From Italian American English to American Italian English : the twilight of a language variety

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Mémoire de Master

Directrice de Mémoire : Prof. Genoveva Puskas

Année académique 2020-2021

‘Anche il primo della classe come lui qui è ridiventato analfabeta’

– Melania Mazzucco, *Vita*

Image: ‘An immigrant family on the dock of Ellis Island after having just passed the rigid examination for entry into the country, looking hopefully at New York’s skyline while awaiting the government ferry on August, 13, 1925’ *Bettmann Archive/Getty Images.*

Horne, Madison. *Immigration at Ellis Island: Photos.* 3 October 2019. Web. history.com/news/immigration-ellis-island-photos. 10.10.2020.

Table of Contents

Introduction

> 'Il tale aveva una *scioppa*, quell'altro una buona *giobba*; chi aveva lo *storo*, chi lavorava in una *farma*; tutti avevano figli all'*aiscule* e al *collegio*, e il *carro*, l'*aisebòcchese*, la *uasetoppe*. Con queste parole di cui pochi capivano il significato, ma certo dovevano indicare cose buone, mia zia cantava l'America' (Sciascia, 1956:48; emphasis added)[1]

Leonardo Sciascia, in his novella *La zia d'America* (*The American Aunt*) (1956) describes an Italian American family returning home, in Sicily, for a holiday. The narrator, the Aunt's nephew aged ten and living in Sicily, is astonished by his aunt's language and incomprehensible words. Sciascia's use of hybrid language is among the first witnessing that we have of the linguistic Italian American heritage in literature. In this short excerpt, we can notice how languages in contact, Italian and American, have mixed to create a new variety as a result of migration.

American varieties such as Italian American English, African American Vernacular English, or Chicano English, clearly show the significant influence of human and sociological phenomena on languages. Coming myself from a mixed linguistic background as I grew up in Geneva but in an Italian speaking environment, I have always been very interested in linguistic phenomena that occur in multilingual contexts.

[1] That one had a *scioppa* [shop], the other one had a good *giobba* [job]*;* some had a *storo* [store], others worked in a *farma* [farm]; everyone had children going to the *aiscule* [high school] and to *collegio* [college], and the *carro* [car], *l'aisebòcchese* [icebox], the *uasetoppe* [housetop]. With these words which few of us could understand, but surely had to mean good things, my aunt was praising America. [Translation mine; emphasis added]

Multilingualism is often the result of histories of migration, and by looking at the migration history of Italy, one cannot mention the American experience. The history of Italian Americans is probably one of the most interesting in terms of integration and linguistic hybridization. Italian Americans have been so well integrated by now, that it has become a forgotten community of immigrants. As a result, it is not a surprise to find Italian names in high position jobs but, in the past, they were *dagoes* in the eyes of the US society. Following my first MA dissertation that explored the specific features of immigration literature in the context of Italian literature, while providing a thematic analysis of Melania Mazzucco's novel *Vita* (2001)[2], it seemed natural to continue my research in the linguistic field of Italian American. Thus, I would like to investigate the influence of Italian on the American language, and more precisely on the variety of English that Italian American immigrants created and spoke through different generations. Italian American English variety has always been reproduced and publicized in the 1960s-1980s, maybe even mocked to a certain extent, by newspaper articles, and *mafia* novels such as *The Godfather* (Mario Puzo, 1969) or *Wiseguy: Life in Mafia Family* (Nicholas Pileggi, 1985) and became even more successful after movie adaptations. However, besides this mass-media popularity, many studies have proved that the Italian American language is a variety of English spoken among the Italian community with specific linguistic features. Compared to other English varieties arising from relatively recent migrant communities, the Italian American English variety has a longer history (as much as the Irish or the Yiddish speaking community), therefore it is worth investigating in this subject. Moreover, it can provide an answer as to why and how these varieties

[2] Martella, Lidia. *Quando eravamo « dagos ». Emigrazione e letteratura: il caso di Vita di Melania Mazzucco.* MA Dissertation. Université de Genève. Unpublished. 2018.

evolved and survived. The purpose of this *mémoire* is to acknowledge a variety spoken among the Italian American community as well as to give it its due place in the corollary of varieties in the North American continent. Moreover, as less and less people speak this variety in its original form, it is important to preserve it, at least theoretically. *In fine*, this study aims at understanding which are the linguistic phenomena that led to the evolution but also the involution of this variety.

This study will first provide a brief historical introduction to the history of the Italian immigration in the US as well as a short insight of the complex linguistic history and status of Italians prior the Unification until the Second World War. This first chapter will help to better understand the historical and linguistic background of Italian immigrants. Then, the second chapter will introduce the theoretical framework that will account for the main trends of language in contact phenomena, and the most important contributions in the field of Italian American linguistic studies. The third chapter will first provide a description of specific linguistic features for each generation followed by an analysis of language in contact phenomena. This will allow the research to delineate the evolution and involution of Italian American English variety. Finally, the fourth chapter will tackle the issue of defining the current status of this variety.

1. Historical Notes: Italian Migration and the *Questione della Lingua*

1.1. History of the Italian Migration in the US

According to the 2018 US census, 16 million people declared to descend from Italian ancestry in the USA, hence forming the fifth largest ethnic group after people of African (41 million), German (41 million), Irish (30 million) and English (22 million) descent. Finding Italians among the largest groups should not come as a surprise, for 'it is a commonplace statement that America was discovered by one Italian (Cristoforo Colombo) […] and named after another (Amerigo Vespucci)' (Nelli, 1983:3). Italian migration in the America started very early, despite what one might suppose, and can be divided into three main periods: 1) The colonial period from 1500-1783; 2) The pre-unification period from 1783 to 1880; 3) the Great Migration period from 1880 to 1927 (Prifti, 2014:94). In the following subsections, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and 1.1.3, I will describe the different characteristics of each period.

1.1.1. Colonial period 1500-1783

The first period covers around two hundred years and can also be called the 'adventurers' period. While the Italian peninsula was still under the reign of Austrian, Bourbon kingdoms, and papal rule, Italians began migrating to the American territory under the

sponsorship of French, English, Portuguese, and Spanish governments as explorers, sailors, soldiers, missionaries, and other useful figures for the new colonial settlements. In 1500, Italians were mostly involved in the evangelisation process with around 450 missionaries (Franzina, 1995:59). Then, in later years, during the first decades of 1600, a discrete community of Italians settled under the invitation of the English colony for Italian artisans' skills were much needed. Another type of immigrants who came to the New World were the Waldensians community from Piedmont who, similarly to the English puritans, found refuge in Nieuw Amsterdam after the persecution of the Catholic church (Mangione, Morreale:1993:10; Nelli, 1983:8). Besides these very restricted and precise type of immigrants, first Italian immigrants-settlers were quite few. As Nelli claims, 'although Italian contacts with colonial America were more numerous than is generally assumed, the numbers involved were small' (Nelli, 1983:8).

1.1.2. Pre-unification period 1783 to 1880

The second period, fairly shorter as it is a transitional period but full of different historical events, paves the way for the massive numbers of immigrants who will come in the third period. In this century of time span, between the founding of the American Republic in 1783 and the establishment of the unified Italian kingdom in 1861, around twelve thousand Italians came to America (Mangione, Morreale, 1993:14; Prifti, 2014:98).

As above mentioned, the Italian peninsula was under the domain of eight principalities whose sphere of control had been decided during the congress of Vienna in 1814-1815. Despite the intention to keep this order as well as to repress all sorts of subversive acts, revolutionary movements burst in 1848 in the whole peninsula. The main pioneers for Italy's unification are Giuseppe Mazzini, King Victor Emmanuel II (House of Savoy), Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, and Giuseppe Garibaldi who contributed to

the two Italian wars of Independence (1848-1859) that liberated the peninsula from the yoke of foreigner kingdoms. This troubled period, *Risorgimento*, ended in 1861 with the creation of one only kingdom ruled by the House of Savoy. However, the *Risorgimento* clamorously failed in the south as rebellions continued to spark, mostly financed and encouraged by defeated kings. The unification was then perceived as a lure hiding a political and economic convenience for northern regions only. As a matter of fact, the south felt abandoned and left at its own mercy for the newly kingdom seized and sold the vast land to large landowners and speculators, instead of peasants who could not afford the high prices. This simply reinforced the existing order of feudalism and the conditions of the *Mezzogiorno*, namely the provinces south of Rome and the Sicilian island, did not improve at all (Nelli, 1983:20). Thus, 'the desperate antagonism of the Southerners against their new authorities inevitably gave rise to the speculation that Italy had become a nation in name only' (Mangione, Morreale, 1993:32).

During the *Risorgimento* decade the immigration waves in America stopped only to resume in larger numbers. Around 1850-1860 Italians (ca.10,000 individuals) coming mostly from the North, continued to cross the Atlantic (Prifti, 2014:97), but the instability created by revolutionary movements and the new kingdom, which failed to represent southern regions, inevitably led to new and larger waves of immigrants. Interestingly enough, however, if so far the Italians who braved the Atlantic were Northerner Italians, the impoverished South started to send its inhabitants who did not feel any loyalty toward the new nation (Mangione, Morreale, 1993:32). They first began migrating in Latin America for they believed it was more favourable for Italians but when the yellow fever epidemic in Brazil killed several thousands of Italians, the immigrants changed their primary destination (Mangione, Morreale, 1993:33). Moreover, the Gold Rush was still

very attractive in North America (Prifti, 2014:98). In this transitional phase, around 4,500 new Italians arrived each year with a peak of 8,800 individuals in 1873 with a result of twelve thousand Italians immigrants in the USA from 1783 to 1871 (Mangione, Morreale, 1993:14).

The type of immigrants who crossed the ocean in the second period was mostly individuals belonging to lower classes, usually employed in rural areas. As numbers were increasing years by years in 1870, the Italian government tried to stop the migration crisis which incidentally shed light on a 'miserable, poverty-stricken, humiliated Italy [...] governed by the dregs of the nation' (Garibaldi quoted in Mangione, Morreale, 1993:69). It is in these years that a real labour trafficking started to emerge in South and North America with a system of recruiting agents, *padroni*, who were both in Italy and in America, and who were in charge 'of supplying unskilled laborers for American landowners or managers of mines, railroads, or factories' and took advantage of immigrants (Mangione, Morreale, 1993:71). Needless to say that the numbers continued to increase in America albeit life conditions both in Italy and in the New World worsened dramatically.

As said at the beginning of this subsection, the transitional phase which has pivotal moments for Italy's and America's history, introduces a new type of immigration which will characterise the last period with the largest numbers of arrivals on the American soil.

1.1.3. The Great Emigration period from 1880 to 1927

This last phase is the most significant one as approximately 4,5 million of Italians entered the US between 1880 and 1927, with an average per year of circa 10,000 individuals (Prifti, 2014:101).

The reasons behind these extremely high numbers of immigrants are to be found not only in the political instability brought by the new Italian kingdom, but also by overpopulation and other natural disasters. Both Mangione and Nelli point out that Italy was notorious for being the 'most malarial area flu' at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Mangione, Morreale, 1993:77; Nelli, 1983:20). The extensive agriculture implemented at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the South resulted in soil erosion, hence creating marshes which became 'breeding places for mosquitoes' (Nelli, 1983:20). Besides low conditions of life, Italy was among the largest overpopulated countries, after Belgium, The Netherlands, and England (Nelli, 1983:19). Thus, impoverished regions suffering from political-economic instability, epidemics, and overpopulation, fuelled immigration with massive numbers of individuals who left as it was 'the best, perhaps the only, hope for improving their lives' (Nelli, 1983:19). Thus, from 1900 to 1914, the number of arrivals continued to peak with an average of 100,000 immigrants coming to the US each year.

The migratory flux, however, underwent a dramatic decrease during the First World War which drastically reduced the arrival of new immigrants. Moreover, in 1917, the US government introduced a *Literacy Test* addressed to each immigrant that succeeded in dissuading them to come. Indeed, if at the end of the nineteenth century, the US government needed immigrants to build the new industrialized country as well as the shiny and performant cities; at the turn of the twentieth century, they changed their policy towards immigration. However, despite restrictive migratory laws, immigration started to flow again due to the tragic outcome of the war and the post-bellum economic conditions. Thus, the US government implemented new actions similar to the *Literacy Test* in order to regulate the migratory flux. The government established the *Emergency Quota Act*

(1921) and the *Immigration Quota Act* (1924) that aimed to radically reduce immigration (Prifti, 2014:101). These acts were also the result of a wave of anti-immigration sentiment that emerged after the First World War, and as Mangione notes, these sentiments were expressed in the popular slogan "America for Americans" (Mangione, Morreale, 1993:340). Naturally, with these further actions, the number of arrivals from 1925 to 1927 decreased to eight thousand less than in 1924 that counted around 56,000 new arrivals (Prifti, 2014:102).

The last period also characterises the geographical distribution which closely followed the transformation of the US. In the first two periods, immigrants mostly settled in the West, with the largest groups in California. In the following years, and with more and more immigrants coming from Southern Italy, the favourite destinations increasingly became the 'urban-industrial states of the East and Middle West' (Nelli, 1983:41). The majority of immigrants settled in the states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania as well as in the states of Ohio and Illinois. As Fred Gardaphé explains,

> ships from Palermo went to New Orleans and the ships from Genoa and Naples went to New York. They spread from there, but the richest pockets of Italian-Americans are not far from New York City. They are clustered in New York City, Long Island, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and in and around Philadelphia. (Gardaphé quoted in Nosowitz, 2015)

Besides the maritime route motivation, the reason behind this move from West to East is also to be found in the transformation of the US from an agricultural country into an industrial one. Although Italian immigrants worked in farm labour in Italy, in the US they were engaged in low-paying occupations in the cities. This soon became a concern of contemporary observers who believed that urban difficulties could be overcome in rural areas, besides encouraging a better and rapid assimilation (Nelli, 1983:47).

The last period, whose end was marked by the increasing xenophobia in the US as well as the increasing totalitarian regimes in Europe, characterises best the Italian immigration. Individuals were varied and came from throughout Italy, although southern regions were more concerned. Immigrants' occupation moved from rural fields to the actual buildings of gigantic and modern cities. Naturally, Italians did not stop coming to the US, in fact, a last wave of immigration resumed after the end of the Second World War, up until the seventies of the twentieth century, but numbers were rather low compared to these three main and distinct periods.

1.2. Linguistic status of Italian immigrants in the US

1.2.1. The *Questione della Lingua*

After having introduced the historical context in which Italian immigration took place in the US. I will now turn to the linguistic background of Italian immigrants as it represents a peculiarity that is only Italy specific. Section 1.2.1 addresses the issue of the *Questione della lingua*, and the spread of the national standard Italian language, whereas section 1.2.2 will look at the linguistic status of Italian immigrants in the US from the first period of immigration to the last one.

Italian immigrants who arrived in the US did not speak a standard language; rather on the contrary, they arrived with a complicated and intricate linguistic history. Indeed, what is known as Italian, is nothing but the Florentine dialect that eventually became the national language after a long debate that started in the thirteenth century, and is known as the *Questione della lingua.* For centuries, before the establishment of a national language, the Italian peninsula had (and still has today) a large number of dialects spoken throughout the country. The issue, *questione,* of the Italian language was first addressed

by the founding father of Italian, Dante Alighieri who, along with the *Divina Commedia* (ca. 1303-1321), also wrote *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (ca.1303-4). The *De Vulgari Eloquentia* is a linguistic treaty that aimed to find a language, a *locutio vulgaris*, that could be adopted by every inhabitant of the Italian peninsula as well as by authors who were forced to use high latin instead. Ironically, his treaty was written in Latin in order to reach the elite. From his research, Florentine was the best vulgar vernacular as it satisfied both the communication and the lyric needs. Dante's legacy continued to be discussed and contemporary authors adopted the Florentine *volgare*, such as Petrarca or Boccaccio who wrote respectively their lyrics and novellas in this specific language.

Boccaccio's *Decameron*, written in prose, became a study case for Pietro Bembo who theorized the Italian vulgar language, namely Florentine, in his volume *Prose Della Volgar Lingua* (1525) almost two centuries later. As explained by the historian Carnevale,

> the Florentine dialect was chosen because it was better understood than other dialects and was closer to Latin, making it comprehensible to at least the elite classes throughout Italy. The economic dominance that Florence enjoyed from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries also helped solidify its position as the linguistic capital of what would become Italy. (Carnevale, 2009:24)

The issue however became urgent under Italy's unification as it was a means to create the 'new Italians' who could speak the same language and understand each other throughout the country. Indeed, the statesman Massimo D'Azeglio in 1870 cautioned that *'Fatta l'Italia, bisogna fare gli Italiani'* ('Although we have made Italy, we have yet to make Italians' translation by Mangione, Morrelli 1993:32). Not only a national identity was needed, but also and foremost a national language that could create a bond in the whole peninsula. In the nineteenth century, the *Question della lingua* was then discussed by several literary elites, among whom, Alessandro Manzoni who re-wrote his main novel *I Promessi Sposi* (1840) in contemporary Florentine in order to spread the language that,

according to him, every Italian should speak. He firmly believed in the widespread use of the language through media and literature which, ultimately, will encourage the abandonment of dialects. In the debate, the language scholar Graziadio Isaia Ascoli was opposed to the idea of imposing a relatively new language to everyone, as Manzoni intended to enforce, and suggested that both Italian and dialects could coexist. As a matter of fact, even King Emmanuel II spoke a Piedmont dialect with his ministers. Despite the implementation of Manzoni's idea, and therefore new ways of spreading the language - among which mandatory education and conscription into the army - the vast majority of Italians continued to speak their dialect. According to De Mauro, only 2.5% people could speak Italian (De Mauro, 1970:43). In recent years, many linguists such as Castellani (1982:25-26) or Berruto (1990) have addressed this issue, and they all agree by claiming that Italian was more widespread than it has been generally assumed.

Following the adoption of Florentine, it must be acknowledged that the Italian language as known and spoken today, is the result of many linguistic policies implemented from the end of the nineteenth century to the late forties of the twentieth century which all aimed to widespread the language. Besides what has already been mentioned during the unification period, for this study's sake which considers later generations of Italians as well, it is also worth mentioning the fascist regime's strong policy. Fascism wished to impose standard Italian to the whole peninsula, thus neglecting dialects, minority languages (e.g. Occitan in Piedmont or Germanic languages in Trentino Alto Adige), and foreignisms. Among the rigid policy, a commission of linguists, authors and other elite figures of the party established, under Mussolini's order, a list of substitute words for foreign loans. Thus, the English loan 'cocktail' became an *arlecchino,* and the French loan 'régisseur', a *regista* just to quote a few. Most of the suggestions made by

the fascist linguistic commission were completely abandoned at the end of the war but some permeated the language, as for instance *'regista'* (film director) or *'autista'* originally 'chauffeur' (Klein, 1986). As a result, the two World Wars and the violent actions of the fascist regime encouraged the massive widespread of standard Italian.

The last two means used to spread Italian were mandatory education (first until 10 years old, then 14 years old, and today 18) and the beginning of a new era of mass media entering the home of many Italians, such as the radio and the television. The only national television channel RAI even transmitted literacy and Italian lessons for adults in the program '*Non è mai troppo tardi'* ('It is never too late') which started in 1960. The program was meant to fight illiteracy which was still high in the sixties. In this regard, the process of mandatory education and the spreading of Italian took approximately a century for compulsory schooling had 'a very limited success since most of the population ignored the decree' (Finocchiaro, 2004:27). As a result, at the time of the Italian unification, 90% of the population was illiterate in the southern regions, whereas in northern regions, illiteracy oscillated between 50% and 75% (De Mauro, 1970:95) with an average of 75.6% of illiteracy in Italy in 1861. Always according to De Mauro, illiteracy went from 75.6% in 1861 to 50% in 1901 to 40% in 1911. Thus, the need to continue implementing strong language policies until the unanimous adoption of the national, standard language, as well as the complete literacy of each inhabitant.

However, as Graziadio Isaia Ascoli hypothesized, dialects continued to be spoken in many areas of the peninsula and, through interference, the coexistence with standard Italian led to the creation of a regional/popular Italian. De Mauro defined 'popular Italian' as a,

> modo di esprimersi di un incolto, che sotto la spinta di comunicare e senza addestramento, maneggia quella che ottimisticamente si chiama la lingua 'nazionale', l'italiano. (De Mauro, 1970:49)[3]

Although some linguists tend to differentiate regional Italian from popular Italian, for this study's sake, I will use indifferently popular Italian to refer to an Italian that is neither a dialect, nor standard Italian.

With this brief overview of Italian's complex linguistic history, it appears clearly that Italian immigrants arrived in the US with a variable knowledge of standard Italian. In fact, until after *Risorgimento*, Italian immigrants were only fluent in dialects.

1.2.2. Linguistic status of Italian immigrants

In the first period, the colonial period, immigrants mostly spoke northern dialects of 'Gallo-Italic' families (Prifti, 2014:96). However, in this first period of contact and settlement, Prifti notes that Italians who came to the US first went to France or Spain, consequently they already presented foreign interferences within their variations. Moreover, the number of individuals were relatively low, therefore the case of linguistic enclaves – as it will be the case in the third phase of immigration – did not take place. What is safe to assume is that first immigrants were dialect speakers and many were probably illiterate (especially less skilled individuals). This linguistic framework did not undergo many structural changes as immigrants who came from 1783 and 1871 had similar profiles, i.e. northern Italian immigrants mostly dialect speakers. Thus, during the colonial and the pre-unification periods, only northern Italian immigrants who did not

[3] [Popular Italian] is the way an uneducated person, pushed by the need to communicate and without any teaching, expresses him/herself using what is, optimistically, called the 'national' language, Italian. (De Mauro, 1970:49; translation mine)

possess or master a standard language were in the US. In this regard, the absence of a standard language, namely Italian, facilitated the second language acquisition of early Italian immigrants as the communication with a non-peer required a standard language, mostly English, depending on the colonies. As a consequence, early Italian immigrants rapidly lost their initial language mainly in favour of English. Moreover, as noted above, immigrants tended to come from the same area, therefore their linguistic knowledge was binary, that was either northern Italian dialects which were mutually intelligible among other northern Italians – or at least, to a certain degree –, and American English. Compared to later immigrants, they did not need an upper regional standard language to communicate with other Italians coming from other regions. This rather simple bilingualism which eventually tended to become monolingualism in American English because of the reasons above mentioned, utterly distinguishes the linguistic status of early immigrants from the linguistic situation of immigrants from the third period.

The last period of arrivals, namely the Great Emigration period, presents quite a different and more complex linguistic situation. In the following decades of Italy's unification, language had become a sociolinguistic tool, determining one's status and class. The majority of Italians who were living in serious and precarious conditions 'could not afford sending their children to school to learn Italian' (Carnevale, 2004:35), thus dialect speakers continued to peak as well as illiterate rates. Mandatory schooling, as already observed, failed to succeed in southern regions, resulting in a vast divide between North and South of Italy. Even if it is rather impossible to quantify the illiteracy rate among Italian immigrants of this period, it is quite safe to claim that the rate was extremely high according to the numbers that we have in Italy. This can also be proven by the devastating impact of the *Literacy Tes*t introduced in 1921 which slowed the arrival

of Italians in the US (Prifti, 2014:106). Thus, if in the early phases of arrivals, immigrants presented similar linguistic features, during the arrivals *en masse,* Italians presented different profiles. In other words, in this last period of immigration, immigrants came from all regions of Italy and their linguistic profiles were dissimilar: northern Italians may have mastered standard Italian better as well as been able to read and write; whereas southerner Italians were incapable of both.

Another difference compared to early arrivals is the situation found in *loco*. As Prifti comments, new immigrants found an 'Italian' network already established which favoured the creation of ghettos, resulting in linguistic enclaves. These linguistic enclaves, 'a constant element in italo-american reality' (Prifti, 2014:103), were mainly composed of south dialect speakers. These 'ghettos' could be found in urban areas – mostly known under the name of 'Little Italies' – and that were present in New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Boston and in many other cities. These 'Little Italies' encouraged two main linguistic phenomena: conservation of first language (Standard Italian and/or popular Italian arising from dialect mixing and leveling); and interferences (Italian American English). On the contrary, in isolated areas such as in Seattle where the Italian community was rather small, immigrants' language underwent a process of erosion, as Prifti claims:

> Dagli anni '20 in poi Seattle non fu più meta dell'emigrazione italiana; la situazione dell'italoromanzo lì si presta dunque ottimamente a un'analisi dell'erosione linguistica [...] (Prifti, 2014:105)[4]

The last period of large immigration was almost exclusively coming from the South, thus adding a new variety to the little Babel of northern dialects already present in the US.

[4] From the 20's onward, Seattle was not a destination for Italian immigrants anymore; the situation of 'italoromanzo' is then appropriate for an optimal analysis of linguistic erosion. (NB: Prifti uses the term *italoromanzo* to refer indifferently to dialects or popular/regional Italian). (Prifti, 2014:105; translation mine)

Mutual intelligibility became a serious issue as northerners and southerners could not understand each other, let alone speak standard Italian as not everyone could use it actively (Carnevale, 2004:34). Carnevale also notes that not only standard Italian and American English were an issue, but also the presence of other languages that were mixed to the linguistic melting pot of the newly industrialized US:

> Upon arrival in the United States, Italian immigrants found themselves not only surrounded by English and other foreign language speakers whom they could not understand, but also by Italians from different regions who spoke a variety of dialects. (Carnevale, 2004:36).

Italians had to use a lingua franca that resulted in a popular Italian, Italian with American English interferences, and/or American English in rare cases (in some instances, also Italian with other community languages such as Yiddish). The product of interferences and contacts led to the creation of a hybrid language which resulted in combined elements of English, southern dialects (mostly Neapolitan), and Italian. Surprisingly, 'this Italo-American dialect enabled the immigrants to function within the wider Italian community and, to a limited extent, within American society at large' (Carnevale, 2004:37).

Italian immigration in the US, as seen, is tightly linked to Italy's main historical events with *Risorgimento* and Italy's unification as pivotal moments for the arrival of numerous Italians. Early Italian immigrants contributed to the colonial expansion and settlement of English, French, and Spanish governments. They were mostly employed in the evangelization process or in artisan works. But not only, as Mangione observes, 'they were mainly tradesmen, artists, musicians, teachers, and political refugees with a wide diversity of skills' (Mangione, Morreale, 1993:14). These figures, however, tended to be substituted by a low working manpower, such as countrymen both from northern and southern regions in the later waves of immigration, who ultimately represent the immigrants' profiles of the Great Emigration period.

Another tight link and legacy that immigrants brought along in the US is the linguistic history of Italy. From dialect speakers only, as well as mostly illiterate, immigrants were forced to find a new way to communicate and integrate in the American society. Out of necessity, immigrants created a new hybrid form of the three or four varieties that they had at their disposal, namely dialects, popular Italian, standard Italian, and American English. Table 1 below gives a translated and adapted version of Prifti's table that summarizes the historical and linguistic conditions of Italian immigrants throughout the main periods (Prifti, 2014:127).

Period	**Colonial period**	**Pre-unification period**	**The Great Emigration**	**World Wars years**	**Late arrivals**
Dates	1500-1783	1783-1880	1880-1927	1927-1954	1954-onward
Number of arrivals	ca. 30,000	ca. 80,000	ca. 4,525,000	ca. 230,000	ca. 565,000
Geographic distribution in the US	Mostly in the West	South West and North East	Mostly North East	Mostly North East	Everywhere, but mostly North East
Linguistic traits	Northern dialect speakers	Northern dialect speakers	Almost exclusively southern dialect speakers	Almost exclusively southern dialect speakers and standard Italian speakers	Almost exclusively southern dialect speakers and standard Italian speakers
Type of immigration	Colonisation, rural immigration	Rural immigration	Ghettos / creation of *Little Italies*. Both rural and urban immigration	Almost exclusively urban immigration	Progressive end of *Little Italies* and modern immigration, self-isolation

Tab.1: Summary table of historical and linguistic profiles of Italian immigrants

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

2.1. Main trends on language in contact phenomena

When two cultures with two different linguistic backgrounds come into contact, there are inevitable consequences which result in some structural changes within the speaker's language use. Many linguists, psychologists and anthropologists have accorded much attention on the matter and developed a certain number of theories on language behaviours. In this respect, this chapter will provide an overview of the main trends regarding language in contact phenomena. Thus, this section will be divided into three parts: 1) a scientific review of relevant studies on language in contact phenomena with a subchapter on bilingualism (2.1.1), code-switching (2.1.2), language maintenance and language shifting (2.1.3); 2) a scientific review on relevant studies on Italian American English (2.2); 3) The research questions and hypothesis of this study (2.3) 3) a description of this research corpora (2.4).

2.1.1. Bilingualism

The first studies that tackled the issue of bilingualism started to emerge between the 1950s and the 1960s. Among the first scholars who have addressed this language phenomena,

there is Uriel Weinreich who established three types of bilingualism in his work *Languages in Contact* (1953). These three types allow to understand and organize the bilingual speaker's thoughts. The first type is 'coordinate bilingualism (type A)' where the individual acquires the language in separate environments and his/her two languages are kept separate. Thus, for example, the word 'book' has its own meaning and so does the Russian equivalent 'kniga' which has its own separate meaning. In other words, the mental realisation of the words is distinctly separate. The second type is 'compound bilingualism (type B)' where the individual acquires the two languages in the same context and uses them together. Thus, the word 'book' and 'kniga' share the same meaning, hence they have the same mental realisation. The third and last type is 'subordinate bilingualism (type C)' where the individual acquires the language with the help of the other language at his/her disposal. In this case, the bilingual interprets words of the weaker language through the words of the stronger one. If Russian is the individual's weakest language, the word 'kniga' will evoke 'book' in English - the stronger language. His theory was based on the differences which may result from the way a person has learned the two languages (Weinreich, 1953:9-11; Finocchiaro, 2004:85; Grosjean,1982:240). Weinreich's theories became ground for discussion as many scholars tended to disagree with his rather theoretical distinction. In this regard, Michel Paradis (1978) observes that

> the linguistic system of a bilingual individual may of course contain within each stratal system, in various proportions, all three types, and probably generally does.

> Moreover, the state of bilingualism of any given subject is not necessarily static, as the subject may change his various interlingual relationships over time, in the course of his linguistic development and experience (Paradis, 1978:173)

Weinreich's model does not take into account variations through time and experience as rightly pointed out by Paradis. Still on Weinreich's theory, Grosjean claims that his model has been misunderstood, thus leading to the assumption that bilingualism was confusing, among other things. This will strongly impact the opinions on L2 acquisition and bilingual education as we will see in the subsection dedicated to language maintenance. Other influential studies on bilingualism continued to flow during the 1960s although many tended to focus on the fluency of the bilingual individual only, regardless of the context or the domain in which languages were used. In these earlier studies of psycholinguistics, it has been assumed that a bilingual was to some extent two monolinguals in one person. This claim was progressively substituted by the idea of 'a unique speaker-hearer using one language, the other language, or both together depending on the interlocutor, situation, topic, etc.' (Grosjean, 1995:259-260). In the following decade, Fishman (1989) claimed that a shift was undertaken in bilingualism studies. Contextual domains and societal perspectives were adopted in order to describe this language in contact phenomena more precisely.

One subsequent phenomenon that was studied concurrently with bilingualism was the case of diglossia. As a matter of fact, the term diglossia was originally used by Ferguson (1959) to define

> a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (Ferguson, 1959:336).

According to Ferguson, diglossia is when two languages come into contact but have different social statuses, namely a high code 'grammatically more complex' and a low code that is 'primary dialects of languages'. Ferguson's nomenclature and theory has been widely accepted by linguists, although according to Fishman (1972) his theory was rather restrictive. Diglossia, in his opinion, can be observed in highly and/or very low stylistic features within the same language as much as in the use of two utterly different languages. In this regard, Pauwels (1986) defines Fishman's notion of diglossia a 'fluid diglossia' which suits well the type of tri/bilingual settings that can be found in migrant conversational contexts in which more than one language is used without defined boundaries, namely in 'written and formal spoken purposes' or in 'ordinary conversation'. However, diglossia cannot be considered bilingualism as they are two separate phenomena. As Fishman argues, diglossia appears only when 'an enduring societal arrangement extends itself at least beyond a three generation period, such that two "languages" each have their secure, phenomenologically legitimate and widely implemented functions' (Fishman *et all,* 1985:39). In the context of this study, this appears to be relevant as Italian American English never established itself beyond the third generation; it is then fair to assume that we are not always in the case of diglossic

communities, but mostly trilingual/bilingual communities in the earlier generations. Bilingualism is then the ability to speak two or more languages regardless of the context or situation in which the individual is asked to utter. These language phenomena have started to gain the attention of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics researchers in order to establish a certain codified system and to explain bilingual conversations. As claimed by Fishman, later studies have focused on bilingual conversations in context, hence paying attention to another language in contact phenomenon, i.e. code-switching, that will be addressed in the following subsection. Surprisingly, views on code-switching have not always been positive, rather on the contrary according to what Weinreich believes, namely that there is an 'ideal bilingual' and a non-ideal one:

> the ideal bilingual switches from one language to the other according to appropriate changes in the speech situation but not in an unchanged speech situation, and certainly not within a single sentence (Weinreich, 1965:73)

2.1.2. Code-switching

The terms 'switching' and 'code-switching' both designate language in contact phenomena. 'Switching' was first used by Haugen (1953) to describe the alternate use of two languages. 'Code-switching' was instead coined by Gumperz to describe the switch from one language to another. Other scholars preferred to distinguish code-mixing, i.e. when the alternation of languages is intrasentential, from code-switching, i.e. when the alternation of languages is intersentential (Finocchiaro, 2004:69). Apart from

terminology issues, a real paradigm shift took place at the beginning of the 1970s where a certain amount of research observed that there was a regularity and similar patterns in alternating languages. There were mainly two areas: a first area that was more interested in grammatical features and the morphosyntactic constraints which were visible in bilingual conversations and code-switching (Poplack, 1980); the second area identified instead a connection between code-switching and sociolinguistic identities of bilingual speakers.

In this respect, Gumperz, in his study of a bi-dialectical community in Norway (1982), identified two types of code-switching: situational and metaphorical. Situational code-switching refers to when the alternation of languages occurs when changes in the situation happen (change of participants, activities or setting), hence a code-switching directly related to the situation. Metaphorical code-switching refers when the alternation of languages occurs when the speakers want to achieve some communicative effects (e.g a joke, reported speech, etc.) but the situation does not change. Gumperz identified typical discourse functions in which a bilingual speaker would tend to switch. Here are the six functions:

1. Quotations: 'the code switched passages are clearly identifiable either as direct quotations or as reported speech.'
2. Addressee specification: 'examples the switch serves to direct the message to one of several possible addressees.'
3. Interjections: 'In other cases the code switch serves to mark an interjection or sentence filler.'

4. Reiterations: ‘Frequently a message in one code is repeated in the other code, either literally or in somewhat modified form.’

5. Message qualification: ‘Another large group of switches consist of qualifying constructions such as sentence and verb complements or predicates following a copula.

6. Personalization versus objectivation: ‘The code contrast here seems to relate to such things as: the distinction between talk about action and talk as action, the degree of speaker involvement in, or distance from, a message, whether a statement reflects personal opinion or knowledge, whether it refers to specific instances or has the authority of generally known fact’ (Gumperz, 1982:74-85)

A further distinction introduced by Gumperz which received much attention is the notion of the ‘we code’ (i.e. the language spoken by an ethnic minority within the community) opposed to the ‘they code’ (i.e. the outside language used to interact outside the community). Naturally, these functions are not exhaustive, but they clearly show the most common uses of code-switching.

Another scholar who has dedicated many works to bilingual conversations is J.C.P Auer, who according to Wei, ‘[the publication of Auer’s *Bilingual Conversation* (1984)] marked a turning point in the studies of code-switching’ (Li Wei, 1998:157). Auer finds Gumperz’s approach useful to explain some aspects of code-switching although he claims that they are not sufficient to formulate a theory on language choice. In his opinion (1995), all lists of discourse function in bilingual conversations will never be complete. Yet, he prefers to analyse code-switching in terms of contextualisation cue (originally introduced by Gumperz in 1982). Auer defines contextualisation cue as follows:

> In very general terms, contextualisation comprises all those activities by participants which make relevant/maintain/revise/cancel some aspects of context which, in turn, is responsible for the interpretation of an utterance in its particular locus of occurrence. (Auer, 1995:123)

Context is then shaped, changed, or maintained by the speakers. Auer believes that code-switching (or code-alternation in his terminology), must be analysed as part of a context, therefore contextualisation must be specified. As a result, he proposes four main patterns of code-alternation which I will refer to when analysing language in contact phenomena of Italian American immigrant speech.

1. The first pattern is 'discourse related code-switching' which is when a language 'A' has been established but at one point speaker 1 switches to another language and the other speaker accepts this change of language. According to Auer, this alternation happens when there is a shift in the conversation or in the activity. To some extent, it resembles Gumperz's situational code-switching.

2. The second pattern is: 'language negotiation - preference-related code-switching'. In this case, speaker 1 consistently uses one language but the other speaker consistently uses another one. At some point in the conversation, one of the participants may accept the 'language negotiation' and continues in the other's language. The speakers are negotiating what language they prefer to use and may be willing (or not) to adopt one of the other speaker's preferred languages. In terms of preference, Auer says that reasons may vary but it usually denotes the speaker's insecurity in one or another language. Thus, he/she negotiates to speak in the language in which he/she feels secure or has greater competence.

3. The third pattern is 'discourse-related and discourse-participant related'. This pattern of alternation involves bilingual speakers who keep switching between languages. According to Auer, this kind of alternation usually depends on the discourse and at the same time the participant. In other words, speakers may freely choose to change language when he/she considers necessary. Discourse and language is then often shaped by participants.

4. The fourth pattern is ‘transfer’. This pattern involves the alternation in the middle of the speaker's turn without influencing the other speakers’ language choice. It is usually the insertion of a word in the other language but the other speakers do not accept the change. The speaker, then, may use a word from the other language but the conversation continues in the primary chosen language, hence not influencing the choice of the other participants. As for pattern 3, it can be either discourse or participant related. (Auer, 1995:125-127)

In this way, Auer’s theory of contextualisation cue somewhat accommodates bilingual speakers whose linguistic abilities are diverse. This is the case for instance of migrant communities whose choice of language is not always dictated by a complete freedom of choice, rather on the contrary. In many cases, code-switching happens because one participant cannot continue in the preferred language of speaker A.

More recent studies, among which Clyne’s *Languages in Contact* (2003) in which he argues that the term code-switching has become polysemous, are re-considering the term code-switching that has become an umbrella term. In his view, code-switching refers to the ‘alternate use of two languages, either within a sentence or between two sentences. The speaker stops using language A and employs language B’ (Clyne, 1991:160).) Clyne somehow simplifies Auer’s model. However, as far as this research is concerned, I will keep the term code-switching in Gumperz and Auer’s acceptation.

Other important contributions in the discussion have been realized by Myers-Scotton who suggested a framework for code-switching known as the ‘Matrix Language Frame’ model (Myers Scotton, 1993), albeit some scholars find it too restrictive (Franceschini, 1998:59). As it appears, many scholars have tried to theorize this particular

and almost ungraspable phenomenon. The numerous studies on code-switching proved that it is not an irregular, random (Lance, 1975) or causal phenomenon but it can be analysed from different perspectives, showing some regularities and recurrent patterns.

The last two studies that are worth to be mentioned in this review regarding code-switching are, first, Rita Franceschini's "Code-switching and the notion of code in linguistics. Proposals for a dual focus model" (1998) and then, Robert J. Di Pietro's 'Code-switching as a verbal strategy among bilinguals' (1978).

Rita Franceschini's "Code-switching and the notion of code in linguistics. Proposals for a dual focus model" (1998) proposes a dual focus model, as the title suggests, which aims at considering code-switching as a role that the speaker chooses to play. Franceschini bases her argument on a study that she carried out with Italian-Swiss German bilingual speakers. She observed that although many speakers were bilinguals, some others - because of a rediscovery of Italian ethnicity in the eighties - were not Italian bilingual at all but could use code-switching in alternation with some Italian words. She assumes that code-switching can be acquired later, which is somehow relevant to my research. Indeed, later generations of Italian American have been rediscovering their ethnicity, and language results in a tool to display it. It is not surprising to find in a speech an intrasentential insertion of one Italian word for instance. As introduced by Auer, 'Code-switching may be employed by bilinguals in order to display their group membership and their multilingualism to outsiders' (Auer, 1998:50). Franceschini's

article does not want to ‘regard CS as a supplementary, additional, peripheral behaviour or as an exceptional possibility, but rather will relate CS to a general characteristic of language, i.e. variability in use, and to an extra-linguistic factor, i.e. flexibility in behaviour’ (Franceschini, 1998:52). In other words, she is not interested in the descriptive or the theoretical aspects of code-switching, rather in the assumption that this phenomenon belongs to language and ‘govern[s] the language system and should no longer be seen as its secondary characteristics’ (Franceschini, 1998:52). Interestingly enough, she argues that in the analyses of code-switching, one must have a clear idea of what can be interpreted as a single language. Datas, she says, in reality are much blurred when it comes to distinguishing languages. To some extent, code-switching may be considered part of a language, almost as contributing to pidginization, which is really relevant to my study in general. She argues that the ‘mixture’ arising from code-switching behaves like a unique language, rather than two distinct ones (Franceschini, 1998:61). According to her, code-switching resembles more ‘interlanguages’ since ‘both [code-switching and interlanguages] are produced anew in each sociocultural situation and are not stable in time. But in contrast to interlanguages, CS develops group norms and functions, and it expresses group identity’ (Franceschini, 1998:62). In this framework, a speaker is able to perform a role, that is either being monolingual and speaking either one language or the other separately, thus having a monofocus; or being bilingual and

performing at the same time both one language and the other one together, thus having a dual focus. She specifies the abilities of a code-switching speakers as follows:

> (1) the ability to use the dual focus as if it were a unique focus;
>
> (2) the ability to maintain the dual focus for a longer time-span (short-term dual focus would result in brief insertions only);
>
> (3) the ability to quickly have the dual focus fade into other foci (flexible focusing, e.g. to a monofocus). (Franceschini, 1998:64)

The 'code-switching speaker' masters several communication skills that allow him to perform different language roles according to the situation. However, as she rightly points out, if on the one hand the association of code-switching with 'normative aspects' prevent 'socially well-adjusted people' to use it; on the other one, non-standardised languages which existed only orally would 'favour the use of code-switching' (Franceschini, 1998:65). In the context of Italian American English, this assumption defines well one of the usages of code-switching, namely that as a non-standardised language, code-switching allowed it to exist and to last in time. In her conclusion, Franceschini widens the question research and claims that in this framework, it would be useful to study the 'the diachronic dimension of CS, its relation to language changes in individuals (a phase in language attrition?) and in groups and societies (a step in the process of language loss, a force in language change?), which has not yet been sufficiently studied' (Franceschini, 1998:66). It is in this sense that my research will be oriented.

The last study on code-switching in this subsection, as mentioned, is Robert J. Di Pietro's 'Code-switching as a verbal strategy among bilinguals' (1977). Robert J. Di Pietro is among the most influential scholars in the context of bilingualism and Italian American English. Essentially, what he has demonstrated in his study, which is ultimately what my study will also show, is that through the process of code-switching the speaker moved from the alternation of English to the alteration to Italian. More specifically, he says that,

> in surveying the sociolinguistic acculturation of Italian immigrants and their descendants in the United States over the past century, I found that code-switching behaviour progressed from an initial stage in which stylized English expressions were buried within an Italian matrix, through successive stages where switching into English became more functional, to reach a final stage in which English provides the matrix and switching into Italian is conventionalized and frozen. (Di Pietro, 1977:276)

In his article, Di Pietro discusses Gumperz's approach because he believes that for Italian immigrant communities, the language interface is more complex. Indeed, as the languages involved are standard Italian, Italian dialects, and Italian American English (which he defines 'Italo-American koiné), the reasons for code-switching are wider. Moreover, he believes that not all code-switching is for 'verbal maneuvering', quite on the contrary, some code-switching may be 'unintentional' (Di Pietro, 1977:278). Similarly, to Franceschini, Di Pietro as well, years earlier, claims that for Italians in the US, code-switching was a way to display group membership. As he rightly observes, 'code-switching from standard Italian to dialect Italian served to consolidate those Italians who felt both alienated from their home-land and unwelcomed in the new country' (Di

Pietro,1977:279). In other occasions, Di Pietro reports that code-switching, usually to Italian, was a way to discuss topics that they wish to keep from their allegedly monolingual English offsprings.

All in all, Robert J. Di Pietro discusses Gumperz's approach by adding situations that are specific to Italian immigrants in the US which are relevant to my field of study. It must be said, however, that recent studies on code-switching may shed a new light on this study which is overall slightly dated. My research will, to some extent, confirm but also add new elements in this respect by using Auer's taxonomy.

2.1.3. Language Maintenance and Language Shift

As observed, in multilingual contexts, speakers tend to shift to one or another language based on conversation cues, membership displays, or other situations that trigger the speaker to change languages. However, as already seen, some shifts are not dictated by a complete freedom; rather on the contrary, in some migrant communities, interlocutors are not always able to choose the language that they prefer. Sometimes, this is due to the knowledge they have of a particular code as well as the ability to use it. This may lead, in some cases, to the maintenance of a language in a precise setting. For instance, as suggested by Smolicz (1981) some domains encourage more the use of a specific language. In the context of Italian communities, it has been argued that the 'home domain' appears to be conducive to the use of Italian, hence the maintenance of this language. According to Smolicz (1981), every community has a 'core value' that is central to the

identity and therefore every attempt is made to preserve it. In Italian families, he argues that 'the Italian language undoubtedly constitutes a core value in Italian culture but, among rural Southern Italians at least, the importance of the family as a cultural value may even transcend that of language' (Smolicz, 1981:76). Italians are thus 'language centred groups' as opposed to 'not language centred groups'. In his study, he states that 'language centred groups' are more likely to preserve their language. Although this study of 'core value' has been supported by many studies (Finocchiaro, 2004:54), many have also contradicted these results. Michael Clyne, for instance, showed that Italian communities were more willing to shift to English compared to other groups, such as German which were targeted as 'non language centred groups'. What Clyne reproaches to Smolicz's theory is that 'core values' should not be seen in isolation. Indeed, in the case of Italian families, the 'core value' would be more family which to some extent transcends the language. Thus, Italian has been maintained because the value of family encouraged it, but as soon as American English became the dominant language - as I will show in this research - Italian was less needed but family remains the 'core value'. Moreover, in the context of Italian communities, as seen, they have tended to live in almost secluded areas where the whole neighbourhood became a sort of extended family. As Finocchiaro observes,

> Since a great part of the linguistic interactions in this big 'family domain' would be conducted in the first generation's mother tongue, it makes the home environment of Italian families, as mentioned above, very conducive to mother tongue maintenance (Finocchiaro, 2004:56).

Thus, language maintenance can be encouraged by ‘core values’ that are specific to each community. In the case of Italian immigrants, the most important value that ties the community abroad is the notion of family, and ‘extended’ family that was originally the neighbourhood. If Smolicz is right about identifying ‘core values’, the notion of ‘centred language groups’ is not accurate enough as language is interdependent on other core values. As we will see in chapter 3, Italian language for later generations is not always a marker of ethnicity. This leads to the results of Rubino and Bettoni’s studies on language maintenance in Italo-Australian communities.

Bettoni and Rubino (1996 in Finocchiaro, 2004; Rubino, 2014) investigated the use of Italian in Italo-Australian communities and came to the conclusion that the language maintenance process could not count only on domains or generations. Indeed, in their findings, it appeared that first and second generations spoke Italian to first generation relatives and friends, but that a general shift from dialect/Italian towards English was certain to continue. The conclusion provided by Bettoni and Rubino is that language maintenance is also, and probably foremost, tied to personal characteristics of speakers who have a strong influence in slowing the shift.

If so far, studies were focused rather on small scale individual levels (Bettoni and Rubino) or larger scale individual levels (Smolicz and Clyne), Fishman proposes a model, the ‘Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale’ (GIDS) that explains the process of language maintenance and language shift on a societal level. Fishman’s model seeks to

investigate the linguistic disruption in communities. Similarly to the Richter Scale that measures the intensity of earthquakes, the GIDS provides eight stages that describe the state of a language and its endangerment. Fishman states that 'the higher the GIDS rating the lower the intergenerational continuity and maintenance prospects of a language network or community' (Fishman, 1991:88). The eight stages are quoted below:

> Stage 8 [...]: most vestigial users of Xish are socially isolated old folks and Xish needs to be re-assembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically unconcentrated adults.
>
> Stage 7 [...]: most of the users of Xish are socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child-bearing age.
>
> Stage 6 [...]: the attainment of intergenerational informal oracy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement.
>
> Stage 5 [...]: Xish literacy in the home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy.
>
> Stage 4 [...]: Xish in lower education that meets the requirements of compulsory education laws.
>
> Stage 3 [...]: use of Xish in the lower work sphere (outside the Xish neighbourhood/ community) involving interaction between Xmen and Ymen.
>
> Stage 2 [...]: Xish in lower governmental services and mass media but not in higher spheres of either.
>
> Stage 1 [...]: some use of Xish in higher level educational, occupational and media efforts (but without the additional safety provided by political independence) (Fishman, 1991: 88 - 109).

Fishman used this scale as an evaluation for indigenous languages and immigrant languages. Fishman's model provides a means of comparison that can be applied to any language maintenance situation. In the case of this research, Italian American English is generally situated between stage 5 and 8 as most Italian immigrant speakers are beyond child-bearing and cannot contribute to the spread of the language through their offspring. This scale is particularly relevant for my research as it can provide the status of Italian American English as a language as well as its future perspectives which will be discussed in the final chapter. Along with Auer's and Gumperz's models, I will analyse the phenomena of language in contact that brought Italian American English to the last stages of Fishman's scale.

Another way to maintain language would be the study of the language at school (see Fishman's stage 4). In this same vein, some scholars advocate a bilingual setting and education in order to maintain minority and community languages. Usually because of strong educational policies that encourage assimilation, second languages are abandoned in favour of the local language. Besides, 'many immigrants want their children to assimilate as quickly as possible, and hence either do not reinforce the language or actually forbid its use' observes Grosjean (1982:110). Thus, the educational system as well as the stigma of being immigrants, encourage the loss of language if institutional policies are not taken, as for instance by the Italian Foreign Ministry. Moreover, views

on bilingualism have not always been positive as discussed earlier with Weinreich's model.

In the context of Italian American immigration, Robert J. Di Pietro blames the lack of interest and energy to study and to maintain Italian as well as Italian American English, and other language-contact pidgins because of conformism. He says that, 'anyone who advocates the public use of a language other than English in the United States risks being accused of 'balkanizing' the country' (Di Pietro, 1976:159). In his opinion, bilingual education could achieve language maintenance but also and foremost successful results for the school system. However, he notes that bilingualism must be 'freed of its association with poverty and ignorance' (Di Pietro, 1977:106).

In respect to language maintenance in the US, Anna De Fina and Luciana Fellin, dedicated their research on the state of Italian and language maintenance in the US. Although Italian Americans are still a very distinct community in the US with their own traditions, and moral values, the Italian language – as noted above with Smolicz's theory – has been completely abandoned. As observed by the two scholars, the loss of Italian may also be the result of a lack in assisting the conservation of Italian by the US government as also blamed by Di Pietro decades ago. But not only, another element that contributed in the loss of the language is the racial stigma that started during the Great Emigration period. As a matter of fact, 'southern Italian immigrants to the USA were considered somewhere in between white and black, which Richards (1999) terms

'nonvisibly black' (De Fina, Fellin, 2010:203). Moreover, during the Second World War, Italian was perceived as the fascists' language, thus the language's enemy for the US. This negative view on Italian led Italian immigrants to switch to English in order to be accepted and integrated in the US society (Carnevale, 2003). Thus, the Italian community in the US experienced a language shift in the span of three generations. Only recently, Italian Americans of later generations have rediscovered their ethnicity, and along with new campaigns promoting Italian language and culture abroad by the Foreign Italian Ministry, the study of Italian has increased in academic education.

Thus, language maintenance and language shift are certainly a matter of the speaker's inclination and attitude towards a language but it must not be forgotten that society plays a role in the loss of some languages. Many studies on bilingualism and code-switching were carried out by monolingual researchers or in monolingual countries, hence influencing the opinion on such language phenomena. As a result, bilingualism has been a stigma for a long time when

> plus de la moitié de l'humanité est plurilingue ou vit dans un environnement multilingue. Le plurilinguisme n'est pas une exception, il n'a rien d'exotique, d'énigmatique, il représente simplement une possibilité de normalité, une des manifestations de la compétence linguistique humaine offertes à l'observation de celui qui considère son entourage avec l'optique du linguiste (Lüdi, Py, 2012:1)

2.2. Italian American English studies

Scientific research on Italian American English started relatively early, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The linguist scholar Elton Prifti (2014) identifies three main periods of studies dedicated to this variety. Here follows a review of the main works relevant to this research.

The first works appeared in the first half the twentieth century, namely from 1917 to 1946. In this respect, it is worth mentioning scholars Amy A. Bernardy (1913), Herbert H. Vaughan (1918), Arthur Livingston (1918) Anthony Turano (1932), and Henry L. Mencken (1938) who focused their analysis on the lexicon. Amy A. Bernardy, an Italian historian, published two monographies on Italian American immigrants and their life conditions. She naturally dedicated a chapter to their language which she coined '*la lingua del iesse*'. Her view on this hybrid language is fairly negative and mainly focuses on the lexicon and the immigrants' poor command of Italian and English grammar. Some years later, Herbert H. Vaughan (1918), an Italian literature scholar, provided an exhaustive list in which he stated the many loans and neologisms (along with their translation into English) that Italian American immigrants created between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Compared to Bernardy, Vaughan provides a more neutral account of the language even though it is still superficial when it comes to analysing the rationale behind these new, adapted words. Another Italian literature scholar, Arthur Livingston, provided a detailed account of the Italo-American

in New York (1926). Similarly to Vaughan, the study is merely descriptive and does not propose a strong argument on the matter. In 1932, Italian American English was again under the spotlight of scholars, with Anthony M. Turano's article 'The Speech of Little Italy' in which he divides into three categories the American loans. Turano's article changes perspectives in the studying of Italian American English by introducing a new way to address this variety. In the same vein, Henry L. Mencken published an important anthology on the American language in which in addition to his analysis of American, he dedicated chapters to foreign languages spoken in the US. Italian was thus addressed by looking at the lexical features. Although these studies are still relatively superficial in terms of linguistic analysis, as they only provide a descriptive account of Italian American English (except for some exceptions), they are relevant to this research as they are witnessing speeches of the very first generations of immigrants.

The second period, that starts at the end of the 1940s until the early years of the 1970s, presents similar features of the first one. Studies are rather general, although linguists begin to contribute to the discussion. Among these, we can quote two main scholars, namely Alberto Menarini and Robert J. Di Pietro. In his chapter 'Sull'Italiano-Americano negli Stati Uniti' (1947), Alberto Menarini explains the linguistic phenomena that led to the creation of certain terms that entered the lexicon of Italian immigrants (which were already quoted in the works of Vaughan and Mencken). Menarini's aim was to describe all kinds of Italians spoken or written in marginal contexts, hence the

modified, pidginized form of Italian spoken in the US. In the case of Italian American English, he proceeded through the analysis of loanblends, thus through language in contact phenomena. His study, however, is limited to a very precise period of time as it faces only the earlier generations of immigrants. Menarini is then still very much attached to the first studies carried out at the beginning of the century. A step forward in linguistic analysis is taken by Robert J. Di Pietro who dedicated many of his studies to the language of Italian immigrants and the impact of language in contact phenomena. His argument is based on the firm belief that bilingualism and bilingual education should be encouraged in order to maintain pidginized languages such as Italian American English. His claim is still very current and provides theoretical grounds to my argument on language maintenance.

The third and last period from the 1970s up to today, is the most relevant in terms of linguistic and sociolinguistic studies. As Prifti notes, the rise of sociolinguistic studies shed light to the linguistic issues of Italian immigrants in the US. Research tackles the issue of fluency of Italian immigrants in Italian and in English. As far as English fluency is concerned, Lawrence Biondi (1975) investigated the linguistic development and socialization process of monolingual and bilingualism Italian American children in Boston, and in particular in North End which was an isolated enclave of Italian descent. Biondi's work provides a detailed account of specific phonetic features that characterise Italian American children of second generation. Compared to previous studies, his

contribution goes deeper in the analysis of linguistic features. It fails, however, to provide a general overview of the second generation's speech. Moreover, he is interested in the process of socialization, hence in sociolinguistic theories that I don't intend to address in my research. In relation to Biondi and Di Pietro, Hermann W. Haller's investigations offer multiple perspectives that his predecessors adopted. As one of the main principal scholar of Italian American English, he dedicated many studies to the survival of this pidgin in later generations. His focus was dual in the sense that it looked at both the status of Italian (intended either as Standard Italian or dialects) in the US as well as Italian American English and/or American English. In other words, he tried to delineate the dynamics of Italian as an immigrant language, and Italian American English through time and space. Although his starting point was Italian, his perspective is focused on the evolution in time and space of a particular variety, which is similar to my research. Haller's contribution, moreover, will help in the hard task of defining Italian American English variety as well as in the analysis of its evolution and involution. Besides Haller's works which continued to be published in the first decade of the 2000s, there is a quantitative reduction of publication in this field. Because of a loss of interest, new generations are less taken into consideration which is what my research would like to do by analysing some speech taken from current podcast realised by young Italian Americans. In relation to the study of later generations, Elton Prifti's *Italoamericano* (2014) aimed to provide a complete and thorough description of the linguistic history and

the contact dynamics of Italian American English through time and space. His purpose is to provide a diachronic and variational analysis of the Italian American English phenomenon. He argues that by looking at variation in time and space through language in contact phenomena, future studies could draw a more complete and precise description of pidgins. It is in this sense that I will carry my research and follow Prifti's intention by observing the status of Italian American English in later generations as well.

2.3. Research Questions

The framework for this study is then mainly Gumperz's theory of code-switching functions along with Auer's theory of discourse patterns. The theories are interpreted to answer the following research questions: In the context of immigrant languages such as Italian American English, is code-switching a marker of language loss? What are the language in contact phenomena that lead to the abandon of a language in favour of another one? What is the current status of Italian American English?

My hypothesis is that in bilingual and diglossic communities, such as in immigrant communities, code-switching patterns encourage the complete switch from the original L1 to the adopted L2. My study does not want to discourage code-switching uses, as I believe that they are powerful discourse tools; however, in a community where the original L1 (Italian and/or Italian American English) is not maintained, the frequent interferences of L2 led to the loss of L1. Moreover, the weak incentives and

encouragement of keeping the original language through institutionalised bodies (school and accredited courses) are also causes of language loss. Not to mention that Standard Italian is almost a foreign language for some immigrants, as they speak dialects. This adds a further issue in language maintenance. However, language loss will be interpreted through the analysis of Fishman's GIDS model. My conclusion will be that progressive and more and more frequent interferences of English in Italian Americans conversations, which are all in all visible through code-switching patterns, Italian and Italian American English lost ground in favour of American English. In addition, this study will consider the passage from Italian to Italian American English as the result of immigration, and the passage from English to the revival of Italian American English in later generations as a language distinguishing membership. To interpret this, I will appeal to the theories of ethnolect of Clyne (2000), Wölck (2002), and Pasto (2019).

2.4. Corpora and Methodology

This research will be based on several corpora gathered from different studies as I do not have access to direct speakers. By gathering a larger corpus from different epochs and different scholars, I can draw a more general representation of Italian American English throughout time. In this respect, the analysis of the first generation will be mainly based on the accounts of Bernardy (1913), Vaughan (1918), Mencken (1938), and Menarini (1947). Some literary texts will also be taken as examples of the first generation speech

thanks to the rich contribution of Durante (2013). The second generation's speech features will be studied through the analysis of Haller's and Prifti's transcriptions (1993; 2004) as well as literary texts too. Moreover, PhD thesis of Pasquandrea (2007) and Finocchiaro (2014) will contribute to the discussion of the variety of Italian American English of the second generation. Finally, third generation speech will be analysed through the data collected by Prifti (2004), Finocchiaro (2014), and Pasto (2019), as well as a small corpus gathered by myself that is based on the 'The Italian American podcast'[5]. My research will first provide a description of the linguistic features of Italian American English variety in order to delineate an evolution of the language. Then, it will focus on bilingual conversations of the three generations of Italian Americans in order to analyse and demonstrate that frequent occurrences of code-switching along with weak language maintenance programs slowly brought to the twilight of Italian American English.

[5] The Italian American Podcast aims to 'return you to your roots, or better said, to bring your roots to you, bridging your modern life to the ancient DNA in your Italian blood […]. This isn't your nonna's Italian America, but a new voice of the Italian American experience, delivering history, discussion, examination […]. (The Italian American Podcast. *Mission Statement.* Web. https://italianamericanpodcast.com/, 10.12.2020).

3. From Italian American variety to American Italian variety

3.1. Definition of the 1st generation of Italian Americans and its linguistic status

In the context of this research, what is considered to be the first generation are individuals who were born either in the US around 1910-1930 or in Italy and emigrated in the US as children in the same years. The first generation observed here still belongs to the largest waves of immigration in the US either because they immigrated from Italy or because they were born from earlier Italian immigrants (see chapter 1). The reason for this large group of individuals, and rather recent compared to the history of Italian immigration in the US, is due to the lack of material concerning early immigrants. To fill this gap, I will provide some literary excerpts that represent well first Italian American speakers.

As seen in the first chapter, the linguistic status of earlier immigrants is quite irregular. The first generation is mostly characterised by its fluency in the various Italian dialects, and a relatively low and/or passive knowledge of both standard Italian American English. As far as the educational system is concerned, Italian was not a subject and the Italian Foreign Ministry was not yet promoting the Italian language abroad. Thus, Italian Americans of first generation are linguistically crystallized speaking dialects and a variety of American English arising from the contact with the two languages which ultimately produced Italian American English.

In the following subsection, we will observe the phonetic (3.1.1), lexical (3.1.2), morphosyntactic (3.1.3) features, before analysing language in contact phenomena (3.1.4) as well as drawing a first definition of Italian American English (3.1.5).

3.1.1. Phonetic features

Consonants:

In the first witnessing, we find a shift from a labiovelar consonant [w] to a labiodental [v] usually in initial position, hence a consonantalization of the velar: New York > Nevyork (Prifti, 2014). This is also the case in the adaptation of 'what's the matter' in *vosta mater* or 'what do you want' > variu vanni (Bernardy, 1913) which really denotes how Italian immigrants adapted new sounds into known ones (Finocchiaro, 2004). Within the shift [w] > [v], Menarini (1947) also observed an addition of vowels such as [w] > [vu] as in 'water' > vuora, 'white'> vuaitti. Moreover, he notes that in some cases the shift also includes a change of consonant cluster, namely [w] > [gu]. This can be seen in Tony Ferazzano's poem 'La lengua 'taliana' (The Italian Language):

Mia moglie invece, la scannata ncanna Mi parla quasi sempre americano Quando io la chiamo, dice: 'Guario guanne?' Ma 'Guario guanne' nun è 'taliano! [...]	My wife, instead, that good for nothing, talks to me almost always in American when I call her, she says 'What do you want?' But 'what do you want' is not italian! [...]
(Ferazzano in Durante, 2013:97)	(Ferrazzano in Durante, 2014:469)

Similarly, 'why' becomes 'guai' which incidentally means troubles in Italian. In this regard, Michele Pane, another Italian American immigrant poet, satirizes these phonetic incidents in his poem 'Lu calvarise 'ngrisatu' (The Americanized Calabrian):

[...]	[...]
li guai ccádi se chiamanu li *trùbuli*	and the *guai* here are called *trùbuli*
e *guai* se dice ppe' dire: pperchì?	and you say *guai* to mean: how come?
[...]	[...]
(Michele Pane in Durante, 2013:151)	(Michele Pane in Durante, 2014:506)

This phonetic phenomena, namely [w]>[gu] is still used today among Italian immigrants, and it is not unusual to hear *sanguiggio* instead of 'sandwich' for instance (Little Big Italy, season 2, ep.10, 2019).

Other frequent phonetic interference in consonants are:

- The change of interdental fricatives [ð] and [θ] into alveolar plosive, respectively [d] and [t] resulting in 'that' > dat; 'nothing' > natingo; 'mouth' > maus (Biondi, 1975; Prifti, 2014).
- The loss (apheresis) of the glottal fricative [h] in initial position such as in 'head' > edde (Migliaccio in Durante, 2013:90); 'hose' > ozo (Correa Zoli, 1974:79).
- A major vibration of the [r] as in 'All right' > orrait; (Menarini, 1947:159).
- A similar vibration is applied after the affricate [ts] as in 'what's the matter' > uazzumarra; or in 'that's all right' > azzorrai (or dezzorrait); or in 'it's nothing' > ezze natingo (Menarini, 1947:159; Migliaccio in Haller, 2006:113).
- Apocope of voiceless consonants, or voiceless final syllables such as 'what' > uà; but > ba (Menarini, 1947:160).
- The devoicing of [g] > [c] as in goodbye > cubbai; good morning > cummonì (Menarini, 1947:160; Prifti, 2004: 287)

It must also be noted that there is a frequent rhotacisation of plosive alveolar [t] and [d] > [ɾ] / [r] as in 'everybody' > evry barì; shut up > sherappe (Cordiferro in Durante

2013:73-4). According to Livingstone (1918), Menarini (1947), and Haller (2006), this rhotacisation is due to the Neapolitan substrate. However, as Prifti notes, this phenomenon is also widespread among other italophone communities, therefore he argues that it is more likely to be due to the already present rhotacisation in some varieties of Vernacular American English.

Vowels:

The Italian syllabic structure is mainly composed of an onset and a nucleus. Coda is less frequent therefore the most recurrent vowel interference with English is the addition of an ending vowel at the coda such as 'ice cream' > aiscrima; 'ticket' > ticketta; or 'mistake' > mistekku. Besides ending vowels, we also find epenthetic vowels with as an example two of the most famous Italian American English words: 'bisinis'< business; 'broccolino'< Brooklyn. (Menarini, 1947:154-157). Another frequent change already attested in Menarini (1947) is the vocalization of the voiced alveolar approximant [ɹ] > [a] in the case of the cluster [er] in final position such as in 'daughter'> dora. A similar phenomenon can be observed with the vowel [ɜ] that changes in favour of [o] as in 'church' > chiorch [ˈʧorʧ] (Cheda, 1981:5016). In this respect, we can also mention the adaptation and simplification of unfamiliar diphthongs, as observed by Correa Zoli (1979) such as 'cake' > checca [kekka], thus from [eɪ] to [e].

Finally, we can observe the change of accents in final position such as 'country' > countrì (Migliaccio in Durante, 2013:85), or following the penultimate stress rule as in standard Italian, especially in longer words: 'contractor' > con-trat -tò -re (Correa Zoli, 1979).

3.1.2. Lexical features

In terms of lexical features, we can classify them into two groups: loan shift and loan translations.

Loan Shift:

Loan shifts can be characterised by phonological features that are identical to those found in the lexicon of regional or standard Italian, but their new meaning in English is not related at all to the Italian word. As observed by Correa Zoli (1979), 'the overlap of phonetic similarity appears to be entirely accidental'. To illustrate this point, we can quote 'fattoria' used to define 'factory' but which means 'farmhouse' in Italian (Menarini, 1947:185); or 'costume' used to define 'customer' but which means 'custom or costume' in Italian (Correa Zoli, 1979:181). A last example which characterises earlier Italian Americans is the word 'sciabola' ['ʃabola] which stands for 'shovel' but means 'sabre' in Italian. Naturally, this first type of loan shift may result in greater confusion when speaking Italian for instance.

In this same vein, the last type of loan shift is based on the resemblance of both phonetic and semantic features between standard or regional Italian and American English. The result is the extension of meaning of existing Italian words within Italian American English (Correa Zoli, 1979): 'confidenza' then becomes 'confidence' but again, the original meaning in Italian is 'trust'; or 'educazione' which stands for education, instruction, culture in Italian American English but, originally, it means 'manners' or 'upbringing'; or 'sopportare' which means 'support financially' but means 'hold' or 'sustain' in Italian (Correa Zoli, 1979). Naturally, these types may overlap depending on how they are used but for this research, the classification simplifies the overview.

Loan translation:

As a result of contact and interference, the lexicon of Italian Americans is also made of literal translations from American English into Italian American. A first type of loan translation is the combination of two or more words which are rather unusual in standard or regional Italian, such as 'prendere vantaggio' which stands for 'to take advantage' but does not have any meaning in standard Italian; or even more eloquent 'fare differenza' which stands for 'to make a difference' but again does not carry any meaning in standard Italian and it is a rather bizarre combination. A second type of loan translation can be seen in the translation of only one item in the compound: 'scuola alta' instead of highschool (Correa Zoli, 1979:185) or 'bassa città' for 'downtown' (Little Big Italy, season 2, ep.10, 2019).

As mentioned earlier, lexical features of Italian American immigrants are here simplified and classified but many cases are rather blurry. What is safe to claim is that the first generation of immigrants tended to translate into Italian or to shift from English into Italian according to similar sounds or words that are already available in their original language but extending the meaning, or literally translating the compounds even though they did not exist or did not mean much in standard Italian. Many new words as well were adapted within the Italian morphological system as I will show in the next subsection. The most quoted example is the term 'backhouse' (toilets outside the houses' yard) which did not have any equivalent into Italian and simply became 'baccausa', 'biccausa', and other variants as also young Martin Scorsese shows in his first documentary 'Italian American' (1974:15'58).

3.1.3. Morphosyntactic features

The morphosyntactic features of first Italian Americans are quite a few and usually involve loanblends. This is the case of many words whose suffix derives from standard Italian, as in 'Germanese', i.e. 'German' + '-ese' as a bound morpheme which indicates an adjective; or in 'grosseria', i.e. 'grocery' + '-ia' as again a bound morpheme used to create a noun. As Correa Zoli (1979) observes, many pejorative or diminutive suffixes are also largely used in spoken speech, as for instance 'beguzza' which is 'little bag', thus 'bag' + '-uzza' a sicilian suffix indicating something small (Prifti, 2014). The pattern is then fairly simple as it involves the English noun with a standard and/or regional Italian suffix while respecting the noun class of the word (i.e. adjective, adverb, noun, etc.).

The same pattern is used with verbs where verbal endings are applied to English verbs as in 'rentare' for rent, hence 'rent' + '-are'; or in 'frizato' for 'frozen'. Interestingly enough, in this case we have the English infinitive stem 'freez' + '-ato' which is the past participle suffix in Italian. In this regard, a speaker of second generation remembers that she used to make fun of their parents because they did not conjugate well:

> Con cert'amici a età noʃtr', quand'eravamə giovanə, facevamo il əh :: come si chiamə? la congiugazionə delle verbi, come facevano loro: «Today we diggə, yesterday we daggə, and the other day we diggəliatə. (Prifti, 2004:326)[6]

In this quotation, we can observe the verbal ending of the past participle -ato in a southerner Italian variant -atə in 'diggəliatə' . This pattern is applied to every tense and person, as we can also see in the example of 'locka'('lock') with the Italian suffix 'a' which clarifies the person, namely a second person singular in the imperative mode. As above, verb stems are kept in English but the suffix is generally Italian.

[6] With some friends of our age, when we were younger, we did the uhm… how do you call that? the conjugation like they used to do: "today we diggə (from 'to dig'), yesterday we daggə, and the other day we diggəliatə". (Translation mine)

A last feature worth mentioning is the addition of gender marked bound morphemes A last feature worth mentioning is the addition of gender marked bound morphemes. As Italian is a language that has a grammatical gender, Italian Americans added grammatical gendered morphemes to English words with the appropriate articles, as shown by Livingstone (1918). Hence, 'girl' becomes 'la ghirla (or ghella)' as a product of 'girl' + 'a', the feminine ending with the addition of the feminine article; or 'block' > il blocco, 'block' + o, the masculine ending with again the article; or 'car' > il carro as a result of 'car' + 'o' and the major vibration of the rhotatic [r]. Surprisingly, genders do not always correspond to the Italian equivalent as the former example would be 'la macchina' or 'l'automobile', hence both feminine. To my knowledge, 'il carro' in Italian mainly stands for 'cart', which may somewhat denote the Italian immigrants' background as a rural one, besides confirming the process of loan translation in this case. As explained and mostly criticized by Bernardy,

> tutto questo vocabolario subisce aumenti e diminuzioni e gradazioni (loffaino, loffaretto, loffarone, loffaraccio), si declina, si coniuga e si concorda come se fosse il volgare aulico del padre Dante, sicché ne risulta una vera lingua italiana d'aspetto, inglese d'etimologia: la lingua del 'iesse'. (Bernardy, 1913:91)[7]

In the case of gender attribution, the pattern is similar to what has been observed with the ending of verbs or nouns, that is to say, the addition of the Italian ending to the English stem while basing the gender attribution on the Italian equivalent (when there was one).

In terms of syntax, as first immigration speech is still heavily influenced by regional and/or dialect varieties, the only and most well-known phenomenon attested by linguists is the construction 'me + (no) + verb', as in 'mi laiche dis contrì' (I like this

[7] All this vocabulary undergoes increases and decreases and gradations (loffaino, loffaretto, loffarone, loffaraccio), is declined, conjugated and agreed as if it were the aulic vulgar of Father Dante, so that it turns out to be a true Italian-looking language, with English etymology: the language of 'yes'. (Translation mine)

country) which comes from ‘mi piace questo paese’ (Migliaccio in Durante, 2013:85); or in ‘mi no sten’ > I don’t understand (Menarini, 1947:192). Throughout the years, the first generation englisised more their English fluency although keeping the syntax at the most simplified level, as Jerre Mangione reproduces when reporting his father’s speech: ‘Sorry we bodder you, Mr. Polissaman. Everything o.k. now. My friend doan know what she do. Now she ok.’ (Mangione, 1981:31). Note that the pronoun ‘she’ is used indifferently for male or female subjects as the author says about his father’s English: ‘Probably, the most astonishing aspect of his system was that he used only one pronoun - ‘she’ - and only one tense - the present’ (Mangione, 1981:57).

To conclude this subsection, we can quote Haller’s description of earlier Italian Americans’ speech which summarizes well the linguistic features observed so far:

> La maggioranza dei prestiti sono integrati nel sistema fonologico italiano, un’espressione del *language loyalty* dell’emigrato nei confronti dell’italofonia e del suo sforzo di conservare la propria identità linguistica, ma anche un riflesso della sua scarsa dimestichezza con l’inglese. (Haller, 2006:3; italics original)[8]

3.1.4. Language in contact phenomena

As already mentioned, Italian American English of the 1st generation is characterised by a strong substrate of regional Italian and/or Italian dialects while mixing and borrowing English words. Here follows an excerpt of Ferrazzano quoted in Livingston (1918:219) that will help in the analysis of language in contact phenomena:

(1)

> Na sera dentro na barra americana dove il patrone era americano, lo visco era americano, la birra era americana, ce steva na ghenga de loffari tutti americani: solo io non ero americano; quanno a tutto nu mumento me mettono mmezzo e me

[8] The majority of loans are integrated into the Italian phonological system, an expression of the emigrant's *language loyalty* towards the Italian language and his effort to preserve his linguistic identity, but also a reflection of his lack of familiarity with English. (Translation mine)

> dicettono: Alò spaghetti; iu mericano men? No! no! mi Italy men! Iu blacco enze? No, no! Iu laico chistu contri? No, no! Mi laico mio contry! Mi laico Italy! A questo punto me chiavaieno lo primo fait! "Dice: Orré for America!" Io tuosto: Orré for Italy! Un ato fait. "Dice: Orré for America!" Orré for Italy! N'ato fait e n ato fait, fino a che me facetteno addurmentare; ma però, orré for America nun o dicette! (Livingston, 1918:219)[9]

Although Ferrazzano's excerpt is not an authentic report of a conversation, according to some critics the text has been judged natural. This kind of pidginized language could be heard in the many 'little Italies' of North America. The story here is told in Neapolitan dialect (Schmid, 2005) integrated with English loans 'barra' (bar), 'visco' (whiskey), 'ghenga de loffari' (gang of loafers), etc. The alternation of code is used to mark reported speech, thus satisfying Gumperz's discourse function of 'Quotations' (see 2.1.2) where 'the code switched passages are clearly identifiable either as direct quotations or as reported speech'. Ironically, the reported speech of the American interlocutor exhibits a rather 'simplified foreigner talk' (Schmid, 2005:120). As noticed by Schmid, the code-switching is still at 'early stages',

> due to the unbalanced bilingualism of these immigrants, their scope for language alternation as a communicative resource was quite limited; [...] the only discourse-related function is quotation, so that in a certain sense, we are at an incipient stage of code-switching. In any case, we are far away from the highly variable juxtaposition of parts of speech that characterises 'language mixing' in balanced bilinguals. (Schmid, 2005:121-2)

Indeed, except for purely linguistic phenomena that occur when two languages are in contact, hence calques, borrowings, and loanblends, there is not yet always a free and

[9] One night in an American bar, where the bar keeper was American, the whiskey was American, the beer was American, there was a gang of loafers, all of them Americans: I was the only one who was not American; when, suddenly, they surround me and said to me: Hello Spaghetti; are you American? No! No! I am Italian. Are you black hands? No, no! Do you like this country? No, no! I like my country! I like Italy! At this point, they dealt me the first blow! He says: Hurray for America! I was bold: Hurray for Italy! Another blow. He says: Hurray for America! Hurray for Italy! Another blow and another one, until they made me lose consciousness; but I didn't say Hurray for America! (Translation by Livingston,1918:219).

easy code-switching. The language is still heavily influenced by Romance languages (regional/dialect varieties), although we can see that they will not last longer and English will gain more ground as this example shows:

(2)

Jeh! Com'in! Uanne dis?	Yea! Come in! [Do you] want this?
– No, mi uante giuste disse	– No, I want just this
– Bai dise bai dette (…)	– Buy this, buy that (…)
– Se Tonì dont iu forchette	– Say Tony, don't you forget,
Dezzolrraite verso 'e sette	That's all right verso le sette
– Uatte? Seven tu moce	– What? Seven, too much
– dezolrraite – Ghi mi a brasce/ na baschetta	– that's all right, give me la brush/ una basket
[…]	[...]
(Migliaccio in Haller, 2006:214)	(Translated by Prifti, 2014:291)

With this second example, we can see that the variety starts here to undergo a structural change as the whole speech is performed neither in Italian nor in English but in Italian American English. In this short quotation, we can observe many of the linguistic features noticed earlier. The two speakers, both Italian immigrants, do not negotiate the language or need to switch, as they directly speak in the pidginized form of Italian American. Compared to the first example, the speakers here do not require Italian to communicate. In order to show the progressive move from dialect/Italian speakers only (1) to a mix of both to a complete conversation into Italian American English (2), we can observe the following example:

(3)
LM: Iḍḍa fici u *[ˈkaːlɪʧ]*, u *cullèggiu*, no? Parla cchjù 'talianə che sicilianə, *ju no.* (Prifti, 2014:149; emphasis added)[10]

[10] She went to college, the *culleggiu*, right? She speaks more Italian than Sicilian, you know? (Translation mine).

The speaker here starts in Sicilian but when she has to say ‘college’ she switches to English, presumably because she does not know or does not immediately remember the equivalent in Italian, and then tries to translate it literally into Sicilian. The result is ambiguous as ‘collegio’ in Italian refers to boarding school, when the speaker probably meant ‘university’. Then, the discourse maker ‘you know’ shows a switch toward a new and preferred language (see the notion of preference in Auer’s function pattern). Thus, through contact and lack of language maintenance, Italian American English and English gains more ground in favour of a loss of Italian varieties.

3.1.5. Towards a first definition of Italian American English

As observed so far, first speakers of Italian American English are immigrants who do not own a strong standard language; rather on the contrary they are only fluent in their regional Italian and/or dialect. Naturally, this led to issues of intelligibility, hence the need to speak a lingua franca. English was not known to immigrants yet and the result of languages in contact led to an adapted phonological system, a new lexicon made of loanblends and loanshift, as well as new words created and extended through the use of Italian bound morphemes. The syntax was quite simplified and somewhat calqued on the Italian syntax. The issue of this subsection is to seek a first definition that could be used to describe the first version of this variety. Is this already Italian American English? Is this a pidgin? Or a dialect? Many scholars tried to tackle this new *questione della lingua.*

The first who tackled the issue of Italian American English referred to it as a language (Bernardy, 1913), or as a dialect (Livingston, 1918). Robert J. Di Pietro called it an ‘Italo-American koiné’, where koiné stands for a variety that has uniformed and

accepted features by the speaking community as opposed to dialects which are subject to variations. In this sense, Di Pietro, as Bernardy, recognizes the value of a constructed language. Similarly, Haller refers to Italian American English both as creole (1981) and pidginized American Italian (1987). If we look at the definition of creole, we can observe that creole is a language that has developed from the contact of two or more languages and is then adopted by the community. Moreover, creoles have native speakers (Myskens and Smith, 1994) which is not exactly the case in Italian American speakers as the variety was used to communicate among people who did not share a common language. As a matter of fact, Italian immigrants had different mother tongues. Thus, the form of pidginized American Italian is probably more specific in this first generation as it refers to a language that contains linguistic features of two or more languages but with simplified grammar while being mainly used as a lingua franca without native speakers of this variety. We can fairly assume that at the beginning Italian American English, especially in the first generation, was indeed a 'pidginized American Italian' but that it evolved as a variety of English. We could not consider the evolution of this 'pidginized American Italian' a creole as it does not replace Italian Americans' mother tongues in neither the first generation nor the following.

In this research, I accept Haller's definition of pidgin, but Italian American English will be considered as a variety of American English as it is 'a more neutral term' (McArthur, 2003:12) and resembles other American English varieties such as Chicano English or African American English. This position may be arguable since the notion of 'variety' is generally used to refer to language systems that tend to be recognized as such over time, whereas this work deals with a code that was on the verge of becoming a 'variety' but that disappeared before achieving that status in a manifest way. However, as

we will see in the data gathered from the speech of our second-generation immigrants, some features of Italian American English are fixed in time and directly linked to the first generation. On this basis I find the use of the term variety suitable. Moreover, when looking at later generations, we will also take into consideration the notion of ethnolect introduced by Clyne (2000), Wölck (2002), and Pasto (2019).

3.2. Definition of 2nd generation of Italian Americans and linguistic status

In this study, the second generation is mainly composed of Italian Americans born in the US from Italians of the first generation around 1950. The second generation is the first generation to attend school in the US, thus we do not encounter issues of literacy. However, their linguistic status is the most hybrid and bilingual one, as they fluently speak American English and Italian dialects. As a matter of fact, the majority of them do not speak standard Italian, and a visible abandon of Italian dialects in favour of English is in progress. This is mostly due to two main reasons: the negative views on bilingualism (Grosjean, 1982) resulting in the lack of external support to maintain heritage languages; and the stigma of being the child of immigrants. In addition, there is the family's inclination towards languages which usually varies from families willing to preserve dialects and/or regional Italian; or on the contrary, unwilling to mix languages and just privilege the most useful language, that is American English. This is clearly shown in Jerre Mangione[11]'s memoir where he explains that his mother wanted only Italian - or better, Sicilian - to be spoken at home:

[11] Jerre Mangione is an Italian American author, professor of Literature at University of Pennsylvania. For clarity's sake, Jerre Mangione was born in New York, at the beginning of the twentieth century, therefore he would not be considered full a second-generation member if we look at dates only. However, since he was born from an Italian American family, I have considered him and his writings closer to a second-generation experience.

> Another unpopular rule she vigorously enforced was that we speak no other language at home but that of our parents. Outside the house she expected us to speak English, and often took pride in the fact that we spoke English so well that almost none of our relatives could understand it [...]. My mother's insistence that we speak only Italian at home drew a sharp line between our existence there and our life in the world outside. We gradually acquired the notion that we were Italian at home and American (whatever that was) elsewhere. (Mangione, 1981:50)

Thus, Italian Americans of second generation are perfectly bilingual although the Italian variety that they speak is heavily influenced by dialects and/or American adaptations taken for Italian as for instance 'baccauso'. Again Mangione claims that he 'had been using baccauso for a lifetime, always under the impression it was an authentic Sicilian word' (Mangione, 1981:52). The linguistic status of the second generation is then, as mentioned, the most hybrid product of the two substrates (or three), i.e. American English, regional Italian, Italian American English. As for the first generation, we will observe the phonetic (3.2.1), lexical (3.2.2), morphosyntactic (3.2.3) features, before analysing language in contact phenomena (3.2.4).

3.2.1. Phonetic features

Consonants:

Compared to the first generation, the phonetic features are less directly influenced by the dialect or regional Italian. However, there still are some general features that are related to the evolution of the first generation speech. To illustrate this point, we can mention the loss (apheresis) of the glottal fricative [h] in initial position, similarly to the first generation. As one informant of Prifti's investigation says in respect to his father's speech,

> he never pronounces his /h/-s. Let me think of a word. We laughed at my dad saying the word «humour». He would not pronounce the /h/ in that word. I don't know if that's New York or a little bit of the Italian, of where about. He said [ˈjuːməɹ], without the /h/, not [ˈhjuːməɹ]. (Prifti, 2004:294)

Another consonant that is not pronounced is the postvocalic /r/, as in [ˈgaːbɪʤ] > garbage or [fuˈgɛḍ] > forget.

Other specific features that can be found are:

- The change of interdental fricatives [ð] and [θ] into alveolar plosive, respectively [d] and [t] resulting as in the first generation (Biondi, 1975:66).
- The gemination of plosives in initial position as in [ˈdʊːwɪŋ]/ [ˈdʊwɪn] < (doing); [bːad] < (bad) (Prifti, 2004:294). The latter being very representative in all Italian American movie characters (e.g. Joey from 'Friends').

Vowels:

Similarly to consonants, the second generation still carries some legacy of the first generation speech. In this regard, we can mention two cases:

- The case of diphthongs realised with the addition of the velar [w] as again in [ˈdʊːwɪŋ]/ [ˈdʊwɪn] < doing).
- The case of monophthongs replacing diphthongs as for instance [əˈbaːɾ] < about, [haːs] < house, [laːḍ] < loud (Prifti, 2004:294).

3.2.2. Lexical features

In terms of lexical features, we still encounter Italian traces in the speech of the second generation. There are mainly two areas that have been influenced, that is the culinary lexicon and the area of designations, injures, wishes, and proverbs. As Prifti observes, these terms come from popular Italian and/or dialect but linked to the culture of Italian Americans. Thus, they have been adapted to the English phonological system, and to some degree, to the semantic system.

As far as the culinary area is concerned we can find: [bəˈlɛnt] (balend) < polenta; [bɹəˈʒut] (brashoot) < prosciutto (ham); [fəˈzuːɬ] (fazool) < fasulə (Neapolitan dialect for 'beans'; [muzzərellə] (mootzarell) < ('mozzarella'); [ɹɪˈgɔt] (reegott) < ricotta, [sɑˈsiːʦ] (saseets) < salsiccia ('sausage'), [vɪsˈgaːd] (visgut) < biscotto ('cookie'); and many others (Prifti, 2004:295). As we can observe, many words have a dialectal substrate (Neapolitan mostly) but the phonology has been influenced by English as in [bɹəˈʒut] or [muzzərellə]. These terms have entered the lexicon of Italian Americans, naturally, but also of other Americans who lived in Italian neighborhoods (Prifti, 2004).

The same phenomenon can be seen in the second area of words that regards designations, injures, wishes, and proverbs, as for instance: [fəˈnuːk] (finook) > finocchio > gay (pejorative); [ˈfuːt] (footitah) > futtiti > go to hell; [gabəˈdaʦ] (gabbadotz) > capa tosta > stubborn; [gaˈvɔːn] (gavohn) > cafone > bad mannered; [gʊmˈbɑː] (goombah) > compare > 'godfather'; [gʊmˈad]/ [gʊmˈɑː] (goumada/ goomah) > comare > godmother; [mɑməˈłuːk] (mamaluke) > mammalucco > idiot; [məˈroːn] (Marone!) > Maronnə! 'Madonna!' > my goodness; [skiːvi] (skeevy) > schifo! > disgusting; [stuˈnad] (stunod)' > stunatə > head in the clouds; [dʒendˈan] (gendan) > cent'anni! > may you live hundred years; and many others (Prifti, 2004:295-6).

As mentioned these terms are not only used among Italian Americans of second generation, but also among people who lived in urban areas with high density of Italians. Among the terms that were, and still are today, representative of the Italian American influence are 'wop' a pejorative epithet to indicate Italians and that could derive from guappə ('guappo' which means young men in Neapolitan), 'fuggetaboutit', 'skeevy', 'gabagool', and 'stugòt' (Prifti, 2014:297). As we can observe in these four words, there are English words such as 'fuggetaboutit' and Italian ones such as 'stugot' or 'gabagool'.

‘Stugot’ from ‘stu cazzə’, that is literally ‘this dick’ in Italian, is indifferently used by Italian Americans and non-Italian Americans as ‘testicules’, ‘stupid’, ‘asshole’, or ‘bullshit’. The term has been made popular by the HBO tv show *The Sopranos* and is usually used as ‘this dick’. ‘Fuggetaboutit’, from English ‘forget about it’ is mainly used to express disagreement, anger, surprise as Donnie Brasco’s character Joe Pistone explains:

> ‘Forget about it!’ is like, if you agree with someone, you know?, like: ‘Raquel Welch is one great piece of ass! Forget about it!’. But then, if you disagree, like: ‘A Lincoln is better than a Cadillac? Forget about it!’, you know? But then, it’s also like if something’s the greatest thing in the world, like: ‘Ming! Those peppers! Forget about it!’. But it’s also like saying: ‘Go to hell!’ too. Like, you know, like: ‘Hey Paulie, you got a one inch-pecker!’and Paulie says: ‘Forget about it!’. And then, sometimes it just means… ‘Forget about it!’. (Newell, 1997:1:02:38-1:03:34)

In this case, the semantic expansion of the syntagm directly comes from Italian. Both expressions observed have been popularised by Italian American movies and recent tv shows as mentioned above. Lexical features of the second generation are still heavily impacted by regional Italian, dialects, and the first version of pidginized Italian American English. More interestingly, is the mix of the many languages that converged in the speech of Italians, as Mangione rightly remembers in his memoir:

> But if my relatives were under the impression that they were speaking the same dialect they brought with them from Sicily, they were mistaken. After a few years of hearing American, Yiddish, Polish and Italian dialect other than their own, their language gathered words which no one in Sicily could possibly understand. (Mangione, 1998:51)

3.2.3. Morphosyntactic features and prosody

Morphosyntactic features are very few to report. Naturally, the speech of the second generation is very much influenced by English rather than Italian. The phenomena

observed in the first generation disappeared completely, thus leading to the interpretation that morphosyntactic structures phenomena took one generation to be inverted. Indeed, we can claim that it is rather their fluency of Italian that has been influenced. One of the syntactic feature that we can mention to illustrate this point is the place of the adjective that is put before the noun, like in English, instead of after the noun, like in Italian:

'(…) a nticchjərə era cchjù faʧələ. Cchjù *moderni parole*, certi parole cchjù moderni.'	(...) it was a little bit easier. More *modern words*, some words were more modern.
(Prifti, 2004:308; emphasis added)	(Translation mine; emphasis added)

Here, the speaker uses a dialect from Sicily but applies the English rule to his variety of Italian. In his speech, we can also see how he is unable to use gender and number agreement in Italian (e.g. 'certi parole' instead of 'certe parole'). This can be due either to his small knowledge of Italian or to the influence of English.

Another feature that characterises second generation is the loss of formal distinction in pronouns. Whereas Italian has a polite form in pronouns, usually Lei or voi in some southern areas; English does not have this morphological difference. Thus, Italian Americans of second generation use 'you', that is 'tu' in Italian regardless of the context. Once again, we can observe how English has influenced Italian and not the contrary in the second generation. Thus we can conclude that Italian American speakers start to lose the influence of Italian, stricto speaking, in favour of a more americanization of their speech.

3.2.4. Language in contact phenomena

Italian American English of the second generation is characterised by a stronger presence of code-mixing compared to the first generation. In the following example, we can notice that second generations are more inclined to switch to English, as we can see in this example when an informant is asked to describe a picture in Italian:

Questo [ˈgaːi], ha datə ’no [ˈsłæːp] a u [ˈsnɔʊ̯ˌmæn] e l’ha fattə andare [ˌɔn ðə ˈgɹaʊ̯nd̥]. U [ˈbʊoɪ] ha cominciatə a [ˈkɹaɪ̯], e il padre ce messə u [ˈʃiːt] sopra, per imitare il [ˈsnɔʊ̯ˌmɛːn]. Ha passatə ’n ato gai per dar’ un pugno a questo [ˈsnɔʊ̯ˌmɛːn] invece questə ha datə un [ˈkɪk] al sedere di questo e ha datə delle botte con le sticche.	This guy has slapped [has given a slap] a snowmen and he fell on the ground. The boy started to cry, and the father put the sheet on to imitate the snowman. Another man came to punch [give a fist] this snowman, but this one [the father] gave him a kick in the ass and bate him with a stick.
(Prifti, 2004:341)	Translation mine

As we can notice, the speaker here mixes intrasententially English and dialect in order to achieve the requested task. In this example, we can observe that some second generation speakers may be diglossic but only in Italian. Indeed, as this example shows, the speaker does not mix Italian American English but mixes quite distinctly dialect and English. This satisfies what Fishman considered to be diglossia, namely that this phenomenon can be attested when two or more languages have established themselves through time as separate languages. We are not in the case of diglossia, however, when Italian American speakers mix English and Italian American English (as it is not an established language); but when two codified languages are mixed. We can argue therefore that there is a case of diglossia in this example (in Italian). In terms of code-switching, this example corresponds to what Auer defined ‘language negotiation - preference-related code-

switching'. The speaker seems to be more comfortable in English, and had he been in a conversation, he might have switched to English and tried to negotiate with the other speaker to switch to English as well.

In this second example, we can observe a conversation between two speakers of second generation. Besides code-switching, we can also see the emergence of discourse markers:

A: Allura ʃtu combleannə, ha jittə tuttə bbounə?	**A:** So, how was the birthday, everything went well?
B: O *jeah,* boun.	**B:** Oh yeah, *buon.*
A: Tə si fattə 'na bellə mangiatə?	**A:** Did you eat well?
C: *Oh my God* :: Lu *lonʧ* da Maria – n'chełə ristorandə chełə, lu vecchj, cheł' də pret', *you know?* no də *bricchə* – pastə fattə n' gasə… Pə cenə mamma mia ha cucinat', raviouł marchiggian' comə piaʃ a me: fattə bianghə. Ierə so' fattə purə carnəvałᵊ :: Maronn'! (…) *Anyway,* adess' mə dev' priparà pə Pasqua, l'aliva…	**C:** Oh my God, the lunch at Maria's - in that restaurant, the old one, the one of stone, you know? not the one of bricks - homemade pasta… For dinner, my mother cooked, 'marchiggiani ravioli' as I like, in white. Yesterday, I also celebrated carnival… *Maronn* [...] Anyway, now I have to prepare for Easter, the olives…
(Prifti, 2004:284; emphasis added)	Translation mine

The speakers here alternate with dialect and Italian American English ('bricche', 'lontch', 'maronn') and English ('Oh my God', 'you know', 'oh yeah', etc.). In this example, English is mainly used as discourse markers. In Gumperz's taxonomy, discourse markers could be interpreted as 'interjections' which 'serve to mark an interjection or sentence filler' . Through the adoption of discourse markers, and the constant code-switching pattern, we can argue that these are the first steps towards the adoption of American Italian English instead of Italian American English. In other words, speakers are more influenced in Italian than in English. With the two examples observed as well as the

linguistic features above mentioned, English is not an issue anymore. Quite on the contrary, English is slowly establishing itself as the primary language although speakers of second generation still use what has been defined as Italian American pidgin. They still master their dialects of origin thanks to their parents who insisted in keeping the heritage, the family language spoken at home. To some extent, we could agree with Franceschini's theory of 'dual focus model' (1998) since this generation is able to switch indifferently from English to Italian American English to their own Italian variety without any apparent difficulty. In these instances, we can observe that they are able to use the 'dual focus as if it were a unique focus' as well as for a longer time-span (Franeschini, 1998:64). Standard Italian, however, as it has never been heard or taught to second generations, is rarely spoken and some linguists, Haller (1993), Finocchiaro (2004), and Prifti (2014) speak of erosion. As Haller (1993) notes, he confirms the analysis for the second generation,

> La demarcazione più netta si nota tra i soggetti di prima e di seconda generazione. Gli individui di seconda generazione hanno acquisito - senza opportunità di scelta, ma anche soltanto con approssimazione - le varietà non-standard dei genitori e dei nonni, integrando inconsapevolmente nella loro parlata elementi dialettali, popolari, anglo-americani [...]. Da questa generazione solo poche frasi o espressioni italiane passeranno alla terza generazione. (Haller, 1993:19)[12]

[12] The clearest dividing line can be noted between first and second generation subjects. Second-generation individuals have acquired - without the opportunity to choose, but also with approximation - the non-standard varieties of parents and grandparents, unknowingly integrating dialectal, popular, Anglo-American elements into their speech [...]. From this generation only a few Italian phrases or expressions will pass to the third generation. (Translation mine)

3.3. Definition of 3rd generation and onward of Italian Americans and their linguistic status

The third generation of Italian Americans and onward are entirely born in the US, usually from parents of the second generation around 1970-1980. They share similar features with the second generation although they are less and less users of Italian American English, let alone Italian. English has taken over Italian varieties and Italian American English, hence following the path of the second generation. This is partly due to the linguistic status of the second generation that is, as mentioned, the most hybrid one. Besides, not both parents are of Italian descent from the second generation onward. As a consequence, they did not convey either Italian varieties or Italian American English. This role was rather conferred to grandparents, namely the first generation. From the third generation onward, we can claim that there is an involution of Italian American English. Indeed, the third generation is usually monolingual in American English although, as we will see, some may have sometimes a passive knowledge of Italian varieties and an active use of some Italian American features in their speech.

3.3.1. Phonetic features

In the case of the third generation, American English has not been influenced or impacted by Italian or Italian American English since English is their mother tongue. We can however observe an involution in terms of influences where Italian varieties are the ones to be influenced by English. As it is not the object of this research, we will just quote few features that are still relevant:

Consonants:

When Italian Americans of the third generation speak in Italian, they have the tendency to voice voiceless consonants, such as bilabial plosives [p] > [b] as in *prosciutto* > [proʃutto]> [bɹəˈʒutˀ] (ham); velar plosives [k] > [g] as in *compare* > [komˈpare/] > [gʊmˈbɑː] (godfather); palato-alveolar fricatives [ʃ] > [ʒ] as in *prosciutto* >[proʃutto] > [bɹəˈʒutˀ] (ham). As observed by Menarini and Haller, first Italian Americans tended to rotate alveolar plosives [t] and [d], as in 'evry barì'. This is also the case of third generation of Italian Americans who rotate [t] and produce a flap [ɾ] instead when the consonant [t] is between vowels as in gelati > [/ʤeˈlatɪ] >[ʤeˈlaɾɪ] (icecreams) or spaghetti > [spaˈgetto/] > [spəˈgɛːɾɪ] for instance (Prifti, 2014:281). This would confirm Prifti's theory that this phonetic feature is mostly due to the substrate of other American English Vernaculars that present the same phenomenon.

Vowels:

The most frequent vocalic phenomenon that is attested among speakers of the third generation is the tendency to "close" the italian [a] vowel (usually towards [ə]) or even to suppress it when it is in central position as for instance in *Calabria* [kəˈɬɑːbɹɪɑ], *calabrese* [ˌkɑɬˈbɹɛ͡ɪs] (Prifti, 2014:282).

3.3.2. Lexical features

If the phonological system of the third generation is not impacted by Italian as it has been observed for the first and second generations, the lexicon still presents some influences of Italian American English. As for the second generation, the lexicon is still confined to some very precise areas, that is the culinary and family domain (see 3.2.2), and/or discourse markers. For the latter, we still encounter today discourse markers as [səˈɬuːt]

< *Salute*! for ‘cheers!’ or the popular ‘capeesh’ [gaˈpiʃ] < capisci? for ‘do you understand?’ (Prifti, 2014:390). As we can observe, even in the lexicon there has been an involution as discourse markers were used in English while speaking Italian; whereas in the third generation discourse markers are Italian words used while speaking in English and phonologically adapted to the English system.

3.3.3. Morphosyntactic features

As for the phonetic features, the syntax and morphological system does not present any traces of Italian varieties or Italian American English. As observed above, the influence on morphosyntax is rather on the Italian variety that some individuals of the third generation still speak. Here again, we will quote just a few examples to show how the process has been inverted. The most frequent phenomena are the omission of prepositions, articles, and auxiliary verbs as shown by Prifti in these following parts of conversation:

EP: In che lingua parla?	**EP:** Which language do you speak?
AM: *Mericanə.*	**AM:** Mericanə.
EP: Cambia l’accento?	**EP:** Does that change the accent?
AM: *Credo sì.*	**AM:** I think yes.
(Prifti, 2014:282; emphasis added)	Translation mine
JD: Genətori mia è *natə Ascołəpiceni*, e mama *natə Angona.*	JD: My parents were born in Ascoli Piceno, and my mother Ancona.
(Prifti, 2014:282; emphasis added)	Translation mine

In these examples, we can see how standard American English influenced the Italian variety spoken by this third generation individual, as well as the remnants of dialects that are ultimately influenced by English. Indeed, since the language has been probably

conveyed by the first generation, and that standard Italian has not been maintained in any way until the second generation, the average third generation speaker only knows and understands his family dialect. This could partly explain the missing article in 'l'americano' (instead of *Mericanə*), or the preposition that has been omitted in 'è nata ad Ancona' (instead of mama *natə Angona).* As claimed for the second generation, we cannot be sure whether the lack of agreement is due to the influence of dialects and/or English. In any case, their Italian status is also hybrid, that is to say that it is composed of Italian varieties, some standard Italian for those who have studied it at school, and Italian American English. As for the phonetic features, the morphosyntactic structure of third generation speakers has not been impacted by Italian or Italian American English. As seen, it appears to be the contrary process for it is English in general to influence their Italian varieties.

3.3.4. Language in contact phenomena

If so far Italians of the third generation seem to be more monolingual and quite immune to language in contact phenomena, we will see that the overall linguistic status of the third generation is slightly more complex. Indeed, we still do encounter instances of bilingual conversations, hence code-switching occurrences. Through the process of language in contact phenomena, we can understand more clearly the evolution and involution of Italian American English, or better, American Italian English in the third generation. In the first example, provided by the data collected by Prifti (2014), a third generation speaker tries to explain in his Italian variety his knowledge and fluency of Italian:

(1)

EP: In quale lingua parli quando vai in Sicilia?	**EP:** What language do you speak when you go to Sicily?
PM: Ameriganu, sicilianu ::: è che i hai amici dà. È diffi ʧ͡ʃ͡ʃi pe :: ju no?, pə parlə(…) ‘tałianu. I d’ idu parlo meriganu. They understand American a little bit, so :: Lo fazzu ingles’, sugnu cchjù kàmftəbəł.	**PM:** American, sicilian ::: I have got friends there. It’s difficult for:: *you know*? to speak (...) Italian. I speak American to them. *They understand American a little bit, so* :: I do it in English, I am more *comfortable.*
EP: Parli anche in italiano?	**EP:** Do you also speak Italian?
PM: Pogu. No pał’ assai. Pogu pał’ italianə, [ˈðætʂ ˈɔː].	**PM:** A little bit. I don’t speak much. Just a little bit. *That’s all.*
EP: E come lo parli l’italiano?	**PM:** And how do you speak Italian?
PM: Come parlu? No pure bonu. *I* capiʃə tuttə cos’ itałianə, no poʧ͡ʃ͡ʃu parli. Parli pocu. *I* no sappə ’talianu, tuttə ’tałianu, io pało, [ˈdaiłəkt ˈðætʂ ˈɪ]. *I* capiʃə, no poʧ͡ʃ, no poʧ͡ʃ͡ʃu fari, italianu. Capiʃi? [ˈsɔˈakɛˈnːɑt ˈsɛː]. [a ˈmiː] è diffi ʧ͡ʃ͡ʃi pe mia. Mi ’taliano è medda, [ˈnɔˑ ˈwɔɾ ˈaˑ ˈmiːn ˈɪtsˈnaθin]. [ˈaːj spiːk ˈdaiłəkt ˈwɪθ ˈɛvɹɪbɑɾi], co tutti, picchi [ˈðætʂ ˈɔł ˈa ˈnoʊː]. *It’s* sicilianu.	**PM:** How do I speak it? Not well. I understand everything in Italian, but I cannot speak all Italian, I speak dialect, *that’s it.* I understand, but I can’t, I can’t do Italian <here: I cannot say it in Italian>. Do you understand? *So I cannot say. I mean*, it’s difficult for me. My Italian is shit, *you know what I mean. It’s nothing. I speak dialect with everybody* with everybody a little bit. *That’s all I know.* It’s sicilian.
(Prifti, 2014:319)	(Translation mine; emphasis added)

This informant is visibly bilingual in Sicilian and English. He can communicate with his interlocutor in Sicilian while switching to English when he needs to express himself more easily. In terms of Auer’s taxonomy, we are in the case of the fourth pattern, where the alternation does not affect the language choice of the conversation. Indeed, the conversation proceeds in Sicilian (the informant)/Italian (the researcher) although the informant tends to switch to English. We cannot say however that the he is diglossic.

More precisely, he would be considered to be diglossic if he was trying to speak Italian, but for our conversation's sake, the informant is bilingual in Sicilian and American English, and switches to English when he feels that he is not being understood by the interlocutor usually because he/she speaks in Italian which the informant admits not being able to speak. This example shows us that some third generation individuals still master their dialects actively although with some difficulties. Their linguistic situation resembles the one of the first generation but conversely.

In the following five examples, we can see on the opposite, that there is a complete switch of languages where English is preferred:

(2)

CT: I don't remember ever speaking very good Italian.
FT: No, no, C. Però ti ricordi la sera, prima di portarti a letto, ti facevo dir' le preghiere.

(Prifti, 2014:237)

CT: I don't remember ever speaking very good Italian.
FT: No, No, C. But don't you remember that before going to bed, I made you recite prayers?

Translation mine

(3)

Grandmother: Non stare così. Fa freddo! Mettiti la vestaglia
Grandchild: I'm not cold! I don't want to wear the *vestaglia.*

(Finocchiaro, 2004:250)

Grandmother: Don't stay like that. It's cold. Wear your dressing gown.
Grandchild: I'm not cold! I don't want to wear the *vestaglia.*

Translation mine

(4)

EP: How much Italian do you know?
SG: Nothing! Absolutely nothing! Maybe just some swearwords, I know some of them; [vɔfəˈŋguːɬ], I mean, that's the only thing I know.
(Prifti, 2014:141)

(5)

Joseph Tusiani[13]: [questa terra] aveva una lingua tremenda, orrenda per lei. Diceva: "ma che lingua è questa? Per dire chiesa dicono 'cuccia'! Che lingua è questa!"

Paola Tusiani: She never had to learn English, because when in the Bronx everybody spoke Italian. She went to the store and everybody spoke Italian, so she lived in an Italian neighbourhood, she never learned English.)

Joseph Tusiani: [this land] that had such a terrible language for her. She would say: "What kind of language is this. To say 'chiesa' (church) they say ciuccia (donkey)!"

Translation mine

(Iitaly, "Grandparents and Grandchildren in Italian America", 11 June 2016. https://youtu.be/iaclwIrillc 22:05-22:30)

In all these examples, we can notice that speakers understand each other but do not speak the same language. In other words, a first speaker starts the conversation in Italian or in English, and the other interlocutor replies with his/her preferred language. In these cases, we are in the second pattern function of Auer, where the speakers negotiate the language of the conversation. Example (3) is particularly interesting as the reply is almost fully in English, except for *'vestaglia'* which corresponds to a semantic area belonging to the family dimension. Moreover, in Gumperz's theory, it could also be considered a direct 'quotation' of the grandmother's speech. We are therefore in instances of bilingual conversations. Interestingly enough, these conversations usually happen between first and third generation individuals.

In the example below, we can see the almost complete evolution of Italian Americans speech and how the first generation has adapted to the third generation speech. In this transcribed conversation, a grandmother is telling the story of when she went back to visit Italy with some American friends and had an altercation with an Italian woman.

[13] Joseph Tusiani (1924 - 2020) was an award-winning poet, novelist, and translator.

In this example of conversation, the code-switching appears here to have a double function: a reported speech function in Italian, and an explicative function in English, as if it would help the grandchild to understand better:

> **Grandmother:** When I went to Italy, we had to go to the bathroom. We've just gotten off the bus and we all run in, you know, everybody. And this woman, we were asking her to give us toilet papers. "Signora, give us the paper". She got so mad, she didn't wanna give us the toilet paper. She was just looking for the money. We all had our own toilet paper in our pocket bag. She says: *"chist' americani tenene' 'e corna"*. *These Americans have horns*. *"vojon' us' 'u gabinett' e no vojono pajà". They wanna use the toilet but they don't wanna pay.* She said it once, she said it twice, she said it three times. Finally, I said to her: "*Signora, 'e corn' li teni tu".*
> **Grandchild:** And that means…
> **Grandmother:** In other words, you have the horns because we wanted toilet paper and you don't wanna give it to us. So we all opened our pocket bag, we took out our own toilet paper, and she stood there, like that. *"chist' americani tenene' 'e corna, "vojon' us*' 'u gabinett'". *'gabinett' is the toilet...*
> **Grandchild:** Oh okay.
> **Grandmother:** and they don't wanna pay. She was looking for the money, she wouldn't give us the toilet paper. And when I answered her, she was like "Oh my God! She was shocked"...
> **GrandChild:** Oh right, 'cause you spoke Italian?
> **Grandmother:** ...that somebody in the group spoke Italian.
>
> (Viola, *et al.* "Ciao - An Introduction to the Italian American Podcast". 2015:00:09:03-00:10:38; emphasis added).

As mentioned, Neapolitan parts are faithfully reported by the grandmother who easily switches from one language to another while giving the translation to the grandchild in English. So, she switches first, from English to Neapolitan to report faithfully the conversation, then while switching again to English, she provides a direct translation of some parts that the grandchild may not understand (or the Italian American audience in general as it is meant for a podcast), and then continues the conversation. This seems to be very eloquent of how both the third and first generation of Italian Americans found an accommodating way to communicate while keeping their own linguistic essence. To

conclude, the third generation is actively losing Italian American English but still understands it (as well as the family or regional dialect spoken by the grandparents). While the linguistic analysis showed an almost complete loss of either Italian or Italian American English, excerpts of conversations have demonstrated that they are still bilinguals in the sense that they can manage to have a conversation in more than one language actively and/or passively. As thoroughly explored by Finocchiaro, the reasons lying behind this loss of languages (both Italian and Italian American English) are due to a lack of language maintenance. Besides governmental policies that have not been undertaken until recently, the family did not invest much either in keeping bilingual contexts (especially from the second generation onward) as we can see in Finocchiaro's report of one of her informant:

> Paolo saw little use in the speaking of Italian. His children speak Italian with their grandfather to make themselves understood, but according to him nothing was gained by speaking Italian in the place where they live (Virginia) (Finocchiaro, 2004:246).

There is then an idea of utility behind the language that one speaks or learns that could motivate the loss of a language. This topic, however, will be discussed later, at the end of the chapter with Fishman's GIDS model.

3.3.5. Concluding notes: Towards a final definition of Italian American English

The first generation of Italian immigrants created a new language, a pidgin, out of necessity to communicate with the external world, with other Italians from different regions, and naturally, with Americans and other kinds of immigrants. The result is, as observed, a mix of Italian varieties converged into English where the influence of both languages are visible in the phonological, lexical, and morpho-syntactic system. This

language, earlier defined as pidginized American Italian, became a widespread variety in the following generations. Indeed, as seen with Mangione, the adoption of the language by the community proves that Italian American English established itself as a variety of American English spoken by the Italian community. With the second generation, and the majority of them going to school in the US, Italian American started to lose ground. It is safe to assume that they too spoke Italian American English and Italian varieties in their family background, though the language for 'outside' was definitely English. There was then a 'we code' in opposition to the 'they code' (Gumperz, 1982) which was very clear to the speakers of the second generation. Surprisingly, some Italian American words such as 'baccauso' or 'skeevs' or even the verb 'capeesh' entered the lexicon of non-Italian Americans, proving that the variety expanded itself outside the family and neighbourhood boundaries - also thanks to the media (Prifti, 2004). In the third generation, however, we have observed that traces of Italian and Italian American English are almost completely lost, if anything in their active fluency. They do understand the language at home, the grandparent's 'broken English' and the Italian varieties but they do not use them, as we can see in this example:

> **Viola:** And we got words here that were made in the United States. You talked about them a lot, like you mentioned 'iangolin', that's an american word. *Shoppe bag, baccauso* [...] My family would say *basciament* (basement) [...].
> **O'Boyle:** We hold on to these [words] like certain buzz words. People are talking about like the 'muzzarell and gabagool conversation' which I get because, I think the deformation of those words are somehow like stupid, but it's frustrating because those word's pronunciation are from an historical point in time and place. It's the words that we invented that fascinated me… they really fascinated me.
> **Rago:** [interrupting] 'whatack'
> **O'Boyle:** [laugh] What's that? Heart attack?
> **Rago:** Yeah, 'la kekka' [cake]
> **O'Boyle, Viola**: a 'kekka'
> **Viola:** You say 'kekka'? 'Kukì' [cookie]? 'U kukì?

> **O'Boyle:** Yeah, my family says 'u kukì', 'packbook' [New York/New Jersey variety for bag] [...]
> **Viola:** That's a New York/New Jersey word and that's dying too because the young people don't say 'packbook'.
> **Rago:** Nonna says 'packabook'.
> **O'Boyle**: Yeah, my mother says 'packabook'.
> **Viola:** But that's gone with us.
> [...] (Viola, *et al.* "Le Belle Lingue - Dialects, Regional languages, and Italian American English". 2020:00:28:53-00:29:50; emphasis added])

In this very interesting conversation, three hosts of the *Italian American Podcast* from the third generation talk about some words that their grandparents or parents use and that have entered the family lexicon. However, as rightly pointed out by one of the hosts, these words 'are gone' with them. They will not use these words outside of their family and Italian friends' background, and with the loss of the first generation the conveyal of the language will stop. Italian American English for the third generation onward is still a pidgin although it is less and less adopted by the community. Somehow, Italian American English crystallized itself between the first and second generation because of a lesser necessity to communicate with the external world. With literacy and school, Italian American English was surely less useful and, overall, needed by the community. Nevertheless, Italian American English is still a pidgin for the third generation, and is still present because of the active use of the first generations. The third generation learned it in their early age through family, just as much as the traces of Italian varieties that they know.

In this respect, we can also mention the efforts of the Italian Foreign Ministry that in the nineties promoted the Italian language abroad, thus enhancing the learning of Italian outreach. Italian was also proposed as a subject in secondary schools although, as reported by Finocchiaro (2004), not many Italians took it as they did not see any utility in studying

it. So, in terms of Fishman's GIDS, Italian status still revolves around stage six[14] as the third generation and onward do use Italian American English and Italian varieties in the family - although it is not sufficient to reverse the language shift, and as a result a revival of the language. The following stages that regard the introduction of the language at school and in the workplace do not really satisfy the case of Italian American English. We could, however, argue that Italian American English stopped being used in stage six, but that Standard Italian is still present in stages five and four[15] as explained earlier through second language acquisition policies undertaken by government and incentives by the Italian Foreign Ministry and other associations such as the Dante Alighieri society.

To conclude this chapter, Italian American English was a pidgin that evolved to a variety of English that stopped its expansion with the arrival of the third and later generations who, however, do understand it and use it in the family. The first signs of loss appeared with the introduction of English as preferred language when switching between Italian American English, and Italian varieties. The constant code-switching and the absence of a bilingual support that encouraged the maintenance of both the languages, led to the adoption of a mostly monolingual community. Moreover, we could also speak of two other linguistic phenomena, that is to say the linguistic erosion of dialects and/or Italian American English, and the standardisation of languages. New generations encouraged the learning of Standard Italian and Standard English since they were considered to be more useful. This echoes the predictions of Di Pietro who feared the loss

[14] Stage 6 [...]: the attainment of intergenerational informal oracy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement. (Fishman, 1991)

[15] Stage 5 [...]: Xish literacy in the home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy.

Stage 4 [...]: Xish in lower education that meets the requirements of compulsory education laws.

(Fishman, 1991:88)

of pidgins in favour of monolingual communities. All in all, we can claim that Italian American English moved from a language related to the migration phenomenon, an immigrant language as defined by Fishman (1991), to the family heritage, to the identity of Italian Americans. Thus, if some linguistic phenomena as well as behaviours led to a twilight of the Italian American English variety, there is a revival of ethnicity with a renewed interest in the language as a sign of membership and identity which will be discussed in the next chapter.

4. Towards a loss of variety: from Italian American to American Italian to 'Goombish'

4.1. Current status of Italian American English

As observed in the previous chapter, an involution has happened between the second generation and the third one where we even talked about an American Italian variety instead of Italian American English. This inversion was not only justified by the influences that impacted more Italian than English but also by the less and less active knowledge of Italian American English. However, as observed, new generations still understand and/or speak Italian varieties and, especially, Italian American English. Indeed, in the quoted conversation of the *Italian American Podcast*, many words are the direct product of American in contact with Italian, therefore, if used in Italy they would not be understood. Moreover, their family speech is still dotted with some Italian American English words and idioms. There is then a certain resistance to erosion although Italian American English is not anymore a spoken language as it was between the first and the second generation. The issue of this chapter will be to define the current status of Italian American English in light of the theories of ethnolect.

Around the 1970s, the term 'ethnolect' was coined to define the English used by descendants of immigrants. More precisely, and as defined by Wölck, an ethnolect is the 'English of the descendants of immigrant families which shows clear traces of their home languages long after their original language is lost' (Wölck, 2002:159). The last traces of

Italian American English could be defined then as an ethnolect since the original language was Italian and Italian varieties but, *de facto*, also Italian American English as it was the pidgin spoken by earlier generations. In addition to Wölck's definition of an ethnolect, we can also look at Clyne's definition where he adds a further element, that is, the notion of identity: 'an ethnolect is the varieties of a language that mark speakers as members of ethnic groups who originally used another language' (Clyne, 2010:86). Italian American English, then, is not anymore a language spoken out of necessity or the product of the migration experience, but rather a sign of membership, of identity for new generations. The term ethnolect could fill the gap by defining the current status of Italian American English. To sustain the claim, we can also observe Pasto's definition of ethnolect which, according to him, is 'not a hybrid of "foreign" lexical items and morphological features mixed with a primary language or a heavily accented second language; it is a vernacular, "the individual's most natural speech, learned early in life" (Eckert, 2018:139 adapted by Pasto, 2019:89). In his definition, Italian American English is not anymore the heavy mixing of a 'primary language' with another one as it was the case for the first generation but a 'vernacular' learned in childhood. According to Pasto, Italian American English today is considered to be the 'primary language', or as I would rather modify, the 'family language' that is heard and/or 'learned' in the first years of life. Moreover, it is indeed a 'vernacular' shared among the Italian community, and especially in some dense Italian populated areas, such as in New Jersey or in Boston's North End, where Pasto is originally from. Pasto's definition of ethnolect does correspond more to the current status of Italian American English. In his article (2019), he takes a step further and defines 'new' Italian American English 'Goombish', from 'goomba' (godfather) as explained in this short excerpt written in this variety:

> Whad a yuz doin? I'm gonna tawk today about Italian American tawk. I call it Goombish—from Goombah, aka cumpà, meaning godfather, brother, friend, cousin, I love you. You know. But it ain't easy. I'm not a friggen linguist so I'm worried about sounding like a gidrul. And I can't fake it, not in an article likea this. It may read quaint, but can you imagine line after line of it? I could not write it, and I doubt it could carry my more elaborated meanings. It is too restricted, too dependent on knowledge the majority lacks. (Pasto, 2019:87)

Except for some phonetic instances already observed as in 'tawk' (the addition of the velar to long vowels or diphthongs) or 'gidrul' (from 'citrullo', thus the voicing of plosives [t] > [d] and the apheresis of the ending) which is also an epithet used to indicate someone 'stupid', thus belonging to the semantic area of pejorative words; the whole quotation is not influenced in any way by Italian. It does, on the contrary, look like an English vernacular. Thus, in the final realisation of Italian American, the result is indeed a vernacular, a variety of English, but as a vernacular, it is only used among the same community and for restricted uses. Since, today, the language is only Italian or Italian American words embedded in the English sentence (Finocchiaro, 2014:139), it cannot be anymore considered 'Italo-English' or 'Italgish', as there is a substantial difference between the pidgin spoken by the earlier generations and the new ones; however, for this research, we will keep the neutral term Italian American English. A last example that can illustrate how the language has changed from the first generation to the new ones, hence the current features of Italian American English, is the following sentences quoted by Pasto:

> I would say things at UMass Boston that nobody got, like "he's a real chiacchierione [chatter]" or "you look moosh-a-moosh [apathetic]," or "open the light," or "that's good" for "I agree," or "whada yu doin'?" for "how are you." Sometimes they did not understand the word; other times it was that the word did not match their understanding. It was no surprise. (Pasto, 2019:88; parenthesis added)

As already mentioned, the last traces of Italian American English are the lexicon and some idioms and/or loanblends with an extension or change in the meaning as in 'that's good' which is a literal translation for *va bene*, namely, 'I agree'. 'That's good' used as 'I agree' certainly generates confusion if the other interlocutor does not have an Italian or Italian American English background. Thus, the current status of Italian American English is an ethnolect, a language that witnesses the first language spoken by earlier Italian immigrants who linguistically integrated themselves and abandoned Italian and Italian American English in the following generations. The vernacular spoken is ultimately English with some Italian or Italian American words which are intrasententially code-switched.

4.2. Future perspectives

Against all predictions, Italian American English is still a form of vernacular spoken and/or understood by new generations as it has become a sign of identity and membership. Thanks to a revival of ethnicity through media (TV shows, movies, social networks, etc.) and Italian associations, there is a renewed interest in Italian and Italian American English. An eloquent example of this movement is the *Italian American Podcast* who features every week a podcast on an Italian or Italian American subject, or as they present themselves: 'The Italian American Podcast is dedicated to helping Italian Americans celebrate our brilliant heritage. Covering all things Italian American- like history, family traditions, genealogy, recipes, language, and more with smarts, heart, and a lot of

laughs!'[16] Their Facebook page, in addition, provides an interesting account on the future perspectives of Italian American English, as we can see in the following images:

Image 1: The Italian American Podcast Facebook page, 2019.

Image 2: The Italian American Podcast Facebook page, 2019.

Image 3: The Italian American Podcast Facebook page, 2020.

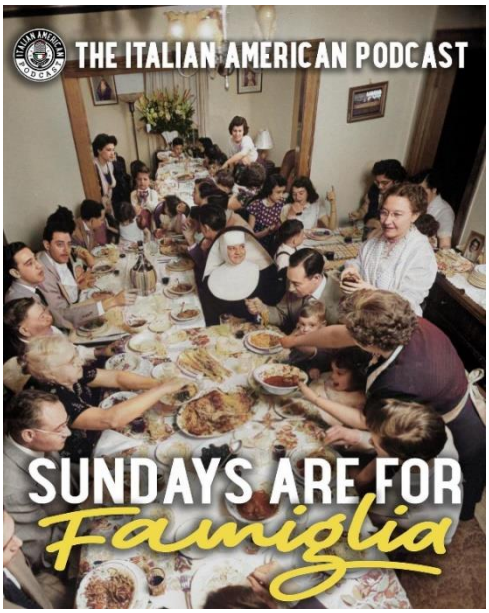

Image 4: The Italian American Podcast Facebook page, 2020.

[16] Viola et al. *The Italian American Podcast – About*. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/pg/ItalianAmericanPodcast/about/. 29 May 2020.

In these pictures, we can see how only some words are embedded in the sentence or clauses: ‘pass the Panettone’ (image 1),‘Struffoli Squad’ (image 2), or ‘Eat spaghetti to forgetti your regretti’ (image 3). The last picture is striking for the modified form of ‘forgetti’ and ‘regretti’ that are certainly used to rhyme with ‘spaghetti’ but also mimic the Italian prosody by adding a vowel at the end of the word. The main subject of the three pictures are Italian food as ‘panettone’, ‘spaghetti’, and ‘struffoli’ that are a Christmas specialty usually prepared in Naples. It looks, to some extent, that to enhance the Italian heritage they need to appeal to stereotypes. The same can be considered when looking at pictures celebrating (Italian) sunday family lunch (image 4). Again, only some well-known and shared words are embedded in the English sentences but always appealing to the tradition. This reminds Smolicz’ theory of ‘core-value’ contradicted by Fishman who identified Italian’s core-value to be the ‘family’. By anchoring their content to some strong and traditional values such as the family, Italian food, sports, religion, and festivities, the Italian American ethnicity is maintained. By looking at these examples, however, we can observe that the language has been lost as it is not the main core of Italian Americans anymore. However, the revival of this ethnicity may revive the interest in the Italian American language and Italian, as claimed by De Fina and Fellin (2010):

> Third generation Italian-Americans are enrolling in language courses and employing creative ways to manipulate their limited Italian repertoire for socially meaningful purposes, while members of the older generations are no longer ashamed to use their language in public. These new attitudes can hardly reverse the language shift, especially if we consider the small number of new Italian immigrants to the USA, but they point to the fact that language maintenance is just one of the possible strategies to encode ethnic belonging and membership, and that limited language use and proficiency can still play a role in maintaining a sense of “Italianness” for people of Italian origin in the USA.

With the loss of the first generations, it is quite safe to assume that Italian American English will be lost with them. While it is quite impossible to reverse the situation, the third generations and onward may preserve the remnants and traces of Italian American English in the future with the notion of ethnicity and belonging. Thus, we will probably move from this type of language with heavy code-switchings (example below) to lighter ones as seen in the pictures above:

> Come stai? Molto bene. Buon giorno. Ciao. Arrivederci. Every Italian from Italy knows these words and every Italian-American should. This takes us to the Goomba speech pattern. Those words and phrases that are a lil Italian, a lil American, and a lil slang. Words every paisan and bacciagaloop has heard. This form of language, the Goomba-Italiano, has been used for generations. The goomba says ciao when he arrives or leaves. He says madonne anytime emotion is needed in any given situation. Mannaggia, meengya, oofah, and of course, va fungool can also be used. Capeesh? He uses a mopeen to wipe his hands in the cucina, gets agita from the gravy and loves his famiglia. [...] Also don't forget to say per favore and grazie and prego. So salud' if you have any Italian blood in you and you understood anything written here! Then you are numero uno and a professore of the goombas. But if you don't get this at all, then you're a disgraziat.' Scuzi, mi dispiach, I didn't mean that . . . just fugheddaboudit. (DeCarlo quoted in Pasto, 2019:91-92)

To conclude, Italian American English as an ethnolect will probably continue to be spoken or at least to be used to appeal to some Italian or Italian American values or traditions. The pidgin spoken by the first and second generations will soon disappear, if this has not yet happened, in favour of a more stereotyped language conveyed and heard in tv shows or movies such *The Godfather* or *The Sopranos*, namely what has been defined by Pasto as 'Goombish'. In order for Italian American English to be preserved, later generations may need to actually know their history without the stigma that first and second generations may have suffered from. In this sense, the project of *The Italian American Podcast* might help and preserve the language that their ancestors have spoken.

Conclusion

This research has tried to investigate the implication of code-switching and language in contact phenomena in immigrant communities such as the Italian American one. It has also observed whether these linguistic phenomena are responsible for language or language variety loss. As it appeared from this study, code-switching is partly responsible for language loss if L1 (or L2 from the second generation onward) is not maintained or supported through external institutions, that is outside the family spoken interactions. We have seen that the first waves of Italian immigrants had a very fragile linguistic situation and were mainly dialect speakers (chapter 1). This led to complex mutual intelligibility issues as immigrants came from different parts of Italy and did not speak a common language. The mix of American English words in their speech led to the creation of a lingua franca (pidginized American Italian) and allowed them to communicate not only with English speakers but also, and most surprisingly, with Italians. In this respect, Melania Mazzucco's novel *Vita* depicts fairly well this mosaic linguistic situation that this study sought to show:

> In squadra stavolta c'erano solo montanari nordici, che facevano società tra loro ed erano l'orgoglio degli ispettori scozzesi. Coi calabresi non si capiva, e la sera,

> nel buio del vagone, si limitava a scambiare con loro qualche parole franca - americana. (Mazzucco, 2014:289)[17]

In order to communicate with other fellow Italians, immigrants had to resort to Italian American English. As observed, this work considers Italian American English a variety descending from a pidgin spoken by the first generation of Italian immigrants. We have accepted the term 'variety' as it does not convey any connotations, and has a neutral value (chapter 3). Moreover, we have refuted the designation of creole as Italian American English did not establish itself as a mother tongue. We do not believe that there are native speakers of Italian American English, therefore the term 'variety' suits better the purpose of this study. Indeed, first generations' mother tongue was their dialect and later generations' mother tongue is English.

This has been possible to notice thanks to the theoretical framework in which this research is included. The notions of code-switching in Auer's and Gumperz's taxonomy, allowed us to analyse in which stances switches occurred and for which purposes (chapter 2). Most of the time, we have observed (chapter 3) that switches were due to a lack of linguistic skills to continue the speech. On other occasions, there was a preferred language, mostly English for later generations, which forces speakers to switch to English. The rationale behind such choices of code-switching allowed us to confirm that these linguistic phenomena are only partly responsible for language or variety loss. Indeed, as seen with Fishman's GIDS (chapter 2), Italian has not been sufficiently

[17] This time his team was made up of mountain people from the North who kept to themselves and were the pride of the Scottish inspectors. He didn't understand the Calabrese workers' dialect, so as evening set in and dark settled over the freight car, the best he could do was exchange a few words in their lingua franca - American. (Translation by Virginia Jewiss, in Mazzucco, Melania. *Vita*. New York. Picadora. 2005: 270. Ebook.)

maintained in the early years. Thus, as claimed, Italian revolves around stages 6 where Italian has reached an 'intergenerational oracy' and is subject of an 'institutional reinforcement'. Looking at the last generations, we have observed that their knowledge of Italian is fragmentary and often confused with Italian American English that they have heard in their family context. As a consequence, they are sometimes unable to tell the difference between the two languages. However, compared to the first and the second generation, the last generations are not fluent and active in the Italian American variety. Chapter 3 showed how there has been an involution between the first and the last generations, where the former was fluent in their own Italian dialects and used Italian American English as lingua franca; whereas the latter is fluent in American English and sometimes uses the Italian American English variety as a sign of community belonging. This analysis would not have been possible if the study did not look at both Auer's and Gumperz's theories of codes-switching along with Fishman's theories of language maintenance. In this way, it has been possible to reach a clear view on the linguistic history of Italian American English variety and its current state.

In this respect, chapter 4 showed that there is a new path undertaken by young Italian American generations. The variety is not a means to communicate anymore, but a way to rediscover their origins. Italian American English is then used as a sign of membership of the community. The concept of ethnolect helped us to understand the current state of Italian American English and its evolution into a more socio-linguistic

phenomenon. However, it would be interesting to continue analysing the speech of the latest generations of Italian Americans and their fluency in Italian and Italian American English. There may be in the context of this ethnicity revival a further evolution of the variety, as suggested. Moreover, although enlarging the theoretical field, we could also look at the socio-linguistic impact of immigration and its stigma on language maintenance in second and later generations (also studied by De Fina and Fellin, 2010). In this sense, that is understanding whether a negative stigma had any implications with language maintenance, we could also try to clarify the motives behind a revival of ethnicity a century later - that also involved language - with a joint study of both sociology and linguistics. What is safe to claim is that Italian Americans will hold onto their cultural traditions including the preservation of some Italian American English idioms – as seen with the Italian American Podcast – since the notions of heritage and ancestry are intrinsic to the United States.

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