

From 1950-1969, at Halifax's Pier 21, 20,000-30,000 Italians arrived each year in search of a better life (pier21.ca). Many Italians settled in large urban centres, but tens of thousands came to the smaller cities and towns across Canada.

Heritage Languages are those languages brought by immigrants to a new place, and now spoken as a minority language within that community (Fishman, 2001). Most Heritage Language research is done in large cities, such as Toronto's *Heritage Languages Variation & Change* project (Nagy, 2011). Similar research in small cities and towns is limited (Del Torto, 2008, 2010). My research is focused on the Heritage Italian community of Sarnia, Ontario (population, 73,000; Statistics Canada, 2011).

The Ciociaria Heritage Italian Language of Sarnia (CHILS) corpus documents and archives the variety of Italian spoken by a majority of the Italian immigrants to Sarnia, Ontario: a dialect colloquially known as Ciociaria. I am interviewing 60 of the original immigrants to Sarnia and 40 of their children, for a total of 100 research participants. In Sarnia, nearly 1,000 of the 2,400 Italians come from the Frosinone province (Di Cocco, 1991). Because of this, the Ciociaria dialect in Sarnia is well-preserved compared to an urban centre where immigrants come from different regions, and individual varieties are subject to 'dialect levelling' (Mougeon et al., 1985).

The Ciociaria dialect is also potentially better-preserved in Sarnia than even in its homeland of Frosinone, Italy. Standardized education, mass emigration, and intranational mobility means that the communities of the Ciociaria homeland are much less homogenous than they once were (Barberis, 1999).

ELAN was used to transcribe and code 30 hours of recordings, and analysis was done using Rbrul. The methodology is based on research in sociolinguistics (Holmes & Hazen, 2013), Heritage Languages (Nagy, 2015), and other Italian dialects (Merlo, 1919).

The first feature to be analyzed is the variable realization of /v/ as [w] or [v].

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|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1) <i>vino</i> | 2) <i>nove</i> | 3) <i>vecchia</i> |
| [wino] | [nowə] | [wɛkija] |
| 'wine' | 'nine' | 'old' |

This paper describes and defines the constraints of the variable realization of /v/ in Sarnia's community using social and linguistic constraints.

The two most significant social constraints are style and town of origin. Rates of the [w] variant are much higher when two participants talk to one another than when they speak with the interviewer, who is an L2 speaker of a more standard Italian variety. The other significant social factor is place of birth within Frosinone, Italy. Towns only a couple kilometres apart can have significant differences in rates of /v/ being realized as [w].

The two most significant linguistic factors are if the variant is word-initial, and the preceding and following segments. Words that begin with /v/ have a much higher rate of [w] than when /v/ occurs word-internally, across all speakers. Also, where /v/ precedes or follows a high vowel it is significantly more likely to be realized as a [w].

The Ciociaria dialect serves as an important marker of identity in the Italian community of Sarnia. This research deepens our understanding of how Heritage Languages and their homeland varieties may diverge.

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