

Language Attrition in Immigrant Communities: Evidence from Italian Speakers in Canada

Nico Clark

Dr.

University of Bologna

Via Zamboni, 33, 40126 Bologna BO, Italy

Adrian Jones

Prof.

University of British Columbia

2329 West Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4, Canada

Kim Carter

PhD

University of California, Berkeley

Berkeley, CA 94720, USA

Abstract. This article examines language attrition in immigrant communities, focusing on Italian speakers in Canada. Through longitudinal interviews and language proficiency tests, the study analyzes factors contributing to language loss, such as age of arrival, exposure to English, and community support. The findings reveal patterns of language maintenance and shift, offering insights into the challenges faced by immigrant communities in preserving their linguistic heritage. This research contributes to the understanding of language dynamics in multicultural settings.

Keywords: language attrition, immigrant communities, Italian speakers, language maintenance, multiculturalism

Introduction

Language attrition is a critical issue facing immigrant communities, as original languages compete with dominant societal languages. This article focuses on Italian speakers in Canada, using longitudinal interviews and proficiency assessments to explore the factors influencing language retention and loss. Key variables, such as age at immigration, level of exposure to English, and the strength of community networks, are analyzed to reveal patterns of language maintenance and shift. The study provides a nuanced understanding of the challenges immigrant communities face in preserving their linguistic heritage, offering broader insights into language dynamics within multicultural environments.

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References

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