicians to intervene. 'For opportunities

taken...you have a bilingual area with schools that teach one language but give you access to the other and from the beginning the education is good.' But in order to ensure a multilingual upbringing, reliance now depends more on parents. Some German-speaking parents will even conduct Italian language exchanges with schools in other regions of Italy to provide their children with more opportunities to practice the L2. Education professor Dr Liliana Dozza of the FUB acknowledged that students from German-speaking backgrounds will participate in Erasmus programmes in other Italian provinces because some German-speaking parents and students believe that South Tyrol is 'less Italian' than the rest of Italy.

For parents like Chiara, the education system posed complications for those bilingual families who have children who speak both German and Italian but do not have access to bilingual education. Many parents, she explained, would like to conduct second language exchanges with local schools, but the opportunities for such exchange initiatives are restricted and not simple to fulfil.

'Let me give you a stupid example: any school where you want to learn another language would encourage you to do exchanges with someone from another school in another country. It would be very, very easy and cost effective in South Tyrol for a German-speaking *liceo linguistico* (i.e. language high school) to exchange with an Italian-speaking high school. They could organize exchange weeks anytime but that is not seen very positively here, to the point that we have a friend who teaches economics in a German-speaking high school that did an exchange with a school in bloody Milan. Why do you have to go to Milan for teenagers in South Tyrol to learn Italian when they can learn it every day and meet people and create relationships that would go just beyond a school and would encourage the use of the language? That's what I mean by opportunities missed.'

While Chiara's husband, Florian, was less inclined to criticize politicians and their role in education, history implies that political agendas helped shaped the educational environment. Informants like Johanna, who felt that local tensions between Germans

and Italians have decreased since the 1940s, insisted that the Germans no longer viewed Italians as second-class citizens. That said, she agreed that there is still some resentment towards Italian migration to the area, as was evident after the First World War, which apparently continues to this day.

As for parental responses to the education system, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, Chiara felt that parents are unable to 'exploit the school system' as a result of political interventions.

'While most parents realize that it is crucial for their children's future to actually be able to speak both languages, that it is a plus and that they should exploit the school system to have this delivered as a bonus at the end of the school year and that it's stupid not to use it...it is frustrated by the politics... Everything depends on whether or not [the school officials] make [the politicians] happy.'

According to Romeo, political intervention is part of the region's history. Although proposals were put forward in the 1980s to establish experimental immersion classes in Italian-speaking education, local politicians were opposed to the plans, declaring them to be in violation of the autonomy statutes. It was believed that immersion education went against political legislation. There was also a concern that without the teaching of grammar, a student's L2 proficiency would be affected. Languages could not be 'taught' through various subjects (i.e. geography or history) unless grammar was part of the curriculum. Otherwise immersion programmes would be viewed as futile if they did not have a grammar-based component.

As a result, language teachers Donna and Heidi felt that politicians were intent on preventing bilingual education. They were concerned that politicians would view bilingual schools as a step towards losing their own identity. Without separation in the education system, some Germans thought that they would lose their dialect, forcing

language groups to merge into a 'mixed' identity and resulting in the failure of language preservation. Additionally, Maurizio stated that while Italian-speaking politicians were interested in multilingualism, German-speaking politicians upheld their concerns with preserving their cultural identity.

Yet, despite these language issues, Peterlini also adds that a good portion of politics 'ignores real life' (2013: 126). As Voltmer states:

'A major obstacle for future development is and will be the political system and in particular the established ethnically defined political parties relying on the victim-group rhetoric, as well as the juridical bases of the Autonomy itself. For fear of reopening age-old questions, a more adequate dynamic autonomy is being delayed' (2007: 219).

With politicians allowing the school system to focus on the L1 at the possible expense of the L2, some informants believe that this denies citizens the opportunity to qualify for civil service positions. This also may prevent some citizens from being able to pass the Patentino exam.

#### 6.8 The Patentino (or bi- or trilingual language examination)

The Patentino, the bi- or trilingual language examination<sup>83</sup> designed specifically for South Tyrol, is a controversial L2 language assessment test which locals take in order to qualify to work in public service. Originally designed in 1977, it consists of a written and oral section with four degrees of difficulty, from level D to level A, according to the job which is desired (Abel et al. 2010: 275; Voltmer 2007: 214; see Virkkunen-Fullenwider 2009: 36; Giudiceandrea 2007: 140; Zambelli 2003/2004: 6). As the exam is conducted in either German or Italian, locals must choose which level they would like to take, from level A, designed for citizens with a university degree, to level D, 'the

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<sup>83</sup> For more information on the Patentino (or bi- or trilingual exam) see: <<http://www.provinz.bz.it/ebt/>> [Accessed 28 July 2015].

easiest, for unskilled workers'<sup>84</sup> (Voltmer 2007: 214; Virkkunen-Fullenwider 2009: 36; Abel et al. 2010: 275).

The exam structure itself is considered straight-forward, with the writing section specifically designed to enable students to read and write in the L2 before they move on to the oral section. The written portion comprises two short texts, each followed by six questions. For the answer to each question, the response must be written in at least one to two complete sentences (Abel et al. 2010: 275; Voltmer 2007: 214-215). The oral portion requires the candidate to have a conversation with the board of examiners on themes ranging from 'personal life, hobbies and interests, recent events, and so on' (Voltmer 2007: 215). Even though there is an abundance of material available online to prepare for the exam, Voltmer explains that it is still 'a hurdle for all candidates' (ibid.), a comment made by many in the province.

According to Romeo, there is an aversion to learning German from the Italian-speaking community that stems from having to obtain the Patentino, which locals find challenging to pass. After the creation of the Second Autonomy statute, 'any hiring in public office was [influenced] by a bilingual exam' (Peterlini 1988: 124). Unfortunately, the Italian-speaking community was unprepared for this bilingual assessment, so that within the first three years of the Patentino's application, only 36 percent of Italians passed the exam. Since the German- and Ladin-speaking populations were required to learn Italian during the Fascist era, 70 percent of Ladin-speakers and 60 percent of German-speakers were able to obtain the Patentino in this period (ibid.).

Despite the higher performance of the Germans and the Ladins, all language groups have difficulties with this test, with only four out of ten passing the Patentino from 1978

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<sup>84</sup> Compared to the CEFR, some researchers claim that the Patentino ranges from levels A2 (level D) to C2 (level A) (Abel et al. 2010: 291).

to 1999 (Peterlini 2013: 121). In 1999, when the exam was first reformed, six out of ten people passed (Peterlini 2013: 120, 237; Voltmer 2007: 214). Some results even suggested that the pass rate had improved from 14.6 percent in 1972 to 61.3 percent by 1999 (Voltmer 2007: 215). But this seems to conflict with results that were obtained by the KOLPISI report published in 2010. In 2009, only 42.2 percent of Patentino candidates were able to pass the exam (Abel et al. 2010: 276-277). This complements the ASTAT results published in 2010, according to which the success rate of those who passed the Patentino dropped in 2009 compared to previous results obtained in 2008. When examined in more detail, those who passed the Patentino A dropped from 66.1 percent to 49.5 percent. Candidates who passed the Patentino B decreased in number from 32.5 percent to 22.3 percent. For the Patentino C, those who obtained this certificate dropped from 44.1 percent to 35.2 percent. Finally, locals who tried to take the Patentino D dropped from 81.4 percent to 77.4 percent (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 75). Additionally, KOLPISI results from 2007 to 2008 show that of those students who took the Patentino, 63 percent of Germans failed the exam, compared to 61 percent of Italian-speaking students (Abel et al. 2010: 281, 288-289). As the Patentino is not part of the CEFR standards and is only recognized within South Tyrol, it is worth pointing out that students who pass a CEFR test 'do not always pass the [Patentino]' (Abel et al. 2010: 290, 300).

Consequently, there are Italians who are 'panicked' when they realize that they need to understand German in order to work in South Tyrol and may need to pass the Patentino to secure a solid future in the province (Peterlini 2013: 120). As a result, 'the obligation to be bilingual is often seen not so much as a stimulus, but as an obstacle to learning' (Peterlini 2013: 120). This opinion was expressed by my informant, Lucia, who was raised in Bolzano and thought negatively of the Patentino. Her concern was not the

difficulty that it imposed but that the test, from her perspective, was impractical. She stated that the exam was an insufficient test that did not reflect the linguistic needs of the community. Too much effort was required to develop one's High German when the locals normally spoke German dialect. 'Once you pass the test it doesn't matter if you ever use German again. All that matters is that you have the language certificate so that you can get a job in Bolzano.' Furthermore, she added that for those who apply for jobs with Italian-speaking institutions 'they don't even check to see if you actually know German' to verify one's L2 credentials. As a result, this sends a mixed message for citizens who choose to apply for civil service positions: your application must state that you have C1/ B2 proficiency in the L2 of the region, but this does not guarantee that you will need the L2 during your professional career.

While residents may disagree over whether the L2 is actually used in civil service professions, two-thirds of German- and Italian-speaking students thought that the Patentino 'reflected the capabilities of a person in the L2' (Abel et al. 2012: 266). Additionally, two-thirds of students are not in agreement over the hypothesis that 'people of their own linguistic group do not pass the exam because they are discriminated against by the [Patentino] examiners' (ibid.).

Nevertheless, Lucia thought there was a fault in the oral section of the L2 assessment. The writing section, she explained, did not pose too many problems, but the oral section had its list of issues. Based on her exam account, the oral examiner asked a series of questions, some of which were too difficult and linguistically specific to answer, even in one's mother tongue.

'If the examiner decides to ask a random question like, "Tell me about the different parts of a plane" and you haven't learned the parts of a plane (and do not know the

words in your own language), you could fail the test, even if you have spent hours studying other material.'

Subsequently, Lucia was of the opinion that the exam was designed to have its students fail, even if this was not the intent of the examiners who distributed the Patentino test. When Hans Karl Peterlini was a German teacher at Alpha & Beta, a language school located in Bolzano, he had his own teaching objections to the Patentino's methods. In his words, he found that training students for the Patentino was a form of language learning 'torture', where he had 'to accompany students through the insidious grammar' that was required to pass the language test. Before the Patentino reforms of 1999, the exams consisted of translation tasks which, according to Peterlini, were a language learning 'trap' which stopped students from the joys of L2 learning (2013: 120). Although Lucia agreed that she could not speak for the Italian version of the exam for German-speakers, she thought the Patentino should be removed from the system and replaced with international exams. Even though only 36.2 percent of Italian-speakers would prefer to eliminate the Patentino (Abel et al. 2012a: 265), the belief by some is that the removal of this exam may encourage more provincial L2 learning.

Fortunately for Lucia, in 2010, the provincial government decided to accept internationally recognized language certificates as an alternative to the Patentino.

According to the European Court of Justice:

'The ruling states that under European Law, applicants for a selective procedure cannot be obliged to provide proof of their knowledge of a language by means of a diploma issued solely at one place within the EU. Thus, since 2010 appropriate new regulations have been introduced so that now a number of selected language certificates or combinations of school and university diplomas are recognized as alternatives to the [Patentino]' (Abel et al. 2010: 275-276).

Exceptions to test taking are also provided for local students who have knowledge of both languages. Provided they can verify that they have completed their fifth-year *maturità*, or high school diploma, in one language but received their university degree in another, these students are exempt from the Patentino A (if their background is in German and Italian). However, local students who attend the FUB are not exempt from taking language testing, as the FUB requires students to take language exams in both German and Italian.<sup>85</sup>

Additionally, as of January 2014, the Patentino was modified again, this time by adjusting the written and the oral sections, while also adding a listening component. The objective was to make the test fit more closely with the requirements of the CEFR standards. Therefore, the written portion has a multiple choice option, along with texts to read and themes for candidates to write about. The oral section also gives participants ten to fifteen minutes to prepare themselves for that part of the exam. Before these changes, residents who did not pass the written portion were exempt from taking the oral section. This time, candidates not only complete the entire test, but their results are assessed communicatively. In order to 'break the ice' for the oral portion of the test, the committee of examiners allow candidates to answer two arguments, one in their mother tongue and the second argument in the L2. Given that two-thirds of candidates (i.e. 14 out of 21) in January 2014 successfully passed this 'new' exam, the objective is to ensure that more residents are able to pass the Patentino, and that the Patentino meets the EU standards.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> See *Alto Adige*, 23 April 2010 'Bilinguismo in Alto Adige, cambiano le regole per il patentino' at: <<http://altoadige.gelocal.it/bolzano/cronaca/2010/04/23/news/bilinguismo-in-alto-adige-cambiano-le-regole-per-il-patentino-1.4144253>> [Accessed 3 June 2013] for more information.

<sup>86</sup> For more information see Antonella Mattioli's articles, 'Patentino: ai candidati piace di più il nuovo esame' at: <<http://altoadige.gelocal.it/bolzano/cronaca/2014/01/17/news/patentino-ai-candidati-piace-di-piu-il-nuovo-esame-1.8489213>> and 'Nuovo patentino, promossi due terzi dei candidati' at:

6.9 The use of High German versus the use of dialect and its effects on Italian-speaking

South Tyroleans

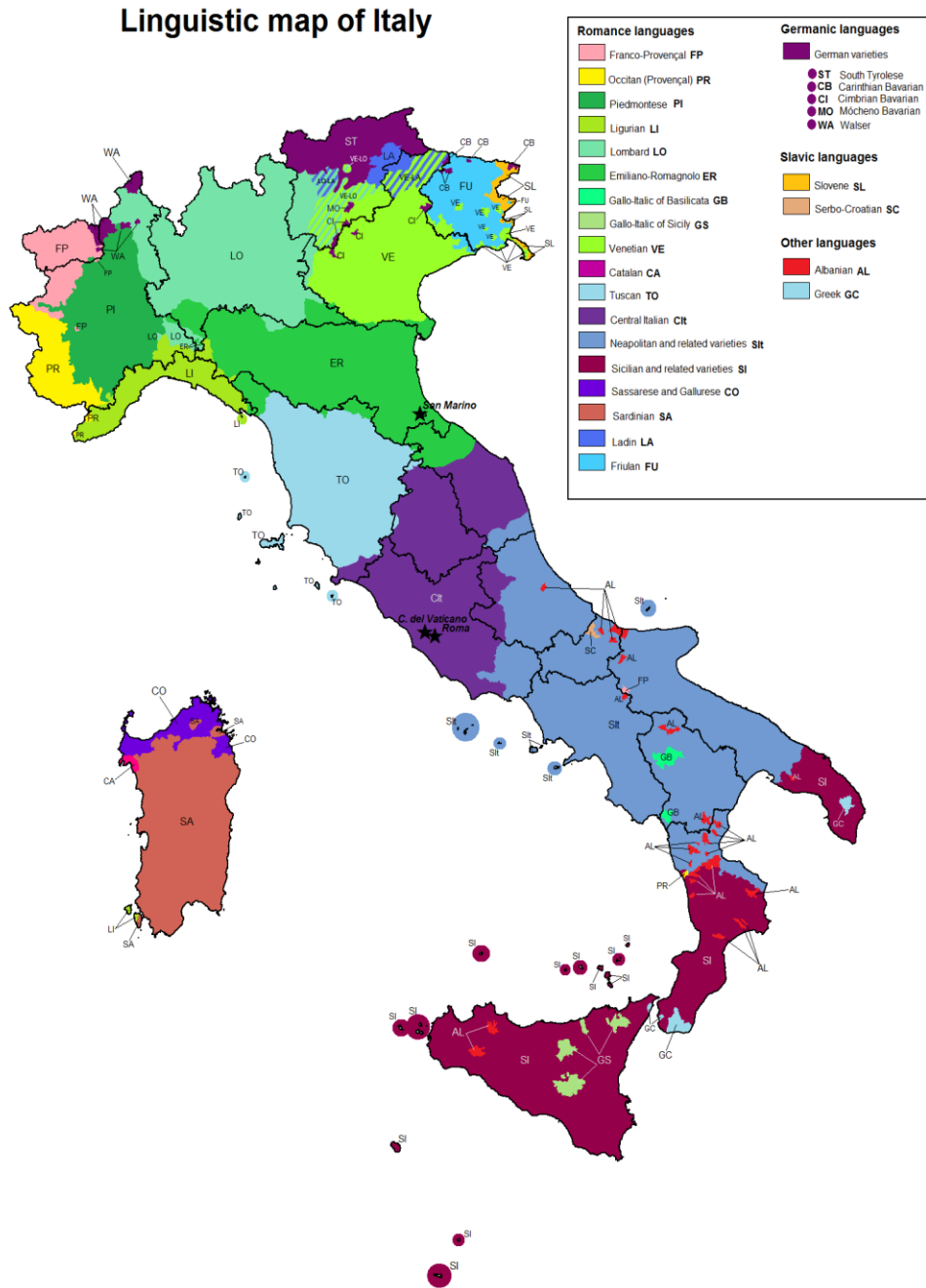


Figure 6.1<sup>87</sup>

<<http://altoadige.gelocal.it/bolzano/cronaca/2014/01/18/news/nuovo-patentino-promossi-due-terzi-dei-candidati-1.8495624>> [Accessed 29 July 2015].

<sup>87</sup> This map can be accessed at the following website:

<[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Linguistic\\_map\\_of\\_Italy.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Linguistic_map_of_Italy.png)> [Accessed 30 July 2015].

Throughout most of Italy, excluding South Tyrol, there are a multitude of Italian dialects. These dialects, which differ from one city to another, are unique to their own respective regions. Fiorentino, for example, is spoken predominately in the city of Florence, while Barese is spoken in the southern city of Bari, far removed from any Tuscan dialect. According to Howard Moss, irrespective of attempts by Mussolini to enforce a standard language, Italian dialects persist and are so diverse from each other that they are 'unintelligible to speakers of other [Italian] dialects' (Moss 2000: 113; Lepschy et al. 1996: 72; De Mauro 1996: 95; Ruzza 2000: 169).

South Tyrol is unique in the sense that most Italian-speakers do not speak in dialect. Instead, dialect is used primarily by German- and Ladin-speakers, whose varied dialects exist throughout the province. The result is one where:

'practically none of the German-speaking participants [use High German] in everyday life (0.9 [percent]); instead they [speak] South Tyrolean dialect (98.8 [percent]), which is only very poorly understood by the Italian-speakers interviewed (70.7 [percent] did not understand dialect or could only understand simple sentences)' (Abel et al. 2010: 299; see Abel et al. 2012a: 161 for more information).

Consequently, Italian-speakers are unable to converse in the High German that they are taught in schools as German-speakers tend to prefer using their own dialect when conversing with one another (see Peterlini 2013: 122). According to Abel et al., 40.1 percent of Italian-speakers insist that the frequent use of dialect prevents them from being able to learn the L2 and is a major obstacle to L2 learning (2010: 277-278). Additionally, German-speakers have an advantage as the Italian that they are taught in school matches the Italian that is spoken in South Tyrol, which allows them to progress in the L2 (see Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 86; Lanthaler 2007: 234; Voltmer 2007: 205).

The reason for this absence of a South Tyrolean Italian dialect lies in Mussolini's efforts to 'Italianize' the province through the integration of Italians from different parts of Italy during the 1930s and 1940s (see Chapter 2). The convergence of the dialects forced Italian-speakers to communicate through standard Italian, while the German-speaking citizens maintained their local dialects despite Mussolini's objectives. As a result, Voltmer states that due to the recent history of Italian immigration to South Tyrol, 'the dialects spoken by Italian speakers...have levelled out to a common "regional variety, very similar to the standard language"' (2007: 205; Mioni 1990; Lanthaler 2007: 234).

When it comes to the use of Italian dialects, the standard Italian that is spoken today historically derives from the Florentine variety spoken during the fourteenth century. Dialects like Turinese, Bolognese and Fiorentino are, in fact, all 'sister' languages which derive directly from spoken Latin, rather than from any language that could be called Italian. Since the majority of Italians 'until recent years' were considered to be illiterate, the Italians' mother tongue (just as it is with German-speakers) was considered dialect (Lepschy et al. 1996: 70; Ruzza 2000: 170).

Even though Italian dialects differ in 'phonology, grammar and lexis' (ibid.), as of 1996, 60 percent of Italians spoke their own dialect, with 14 percent using the dialect 'exclusively, that is, not alternating with Italian or another language' (De Mauro 1996: 95). With the increase of the mass media, as well as education, it is striking on how the use of dialect is still present in the home, community and work environment (Levy 1996: 9), despite the use of standard Italian in technology.

The German-speaking areas of Europe are also noted for their variety of dialects: it is not unusual for dialects to be so different that German-speakers from different regions may not understand each other. Within South Tyrol province, the dialects are so distinct

that single villages have their own unique varieties (Ciccolone 2010: 49; Lanthaler 2007: 223), so that according to Nicole, when she moved to another village, she had to learn an alternative vocabulary.

When it comes to dialects, specifically in South Tyrol, Lanthaler states that there is a 'dialect continuum...that connects grass-root varieties of single valley communities to a colloquial language that combines all the regions' (Ciccolone 2010: 49). This 'plurinationality' found within the German language can be heard through many German-speaking regions, reinforcing the view that state borders cannot 'stop' another language from transitioning into another province (Lanthaler 2007: 220-221).

Historically the German language used within South Tyrol province has been through several transitions. Starting in the 1920s, due to South Tyrol's location, the German dialect shared traits with Austrian German, with some researchers stating that the German that was spoken was more along the lines of Austrian-Bavarian (Ciccolone 2010: 50, 58; see Lanthaler 2007: 222). During the Fascist period, linguistic rights were removed from the German-speaking South Tyroleans (Ciccolone 2010: 50). By the Second World War, even though the German-speakers felt that they had an Austrian identity, the German that was taught officially in German-speaking schools was redirected from an Austrian influence to High German (Ciccolone 2010: 58).

For many years, 'the German South Tyroleans were confronted with a criticism of being bad Germans if they did not master [High German]' (Lanthaler 2007: 230). But from the 1980s onwards, the 'dialect renaissance' brought about a resurgence in the use of local dialect. In domains where the dialect was previously banned, such as in radio, television and entertainment, dialect is now found, as it is in social networks, such as Facebook, email and text messaging (ibid.; Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 83). For young people,

'[w]hat used to be looked down upon in the past is highly appreciated today' with 95 percent of German-speaking South Tyroleans using dialect as their preferred means of communication (Lanthaler 2007: 230-231; see Ciccolone 2010: 51; Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 82).

Dialect is also said to be used by citizens who do not wish to lose their roots or traditions. With immigration on the rise due to the EU's open borders, rural communities have noticed social changes resulting in 'a sense of "loss"...experienced by many villagers, in particular amongst the elderly' (Lanthaler 2007: 230).

[Subsequently] [g]lobalisation has not spared provincial and remote rural areas...[from looking] for identification within his/her own small group. Linguistically-speaking, dialect, the language of the small group, is perceived as a safe haven in the globalisation context...[As a result] there is indeed a renewed tendency to identify with one's own small group and dialect rather than with [High German] in order to attain both social integration and differentiation' (Lanthaler 2007: 230-231).

Similar to comments made on the exceeding role of *Heimat* to 'reconnect' residents with one's own roots (see Fait 2007: 104), dialect can also provide people with their own identity, distinguishing them from foreign-speaking outsiders (see Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 83; Zambelli 2003/2004: 9).

Occasionally there exist Italian-speaking locals who have a fluent knowledge of the dialect, but the dialect is German, indicating that they spend much of their time with German-speaking locals. According to Giudiceandrea and Mazza, there are many Italian-speakers who have a passive understanding of the dialects due to their private relations or through work affiliations with other German-speaking colleagues. However, this does not indicate that Italian-speaking South Tyroleans are able to linguistically

immerse themselves, let alone communicate, in the German-speaking dialects spoken throughout the province (2012: 88).

Many Italian-speaking students who live in Bolzano do not understand the Bolzano dialect, let alone comprehend the other South Tyrolean dialects, as evidenced in my interviews. Consequently, when it comes to second language acquisition, Italian-speaking students find it difficult to learn German when the teachers use High German, since dialect is spoken in the streets. Since the German dialect is the preferred communication outside of written documents and newspapers (Lanthaler 2007: 224, 234; Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 87; Ciccolone 2010: 51; Zambelli 2003/2004: 8), it becomes another 'second language' that Italian-speakers have to learn, resulting in their need for a 'double bilingualism' (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 87).

'In the case of Italian pupils...there is a particular difficulty hindering the motivation for the learning of the L2; whereas contacts for German-speaking pupils actually represent an opportunity for practising the L2, this is not the case for Italian-speaking pupils. In exchanges between German- and Italian-speakers of the same age, the Italian language is used almost exclusively [as stated below]. This virtually "institutionalised" practice of using Italian in intergroup communication indirectly leads to the view among Italian-speaking pupils that it is not really necessary to learn and speak German. Furthermore, the habit of German-speaking South Tyroleans to speak their dialect in practically all areas of daily life while almost never using [High] German makes it difficult even for those Italian-speakers who would like to improve their language skills to practice' (Abel et al. 2010: 301-302).

Subsequently, many Italian-speaking students are dissatisfied with having to learn German if they feel they cannot use it or practice the L2 lest German-speakers speak to them in dialect (Lanthaler 2007: 234; Forer et al. 2008). Given that German-speakers will inadvertently switch into Italian when talking to Italian-speakers, this prevents Italian-speakers from using their L2, which compromises their bilingualism

(Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 86; Lanthaler 2007: 234; Voltmer 2007: 205, 218; Peterlini 2013: 121; see Ciccolone 2010: 51-52; Abel et al. 2010: 298; Zambelli 2003/2004: 8).

As a result, Lucia said it would be easier for Italian-speakers to learn High German if they lived in Germany. But even if Italian-speakers lived in Germany for several years or more, this would not enable them to speak in South Tyrolean dialect.

Weronika experienced second language learning issues when she moved to South Tyrol when she was younger. As a native German-speaker, she claimed that it was difficult for her to comprehend the local dialect. Although the German schools were technically supposed to use High German during school hours, the students spoke in dialect, which she could not understand, as if the dialect was like another language. After one day of classes she went home and cried to her mother because she could not understand the other students. Even though the students were considered German-speaking residents, their dialect was very different from High German. While dialect is purportedly used outside of schools, Giudiceandrea and Mazza claim that dialect is also found in schools 'not only in the hallways, but also in the classrooms and the teachers' lounge' (2012: 84). Even though it is reported that 82 percent of German-speaking teachers teach their courses in High German (as it is a neutral language given the dialectal variation of German-speakers in South Tyrol), German-speaking students retain what is referred to as a 'halting school German', where High German 'is not heard in any medium [outside of school] and offers little motivation for extra-[curricular] use' (Ciccolone 2010: 51; Lanthaler 2007: 229).

Therefore, Italian-speakers must learn through trial and error that High German is not used with German-speakers. If Italians want to have a 'natural' conversation in German

they should anticipate speaking in local dialect since High German is considered, amongst the German-speakers, as inhibiting normal communications (Lanthaler 1990: 26; Zambelli 2003/2004: 8). Consequently, this can result in added difficulty for Italian-speakers who are attempting to learn High German, especially when dialect has a diverse set of grammatical rules, according to German-speaking informants.

Additionally, while some Italians might not have incentives to push themselves to learn the German language, historically the German-speakers were not given a choice and were forced to learn Italian in their schools (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 109). This 'imposed monolingualism' by the Fascist government during the 1920s in German-speaking education, provided German-speakers with a means of survival in response to the Italian nation-state (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 79).

Fortunately, for the Germans, L2 acquisition proved easier since linguistically, Italian is considered more accessible than German would be for an L2 learner. The German-speakers also know that they need the L2 in order to access administration so that they can participate in governmental business and have more of a 'say' in their society.

[Since Germans have to use Italian] when going to the stations, the police, the post office, etc., they've unconsciously become aware of their needing to shift into Italian. As a result, German-speakers essentially take away the Italian-speakers' opportunities to express themselves in the German language when they come face-to-face with each other' (Peterlini 2013: 122).

Peterlini also adds that for German-speaking citizens, learning Italian provides them with an unconscious sense of power. Even if a German-speaker's knowledge of the L2 is essentially of a substandard level, the probability is higher that a German's knowledge of Italian surpasses an Italian's knowledge of German. Additionally, Peterlini states that by knowing the L2, this prevents Italian-speakers from intruding into the German-

speaking world by allowing Germans to proclaim, 'I know your language, but you don't know mine!' (2013: 123-124). For Baur, 'this common linguistic behaviour is an unconscious fear [of letting] the other get too close' (Voltmer 2007: 205).

Nevertheless, despite the efforts of several German-speaking citizens to immerse themselves in the Italian language, there are Italian-speakers who are dissatisfied with how the dialect is used inside work places. For some Italian-speakers, the dialect is misinterpreted as a 'secret code' to close off the Italians, inadvertently creating further rifts between both groups and discouraging further assimilation (Forer et al. 2008).

Since dialect is also linked with German identity, it 'is associated with closeness [and one's] motherland', but at the same time, dialect 'can also marginalise those who speak another language' (Lanthaler 2007: 231). With the widespread use of dialect through the province, this becomes a major obstacle to L2 learning as many Italian-speakers 'do not understand that the linguistic identity of the [German-speakers] is very closely linked to dialect' (Lanthaler 2007: 235; Voltmer 2007: 205). Furthermore, Lanthaler states that:

'If [the Italians] learn German at all they want to be able to move through the whole German language area, rather than "only" communicate with their neighbours... As most Italians [in South Tyrol] are city dwellers, their familiarity with the dialect world is limited. They appreciate [High] German as a cultural language and wonder why their German-speaking fellow-citizens continue to indulge in the use of the dialect' (2007: 235).

For those Italian-speaking students who do make constant efforts to use High German within public spaces, these students may have realized that many German-speakers find speaking High German to be difficult, or at times embarrassing (Peterlini 2013: 122). Researchers at EURAC found that some German-speakers thought speaking the 'pure' High German was a challenge, assuming German-speakers may not have opportunities to use High German in their normal discourse (Forer et al. 2008). Subsequently, this

might explain why some German-speakers tend to view High German like a foreign language (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 85), which further complicates the question of whether it would make more sense to have Italians learn one of the more common local dialects.

According to Telmon, some German-speakers are aware of their inadequate abilities to speak in High German. This results in what he calls 'linguistic modesty' in reference to their disuse of High German. Additionally, he suggests that German-speakers tend to withdraw within themselves when faced with a High German-speaker. Moreover, social stigmas are directed towards Germans who do not use High German in daily life, suggesting that they are of a lower social status and have received little formal education (1992: 77).

'Whereas [South Tyrolean German-speaking] politicians, business representatives and middle ranking administrative staff feel at ease using the above described variety in between [High German] and dialect in the media, the average citizen has inhibitions to use [High German] in official situations. Furthermore, the German South [Tyroleans] speak dialect at home, at work and in their free time in almost 100 [percent] of the cases therefore they have little practice in the active use of [High German]. It is not surprising, then, that many of them make an awkward impression when they unexpectedly find themselves in official situations, for example in the media, in which they are supposed to speak [High German]. Hence the widespread saying [that High German] is a foreign language for [German-speakers]...' (Lanthaler 2007: 229).

Nevertheless, there is a small group of Italian-speaking South Tyroleans who have expressed an interest in learning German dialect. Learning materials are available specifically within the province 'to promote the comprehension of spoken dialect' (Lanthaler 2007: 235), but Italian-speaking schools still prefer to teach High German instead of the dialect in school. That said, Lanthaler referred to linguist, Alberto Mioni, who suggested a 'solution' to the L2 learning problem by proposing that German-

speakers 'choose' a local dialect that closely represents High German. That way, Germans can converse with their Italian-speaking neighbours who are required to learn High German inside school. Alternatively, Mioni states that Italian-speakers would benefit from learning a passive knowledge of the dialects, so that they can distinguish between the varied German dialects and comprehend the native German-speaker. By trying to deliver German dialect to class, this could reinforce 'interethnic communication', but Italian-speaking schools still 'continue to focus exclusively on [teaching] standard [German] varieties' (Lanthaler 2007: 235; Mioni 1990: 31; Abel et al. 2012b: 153).

Having said that, in order for German-speaking South Tyroleans to linguistically relate to Italian-speaking students, Giudiceandrea and Mazza advise that German students listen to Italian dialects spoken outside of South Tyrol. The objective would be to demonstrate to German-speaking students the difficulties that come with learning dialect, so that German students sympathize with Italian-speaking students when it comes to having to learn the L2 (2012: 101). Ciccolone also adds that schools should try to create a 'common communicative space and...promotion of a common [linguistic] code for the two groups' (2010: 130). 'The solution', in his words, 'would be represented by the adoption of a [German] standard that is closer' to the German dialect. By teaching a German standard that is used by German-speakers, but understood and used by the Italian-speakers, this 'could contribute to [reintroducing High German] to [German-speakers]' and encourage better intergroup relations (ibid.).

### 6.10 'False bilingualism'

In hindsight, when examining societal disruptions related to second language learning issues, interviews and observations suggest that many citizens retain a sense of 'false bilingualism'. Whilst the L2 of the region is predominately used in order to deal with official matters, outside of economic and administrative affairs the L2 is not used in daily communication (Zambelli 2003/2004: 6; Baur 2000: 63), except primarily among those who grow-up in bilingual-speaking households and/or actively seek to use the L2.

When interviewing Italian-speaking students, one expressed her concerns on being obliged to converse in High German. From her perspective, she did not want to 'distort' the German language and run the risk of saying something incorrectly. This nervousness was also evident based on an interview with the former President of the provincial council, Mauro Minniti. He stated that '[b]etween us Italians many feel ashamed to speak German: we are afraid of making errors and of making a bad impression' (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 107). This suggests that he is not alone in feeling somewhat self-conscious when required to have discussions in High German.

But is this 'false bilingualism' also evident amongst the German-speakers in Bolzano province, especially considering that most prefer the dialect, rather than conversing in High German? According to Lucia, 'in theory' the German-speakers should technically be well-versed in High German, but as evidenced above, this is not really the case as German-speakers tend to prefer speaking in dialect. As High German:

'is only used in official situations and to a certain degree in school...everyday communication and even on some less official public occasions the [South] Tyrolean dialect predominates' (Vollmer 2007: 205).

As a result, the German-speakers do not see an urgency to develop a knowledge of High German as they never use it during regular discourse between their family and friends. Consequently, there have been students from German-speaking families who have failed the Patentino A because they are unable to write in High German as a direct consequence of only using dialect at home. 'During the Patentino A', according to Lucia, 'if you speak in dialect you will fail', which may prove rather difficult for German-speaking students who are unfamiliar with High German. In one instance, Lucia had a German-speaking friend who studied in Italian-speaking schools. At home, he spoke in an Austrian dialect and at school he spoke in Italian, and hence he could be considered bilingual. That said, he had an insufficient knowledge of High German to pass the Patentino. Subsequently, he decided to take several German language courses in order to perfect his grammar skills, which might have been avoided if his family had made greater efforts to expose him to High German outside of school.

Unfortunately, High German has become somewhat of a thorn in the side of the German-speakers of the region since many German-speakers who grow up speaking the dialect are unprepared for going to a German-speaking university. Those German-speaking students who decide to leave the province and attend courses in Austria and Germany quickly realize that their own comprehension of High German is insufficient for higher education (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 84).

As a result, this might explain why some Italian-speaking South Tyroleans hold negative perceptions of German dialects. 'Their limited access to this variety [of dialects], compounded by their derogatory attitude [towards German], explains why [some Italian-speakers] are very poorly motivated' (Lanthaler 2007: 235) to learn High German, let alone a German dialect.

Therefore, Giudiceandrea and Mazza state that positive perceptions are needed towards L2-speaking groups, along with curiosity and an interest towards others (2012: 82) to promote a better means of L2 learning.

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When examining the effects of the dialect issue for German- and Italian-speaking citizens, the question still remains as to whether it would make more sense to teach the local dialect in schools. When talking to Salvatore, an Italian-speaking teacher who grew up in Germany and teaches German, I asked if he thought that teaching dialect would be a benefit to the school system:

'In my opinion, it wouldn't be a good idea because if you spoke dialect you would only speak the language that is spoken in South Tyrol and the dialect isn't an official language. The newspapers are written in High German... There are no dialect papers; maybe some sentences are, but the articles are all in High German. The locals can read in High German but they speak in dialect. This creates frustration for Italian students who are learning German, which means they cannot practice German on the streets.'

While Salvatore felt that dialect would limit students to the regions where each dialect is spoken, he stated that German dialect is like a separate language where both grammar and syntax are different. My informants Anna and Nicole, both of whom are fluent in their own dialects, informed me that the dialects spoken in South Tyrol are so varied that sometimes South Tyrolean German-speakers are unable to comprehend the other dialects used in certain parts of the province. As Anna stated:

'There are some dialects that you can understand and they can understand your High German and there are other dialects that sound like Norwegian. And those people have a difficult time understanding High German.'

Even when Salvatore tried to talk with German-speakers, he could only comprehend 80 percent of their German. When his friends from Hamburg came to visit South Tyrol the German-speakers asked his friends to speak in English in order to be able to understand them. As for when he taught his classes, Salvatore permitted students to have a local accent when they spoke, but he did not permit his students to use the local dialects when practicing their German in class. 'The words and the grammar have to be correct' so that students have a knowledge of High German.

Similar to Salvatore, Giudiceandrea and Mazza felt that German-speaking schools were the only place where German-speakers had the opportunity to 'be in contact with a good [German] language standard' (2012: 96). In their opinion, '[a] German-speaking South Tyrolean who speaks dialect, but not High German, condemns him or herself to cultural isolation' (2012: 85), by removing themselves from the wider German-speaking world due to an insufficient knowledge of High German.

Paola, on the contrary, did not agree with Salvatore's methods when teaching High German to her students. A native of South Tyrol, she is bilingual in both standard Italian and German dialect. From her perspective, it made sense to teach the local dialect because:

'[n]o one uses High German here. They study High German here for nothing. If the students do not learn the dialect when they are young, they will never learn it in South Tyrolean society.'

Melissa further added that from an employment perspective, it made sense for students to learn local dialect because the German-speakers view speakers of the local dialects as having a fluent knowledge of 'good German'. Furthermore, the dialect enjoys a level of 'high prestige' (Voltmer 2007: 205) within South Tyrolean German culture.

Nevertheless, regardless of the 'high prestige' of German dialect, Italian-speaking students are at odds over how to deal with L2 learning hurdles when German-speakers have no knowledge of High German. While some Italian students do not understand why they should have to learn High German in a region that speaks dialect, other Italian-speakers solely wish to learn High German because it can be used internationally. Until the local school system can come to a conclusion over how to tackle High German in schools, the L2 learning issues will persist within the province until a resolution is found.

### 6.11 Social peer pressure

Finally, I close this chapter by discussing how peer pressure plays a part in second language learning issues. When talking to informants regarding whether social pressure played a role in second language acquisition, several residents agreed that sometimes social situations could influence how students viewed each other.

While some parents try to place their children in an L2 school (an aspect discussed in Chapters 4 and 7), sometimes this action backfires regardless of attempts by local parents to encourage L2 learning. As German teacher Rita stated:

'Some parents will place their children for part of the time in a German-speaking school and then part of the time in an Italian-speaking school, but then the students end up losing their friends from the first school and have to adjust to another school. As a result, these children have a harder time integrating themselves socially and culturally into the province. And once students get into the school system (whether it be the German- or Italian-speaking school system), the children end up influencing each other's views and opinions, etc....'

Hans Karl Peterlini placed his German-speaking son in a German school with mainly Italian-speaking students. Believing this private school would provide his son with access to the Italian language, he was surprised to find that his son did not enjoy going

to school because the Italian students did not want to play with him. Because his son was 'German', he was ostracized from playing games with the Italian-speaking students, causing Peterlini to reflect on local group relations, especially within the city of Bolzano. Italian-speakers living in a German-speaking region constantly feel like they are ostracized because 'the environment...excludes them from playing games...because they do not understand the game's language and its rules' (Peterlini 2013: 253).

Johanna, who commented on the local language tensions, especially when teaching middle school, noticed that from a social standpoint, student divisions develop once they reach pre-adolescence. In middle school, students display an inherent desire to try to 'fit in socially' by justifying their own place within society and distinguishing themselves from other groups.

Her daughter Elisa, a German- and Italian-speaker, was constantly influenced by her peers. During middle school, Elisa attended a German-speaking school and would arrive home with negative views towards Italians. Then Johanna placed her daughter in an Italian-speaking high school, where her negative opinions were redirected towards the Germans. Based on her daughter's change in views, Johanna believed 'these [were] opinions that she picked up from elsewhere' because her daughter was determined to be 'part of the group' to fit in with her social surroundings.

The same could be said for political opinions once students reached pre-adolescence. As stated by Johanna:

'[s]tudents...might not know anything about politics but they'll start taking up radical views and slogans that they're not even standing behind because they don't really know what they're talking about.'

While Johanna insisted that these radical views were less of an issue once students reached high school, politically speaking, there is still a provincial need to keep groups from '[mixing] too much.' Some locals, she explained, are still afraid that they 'will lose a part of their cultural [and linguistic] identity', an identity that bolsters tourism and the economy, and also helps 'make the province move.'

According to Federica, it was only when children are much younger that they will play with other language groups. Once students reach the age of 13, they segregate themselves into their individual social compartments.

### 6.12 Concluding remarks

When reflecting on the role of South Tyrolean social factors and its effects on L2 learning in the province, it is interesting to note how different societal procedures can influence one's L2 learning outcome. In the words of Rod Ellis:

'How far different groups of learners progress [in the L2] will depend on the kinds of social factors [involved]. These factors govern the degree of contact that takes place between learners and target language speakers, how useful it is for an individual learner to make the effort needed to learn the L2, and, in some cases, the extent to which the interlanguage variety becomes a symbol of ethnic pride' (1994: 218).

Even though Ellis does not expand on the types of 'social factors' which can inhibit second language acquisition, his observations bring to mind inherent truths on the influence society has on its second language learners.

In this chapter I have discussed a multitude of social factors and the impact they can have on L2 learners, by examining peer pressure and societal distinctions and how they deter students from learning the L2. Additionally, I examined how geographical

displacement, as well as cultural division in society provides language learners with excuses to avoid having to practice the L2 in their region.

While parents like Chiara are actively aware that learning German for Italians is not easy, research would indicate that integrative motivation is what is needed to encourage L2 learning. Even though the use of dialect is an L2 concern expressed by many Italians in the province, Chiara thinks that dialect can be learned by Italian-speakers despite some people in South Tyrol stating the contrary.

Italian-speaking students are also not the only ones who face difficulties when learning High German. 'False bilingualism' is a societal concern, which is expressed by German- and Italian-speakers. As German-speaking students prefer using their dialect rather than conversing in High German, this dialect preference can isolate German-speakers from other German-speaking regions within Europe.

As a result, I have tried to illuminate the concerns which impede L2 learning in South Tyrol, by filling in the gaps missing in the L2 literature through addressing what I mean by 'social factors'. As history is clearly part of the South Tyrol narrative, it has contributed towards language learning 'blocks', which are manifested in the forms of halted L2 learning for both German- and Italian-speaking groups. Since history is hardly mentioned as a social factor, which determines linguistic group relations, Tollefson explains that 'issues of power and domination', have historically had an effect on majority-minority relations (Ellis 1994: 239). Additionally, he explains that historical variables 'explain why learners from minority language backgrounds make the choices that they do' (Ellis 1994: 238-239) in education.

'Choices', in this sense, can refer to L2 learning and whether students will invest in the L2, presuming they see a value in learning the second language spoken by the opposing social group.

Therefore, Abel et al. suggest that more contact is needed to bolster integrative L2 learning, which they feel is more successful than the instrumental model in motivating young people to learn the L2 (2010: 300). Moreover, they explain that:

'opportunities for contact between the two groups could and should be promoted while creating equal conditions within the groups to work towards [sufficient L2 learning] goals' (Abel et al. 2010: 301).

Rather than placing attention on passing the Patentino, or on teaching students to view the L2 as enforced, more emphasis should be placed on daily communication with the 'other community' within the province (Abel et al. 2012b: 152).

## Chapter 7: Locals' responses to L2 learning issues in education and South Tyrolean society

In the early days of fieldwork, I came to know a family who were based in the city of Merano. My mother, who was trying to find a South Tyrolean General Practitioner with a fluent knowledge of the English language, was combing through the internet in the hopes that she would find a local doctor whom I could use in case of emergencies. She sent an email to a man named Florian, asking if he knew of any doctors in the region, and whether he could be of some assistance. Within a day he replied stating that his neighbour was a doctor, who was based at the hospital in Merano. Through the course of several weeks, Florian became my mother's pen-pal, despite my reservations towards her unknown correspondent.

When I arrived in South Tyrol, my mother contacted Florian asking if she could make an introduction. Regardless of my attempts to downplay his invitation, I agreed to meet his family for dinner. Thankfully, my mother's intuition was correct as his wife, Chiara, was an excellent cook, as well as a hostess. The family also became a major source of local contacts by introducing me to many of their friends.

During one such family dinner, two of Chiara's friends asked me about my doctoral research. When I explained that I was studying German and Italian relations as evident through the South Tyrol school system, her friends got into a debate about the local schooling system and the language issues in South Tyrol province.

As the discussion unfolded, I noticed that these men came from two different European backgrounds. One was raised in the Netherlands, while the other was Italian and yet they both sympathized with one another. I realized that their individual perceptions

outweighed their social ties towards a language group, and that these two diverse adults from distinct social upbringings, had come to very similar conclusions. They were not satisfied with the 'separate but equal' schooling system and felt it contributed to societal divisions.

In the previous chapter, I concentrated on individual responses to L2 learning issues in South Tyrolean society based specifically on my informants' views. I continue with this theme here by trying to understand how locals deal with L2 issues in society as they choose how to manoeuvre amongst the L2 community and decide how they will learn the second language. To simplify their answers, I divided my informants into parents, students, teachers and politicians, to provide the reader with a varied, but organized description of individual reactions to L2 learning in the province. By analyzing the data from four social groups, I aim to construct a mental image of a diverse community that is trying to adapt to better L2 teaching in the region.

Through interviewing parents, I wanted to understand how they grapple with education choices. Do they place their children in German- or Italian-speaking schools? And what impact does that have on their children's fluency? How do parents respond to second language learning if their children come from a bilingual background? And what role does 'Free Choice' play in second language learning? Does it help or hinder second language acquisition?

Teachers, simultaneously, are faced with a variety of issues as they work their way around the school system. While many are tempted to try and find a means of promoting better L2 teaching techniques, others are concerned that late L2 immersion teaching may result in insufficient L2 learning.

Some German-speaking politicians believe that the solution is in the teaching of the L1, before the introduction of the L2, in order to retain one's mother tongue. But other politicians are somewhat in support of a bilingual education system, while others have suggested placing German language teachers in Italian-speaking nursery schools.

Either way, it is the students, in the end, who are the ones most impacted by the education system. They are the future generation who decides whether bureaucracy should implement new educational reforms. Should immersion education become a regional prerogative? Or should the schools remain exactly as they are? These are the sort of questions that arose from interviews, which generated interesting results.

Ultimately, I have chosen to focus on these groups and their reactions to L2 learning in South Tyrol in order to provide further clarity as to why the region is still linguistically divided. By concentrating on parents, students, teachers and politicians, I ask informants what the L2 means to them, while finding out how residents respond to L2 learning issues in education and within society.

### 7.1 Parents' reactions and responses to the education system (along with L2 learning issues in society)

When I conducted interviews with parents in South Tyrol, over time I noticed a distinct pattern in that the majority of parents I spoke to were in 'mixed' relationships (i.e. their partners had a different mother tongue). This is interesting, as 'mixed' relationships historically were considered taboo, but over time they have become more common, especially within South Tyrol's cities.

As a result of these 'mixed' marriages, their children face a linguistic dilemma when their parents try to place them in a school as their children could attend a German or

Italian school, depending on their child's linguistic preference. With many parents wanting a bilingual schooling option, it makes choosing schools a difficult conundrum as they want their children to develop both of their mother tongues, regardless of the separate schooling system.

Since the province does not provide a bilingual schooling option, Ellis addresses how parents can impact L2 learning 'by monitoring their children's curricular activities...[and] by modelling attitudes conducive to successful [L2] language learning' (Ellis 1994: 228). In his words:

'A number of studies have found a positive relationship between parental encouragement and achievement in L2 learning. Gardner (1985) [also] argues that parents' influence on [L2] proficiency is mediated through the students' motivation' (ibid.).

Therefore, in this section, I look at the role of parents and discuss how they encourage L2 learning when having to place their children in monolingual schools due to the Second Autonomy statues. In the first part, I analyze why bilingual-speaking parents may opt for German-speaking education, while in the second part I discuss how parents are able to influence L2 learning outside of schools. Finally, I close this section by questioning the 'Free Choice' option and ask whether it solves L2 issues within language politics and social group division as evidenced inside the schooling system.

### **7.1.1 The German- versus the Italian-speaking school system: Where do you place your children and why?**

When reflecting on the school system discussed in Chapter 4, I explained why some Italian-speaking parents opted to place their children in German-speaking education so that their children could learn the L2. While there are German-speaking parents, such as

Johanna, who have placed their children in Italian-speaking schools, my research suggests that German-speakers are less likely to consider an Italian education.

But what happens when a parent from an L2-speaking background marries someone with a different mother tongue? Where do they place their children if they are raised as bilingual? How do they guarantee that their children learn both languages?

Some of my informants were native English-speakers, with English commonly being used at home. Those parents had to decide if their children should learn German or immerse themselves in the Italian culture. Some parents from both German- and Italian-speaking backgrounds faced similar dilemmas in school choice since bilingual education is not normally an option as multilingual schools are so few in number.<sup>88</sup>

When talking with Lucia, an Italian native-speaker, she informed me that if she had a child, she would place her child in the German-speaking school system due to its good reputation in the region. Several of my informants gave me similar responses, regardless of their cultural background. The belief was that more money was given to German-speaking schools and that the structure was more organized and rigid (see Chapter 4).<sup>89</sup>

Another assumption that parents articulated was that the German schools were better equipped for learning. Aside from the presumption that the teaching is more rigorous, the German schools were viewed as more efficient. Consequently, many parents from diverse linguistic backgrounds opted to place their children in German education, even

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<sup>88</sup> Aside from the bilingual elementary school established in Firmian in 2014 (see Chapter 4), the only other multilingual school that I am aware of in Bolzano is the Marcelline school. More information can be found at: <<http://www.marcellinebolzano.it/Objects/Pagina.asp?ID=2&T=Chi%20siamo>> [accessed 12 August 2015].

<sup>89</sup> Rumours during fieldwork suggested that many German-speaking schools were obtaining sufficient funding from the SVP, the EU and the Italian government, but I have no supporting data, outside of personal observations and interviews, to support these findings. That said, while finances do not necessarily indicate the educational efficiency of a school, the structural layout of the interior of one German-speaking high school, along with the instalment of a large indoor swimming pool, suggested that funding was being provided to support extra-curricular activities that would normally not have been available to Italian-speaking students (personal observation).

if the parents did not speak the German language and were unable to communicate with German teachers.

Although this inconvenience of not speaking the L2 is sometimes seen as an obstacle for parents, those parents who make efforts to learn the L2 become an L2 learning model for their children. Nevertheless, some German parents are uncomfortable with having children from different backgrounds learn together in one classroom. As stated by Lucia, 'What makes things worse is when locals want to keep children separated from other cultures.'

This sentiment, however, is not normally expressed in the regions that are solely German-speaking since villagers are limited, based on geographical location, as to which types of schools are available for children. While some villages are perceived as rather 'closed-minded', it is expected that village children attend German schools.

'Rarely, in a village, would a German- or Italian-speaking parent decide to place their children in an Italian-speaking school. Those who do may prefer the Italian-speaking schools because they are much smaller in size or because the parents want their children to have exposure to the second language.'

Otherwise, stated Weronika, parents assume that by placing their children in a German village school, the children will become better socially integrated by learning the dialect and German language. Even some bilingual families will send their children to German-speaking schools under the belief that the children need to understand the dialect or 'they will never fully integrate into society.'

That is why bilingual parents Maria and Ricardo decided to place their son in German-speaking education. Their belief is that Italian is much easier to learn and could be learned at home as well as on the streets, but German is a language that is harder to acquire and would be better learned at a younger age. Although they debated whether

they would place their son in Italian-speaking schools when he is older, the mutual consensus was to start with German schools and see how he progresses in the language.

However, some bilingual families hesitated over finding the best 'overall fit' for their children. Clarissa and Ludovico, who are American and Italian respectively, decided to place their daughter in an Italian school. Since English is the L1 spoken at home, both agreed she needed more exposure to Italian. But as the couple live in a predominately German-speaking city, their daughter needed to learn High German, as well as dialect. When it came to school selection, Clarissa admitted that choosing a school for her children was her 'biggest worry' since the family could not find a happy medium as there are no bilingual schools located in their area. While the German-speaking schools have a better reputation and give children access to German-speaking countries (i.e. Austria, Switzerland and Germany), Clarissa stated that their 'reasons for choosing an Italian-speaking school was because we moved to Italy to live in Italy...it would be silly if our children didn't speak Italian', even if the province normally speaks German.

Consequently, they decided that after Italian kindergarten they would place their daughter in a German-speaking school, but 'if we're all miserable after one year of German schooling we might switch back to Italian-speaking schools.'

### **7.1.2 The role of the family in learning the L2**

When researching the data on the role of local families in encouraging L2 acquisition, I wanted to consider not only bilingual families, but also German- and Italian-speaking families. My objective was to understand how families can impact L2 learning through influence and inter-group exposure, as well as verify how parents play an active part in encouraging more L2 use at home. While in Chapter 6, I refer to the role of families in

determining views towards the L2 group, I have opted to go further in seeing how local families influence their children to learn the L2.

For those parents in Bolzano and Merano who actively try to encourage the L2 outside of school, some have tried to have their children interact with other neighbours who were fluent in the L2 of the region. Others employ foreign nannies or have their children study abroad to make up for the language learned in schools, while some bilingual parents try to use both languages at home to make up for any gaps in the school system.

Other parents, on the contrary, do not see the urgent need to encourage the L2 inside the home. From their perspective, they themselves do not know the L2 and are reliant on the schools for L2 learning.

Nevertheless, Ján Figel, former European commissioner of instruction, education, culture and youth, appealed to local parents to promote the L2 in the early years of education. As the principal speaker at the FUB's conference on 'The role of the European University of tomorrow', he underlined the importance of early L2 exposure for better second language acquisition. From Ján Figel's perspective, parents must make sure that they 'put pressure on institutions to obtain what they want' from education and should actively write letters directly to the province explicitly describing their concerns. But parents are afraid, according to Figel, of political backlash and repercussions. Consequently, politicians 'play off these fears' to prevent assimilation in the province. In order to move past these political differences the language groups must learn to work together (Hell 2008).<sup>90</sup>

Therefore, within a few days of Figel's 'call to families' to encourage more bilingual education, a newly formed association made up of local parents, spoke to the media at a

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<sup>90</sup> See Hell, E., 2008. Il ruolo dei genitori. *Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 21 May. Available at: < <http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?p=82> > [Accessed 9 July 2013] for more information.

café in Bolzano. The association, *Mix-ling Eltern für una cultura plurilingue* (Mix-ling parents for a plurilingual culture), wanted to highlight the importance of spatial planning, so that schools could develop mutual social meeting places that could be used by both language groups.<sup>91</sup> The group's proposal was that school centres offer joint services for students of diverse linguistic backgrounds to intermingle in school spaces, '[such as] libraries, cafeterias, gyms and school courtyards' (Hell 2008).<sup>92</sup> Additionally, parents asked that initiatives take place where group events are not divided between German- and Italian-speaking schools. This could come in the form of a common student festival where both language groups could entertain together. Most importantly, the parents wanted to encourage teachers to recognize their multilingual students, by emphasizing that a bilingual student is 'above all [an] added value' to the South Tyrol school system (ibid.).

These initiatives by parents to endorse multiple changes in education reinforces the need to re-evaluate the language learning process evident within society, as well as in the local schooling system. According to Chiara, there is a social shift that is starting from the bottom up, but 'there are people [at the top] who try to slow it down', regardless of L2 resources in the region.

Despite these social setbacks, Florian stated that within the past five years, local politics have altered for the better 'because there are more people who [want] to do something' and see more changes in the education system. Chiara, for example, had a friend who was a proponent of advocating bilingual kindergarten.

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<sup>91</sup> I am assuming that these 'mutual meeting places' would occur in school buildings that house both German- and Italian-speaking sections (see Chapter 4 for more information on 'mixed' educational institutions).

<sup>92</sup> For more information see Hell, E., 2008. *Cultura plurilingue. Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 23 May. Available at: < <http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?p=84> > [Accessed 10 July 2013].

However, she also added that while there are many reasons to support a bilingual kindergarten class, money is not spent to endorse bilingual teaching, but to ensure that schools are linguistically divided. Additionally, she stated that language groups want control of their educational choices and decisions.

'This is a big issue between German and Italian schools because it's not only a matter of organization, but no school wants another [political language] group telling them what to do. And that's not only [something] that the schools say to the local government, but it's also because the Italians don't want the German-speaking government [i.e. the SVP] to tell them what to do [in terms of L2 education]. There's a lot of power, effort and a waste of energy spent on stupid stuff like this.'

Chiara explained that, in spite of these political obstructions, '[top officials] cannot go against [linguistic] evolution' as more people try to become multilingual.

'You cannot stop the evolution of a language, which is made by people being in touch with other people. Everyone was speaking Latin [in Europe] and then it evolved into other languages due to people coming from other areas. There's no way that you can stop the learning of other languages. To stop the process, would be so narrow-minded.'

Subsequently, during our interview, Chiara expressed her pleasure that she is not so reliant on the school system. Her children are in a 'privileged position' since they grew up in a bilingual household. Those children who grow up in a monolingual household have a difficult time learning the L2, which means that they are at a linguistic disadvantage as the second language is not used at home.

As a result, parents have learned to work around the school system by searching for extra second language practice, as well as English language practice since English has become a popular L3 in education. But rather than suggest a need for social revolution, Chiara said that she has 'enough things to do...so rather than picking a battle [over L2 acquisition], I prefer finding another way of handling things.' In her words:

'The problem is that we, as South Tyroleans, are not desperate. We are far from desperate. We have all the benefits of German and Italian structure. We have precision, order and organization from the Germans, but we also have the culture from the Italian side, which is a nice mix. And I think that the general quality of life here is very good (especially if people eat croissant in the morning). And in order to change things from within you need a lot of engagement. And people just don't bother.'

Therefore, Chiara searches for L2 opportunities by having her children play with her Italian-speaking family and friends. She also arranges private English lessons with American au pairs, which means her children are at the top of their English classes. Although some parents are less inclined to pay for private language lessons, Chiara is an example of the extent some parents will go to make sure that their children are immersed in a multilingual environment.

Other families who know that their children need more L2 exposure outside of education, will make sure that the latter play with L2-speaking neighbours to make up for the segregated school system. When interviewing Rita, an Italian native-speaker who works as a German language teacher, she informed me that Italian-speaking teachers from Bolzano will have their children play with German-speaking neighbours. As Rita stated:

'I think that the Italian-speaking teachers from previous generations lived through a difficult time due to the separation between German- and Italian-speaking people and they do not want their children to go through the same situation again. If you speak with a couple of my Italian-speaking colleagues they will say to their kids, "Go downstairs and speak with your German neighbours" because they know that it is a resource and it is a good opportunity to practice.

When my colleagues went to school, the province at that time decided that the schools should have different school schedules for the different language groups. The schools began and ended at different times so that the kids couldn't meet each other. Also, the breaks were at different times because the German- and Italian-

speaking schools were right next door to each other. Personally, I think that the school officials wanted to prevent the German- and Italian-speaking students from interacting. For these reasons, I think Italian-speaking teachers, today, want to make sure that their children receive as much L2 exposure as possible.'

Consequently, two-thirds of German- and Italian-speaking parents believe it is important that their children learn the L2, specifically for work-related reasons (80.8 percent for German-speakers and 77.2 percent for Italian-speakers). This instrumental approach to L2 acquisition is reflected in the following results: 71 percent of Germans and 66.2 percent of Italians want their children to learn the L2, so that they can work in public administration. This compares to 58 percent of Germans and 64 percent of Italians who want their children to acquire the L2 in order that they pass the Patentino exam (Abel et al. 2012a: 345-346) so that their children are certified as bilingual.

From an integrative standpoint, the KOLPISI results demonstrate that the great majority of parents (approximately 90 percent) do not think that L2 learning is a 'loss of time' when it comes to educational prerogatives. Similar to Rita's colleagues, 70 percent of South Tyrolean parents encourage their children to practice the L2 with native L2-speakers (Abel et al. 2012a: 343).<sup>93</sup> Additionally, approximately half of German- and Italian-speaking parents think that their children should learn the L2, so that they can integrate with South Tyrolean society (Abel et al. 2012a: 344) and become a part of a bilingual network.

Nevertheless, for those parents who try to place their children in both German- and Italian-speaking schools, depending on the school environment, there is a possibility that the child will prefer one language over another. Rita explained that in one instance a German- and Italian-speaking couple placed their child in an Italian-speaking nursery.

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<sup>93</sup> These results differ slightly from the percentages given later on, which state that 45 percent of Italian and German parents and 63 percent of bilingual parents encourage their children to make contacts and immerse themselves in the L2-speaking environment (Abel et al. 2012a: 344).

One day the boy decided that he no longer wanted to speak German in order to 'fit in' with his Italian-speaking classmates. In keeping with comments made in the previous chapter regarding the impact of societal peer pressure, these inclinations to 'blend in' could have an adverse effect for those parents who want to promote the L2.

While parents, like Johanna, tried to prevent this problem by exposing her daughter to German- and Italian-speaking schools, Heidi stated that for those parents who do not know the L2, there were other ways that their children can learn another language. Many parents do not realize that their children can postpone university and try to work abroad. She also stated that there are benefits to having children work overseas so they can 'live a little bit' and learn the second language. But some parents want their children to finish university early so they can get a job and leave the family household. Through this process, parents forget that without L2 exposure their children cannot apply for civil service positions, where knowing German and Italian is required. This implies that while some parents are taking up the initiative to encourage second language acquisition, other parents are distracted by the concern that their children find employment that would make them financially stable.

When interviewing Florian, we discussed L2 concerns that occur in several monolingual households. These parents, he believed, do not understand why they should reinforce the second language in their homes. His Italian-speaking colleague had a child who had taken three years of German language classes, and yet the child could not say in German 'My name is...', which should have been taught in the early weeks of L2 education. From Florian's perspective, an Italian-speaking family should not be 'completely Italian'. If an Italian family wants to ensure their child can speak German, they must not rely too heavily on German language teachers. If parents do not provide access to books,

television shows or movies in the German language, children will not have incentives to practice the L2 outside of the L2 learning classroom.

According to Abel et al., only 28.3 percent of German-speaking students and 19.9 percent of Italian-speaking students read books, watch television or listen to the radio in the L2, while many students also admit that their parents do not provide them with L2-related activities (31.8 percent for German-speaking students and 52.2 percent for Italian-speaking students) (Abel et al. 2012a: 225-226). As a result of these statistics, Richard-Amato states that:

'Families need to be encouraged to become partners in the education of their children by such simple acts as reading aloud with them in whatever language feels most comfortable and helping them with homework. If possible, parents should provide books for the home in both languages, and encourage their children to read them for enjoyment, to analyze and ask questions about them, and/or to use them as resources for homework' (2003: 126).

Additionally, Abel et al. explain that the more parents use the L2 daily within their home environment (i.e. through reading, watching television, listening to the radio, etc.), their children are more likely to comprehend the second language than they would be without at-home L2 exposure (2012b: 178).

Consequently, it would seem that parents play an active role in reinforcing second language acquisition, but at the same time they can also influence whether their children will have a natural interest in the L2 of the region. As parents choose how to respond to L2 learning issues in the education system, it is pertinent to recognize the active part that parents play in an effort to promote bilingualism.

### **7.1.3 Is 'Free Choice' in education really a free choice?**

*'Parents have the right to [enrol] their children into the schools of their choice, Italian or German, provided that the right of education in the mother tongue is not "jeopardised" and that the children have sufficient knowledge of the teaching language of the school' (Abel 2007: 237).*

'Free Choice', which was adopted in 1972 as a result of the Second Autonomy statutes (see Alber 2011: 6), gave parents the flexibility to enrol their children in any school that they felt was most appropriate. Within the course of a few years, many parents took this 'rule' and applied it to second language acquisition. If technically by law the child had the right to attend any school within the province, then legally the child could attend another school where the language of instruction was in the L2. For Italian-speaking parents, the Second Autonomy statute allowed them to overcome legal barriers (Peterlini 2013: 124), which previously forbade Italian-speaking students from attending the German-speaking education system. While initially the German schools did not allow enrolment of Italian-speaking students in their schools, as of recent years, the German schools have relaxed their policies on accepting non-German-speaking students (Alber 2011: 7; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 236).

When examining the concept of the 'Free Choice' regulation, which is supposedly mentioned in the statutes, further examination states that the concept of 'Free Choice' is not explicitly discussed in legislation. Instead, it says in Article 19 (paragraph 1) of the Second Autonomy statute, that the student has the right to learn in the L1 by teachers of the L1. Paragraph 3, which supposedly refers to the 'Free Choice' principle in education, states that the "enrolment of a pupil in schools in the Province of Bolzano shall follow a simple application by the father or guardian" (Alber 2011: 6-7; Peterlini 1997: 198). In the event of a school refusal to admit a child into an institution, the father or guardian

can challenge the school's refusal in front of the regional court of administrative justice<sup>94</sup> (ibid.). Consequently, while the words 'Free Choice' are not explicitly addressed in the autonomy statutes, the liberal interpretation of Article 19 (paragraph 3) is still referred to as the 'Free Choice' principle.

However, despite parental attempts to use the 'Free Choice' option to enrol their children into L2-speaking schools, as of 2008, the SVP was dissatisfied with the number of Italian-speaking students in German-speaking education. To counteract this 'problem', the SVP declared the importance of language tests in nursery schools (Hell 2008)<sup>95</sup> implying that all Italian-speaking students must take a language assessment test to be accepted into German education. According to the SVP, an excess of Italian-speaking students in German-speaking education created a 'disturbance' (ibid.). Therefore, these language tests could 'purify' the German schooling system from the influence of 'Italian and immigrant children' (Peterlini 2013: 272).

To support the party's needs for language assessment tests, the SVP referred to a presidential decree passed in 1988.<sup>96</sup> In the decree it states that in the event a child is unable to follow a school's language of instruction (so much so that the child compromises the efficiency of regular instruction in the classroom), the child will be subject to a probationary period of 20 to 25 days at the start of the school year. During that time, the child will be assessed by the committee and school council to validate if s/he can stay in school. If the committee and the school board decide to refuse the child's enrolment into a particular school, the child will be required to attend another

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<sup>94</sup> See the Second Autonomy Statute (1972) Article 19, paragraphs 1 and 3 for more details.

<sup>95</sup> Hell, E., 2008. Test di lingua nelle scuole dell'infanzia. *Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 8 May 2008. Available at: < <http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?p=77> > [Accessed 5 July 2013].

<sup>96</sup> This presidential decree is also referred as DPR 15 July 1988, no. 301 seen here: <[http://www.consiglio.provincia.tn.it/documenti\\_pdf/clex\\_10845.pdf](http://www.consiglio.provincia.tn.it/documenti_pdf/clex_10845.pdf)> [Accessed 23 July 2013].

school where instruction is in 'the other language' (Peterlini 1997: 198-199; Hell 2008; Peterlini 2010: 158-159; see Alber 2011: 7).<sup>97</sup>

Having said that, this decree does not mandate the enforcement of language tests in schools, but it does stress that parents are entitled to appeal the school's decision to the Bolzano Regional Court of Administrative Justice (Hell 2008; Peterlini 1997: 199; Alber 2011: 7).<sup>98</sup> In one such instance, a German-speaking mother wrote a formal complaint in response to South Tyrol's 'legal institutionalization of ethnicity'. Her son, who was raised in a bilingual household, 'was cared for by an Italian-speaking childminder' (Marko 2008: 386). Upon enrolling her child in a German-speaking kindergarten, the school placed her child on probation for 25 days because s/he was in contact with Italian-speakers. According to the school, it wanted to validate that the child had 'a competent knowledge of German' (ibid.). In response to the school policy, the mother wrote a note, which was published in a weekly magazine.

[When speaking Italian] [i]t is almost as if one speaks of an infectious illness and not of an enrichment. Did you know that many children are thereby hindered from learning good German even though it is the language of one of their parents? On the one hand, you [officials and school administration] speak highly of justice; on the other hand, you allow such rules. This can never really lead to an understanding between the language groups.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> See Hell, E., 2008. Test di lingua nelle scuole dell'infanzia. *Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 8 May 2008. Available at: < <http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?p=77>> [Accessed 5 July 2013] for more information, as well as DPR 15 July 1988, no. 301.

<sup>98</sup> Hell, E., 2008. Test di lingua nelle scuole dell'infanzia. *Bilinguismo a Bolzano*, [blog] 8 May 2008. Available at: < <http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?p=77>> [Accessed 5 July 2013].

<sup>99</sup> See Anon., 2001. Mein Kind auf Probe. *ff-Südtiroler Wochenmagazin*, 29 March and Marko, J., 2008. Is there a South Tyrolean 'model' of conflict resolution to be exported? In: Woelk et. al. ed. 2008. *Tolerance through law: self governance and group rights in South Tyrol*. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. Ch. 19, p. 386 for more information.

When interviewing Donna, she explained that while in theory South Tyroleans have a 'choice' in education, there is a fear in German circles of increased immersion education, which could lead to a bilingual schooling system. In her opinion:

'The problem lies with politicians who impede language groups from finding a commonality. The language groups, as a whole, do not have problems with immersion education. They speak the other local languages. Some say, "We're Italian, so we must speak Italian" and others say, "This is South Tyrol". And the thing is: nobody forgets the language of their own culture. But there is this fear of losing your roots.... [And] nowadays we have this added drama because we have to choose either a German or Italian school for our children. Why do we have to choose? I was born here and I'm used to living in an area that's bilingual. If I go to a café and someone talks to me in German, I respond to them in German. It's not a problem. It's a wonderful thing to be able to speak in another language and it makes it easier to communicate.'

But unfortunately, not all locals would agree with Donna's opinions of bilingual education, which is why many parents are constantly debating over which language school for their children. Since some parents and politicians have mild trepidations over the effects of L2-speakers in their schools, the question then arises: 'Is the concept of "Free Choice" as "free" as politicians would suggest?'

## 7.2 Students' in-depth reactions to bilingual education

Given the complexities in language school selection, I could sympathize with parental concerns, especially when parents want to advance their children's comprehension of German and Italian. But children, ultimately, are the ones who are most impacted by the parental choices made in education. Additionally, children see the 'pros and cons' to L2 learning and its effects on their societal behaviour.

In 2008, when the provincial government passed a law in support of 'Un anno in L2' ('a year in the second language'), this initiative was designed to promote student exchanges

with L2-speaking schools throughout the province. The objective was to allow students in upper secondary school to practice their second language skills by taking their high school courses for a semester or a year in an L2-speaking school within their area.<sup>100</sup> From 2012 to 2013, 91 South Tyrolean students enrolled in the 'Un anno in L2' programme, with 63 German-speakers and 28 Italian-speakers opting for full L2 immersion classes.<sup>101</sup>

In 2013, reporter Paolo Bill Valente discussed the success rate of the programme. While technically the programme is legally obliged to last from a semester to a year, the majority of students who sign up for the programme stay with their L2-speaking high school for two years. When interviewing students, many expressed themselves content at being able to say they were bilingual. By making L2-speaking friends, these students also believed in the importance of a 'mixed' social environment where students could be exposed to other ways of thinking that are different from their mother tongue communities. As one student explained:

'Despite the "geographic" proximity of the [German- and Italian-speaking] schools, we [as students] really know very little about the scholastic activities in the other [L2-speaking] schools.'

Another student commented, that without L2 exchanges, this could contribute to a 'closed mentality'. One should 'use this experience to better understand the other half of South Tyrol!'<sup>102</sup>

With KOLPISI results showing that 40 to 50 percent of students support early bilingual education, approximately 90 percent of German- and Italian-speaking students said that

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<sup>100</sup> See the Deliberazione della Giunta Provinciale 17 November 2008, no. 4250 for more information.

<sup>101</sup> See Paolo Bill Valente's article, 'A scuola nell'altra lingua' (2013) available at: <<http://salto.bz/de/article/30082013/scuola-nellaltra-lingua>> [Accessed 21 August 2015].

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*

if given the option, they would place their children in a bilingual school (Abel et al. 2012a: 261-262).

Nevertheless, when I examined interviews with my informants who were high school students or had been students in the past, I asked whether they thought bilingual education would 'solve' the L2 issues in society. Compared to the KOLPISI results, where the majority of students felt that bilingual schooling would provide more 'advantages', surprisingly, my students were pessimistic of the idea of merging German- and Italian- speaking schools. While few of my informants thought that bilingual education could contribute to inter-groups relations, others felt that L2 learning could occur in separate schools rather than through immersion language courses. According to some students, the German and Italian schooling systems are too different and would contradict each other. And by combining the school systems, this could result in disappointment, rather than in unifying language groups.

### **7.2.1 The pros and cons to a bilingual schooling system**

Below is an account of several interviews that were conducted in 2012. The objective was to learn if students thought that the school systems (i.e. the German- and Italian-speaking schools) should unify into a single schooling system. While some students were uncertain as to whether any changes should be made to the education system, several students did discuss whether they thought the schooling system should evolve towards bilingual education.

#### **Interview 12: Cassidy**

Cassidy, who grew up in a bilingual-speaking household, spent her early years in German education. Once she reached high school, her parents

decided to place her in an Italian-speaking school. In her opinion, she believed it was a good idea to have schools that focused on the different language groups because although the schools are 'separate', they are still required to teach the L2 of the region. From her perspective:

'In England no one goes to an Italian-speaking school. Everyone goes to an English-speaking school. So in Bolzano because we have both German- and Italian-speakers, we have both German- and Italian-speaking schools.'

### **Interview 13: Stefania and Giovanni**

According to Stefania, who did not see the relevance of bilingual education, 'If the students and schools become bilingual, the school programme would be all about language and not about science and other subjects.' Since her parents are both Italian, she was not qualified to attend German-speaking preschool. Yet, she still maintained that local group relations are not affected by the 'separate but equal' education system. Linguistically, she felt that the divided schooling system did not determine whether groups interacted. As an Italian-speaking student, she admitted that language distinctions existed outside of the school arena, but these societal divisions occurred in working environments or sometimes in the German-speaking Bolzano city centre.

Conversely, Giovanni stated that while the education system did not impact his social networking abilities, he preferred the idea of establishing a bilingual schooling system so language groups could be in contact with each other.

### **Interview 14: Max**

Max, who grew up in the German-speaking education system, transferred to an Italian-speaking high school. When asked whether he thought South Tyrolean schools should be united, he replied that the idea was not pragmatic. In German-speaking schools, he explained that the mentality is different, as well as ideology and structure (see Chapter 4). In German schools 'the students have more respect for their teachers. We have to do what they say'. Student-teacher relationships in the Italian-speaking schools are not as rigid nor as strictly defined. 'If the teacher says something, everyone laughs and the students decide whether or not they want to listen to the teacher.' From Max's point of view, Italian teachers are more friendly and willing to help other students, whereas German teachers are 'just there to teach you. If you don't want to learn, that's your problem'.

In the past, his relationships with German-speaking teachers had resulted in his transferring between schools. While this did not prove that bilingual education causes problems in student-teacher relationships, cultural approaches to teaching in the classroom could vary between different language groups. Based on Max's school experiences:

'The German-speaking teachers think they are better than the students. Their motto is: "Because we are the teachers, you should do exactly as we say". Even if the teachers claim that everybody should be treated equally, it's not uncommon to hear a teacher say to a student, "You, on the first day of school, you made a bad first impression so I will treat you worse than the other students". These comments are not meant for revenge, but are designed to teach students on how to respect those who are above them. The idea is to inform students about the importance of respecting their elders.

Personally, I always had problems with these kinds of teachers. I always did what I thought was right. If a student argued with a teacher and said his/her opinion, which was the opposite of the teacher's opinion, that was a no-go. German-speaking teachers will stomp you to the ground. One time, I was arguing with my German-speaking teacher because of something political. She was against a certain political measure and I was in support of this particular legislation, and she threw me out of the class. As far as I'm concerned, if someone is not able to accept another opinion, that's immature. If the teacher is immature, that's not right. I don't want to learn from people like them.'

As a result, Max transferred to an Italian-speaking high school where he found the school system more relaxed. At the beginning, it was difficult for him to learn the terms for certain subjects, like maths or science, but over time he learned the words for varied cultural expressions because of his Italian-speaking friends. His Italian-speaking mother probably helped with his transition, but he normally spoke German with her. This implied that while some students may grow up in one environment speaking a certain language in their family, young students are still capable of switching education systems, even if the 'new' school speaks another language.

From an L2 learning standpoint, Max's experiences with switching high schools supports the idea of bilingual education in that students can transition between different cultures. But Max insists that German students are just more inclined to have an open-mind towards learning Italian. While students should make efforts to learn the local languages so that they can communicate with one another, Max believes that the school systems are structurally and culturally so diverse that bilingual schooling might increase the language tensions.

### **Interview 15: Anna**

Anna agreed that bilingual education could cause issues with German- and Italian-speaking teachers. 'Their ways of teaching are so different that they might interfere with the "balance" of the separate schooling system.' In Anna's own opinion, there are pros and cons to implementing bilingual education. 'The cons are that we've always had a separate language system' for the German- and Italian-speaking students. Consequently, this had led to two different modes of teaching, as well as learning in the varied language schools. If the schools were to attempt to become one schooling system, didactically this process could not happen. The methods are too different, and it would be a challenge for both groups to come to an agreement.

Administratively speaking, 'from a bureaucratic level it is difficult to make this a reality':

'It's the administration that creates tensions between the two groups. Sometimes the administration favours one group over others and this creates tensions. And this is why it's difficult for both groups to work together.'

Although Anna admitted that there are teachers who want to see a change in the education system, there are people who are concerned that a merging of the school systems could result in a loss of their own culture (see Forer et al. 2008).

Despite these diverse views, Anna was still convinced that the education system really worked. By having separate systems 'you have two ways of thinking. You're more open to new experiences'. The separate language groups also learn to co-exist:

'because it teaches you to respect other cultures. Without the German influence, Italians would not have the same respect towards their linguistic neighbours, nor would they have developed an environmental awareness to protect their mountains and community.'

According to Magliana, when examining the uniqueness of South Tyrolean identity:

'It is often said that South Tyroleans have the "German discipline" and the "Italian love of life;" the idea that the intermingling of the two cultures has contributed to the mutually beneficial development of each. It is for this reason that the inhabitants of South Tyrol of all language groups have progressively differentiated themselves from both their Italian and Austrian neighbours' (2000: 90).

Although the separation in the education system might indicate that not all groups are unified (especially into one South Tyrolean identity), in the past, the Dalai Lama has visited South Tyrol to observe how different groups can learn to live together. If two diverse communities can co-habit a space that historically is steeped in controversy, he hopes that conflict regions, like Tibet, can learn from South Tyrol's example to adapt and develop their own policies.<sup>103</sup>

### **Interview 16: Ashley**

Ashley, on the other hand, did not think the separate school systems were beneficial to the school environment. While she thought that L2 learning was a positive addition that was needed in the province of Bolzano,

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<sup>103</sup> The Dalai Lama, along with Assistant Director, Geshe Kalsang Damdul, of the Institute of Buddhist Dialects came to South Tyrol as recently as 2009, 2012 and 2013 to meet at the European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano. The Dalai Lama was greatly interested in studying the political initiatives between South Tyrol and the Italian state, which have allowed for the creation of the autonomous province of Bolzano. His Holiness views Tibetan autonomy as a possible solution to the controversies that exist between the Chinese and Tibetan governments. For more information regarding his visit in 2009 see: <[http://convention.eurac.edu/News/Events/2009/17112009new18601id\\_en](http://convention.eurac.edu/News/Events/2009/17112009new18601id_en)> [Accessed 27 July 2013].

linguistically, the German-speakers had a better comprehension of Italian than Italian-speakers did of knowing German. She thought that this imbalance could be solved through the use of immersion L2 teaching techniques if some subjects were taught in the L2 of the region in order to develop one's vernacular. In her opinion:

'If students are able to take some high school classes in the second language, it's better because students will grow up knowing both German and Italian perfectly.'

Although bilingual education in the South Tyrol school system was a concept that she thoroughly supported, realistically she thought it would not happen. Politics and history would prevent bilingual schooling from establishing its roots in South Tyrol. If bilingual education was mandatory in the region, 'Germans...might go to Austria to attend German schools or Italians might go to Italian-speaking schools further south in order to avoid bilingual schooling.' Even though there are bilingual families who would welcome the idea of bilingual education in their schools, there are parents who would prefer to maintain the separate school system due to tradition and preservation of the L1.

Additionally, Ashley thought that bilingual education would result in a changing of society. In her opinion, 'it would have social and political consequences' that would infiltrate into the daily lives of the community. Therefore, she thinks it would be better if the local language groups 'got rid' of their stigmas towards each other. Not only would it benefit the local economy if the groups could converge with one another, but a deeper sense

of peace would break down the social walls that currently prevent assimilation.

### **Interview 17: Weronika and Evi**

Weronika and Evi, who attended the German-speaking school system predominately in the 1980s and 1990s, thought that the idea of bilingual education would bring an added value to South Tyrolean society. But rather than having only bilingual education, it would be better if it functioned as a piece of the already established 'separate but equal' education system, as suggested in Chapter 4 by Giudiceandrea and Mazza (2012: 96-98; see also Forer et al. 2008). Instead of parents having to choose German- or Italian-speaking schools, another option could be bilingual schools, where students from both backgrounds could learn the other language through a school system that tried to be bilingual.

According to Evi, the creation of the FUB is a sign that society is changing.

'We have more people in South Tyrol these days who are bilingual and also have higher degrees of education. These people believe in bilingualism because it gives more opportunities for work, etc. Monolingual and bilingual families are also more open to the possibility of bilingual education.'

Within the past 15 years, Weronika has seen a shift in the approach to L2 learning. The province has become more internationally recognized with 'outsiders' coming into South Tyrol. Consequently, there are discussions over more bilingual learning for those students who are coming from abroad.

Having said that, politicians are still wary over supporting bilingual education, in case bilingual learning threatens protection for minority languages.

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When examining the quantitative KOLPISI results as they compare to my qualitative data, it is interesting to observe the dissimilarities in students' views towards bilingual education. While most of my informants were of the opinion that bilingual education was not practical, Abel et al. found that the majority of their informants were in support of bilingual education.

As a result, I have learned that 'the bilingual school debate' is a continual discussion amongst locals. Regardless of whether residents approve of the idea, or whether citizens are vehemently opposed, bilingual education is not a ready-made solution for modifying the schooling system.

### 7.3 Teachers' responses to societal division and L2 learning issues in education

Second language teachers have faced many difficulties when trying to encourage L2 learning. While Chapter 6 discusses the complications and hardships that come with teaching German to Italian-speaking students, some second language teachers have been known to introduce several attempts at better L2 teaching methods. However, some L2 techniques, such as the CLIL method, are under scrutiny by several L2 teachers who feel that CLIL might not 'cure' the L2 issues that are prevalent in South Tyrolean society.

Nevertheless, some L2 teachers have tried to promote language exchanges with L2-speaking high schools, while other teachers have attempted 'team teaching' in their

classrooms, despite the fact it was 'forbidden' in the 1990s (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 247). Additionally, there are teachers who support immersion teaching through the re-writing of school history textbooks. These educators teach both sides of South Tyrol's Fascist and Nazi history by describing German- and Italian-speaking viewpoints.

The objective of this section is to show how local teachers voice their responses to division in society by adjusting the school system through its books and teaching methods based on evidence conducted during fieldwork.

### **7.3.1 Educational attempts at immersion teaching**

For the past several decades, many teachers have made efforts to encourage better L2 teaching methods. While the provincial government, during the 1970s, prohibited school class exchanges with different language groups (Lanthaler 2007: 228), the 1980s spawned an underground movement which aimed to 'underline the importance of [learning] the L2' (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 78). Local schools devoted themselves to revising L2 teaching methods (ibid.), while the SVP was critical of L2 learning, especially if it involved early L2 acquisition at the possible expense of the L1. In one example, the SVP criticized an Italian-speaking nursery teacher for playing games in German with her Italian-speaking students (Peterlini 2013: 119). Eventually, the SVP referred to young Italian-speakers learning German as 'Trojan horses' who might invade the German schooling system (ibid.; see Chapter 4).

By the mid-1990s, South Tyrolean society shifted in the way L2 learning was accomplished. Early L2 acquisition emerged in education through what Giudiceandrea and Mazza call a 'semi-clandestine' fashion. Student exchanges, similar to 'Un anno in L2', were quietly introduced to the education system. Students also participated in L2

class exchanges, and were involved in voluntary extra-curricular L2 activities. Additionally, students engaged in 'studying vacations', or language practice in an L2-speaking culture (2012: 98; see Lanthaler 2007: 228). However, these activities sometimes 'roused the suspicion of being mistaken for the dreaded "immersion" [education]'. This brought about political and ethnic controversy (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 98) for those in support of monolingual education.

According to Giudiceandrea and Mazza, the provincial government refuses to recognize immersion education, which is defined by having:

'teachers of the German mother tongue [work] in an Italian-speaking school (and vice versa), [by teaching] lessons in a language that is not the mother tongue [spoken by] the students of the school' (ibid.).

Therefore, in 1992, when the first attempts were made to introduce immersion teaching in elementary and secondary Italian-speaking schools, these efforts at 'improving pupils' competence in German...were rejected by the provincial government' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 247; Abel 2007: 240). By February 1996, the concept of 'team teaching' was also rejected by the provincial government. This 'team teaching' or 'co-presence' in elementary education provided students with both a L1-speaking and L2-speaking teacher for each classroom. But after months of intense arguments in the South Tyrolean press, the teaching method was removed (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 247; Alber 2011: 11), citing Article 19 of the Second Autonomy statute, which:

'prohibits the use of the second language as a language of instruction and the simultaneous presence of a German-speaking and an Italian-speaking teacher in the same class' (Abel 2007: 240).

The term 'immersion' eventually became taboo, specifically amongst the German-speaking community, as the concept was considered a threat to L1 preservation, so

alternative labels were used instead (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 247; Abel 2007: 240).

Then in 1997, the provincial government changed its educational policies by creating "guidelines for the instruction/ acquisition of German as a second language at Italian-language elementary and secondary schools".<sup>104</sup> According to these language guidelines, the L2 could be used to 'convey content' through second language projects where the L2 would be taught through an increased amount of hours (Abel 2007: 240; Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 247-248) as part of the Italian-speaking education system. The objective was to:

'emphasize the centeredness of pupils and active learning, placing importance on interculturality, authentic communication contexts and after-school measures, such as partnerships' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 247).

The guidelines also encouraged 'integrated language teaching' (Abel 2007: 240), which would later transfer into what is the CLIL method (see Chapter 4).

With education shifting towards improved bilingual learning, or at least towards quasi-immersion teaching, it is somewhat disconcerting that the ASTAT results reflect disinterest in student exchanges. These exchanges, which reflect projects like 'Un anno in L2', are used to promote bilingual learning, but as of 2006, only 63.2 percent of Italian-speakers said they were 'very OK' with more school-student exchanges. Compared to German-speaking South Tyroleans, only 32.1 percent were in support of extra school-student exchanges and only 45 percent of Ladin-speaking South Tyroleans declared an interest in school-student exchanges (ASTAT 2006: 54).

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<sup>104</sup> This is a quote within a quote taken from Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 247 in reference to the South Tyrolean Provincial Government Resolution no. 5053 of 6 October 1997. Abel also refers to these guidelines as the 'Guidelines for German as a second language in primary and secondary schools' (2007: 240).

These data correspond with interviews with my informants who attempted to establish close relations with L2-speaking classrooms and L2-speaking students located in other schools throughout the province. When talking to Heidi, she explained the difficulties that come with bridging different education systems as '[t]he Italian and German schools, especially here in Bolzano, are completely divided.' The students, she explained, do not have a lot of friends in the L2-speaking community and therefore do not have much contact with L2-speaking society outside of regular school hours.

With CLIL initiatives and 'Un anno in L2', pen friend exchanges should, in theory, be quite easy, but this would require continual correspondence with L2-speaking schools inside the province. In the end, Heidi explained that she had one pen-friend exchange with a German-speaking school in South Tyrol, but the programme only lasted for a year or two, which she admitted was a concurrent problem. To keep the programmes going, they depended on teacher motivation, and usually the programmes fell apart. Therefore, most pen friend exchanges were typically conducted with schools in Austria or Germany.

Even the ASTAT results indicate that student exchanges only occur on a class-by-class basis, and as of 2004, these types of programmes did not receive media or political interest (2006: 54). Only Ladin middle schools, as of 2005, were able to establish 'linguistic sojourns' with German- and Italian-speaking schools, but these Ladin-L2 exchanges were less likely to take place with middle schools outside the province (Verra 2005: 121, 125).

Therefore, teachers like Concetta, have come to accept that the school system will always remain divided. Consequently, it is up to local schools to try to build relations with other L2-speaking schools. Her Italian-speaking high school, she thought, had

made strides in promoting better inter-group cohesion. As a semi-private high school, she believed that it worked well as a science school which also taught the L2. Her school would hold competitions with German-speaking high schools allowing language groups to interact with one another. The objective of these games was for schools to gather points in sports, theatre and music, so that varied local schools could work collaboratively in order to reduce social barriers.

Unfortunately, not all schools in South Tyrol are interested in participating in such events, especially those schools that lay outside South Tyrol's cities where the separation becomes more obvious. According to Concetta, intercultural communication has to come from teachers and students, but many people are not willing to put in the effort to decrease internal linguistic tensions. In Concetta's opinion, it is the German-speaking locals who want to maintain their social distance, while some German-speaking schools prefer not to work alongside Italian-speaking institutions.

For those individuals who are apprehensive towards the possibility of forced immersion education, the word 'immersion', Donna states, is:

'a symbol of Fascism, and the Germans are afraid that they could lose their culture. [In their eyes], Italy is a country that they feel eats up other cultures. So some German-speakers, as a result, are afraid of assimilation [even though] present times are not violent like they were during the Fascist period....'

While immersion education is less likely to replace the 'separate but equal' education system, educators like Donna try to promote bilingual learning through presenting their concerns to government officials. In 2012, she drafted a letter which was addressed to three education administrators: Dr Christian Tommasini, Dr Sabina Kaslatter-Mur and Mr Florian Mussner. In her proposal, she and her colleagues expressed their desire for more teacher exchanges in German- and Italian-speaking schools. The reasons for this

request were based on research conducted by Siegfried Baur, Dietmar Larcher and others, which suggests that the curriculum does not permit local students to interact with L2-speaking groups. Instead, society gives the impression that 'bilingualism permits everyone to speak their own language',<sup>105</sup> which also sends the mixed message that somehow learning the L2 is not an easy undertaking to accomplish.

As a result, Donna requests that the CLIL method be used, alongside a school-teacher exchange programme, so that courses can be taught by L2-speaking teachers in 'brief or long periods' in the L2 on an annual basis. The long-term goal would be to provide young South Tyrolean students with 'better instruments to orientate themselves in the working world' so that they have opportunities for more global success in a province that continues to evolve.<sup>106</sup>

When examining the interviews conducted by Forer et al., the greater part of their informants indicated their support in establishing a school where 50 percent of the material could be taught in the students' mother tongue, while the other 50 percent could be taught in the L2, in order to promote bilingual learning. The majority of their informants were also in support of additional intervention in the school system, with one informant even stating that there should be a trilingual school to incorporate a multitude of languages (2008).

Nevertheless, the school system does not seem to indicate that it has plans to reform school education, which is why Donna decided to develop extra-curricular programmes for German- and Italian-speaking students. Several years ago, she worked at an Italian-speaking high school, where the students practiced theatre in German. The results were

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<sup>105</sup> Mautone, L., 2012. Lettera di intenti per lo scambio docenti tra scuole in lingua italiana e tedesca e ladina. [letter of intent] (approx. April 2012).

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

so encouraging that German-speaking students did voluntary projects in the afternoons in Italian. Her attempts, she acknowledged, at L2 immersion programmes were such a positive experience that students kept in contact with her well after the programmes, which demonstrates the success of some inter-group activities.

Other teachers have suggested alternative methods to promote better second language learning. Chiara, who used to work as an Italian-speaking teacher, provided her own parental perspectives on how she would alter the L2 learning programme if given the possibility for reform. Her children, who attend a German-speaking elementary school, receive substandard levels of L2 learning. Therefore, she suggested a hypothetical proposal on how to modify the schooling system.

Currently, most students in South Tyrolean schools are placed in L2 classes corresponding to age, meaning that the levels of L2 proficiency may vary from student to student. In Chiara son's Italian class, there may be six to seven bilingual students who speak German and Italian. A few of the students might be moderately proficient in both languages, while the rest of the class only speaks German. This results in teaching difficulties for the L2 teacher when trying to instruct the language class. If the work is too basic for the bilingual students, those students will become disinterested. In order to encourage L2 proficiency, she believes that students should take language tests in order to assess, on a scale of one to five (with five being the highest level of fluency), each students' understanding of Italian. If the children are encouraged to work with other students whose L2 skills are equal to their own, this could reduce the L2 learning gaps that presently exist in education.

Secondly, Chiara states that all students should conduct a compulsory school exchange for one year, so that they are required to converse in the L2 through the use of 'Un anno

in L2'. 'Then people would be obliged to learn the second language because you wouldn't have another way around it.' The objective would be to reduce social segregation through L2 exchange policies. But in order to advocate this theoretical proposal, governmental support would be essential.

Consequently, some researchers have tried to modify the education system through revamping school material and changing how it is taught in schools, especially regarding South Tyrolean history. According to Forer et al., their informants suggested the importance of unifying local history, by recognizing that the German- and Italian-speaking schools have historically discussed different material. Originally, German schools would concentrate their efforts on teaching South Tyrolean history, while Italian-speaking schools would focus their attention on the history of the Italian state (2008). With German-speaking schools teaching South Tyrolean history through 'a major German slant', Donna implies that although German schools cover the Fascist occupation, they may have overlooked the Nazi impact on the region.

As a result, Forer et al.'s informants, as of 2008, felt that South Tyrolean history should account for the diverse personal histories that were affected by the Nazis and the Fascists. As stated by Giudiceandrea and Mazza, the school needs to demonstrate that there is 'German' and 'Italian' history (2012: 99) and that these cultures both exist within the same environment and are essentially a part of the same story.

Therefore, in 2006, school modifications were enforced through the Italian-speaking provincial councillor, when a motion was presented by the Green Party 'to overcome the conflicts and create a European consciousness in young generations' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 36). The motion asked that the provincial council nominate a group, consisting of

German- Italian- and Ladin-speakers, to coordinate the production of teaching material on local history for South Tyroleans schools. According to Giudiceandrea:

[This project] is the start of an attempt [to create] a common interpretation of [South Tyrolean] literature [through] a 'shared history' that constitutes the premise for a [future] passive coexistence [of both language groups]... The education of young people, [i.e.] Italian- and German-speakers, can only benefit from this initiative' (ibid.).

In 2012, Donna explained that local schools now taught 'both sides' of South Tyrolean history. Additionally, the history books provide a less biased opinion on how events unfolded inside South Tyrol. However, Donna still believes that while the education system has changed over the course of several years, there will always be more room for educational improvement as it tries to amend language group relations.

### **7.3.2 Reservations towards the CLIL method, especially starting in high school**

*'If we had bilingual schools in South Tyrol, it would make things so much easier because people would realize that bilingualism is a part of daily life [despite local society suggesting otherwise]...' - Interview with Heidi (April 2012).*

When referring to material discussed in Chapter 4, I made reference to the use of the CLIL method as an additional component of the education system in its efforts to promote bilingual learning. However, not all citizens are thoroughly convinced that the CLIL method will resolve L2 issues. Dr Drumbl, for example, was concerned that the CLIL method would leave a quarter of students linguistically more disadvantaged than if they had attended courses in their mother tongue, in order to progress through course material.

Despite Heidi's insistence that bilingual education would resolve the L2 problems in society, she believed that the CLIL method should begin at younger ages, rather than when students reached upper secondary school. Heidi explained to me that her high

school wanted to apply the CLIL method, but based on her teaching experience, this method could only work with students who are linguistically advanced. Since she knew that I taught an advanced anthropology course in English with Italian-speaking students at my high school, she believed that my students had excelled in the class because their knowledge of English was almost fluent. As for her high school:

'In a couple of years, the school administrators will make us teach one subject in another language through the CLIL method, but they shouldn't introduce it to students who are in their final year of high school. The CLIL method only works when students are younger, not when they're older. You have a good class, so you can teach them anthropology in English, but if you had another class with students who did not have a fluent knowledge of English, it wouldn't work. You have to start the immersion programme in elementary school [when students' brains are more capable of absorbing the language]. Once students start elementary school, immersion teaching should be considered normal. You shouldn't wait until students are at the end of their high school education to teach subjects in another language.'

Salvatore and his colleagues were also of the opinion that the CLIL method should not be introduced in high school. 'Students who study German should have a good foundation of grammar before they learn subjects in another language' and from what I understood, his high school students' knowledge of German grammar was predominately poor for their grade level.

Even though one informant thought that the CLIL method was 'really the better way' for L2 learning, ASTAT results indicate that over half of South Tyrolean citizens are in support of teaching courses in the L2. According to the ASTAT surveys, 56.8 percent of German-speakers, 83.4 percent of Italian-speakers and 98.1 percent of Ladin-speakers are 'very OK' or 'somewhat OK' with the possibility of teaching some courses in the L2. While the German-speaking population is more reserved regarding L2 changes in the

education system, the Ladins and Italians are more inclined to support early L2 acquisition starting in preschool (ASTAT 2006: 56-57).

#### 7.4 An in-depth look at politicians' responses to L2 learning in education

*'It may be heretical for a Spanish professor to say this, but I think we are sometimes too quick in singing the praises of bilingualism... Yes, identity is shaped by language; but no, languages are not like vitamins... I don't deny the damage done by coercive monolingualism, which sometimes results in the extirpation of a mother tongue, but bilingualism can engender its own forms of oppression. Calques and barbarisms are only the surface tremors of rifts that reach deeper than syntax or vocabulary. Among bilinguals, nostalgia for monolingualism is at least as common as its repudiation. A Czech proverb teaches: "Learn a new language, get a new soul." Is it always a blessing to be multisouled?' (Pérez-Firmat 2005: 92)*

##### 7.4.1 The importance of preserving the L1 before introducing the L2

While many local residents and L2 researchers are in support of bilingual education, some informants are uncertain as to whether L2 learning should be promoted through immersion education. Although some teachers are concerned over whether the CLIL method will resolve L2 issues in society, some politicians are in favour of delayed L2 learning in order to preserve the mother tongue.

Research by Lightbrown and Spada found that older elementary school students who learned the L2 only from a later age could 'catch up with those' who started lessons earlier (1999: 86). By focusing on students who study the L2 for only a few hours per week, their research indicates that:

'When the goal is basic communicative ability [in the L2] for all students in a school setting, and when it is assumed that the child's native language will remain

the primary language, it may be more efficient to begin second or *foreign language*<sup>107</sup> teaching later' (ibid.).

Additionally, Lightbrown and Spada were able to conclude that:

'in cases where such high levels [of the L2] are targeted, it is important to recognize certain disadvantages of an early start, especially when an early start in [a] second language means that children have little opportunity to continue to develop their knowledge of the first language' (1999: 164).

'Subtractive bilingualism', according to their research, can have negative effects for students from minority backgrounds if the L2 used at school starts to dominate the L1 used at home. Lightbrown and Spada state that if the L1 used at home is also used within the schooling setting, students may be inclined towards better L2 success if the L2 is taught when students are older. Their research demonstrates that if children have a good foundation of their L1, those children who begin their studies in their mother tongue will display more self-confidence in school. Not only will they learn more effectively during their early years of education, but they 'will not lose valuable time in a period of limbo during which they struggle just to understand what is happening in the classroom' (ibid.).

As a result, Lightbrown and Spada's research illustrates why there are some South Tyrolean informants who believe in protecting the students' mother tongue before they are exposed to the L2. Forer et al. reveal that one of their informants was concerned that early L2 exposure could result in students speaking 'two semi-languages', rather than being fluent in one (2008). Subsequently, there are some German-speaking politicians who support the 'unequal learning of [local] languages' with the assumption that L2 learning or 'language, in South Tyrol, does not unite [communities] but divide [them]' (Peterlini 2013: 125).

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<sup>107</sup> Italics are from Lightbrown and Spada (see 1999: 86).

When interviewing Dr Andergassen, he told me of his father, who was a by-product of the catacomb schools. As explained in Chapter 2, these secret German-speaking schools only added to the L2 learning problem. Since German-speaking students were required to speak Italian during their regular school hours, those students who had difficulty learning the L2 meant that they were illiterate in school. These same German-speaking students then attended secret classes, but the instruction was 'severely limited' (Steininger 2003: 32). Consequently, Dr Andergassen is of the opinion that students should protect their mother tongue. As the German schools are designed with the German student in mind, this is the chance for students to practice High German. Unlike his father, who was deprived of a decent education, the German-speaking education system not only permits German students to speak their dialect, but also teaches them to speak fluent High German.

Dr Peter Höllrigl also strongly supports a 'separate but equal' education system. During our interview, he stated that 'for the past 25 years, the German-speakers have had to adapt and learn the Italian language'. He believes the school system is important, so that children can develop their L1. Since Höllrigl is of the view that local languages tend to converge and influence each other, the German-speaking educational community, administrators and politicians, want to protect their mother tongue before it is lost.

'Keeping our mother tongue is the most important thing in order to safeguard our own identity. If we lose our identity, then we lose ourselves. Then what will have been the point of the divided schooling system?'

#### 7.4.2 Opinions regarding bilingual education

On 29 January 2014, South Tyrolean provincial councillor for the Green Party, Brigitte Foppa, filed a complaint directed at the President of South Tyrol Arno Kompatscher, after he met with Austrian press in Vienna. In her complaint, she stated that she was greatly disappointed by the president's views regarding bilingual education. Kompatscher, who is a member of the SVP, supports monolingual education, a concept which Foppa thinks is socially 'behind the times' and does not lead to a forward-thinking South Tyrol.<sup>108</sup>

According to Kompatscher, bilingual education 'would be dangerous' for German-speaking students as they 'learn the dialect at home' and need to learn High German first before they learn the L2. Foppa, however, stated that Kompatscher's declarations were 'based on an old cliché' and that South Tyrolean politics was going 'back a step' when it comes to bilingual education.

In support of her objectives, Foppa and her advocates referred to 'studies [and] facts at international level', which stated that children who are multilingual are able to activate more areas of their brain. This assumes that children who are monolingual are unable to achieve the same results. Foppa used this platform to explain to local government that German- and Italian-speaking families want bilingualism in the South Tyrol school system, even if the SVP does not. She revealed that by having two separate schooling systems, L2 learning can become more difficult,<sup>109</sup> but her opinions did not seem to change the SVP's perspectives regarding monolingual education.

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<sup>108</sup> For more information see 'Foppa "Bilinguismo, SVP fuori dal tempo"' (29 January 2014) at: <<http://altoadige.gelocal.it/bolzano/cronaca/2014/01/29/news/foppa-bilinguismo-svp-fuori-dal-tempo1.8565530>> [Accessed 7 September 2015].

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

The SVP believes that the South Tyrol school system, in particular, the German-speaking schools, should concentrate their efforts on teaching the 'high language' for the German-speaking population. The SVP 'has blockaded the streets and any [thoughts] of bilingual education' and have also rejected early bilingualism in South Tyrolean nursery schools. Their assumption is that 'contact with more languages is rather damaging for the development of a child' (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 85; see Forer et al. 2008), which is similar to comments made by Kompatscher with reference to a bilingual schooling system.

In an interview, he stated that bilingual education, according to linguist, Rita Franceschini, 'is a myth'. In his opinion:

'it is important to have a school oriented towards the L1, in particular for the German-speaking group, [where] the school is a place where one can learn pure German.'

However, he admitted that the local schooling system incorporates the 'CLIL experience' and that children have the option to practice the L2 through joint recesses and having gymnastics together.<sup>110</sup>

When examining the results by Forer et al., they acknowledge that there is a local fear that bilingual education could be considered a threat in response to the Second Autonomy statutes. Alongside the belief that early L2 acquisition could result in the loss of one's own culture, there are some who still maintain that L1 preservation is relevant for maintaining one's identity. By risking 'to undermine the necessary security [of] the L1', one German-speaking informant was convinced that early L2 acquisition could cause the region to become Italianized (2008).

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<sup>110</sup> For more information see 'No alla scuola mista ma i ragazzi devono potersi incontrare' at: <<http://altoadige.gelocal.it/bolzano/cronaca/2013/10/11/news/no-alla-scuola-mista-ma-i-ragazzi-devono-potersi-incontrare-1.7907095>> [Accessed 7 September 2015].

Nevertheless, the great majority of Forer et al.'s informants are in support of early L2 acquisition, and feel that early L2 exposure can provide citizens with '[more] linguistic awareness'. Even Provincial Counsellor Romano Viola, of the Partito Democratico della Sinistra (PDS), was the first to support immersion education after returning from his studies in Quebec, Canada, in 1991 (Giudiceandrea 2007: 145).

At a news conference, he expressed the view that 'so far, the Italian school [system] in Bolzano province has not succeeded in securing a sufficient understanding of German' (Giudiceandrea 2007: 24).<sup>111</sup> This may explain why there has been an increase in Italian-speaking students in German-speaking schools in South Tyrol. In some cases, Italian-speakers constitute the majority of students in German education. As of 2002, Dr Sabina Kasslatter Mur, provincial assessor of the German-speaking education system, stated that out of sixteen German-speaking preschools, 40 percent of those enrolled were Italian- or bilingual-speaking students. In some instances, the German-speaking sections of certain schools had 80 percent of non-German-speaking students.<sup>112</sup>

As the German-speaking school is the only means for German students to study and practice their High German, the influx of Italian-speaking students to these schools means that the teachers are more inclined to speak in Italian. For some officials, this defeats the object of having a German-speaking education system if German students are unable to hear High German spoken because Italian students cannot speak the language.<sup>113</sup>

Some Italian politicians reacted to the SVP's suggestion that Italian-speaking students verify their knowledge of the L2 before they enrol in German-speaking education.

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<sup>111</sup> For more information see 'Viola (PDS) propone "scuola e immersione" in Alto Adige' in *Ansa*, 3 October 1991.

<sup>112</sup> Hell, E., 2008. Ipocrisie linguistiche. [blog] 15 May. Available at: <<http://www.gebi.bz.it/bilinguismo/?m=200805>> [Accessed 8 September 2015].

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

Comments like 'absurd' and 'dangerous' were used in response to German language tests, suggesting that these tests for Italian-speaking students were forms of language discrimination.<sup>114</sup>

Nonetheless, the SVP said that it was not opposed to better L2 teaching in Italian schools. In an interview with former South Tyrolean President and SVP member, Luis Durnwalder, he agreed with the experimental use of German-speaking teachers in Italian-speaking preschools.<sup>115</sup>

However, it was Alessandro Urzì, provincial counsellor and syndicate candidate of the political group, l'Alto Adige nel cuore (At the heart of South Tyrol), who stated:

I wonder if only modifying [the Patentino] without radically modifying the structure of the school systems, can help to resolve [the L2 learning] problem. A plurilingual school is the only prospective to offer to future generations.<sup>116</sup>

As a result, the ideal outcome would be for the political groups to come to a solution over how to adjust the education system so that both language groups are satisfied with L2 measures. While South Tyrolean vice-president, Dr Christian Tommasini, is in support of plurilingual education,<sup>117</sup> more backing from German-speaking politicians will be needed before the German schools consider bilingual learning.

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<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> For more information see 'Urzì: "Cambiano gli esami ma deve cambiare la scuola"' in *Alto Adige*, 16 January 2014. Available at: <<http://altoadige.gelocal.it/bolzano/cronaca/2014/01/16/news/urzi-cambiano-gli-esami-ma-deve-cambiare-la-scuola-1.8482016>> [Accessed 8 September 2015].

<sup>117</sup> For more information see: 'Tommasini: "Bisogna guardare ai giovani"' in *Alto Adige* on 1 August 2013 at: <<http://salto.bz/de/article/01082013/tommasini-bisogna-guardare-ai-giovani>> [Accessed 9 September 2015].

## 7.5 Conclusion

When reflecting on how informants respond to L2 issues in South Tyrolean society, their reactions to the school system suggest that school administrators are still uncertain how to appease both language groups. While some parents ask for better L2 learning methods, some politicians would prefer more segregation. Consequently, schooling methods, such as the 'Free Choice' principle, act as a means to avoid confrontation, while simultaneously 'Free Choice' as a language learning system is not as 'free' as legislation would suggest.

Subsequently, there are concerns as to whether the school system is addressing students' needs in L2 learning, which is why some parents opt for alternative methods to L2 learning inside South Tyrol. Ellis refers to parental influence in order to encourage L2 learning (1994: 228), while Richard-Amato states that parents need to become 'partners in education' for their children (2003: 126).

Although politicians, like the German SVP, want to safeguard their own identity, this need to 'preserve' the L1 in the face of L2 learning may only magnify historical group conflicts. Some politicians worry about the possible side effects of early L2 acquisition, which is why they prefer a 'separate but equal' schooling system, rather than risk losing their culture all together.

Despite the fact that my students are not totally convinced that bilingual education is the answer, Abel et al. found that the majority of their informants were in support of bilingual education. With 'Un anno in L2' providing local students with ways to interact with L2 groups, this method seems to function as an alternative to monolingual education options.

Nevertheless, it is clear that local school officials should continue to address L2 concerns, especially considering that some of my informants are displeased with the L2 learning outcomes. However, based on recent fieldwork, my data would suggest that there is no collective will to solve this problem. And until the politicians, educators, administrators and parents find a solution to L2 learning issues, it may take several years for the province to provide a bilingual education system.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion: South Tyrol as 'peace model'?

*'Hopefully in the future many things will change. The Dolomites are protected and many people are curious to see this part of the world. But the local people will have to change; they must change.'* - Interview with Maurizio (2012).

In the beginning of my thesis, I discussed how South Tyrol is viewed by some EU states as a 'peace model'. Joseph Marko believes that the autonomy statutes (and/or elements thereof), which constitute the political framework of the region, can be theoretically applied to other nation-states suffering from political and social instability (2008: 379). Nevertheless, when he questions whether a 'successful [South Tyrolean] "model" [can] actually be "exported" to other...European crisis regions' he states that:

'In relation to the everyday logic, there are two preliminary problems on the theoretical and methodological levels dealing with the issue of the "model function" of the South Tyrolean Autonomy [s]tatute and also its "transferability" to other conflict situations... there are those who represent...the naïve opinion that institutional mechanisms can be simply "implanted" without taking into account the demographic, cultural, socio-cultural and...political variables of the state, region or conflict in question... [one example being the 'Swiss model' when it was applied to Bosnia and Hercegovina, which resulted in a "war within a war" between Croats and the Muslim population]... The opposite view takes the position that each nation and each situation is so "unique" and can only be understood in itself, so that comparisons- not to mention the transferability of institutional models- are simply not feasible' (Marko 2008: 378).

While Marko disagrees with the opposite view, Stefan Wolff is of the opinion that South Tyrol's complex power sharing model demonstrates an effective 'institutional design [which] has exemplary character for complex power sharing arrangements' (2008: 363) when compared to other governments worldwide. Additionally, Wolff continues to refer to the 'success' of the South Tyrolean model despite the fact that it had not been "'transferred" to other conflict settlements' (ibid.) as of his publication in 2008.

Having said that, Marko and Wolff are correct in recognizing the success of South Tyrol's progressive government, which has provided the region with territorial self-governance along with regional autonomy (see Wolff 2008: 329; see Marko 2008: 380). As for minority protection, which is expressed in South Tyrol, Wolff explains that complex power sharing governments must deal with conflict resolution by concentrating on 'two dimensions...of particular importance: - Human and minority rights provisions; and- Recognition and protection of identities' (2008: 340-341).

According to the Committee of Regions (COR), as mentioned in Chapter 3, South Tyrol '[stood] out as an example of the successful resolution of a minority conflict...for which other European regions may learn' (see Magliana 2000: 119-120). When comparing South Tyrol to the Bosnian conflict, which resulted in the Dayton Agreement (1995), South Tyrolean negotiations, unlike the Dayton resolutions, did not result in the division of a provincial territory. Bosnia and Hercegovina, which comprised of Muslims, Serbs, Croats and originally Yugoslavs, had to succumb to an agreement dividing Bosnia into a Croat-Muslim federation (51 percent) and a Serb territory (49 percent). As a consequence, the Dayton Agreement functioned as a reluctant peace model based on regional negotiations leaving citizens concerned that the agreement would signal the eventual dissolution of the country (Rogel 2004: 27; 38-40).

South Tyrol, which 'technically' no longer has physical linguistic demarcations in education, is unique in that the region was not exposed to local bombings once the autonomy statutes were put in place.<sup>118</sup> However, Belfast, Ireland, even in 2015 has walls which separate neighbouring Protestant and Catholic communities in certain areas. These 'peace walls' were set up in specific neighbourhoods after the Good Friday

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<sup>118</sup> While bombings were reported in the 1980s (see Peterlini 2013 and John Cole, personal communication), violent conflicts, let alone bombings in the region, have not been reported nor sighted in South Tyrol in at least thirty years.

Agreement (1998), which was designed to bring an end to 'The Troubles' after 'thirty years of sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland' (BBC history 2015; Reeve 2015). In order to maintain the 'peace', the walls have not been removed lest members try to instigate further violence. In his words, Reeve explains that while 'there obviously was a peace process...there wasn't a resolution of the fundamental issues that are dividing the society. So there is now management of stalemate' due to the lack of integration amongst several citizens of Belfast's more impoverished neighbourhoods (see Reeve 2015).

This 'lack of integration' was a concept that I tried to explore through South Tyrol's education system. Despite South Tyrol's 'success' with regards to its peace model, language division in society still persists. While Marko contends that 'institutional segregation' (2008: 377) can compliment regional cohabitation, this belief in 'the complementary functionality of segregation and integration [which means 'to desegregate']' (2008: 380) seems like a contradiction in terms. Even though South Tyrol's model has shown that language groups can co-exist, this 'territorial separation...and regional and supranatural integration' (Marko 2008: 377) has led to a segregated education system.

Outside of education, the peace model also promotes the quota system, or proportionality law (see Chapter 1). While the law was initially designed to provide more jobs for German- and Ladin-speaking citizens, the result is one where German-speakers constitute just less than 70 percent of South Tyrol's work force. German-speakers also represent 60 percent<sup>119</sup> of South Tyrol's provincial government, meaning that they retain a greater level of influence over provincial legislation.

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<sup>119</sup> These figures were obtained through informants during fieldwork.

Since the language census does not allow bilingual-speakers to declare themselves bilingual citizens, this growing proportion of South Tyrol's population is not represented in the local government. Consequently, German-speaking politicians who are intent on protecting the German-speaking minority are more inclined to oppose bilingual education at the risk of losing their L1.

As parents are aware of the bilingual requirements in order to work in civil service positions, many parents are trying to place their children in a school that speaks the L2. But with bilingual education still lacking sufficient support both from the educational and political communities, some teachers have decided to use the CLIL method or 'Un anno in L2' as a means to integrate more children into an L2-speaking environment.

Nevertheless, despite some teachers' efforts and the FUB's attempts to provide students with L2 learning options, my fieldwork indicated that the FUB is unprepared to provide students with a multilingual education system. Since the education system before university does not properly teach the L2, those German students who I worked with at the FUB found that their L2-speaking skills were inadequate. Although the teacher training programme at the FUB is trying to modify these issues by ensuring that future teachers are trained in all three languages (i.e. German, Italian and English), for many students the opportunity has been lost, resulting in a difficult transition into trilingual university based, in part, as a consequence of the monolingual education system.

But there are other social factors, alongside the peace model, that also contribute to L2 learning issues in society, such as the language learning 'block', which prevents local students from communicating fluently in the L2. Additionally, social tensions between Germans and Italians as a result of provincial history have contributed to the 'victim' and 'conqueror' mentalities, making second language learning that more difficult. As the

geographical layout of the province is linguistically divided into German-speaking rural pockets and Italian-speaking urban centres, L1-speakers are able to manoeuvre themselves from having to converse in the L2. Students have also realized that unless their daily lives require them to use the L2, the L2 that they learn in school is taught like a foreign language rather than a language spoken regularly in the province.

Consequently, there are parents who have tried to find alternatives to work around the education system. Some have opted to give their children extra second language lessons while others send their children to L2-speaking countries through the Erasmus programme. In some cases parents have even learned the L2 so that their children can attend L2-speaking schools.

However, despite parental efforts to encourage their own children to be exposed to the second language, it is worth recognizing that the South Tyrol school system serves to reinforce and institutionalize the separation of the German- and Italian-speaking communities. As cultural diversity is becoming an "added value" and competitive advantage in an emerging European market of regions' (see Marko 2008: 388), the South Tyrolean peace model may need to modify its policies to appease the growing multilingual market.

As a result, I have reservations over whether the peace model should be fully transferred to other countries. With regard to whether multilingual regions should support institutional segregation, Marko recognizes that:

'segregation and proportional representation as institutional mechanisms do create security as a necessary requirement of peaceful coexistence but [do] not necessarily [create] trust as a similar requirement for integration through cooperation. Segregation and proportionality are actually "institutionalized mistrust"! (2008: 383).

Additionally, Marko states that the Autonomy statutes 'could [not] simply be exported' (2008: 388) to other European countries, but that does not imply that certain components of the statutes could not be modified to adapt to other regions within Europe.

While Voltmer insists that each country and/or 'case study is different and a simple transfer of [regional] models is generally impossible' (2007: 220), Alcock explains that:

'In its context the South Tyrol model of autonomy is, of course, specific to South Tyrol. Where it can be a model for others is the way in which [autonomy is] reached' (2001: 22).

As a result, while some nation-states, like Tibet (see Chapter 7) and the former Yugoslavian states, look to South Tyrol as the ideal model for autonomy, in terms of border education, I suggest that nation-states observe how South Tyrolean individuals have dealt with L2 learning issues in their society. Since the education system is still a work in progress and is unable to satisfy all language groups, it is important to recognize how South Tyrolean individuals have learned to work around the monolingual education system. By examining how certain citizens respond to regional and linguistic concerns in education, nation-states can modify measures for autonomy so that it meets the collective needs of more members of their society.

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When examining the role of education within nations, Gellner and Banks explain that state-run governments have historically used education as a powerful tool in order to promote nationalism (Banks 1996: 126, 154; Gellner 1983: 94). In many ways this promotion of the 'nation' has resulted in minorities asking for protection in response to L2-speaking international invaders attempting to take-over their province. In the case of

South Tyrol, the Fascists used the schooling system to Italianize the German-speaking people, causing the German-speakers to defend their German language as a consequence of national objectives.

Over time, the German-speakers developed their own 'nation' by preserving their language and culture. Through minority protection they hoped to keep their language pure by placing it 'in a [language safe] museum' (see De Mauro 1996: 94).

Bourdieu explains that for nations the language can become a defining marker for a certain group that together with anthems, flags and oath-swearing ceremonies, helps to sustain a group's identity from divergent outsiders (1992: 220-221). The irony, however, is that despite German attempts to preserve their language from the Italian state, German-speakers have started to express 'Italian-ness' in German dialect (see Hofmann 1995; Kaplan 1999: 53) regardless of regional efforts towards the contrary.

Additionally, Italian-speakers have adopted regional markers which are attributed to German-speakers in the province. Attachment to *Heimat*, which is a German way of life, is expressed through Italian *campanilismo*. This suggests that, like the Germans, Italians show regionalism through their unique connection with South Tyrol province.

As the region continues to differentiate itself from its Italian state and Austrian neighbours (see Magliana 2000: 90), it will be interesting to see how or whether the education system will adjust 'in favour of a new, multilingual and multicultural identity' (Magliana 2000: 64).

As immigration is becoming more of an issue due to the increase of refugees to the region,<sup>120</sup> local politicians may need to reconsider how they can accommodate 'foreign'

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<sup>120</sup> Since I returned from fieldwork there has been an increase in immigration as refugees and migrants have come to Bolzano on their way to Austria or Germany. Originally migrants were stopped at the

L2-speakers who decide to stay in South Tyrol. In terms of education, while Abel indicates that:

'South Tyrol is often viewed as a model for the solution of minority problems and language conflicts [while t]his may be the case in many respects...quite a few aspects will have to be (re)considered and (re)discussed in the future' (2007: 243).

Since the education system tends to concentrate 'on the polarity between' Germans and Italians, 'the challenges for the future will be to reorganize the education system and provide for the integration of further languages and cultures' (ibid.).

Through this research I have tried to understand South Tyrol through the lens of second language learning to see how L2 literature can assist in making sense of identity formation in the region. While I have focused on how anthropology concentrates on nation-states and their effect on identity, I wanted to discover how diverse disciplines can work together to make sense of L2 learning issues. While researchers, such as Lightbrown, Spada, Gass and Selinker have studied motivation and its effects on L2 education (see Chapter 3), the objective of my research is to inform L2 researchers on how cultural politics can impact L2 learning. The effects of local history between cultural groups can determine how language groups view one another leading to L2 concerns later on in education as students study the language of their neighbour.

Furthermore, I hope this research will be able to contribute to an emerging anthropology of regions in Europe, as well as the already more established anthropologies of borders, multiculturalism, nationalism and education.

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Brenner Pass in order to verify their papers, but due to the increase in numbers migrants, some of whom are underage, are now being checked at the Bolzano train station (see Bell 2015; Camilli 2015).

## Appendix A

### Paris Agreement of 1946<sup>121</sup>

1. German-speaking inhabitants of the Bolzano Province and of the neighbouring bilingual townships of the Trento Province will be assured a complete equality of rights with the Italian-speaking inhabitants within the framework of special provisions to safeguard the ethnical character and the cultural and economic development of the German-speaking element. In accordance with legislation already enacted or awaiting enactment the said German-speaking citizens will be granted in particular:
  - a) elementary and secondary teaching in the mother-tongue;
  - b) purification of the German and Italian languages in public offices and official documents, as well as in bilingual topographical naming;
  - c) the right to re-establish German family names which were Italianised in recent years;
  - d) equality of rights as regards the entering upon public offices with a view to reaching a more appropriate proportion of employment between the two ethnical groups.
2. The populations of the above-mentioned zones will be granted the exercise of autonomous legislative and executive regional power. The frame, within which the said provisions of autonomy will apply, will be drafted in consultation also with local representative German-speaking elements.
3. The Italian Government, with the aim of establishing good neighbourhood relations between Austria and Italy, pledges itself, in consultation with the Austrian Government, and within one year from the signing of the present Treaty:
  - a) to revise in a spirit of equity and broadmindedness the question of the options for citizenship resulting from the 1939 Hitler-Mussolini agreements;
  - b) to find an agreement for the mutual recognition of the validity of certain degrees and university diplomas;
  - c) to draw up a convention for the free passengers and good transit between Northern and Eastern Tyrol both by rail, and to the greatest possible extent by road;
  - d) to reach special agreements aimed at facilitating enlarged frontier traffic and local exchanges of certain qualities of characteristic products and goods between Austria and Italy.

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<sup>121</sup> A copy of the Paris Agreement is available in Woelk, et. al's book, *Tolerance Through Law: Self Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol* (2008: 410).

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