

# Attitudes of the Speakers of the Fiuman Dialect Towards Its Usage

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UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA  
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**ATTITUDES OF THE SPEAKERS OF THE FIUMAN DIALECT  
TOWARDS ITS USAGE**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the M.A. in English Language and  
Literature and Philosophy at the University of Rijeka

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## Abstract

*El fiuman* is an idiom peculiar to the city of Rijeka. It is a dialect, a minority language that is facing similar challenges as many other minority languages nowadays. The problems are revolving around its maintenance.

By means of semi-structured interviews, the researcher seeks information directly from the active speakers of this particular idiom. Their opinions regarding the usage and status of the Fiuman dialect, alongside other relevant qualitative and quantitative research in the field, could help crystallize what the speaking trends of the population who uses the dialect are. A thorough analysis of the status, vitality and opinions regarding the dialect is the first step to undertake before developing programmes and policies for its future maintenance.

This research, alongside other works in the field of sociolinguistics, tries to provide a more in-depth insight in the current state, vitality and possible future of the Fiuman dialect and minority languages in general.

**Key words:** Fiuman dialect, minority languages, language endangerment and vitality, attitudes towards minority languages, language maintenance, language policies

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## **1 Introduction**

Language is a distinctive human faculty. What is more, it is often recognized that knowing more than one language has many advantages. In addition to this discussion, the numerous possibilities of a bilingual or multilingual brain have yet to be explored. Nonetheless, in the past few decades linguists have been expressing an alarming concern for endangered languages. This means that languages that are endangered are likely to disappear and be replaced by other more widely spoken languages. Of course, not all languages are severely endangered, but there is a trend of languages failing out of use. This is an impending problem especially for minority languages spoken by fewer people. However, to determine the level of endangerment or level of vitality, languages have to be assessed. This analysis has to include several evaluative factors. For instance, intergenerational language transmission is one of the most representative factors of language transmission and vitality. Organizations like the UNESCO are actively trying to evaluate the vitality of languages all over the world. Documenting a language is one of the ways to preserve a language from dying. What is more, the assessment helps to build up maintenance and revitalization programmes peculiar to the particular context of the languages that are assessed as endangered to a degree or at risk of endangerment. The thought underpinning this kind of work is that losing a language is losing a part of human knowledge. If the losses are too great, the situation could have a serious impact on language diversity, which is associated with culture and identity, both on an individual and group level.

A particular linguistic situation can be analysed in the city of Rijeka. Rijeka is a multicultural and multilingual city, mostly due to its past, strategic position and role as a port in the Adriatic Sea. Among the many minority languages and dialects spoken, there is an Italian dialect that developed specifically in Rijeka, the Fiuman dialect. The history of the Fiuman dialect is complex to understand since there are not many written documents that can

testify its evolution, even less its origin. Even nowadays, the Fiuman dialect is not richly documented. There are only several dictionaries (cf. Samani 2007; Pafundi 2011) and the research revolving around the dialect is scarce (cf. Lukežić 1993; Rošić 2002; Lukežić 2008; Crnić Novosel and Spicijarić Paškvan 2014). Only in recent years, more and more young researchers are trying to enlighten several aspects of the dialect, especially in relation to its usage, characteristics and Fiuman speakers' attitudes towards their home language (cf. Blecich 2012; Ivošević 2015; Šantić 2016; Festini 2016). Whether the Fiuman dialect is endangered or not, more research is needed to determine its status and vitality level.

The aim of this research was to obtain valuable qualitative information from interviews with the speakers of the Fiuman dialect. To be more precise, semi-structured interviews were used to tackle the speakers' attitudes towards several aspects of use and status of the dialect nowadays. The aim was to obtain information regarding the transmission of the dialect, domains and range of usage, representation of the dialect in the media (television, radio, newspapers) or on the Internet, usage of the dialect for writing and reading, and opinions regarding language education in Fiuman. The interviews permitted to assess specific trends of usage of the dialect as well as to understand the opinions of the speakers in relation to the status and vitality of the dialect and the possibility of setting up maintenance programmes. The data obtained from the research contributes to the overall assessment of the vitality of this minority language spoken in Rijeka. Also, when it comes to setting up possible maintenance and revitalization programmes, the opinions and the needs of the speakers of the dialect should be taken into consideration. Important to mention is that this research tries to determine how well the speakers are acquainted with the representation of the dialect in the media and in the educational sphere. Another important aspect that should not be neglected is related to the use of this minority language for reading and writing. This qualitative research

should give insight on how well the speakers know their language, know about their language, how they use it and if they feel the need to preserve it.

## **2 Linguistic identity of Rijeka**

The official and predominant language spoken in Rijeka, as well as in the entire country, is the standard Croatian language. Nonetheless, it is common for speakers to switch between different language varieties. Crnić Novosel (2016) explains that the citizens in Rijeka use daily at least three different language varieties depending on the communicative situation and purpose of the conversation. In other words, the Croatian standard language and Rijeka's urban speech, a nonstandard language in unofficial use, are among the most common varieties used. However, in their private sphere speakers tend to reach to the language they grew up with. This kind of family language can be a language native to the region. The Chakavian and Fiuman dialects are good examples of language varieties that can be used alongside the standard Croatian language and Rijeka's urban speech by the speakers of Rijeka. Although the standard Croatian language is predominant in most communicative situations, the speakers of Rijeka might use dialects like the Fiuman for personal communication, mostly between family members on a daily basis. Sallabank (2013) confirms that it is common for people around the world to switch between languages, dialects and registers every day. In fact, multilingualism is predominant. What is more, Rijeka is the home of 22 ethnic minorities according to the 2011 census. Especially strong are the representations of Serbs, Bosniaks and Italians, as well as Albanians and Roma. Of course, this fact adds to the already layered linguistic identity of Rijeka.

The main reasons behind Rijeka's cultural and linguistic diversity are its position and colourful past. The city is known as a multicultural seaport situated on the Kvarner Bay and facing the Adriatic. Because of its strategic position, it was contested by many countries in the past. Nowadays, it is a regional centre, more precisely, the centre of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and the idioms spoken in Rijeka interact with the various idioms spoken nearby. What is more, Rijeka is actively promoting its diversity and has recently been elected



European Capital of Culture (ECOC) for the year 2020 with the programme *Port of Diversity*. All these factors add value to the research that tries to analyse and interpret Rijeka's complex heterogeneous linguistic identity.

Insufficient research has been published regarding Rijeka's layered linguistic identity. The Fiuman dialect has been an active player in shaping Rijeka's identity both historically and linguistically. The dialect has been passed on from generation to generation within families. Some speakers might consider this minority language as a mother tongue since they usually learn it from birth. This means that the topic of language and identity can be also analysed on an individual speakers' level. In other words, being in contact with a minority language since an early age can be of relevance for the speakers' identity since the language variety, in this case a dialect, they speak or spoke at home might define them as speakers of a particular language group. As Edwards explains in his work *Language and identity* (2009), language is surely considered as a *marker* at the individual level of identity. The relationship between language and identity in Rijeka could be fertile soil for researchers. What is more, multilingualism and identity are related to the topics of language maintenance, language policies and education. In order to understand the status of the Fiuman dialect and its role as a minority language in Rijeka, an analysis of the context in which it developed and the information documented so far is needed.

### **3 The Fiuman dialect in Rijeka: from its origins to the present days**

The Fiuman dialect has been present on the local territory alongside other languages and dialects for hundreds of years. The history of its origin is, to a degree, problematic. The historian Giovanni Kobler in his work *Memorie per la storia della liburnica città di Fiume* (1896) might be the first one to have pinpointed the problem of how the Fiuman autochthonous idiom came to be. The debate revolves around the fact whether Fiuman developed from the Latin language spoken by Romanised Illyrians in the sixth century or if it developed from the Venetian language during periods when the Republic of Venice was very influential and dominated trades and commerce in these territories. This uncertainty stems from the lack of written historical evidence. However, it can be stated that the Venetian dialect had an impact in shaping the Fiuman dialect. Other languages had also an impact, mostly in terms of lexis and pronunciation. Languages like German, Hungarian, Turkish have also shaped the Fiuman idiom due to historical and political reasons (Bratulić et al. 2015). Also, among the Fiuman speaking group is common to code-switch between the Fiuman dialect and other languages, mostly the Croatian standard language, even in a family setting (Ivošević 2015). What is more, the Fiuman dialect is not the only autochthonous dialect that has been present in Rijeka for hundreds of years. The Fiuman dialect coexisted with the Croatian Chakavian dialect. The first did not wipe out the latter, they simply lost their presence due to natural, social, political causes and they are not used as a mean of communication by the majority of the habitants of the city (Lukežić 1993). Some of the habitants might be even speakers of both dialects, in addition to knowing the standard language in use in Rijeka and other foreign languages. There is, however, a limited number of studies and sources that can be consulted to obtain specific information about the dialects since they have been orally transmitted and not necessarily documented.

Today, the Fiuman dialect is categorized as a Venetan dialects, a member of the family of dialects spoken mainly in the northeast of Italy, in the region of Veneto. More precisely, it is a member of the Eastern branch of Venetan dialects. Among other notable dialects members of this family are the *triestino* spoken in Trieste, which is the capital of the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and two Italian dialects spoken in Croatia: the *istoveneto* spoken in the region of Istria, and the *veneto-dalmata*, spoken in Dalmatia (Bratulić et al. 2015). The Venetian and the Venetan language should not be confused as synonyms since the Venetan language with its dialects is a broader term (Spicijarić Paškvan 2015). The Venetian idiom spoken in the Republic of Venice expanded and influenced the idiom spoken in the cities of the region Veneto, of which Venice is nowadays the centre. Because of the expansion of the Republic of Venice as a prominent maritime and commercial force, its linguistic influence was visible in many cities of the Croatian coast. In other words, the history of the Fiuman dialect is closely related to the Venetian dialect. Already in 1967, the notable sociologist Charles E. Bidwell in his work *Colonial Venetian and Serbo-Croatian in the Eastern Adriatic: A Case Study of Languages in Contact* described the Fiuman dialect as a *colonial venetian* dialect because the Venetian dialect influenced the existing Slavic or Romance languages present on the territory. However, it has to be noted that the context and the form in which the dialect exists nowadays is different from what used to be in the past. (Blecich and Tamaro 2015).

Nowadays, the Fiuman dialect in Rijeka has a restricted number of speakers, approximately 20,000 among the autochthone Croats and various minorities (City of Rijeka Intercultural profile 2016) who use the language predominantly for personal communication in a family setting. Furthermore, it is hard to estimate how many are the speakers of the Fiuman dialect who emigrated abroad, especially after the Second World War when the Fiuman dialect lost much of its presence. The speakers and their descendants might still use

varieties of Fiuman that are, however, different from the one used in Rijeka. In Rijeka, according to Bratulić et al. (2015), the Fiuman dialect is used as a personal language of the descendants of the indigenous Fiuman population dispersed throughout the city and its margins. The dialect is spoken mostly in the neighborhoods of Kozala, Belveder, Mlaka, Potok, Kantrida, Škurinje, Zamet, Turnić or in the Old Town, but it can be even heard in the adjacent towns and villages of Rijeka. In these zones and among participants of different age groups, from oldest to youngest, there might be differences in the realization of Fiuman, but those differences are all manifestations of the same dialect.

What is more, there are not numerous recorded descriptions regarding the linguistic form of the dialect. For instance, Rošić (2002) dealt more extensively with its morphology, phonology and syntax. Dictionaries like Samani's *Il Dialetto fiumano* from 2007 or Pafundi's *Dizionario Fiumano-Italiano, Italiano-Fiumano* from 2011 can be consulted as useful sources of information regarding the linguistic form of the dialect. An overview of the most important characteristics of the Fiuman dialect, as well as an assessment of its current status, has been presented in Bratulić et al. (2015).

One characteristic peculiar to the speakers of the Fiuman dialect is that they are not necessarily of Italian origins or members of the Italian minority in Rijeka (Rošić 2002). However, there is a strong bond between the Fiuman speech community in Rijeka and the Italian culture due to historical, political and sociological reasons. What is more, the Italian minority in Rijeka is an autochthonous minority since it has been present in the city for centuries. Also, there is a widespread use of the dialect among the members of the Italian Community in Rijeka. The Italian Community in Rijeka is one of the 46 Italian Communities in Croatia that promotes the Italian culture through various programmes, cultural and educational. The speakers who identify themselves as *Fiumani* are mostly, but not necessarily, members of the Italian Community in Rijeka.

In Rijeka, there are Italian kindergartens, public schools and undergraduate and graduate Italian studies at the University of Rijeka. There are four Italian primary schools (*Dolac, San Nicolò, Gelsi, Belvedere*) and an Italian secondary school (*Scuola Media Superiore Italiana* known as *Liceo*). Classes are held exclusively in Italian, except for the Croatian language course. However, the knowledge of the Italian language is not a requirement to enrol. In these educational facilities, the Fiuman dialect might be promoted through various programmes, depending on the facility, but is not offered as a subject, nor mandatory or optional. Also, the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka presents plays in Italian through its branch, the Italian drama. There is also the publishing house *EDIT* which publishes newspapers like *La Voce del Popolo* or *Panorama* in Italian. Short literary pieces written in the Fiuman dialect can be found in the annual review *La Tore*, a magazine published by the Italian Community of Rijeka. All aforementioned concepts help create a unique representation of the Fiuman dialect and its cultural significance in Rijeka, a city that has long been the meeting point of different cultures and languages.

#### **4 Minority languages in multilingual settings**

According to Simpson, multilingualism is a fact of life and a characteristics of many inhabited places around the globe. Furthermore, linguistic diversity is accepted and celebrated, but at the same time it can cause tension and debate both in the public and political sphere: "Linguistic diversity is also a potential source of conflict in multilingual societies, particularly when choices have to be made about language use in domains such as government, broadcasting, education and public services" (Simpson 2012: 116). The choices regarding use, status and support of minority languages in multilingual settings lie upon national governments. It is among the roles of every country to regulate, control and adjust laws to their particular linguistic situation. The European Commission, the European Union's politically independent executive arm, promotes linguistic diversity (European Union 2018). Indeed, European Union's multilingualism policy advocates the protection of Europe's rich linguistic diversity and language learning. For instance, *Article 3* of the *Treaty on European Union* advocates the respect of cultural and linguistic diversity and protection of Europe's rich cultural heritage (EUR-Lex 2008). Language learning is needed, among other reasons, because it helps people from different cultures to understand one another. Mutual understanding between different language groups is very important for a Europe that wants to present itself as multicultural and tolerant. This is why the research in the field of multilingualism and language contact is needed. Understanding how language communities are in contact by taking into consideration cultural and linguistic roots of the given situation was also one of the basic aspects of Weinreich's notable work *Languages in Contact* (1953). The book is a pillar text in the field of contact linguistics and it analyses how language communities, rather than languages on an abstract level, influence one another.

In multilingual language communities, there will be some differences in the use and status of the various language spoken. The research in contact linguistics and multilingualism

seems to show that a situation of permanent symmetric multilingualism is improbable. In other words, in situations where the entire community speaks more languages, multilingualism is unsustainable in the long run because it becomes redundant and results in language shift (Hickey 2010). This means that language shift is normal in a language communities that use more than one language. It seems improbable that the speakers will have the same mastery of all varieties and that all the coexisting varieties will be used, represented and learned to an equal degree. This argument, of course, does not exclude that symmetric multilingualism can persist for a long time, but it is improbable that such situation will last forever. Furthermore, it is useful to distinguish between language groups that are native to a particular multilingual setting and the ones that are not. The first are referred to as autochthonous language groups or communities and the latter as allochthonous language groups or communities. In this second group of allochthonous inhabitants, included are both people that came as refugees to inhabit a certain place or people that came as a result of migration (Nelde 2010). According to this division, *Fiumani* in Rijeka are an autochthonous group of speakers. Also, multilingualism can be observed in different forms. Communities where diglossia is present are characterized by social multilingualism. Additionally, multilingualism can be also observed at the individual level. There is, for instance, institutional multilingualism practiced by institutions that offer their service in more than one language like the United Nations or state bilingualism. Usually, the problems that multilingualism raises in different societies are problems revolving around politics, administration and language education. As stated before, each national government has the task to control language use in a country and finance language planning and education, also taking into consideration the promotion of language maintenance of every language present on the territory, including minority languages.

## **5 Endangerment of minority languages**

Not every minority language has to be necessarily endangered. However, the concept of language endangerment and the problems that languages, minority languages in multilingual settings in particular, have to deal with is a topic that has received notable attention in the last decades. Minority languages in multilingual settings coexist in linguistic hierarchies with other languages (Mühlhäusler 2010). Minority and autochthonous languages can possibly thrive in a multilingual setting. Another possible scenario is when minority languages in such multilingual settings gradually lose vitality. The process is not necessarily abrupt. In fact, it can be a very slow and gradual process that can even go unnoticed for a long period. Such situation can perpetuate, and in the end the minority language might be gradually substituted by another, the dominant one. This process is commonly referred to as language shift (Dorian 1982). As opposite to language shift, there is the concept of language maintenance which refers to the use of a minority language despite the number of speakers and other regionally dominant languages (Hornberger 2010).

When it comes to languages, change is normal: "In the life of languages, change is the rule rather than the exception" (Maffi 2002: 1). In other words, the inevitable destiny of every language is change and changes within languages happen naturally. For instance, it is normal that the speakers of different generations within a speech community will speak at least slightly different. However, the growing concern popularized by the work of Krauss (1992), Hale et al. (1992), Grenoble and Whaley (1998), Nettle and Romaine (2000), Crystal (2000), and others, is that languages do die and there is an imminent threat to language diversity in the world. Part of the research from the 1990s until now has been oriented towards raising awareness of forthcoming problems such as the rapid language loss of too many minority and indigenous languages worldwide. Many of these languages are not documented thus, their loss can be seen as irreversible intellectual loss for humanity.



Before becoming obsolete and disappearing completely, a language undergoes a process of vitality loss. For instance, a minority language can lose vitality when the number of speakers decreases, mostly due to the lack of transmission of the language to younger generations, or when the number of domains i.e., functional areas of use becomes very limited or even irrelevant to the speakers. Furthermore, various can be the reasons why speakers stop using or/and transmitting their heritage language and start using another. Commonly, the factors that lead to language endangerment can be distinguished in two types that is, external and internal: "... *external* forces such as military, economic, religious, cultural, or educational subjugation, or it may be caused by *internal* forces, such as a community's negative attitude towards its own language" (UNESCO 2003: 2). More often, language shift is dictated by more than one factor. It can happen that multiple factors influence the shift at the same time. In that case, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between internally and externally motivated change (Hickey 2010). Many scholars, starting with Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977), and Conklin and Lourie (1983), have tried to make a list of all the factors that play a role in language shift and maintenance. The final goal is to obtain a model of language vitality assessment. In more than one case, the factors that have an impact on language maintenance and shift are not confined to linguistic factors only, but there is a whole bund of political, economic, social, cultural and linguistic factor combined together. For instance, institutional support factors through mass media, religion, education or government can all have a great impact on the course of language maintenance. Landweer (2010) points out that it might be more important to observe only some factors and the forces that influence them rather than enumerating a list of all the possible factors. This is because certain factors and the forces have different relevance in different linguistic situations, so it might be more useful to give them special attention since language maintenance is not completely associated with the quantity of the indicators analysed.

Once a model of language assessment has been chosen or once the researcher has chosen the main factors of language vitality assessment, then a thorough analysis follows and the researcher can present the evaluation of the status of vitality of a language. This work is especially important if a language is poorly documented because then, the endangerment, if too severe, leads to language death. Also, if a language is considered endangered it can be found on the list of endangered languages of the world. The UNESCO is surely one of the leading organizations in language vitality assessment and language experts from all around the world have compiled the UNESCO Atlas of languages in danger to raise awareness about the problem of language endangerment guided by the idea to safeguard linguistic diversity. Since assessment of language vitality and speakers' attitudes toward their minority language are the main points of focus of the present thesis, the paragraphs that are to follow will explain in greater detail these key concepts.

## **6 Assessment of language vitality**

There are six major evaluative factors of language vitality to consider when assessing the status of a minority language. They are the intergenerational language transmission, the absolute number of speakers, the proportion of speakers within the total population, the trends in existing language domains, the response to new domains and media, and materials for language education and literacy (UNESCO ad hoc expert group on endangered languages 2003).

The intergenerational language transmission factor refers to the important fact of transmitting the language to younger generations. If younger speakers do not learn the language and the older ones die, a language goes extinct. Otherwise, if speakers of all generations use the language in all domains, the language is safe. Here it is important to note that not only the transmission segment can be analysed, but also in which domains the speakers of all generations use the language.

The absolute number of speakers is another factor. The problem is that only an approximate number can be determined. Furthermore, it can be argued that whatever the number of speakers, it is still relatively small and, because of that, possibly endangered. Another obstacle in counting arises when speakers of a language group merge with other language groups. Sometimes it can be hard to set the boundaries, especially in multicultural settings.

When it comes to the proportion of speakers within the total population of speakers, researchers try to calculate if all the speakers of a community use their language. The factor that includes the trends in existing language domains is also significant because it indicates with whom, where and the range of topics for which a language is used. For instance, if a language has a restricted use that corresponds to the use in one or two domains, on rare occasions with few individuals then the level of endangerment is alarming and near

extinction. A good thing for a language community would be to expand their minority language to new domains. A very good example would be the expansion on the Internet. Unfortunately, expansion in new domains does not happen often or not extensively. Moreover, new domains in all the media, education or workplace should be taken into consideration.

Another related factor is language literacy, which is associated with social and economic development, since books and materials on various topics and for various ages are needed. However, many languages are transmitted only orally and there is no established orthography.

In addition to these six informative factors there are also three important factors that help researcher in assessing language vitality. They are the governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies (including official status and use of the language considered), the community members' attitudes toward their own language and the amount and quality of documentation of the analysed language. Of course, when assessing a particular language situation it is not mandatory to tackle all these factors, but rather examine the ones that are important for that particular situation. It is up to the researcher to determine which aspects are of particular impact. Furthermore, for each factor there is a scale that goes from zero to five. Also, each number has its own descriptors, which makes the assessment standardized and easier to compare between different minority languages. Once the assessment is done, the language can be also enlisted in the Atlas of the World's languages in danger which provides a useful overview of the status of endangered languages all over the world. The status of each language can also change and more languages can be added, so it is important to run continuous updates.

## 7 Language planning and policies

The assessment of complementary factors important for a specific linguistic situation leads also to the development of suitable projects and activities that will help preserve a language if needed. Such activities enter in the domain of language planning. An accurate definition and description of language planning is hard to obtain without referring to the numerous examples of language planning observed through history. For instance, Cooper (1989) enumerates four very different situations of language guided change to prove that a good definition of language planning should encompass very different language situations. First of all is the foundation of the Academie francaise which is impossible to explain without referring to the social context of that time. Second is the promotion of Hebrew in Palestine. Third and fourth are the American feminist movement's campaign against sex bias in language and the Ethiopian mass literacy campaign respectively. Following Cooper, a good definition should encompass the common factors of different language planning examples. Furthermore, the definition should try to describe and specify "who plans what for whom and how " (Cooper 1989: 31). Who can, for instance, refer to authoritative agencies, governments or even individuals with great influence. What can refer to many activities from the modification of language forms, promotion of language use or language teaching. As far as the ones toward whom the plans are oriented, they might or might not accept the plans depending on the conditions. In practice, when there is actual language planning, all this key factor should be precisely defined in relation to the linguistic situation at hand and every action should be goal directed. On a larger scale, the general goal of language planning is finding solutions to language problems (Hinkel 2011). Also, language communities can learn from their good practices. The goal would be to learn from each other and implement useful projects or policies but with changes to the particular context and the respective challenges.

Nowadays, the government of each country has to take decisions regarding language planning and education.

As stated in the previous chapters, the government of each country has to make decisions regarding their own language policies. The attitudes of the citizens can have an impact on those decisions, especially on a local level. For instance, the research of the attitudes can reveal what the indicators of success or failure of the implemented language plans and programmes are and give valuable insights for future projects. Of course, research work in any field, from sociolinguistic to comparative studies, can help researchers understand better specific language situations. Hinkel (2011) identifies language surveys and ethnographic observation as two methods used in language planning research which generate a significant body of data. All that said, the corpus of literature in language policy and planning publication so far has a substantial number of works with historical focus. This might be due to the fact that describing the developments in the course of the life of a language can help to understand the current status of a language (Baldauf 2010).

In settings where a fair number of speakers is bilingual or multilingual, the status and usage of minority languages could be particularly interesting to analyse taking into consideration that there might be less information regarding the language and its speakers. Furthermore, language policy and planning open up many questions regarding education. One of them could be how to handle bilingual education of minority language groups. Surely, bilingual education is a vast topic to discuss. That is why in the next chapter only some segments that are relevant for this thesis will be discussed.

## **8 Minority languages and education**

The education of bilinguals can result in various outcomes. For instance, it can boost preservation and revitalization of minority languages in a multilingual setting. At other times, it is a means of assimilation of indigenous and immigrant minorities. However, the education of bilinguals is not related only to the family sphere where parents transmit the language to their children. There is a variety of political, economic, social, cultural and educational factors that have an impact on language shift and maintenance. Baker (2012) considers four major perspectives that influence the education of bilinguals. One of them is the economic perspective where a cost benefit analysis is made of the expenses and advantages of developing bilingual programmes in schools. Another viewpoint is related to the political sphere. Politics plays a crucial role, since governments and politicians have a strong impact on the shaping of educational programmes for minority language speakers. There is also the pedagogical perspective which entails all the controversies related to receiving a bilingual education in schools. Language planners, on the other hand, see bilingual education as a tool of language maintenance and a tool for reversing language shift. Cultivating the language throughout the school system and through social and cultural activities, as well as, using the language for economic purposes boost the blossoming of a minority language. Even though the transmission of the minority language within families is the most important tool of preservation, it is not enough if the goal is for the language to thrive. As far as education in school is considered, there is a difference between classrooms where bilingualism is fostered by the curriculum and classroom where bilingual children are present, but bilingualism is not fostered by the curriculum. Each case has to be approached differently by educators and can have different repercussions on language maintenance.

## 9 Ethnolinguistic vitality

The attitudes of the speakers of a minority and/or endangered languages are important for language planning and creating efficient policies of maintenance. For instance, attitudes can help us understand language shift and the problems revolving around the usage and/or status of a language. Many can be the ways of collecting information regarding speakers' attitudes: discourse analysis, sociolinguistic questionnaires and interviews with the speakers of the researched language group are just some examples (Sallabank 2013). Furthermore, the concepts of language maintenance and language shift are closely associated with the interdisciplinary study of language group's vitality that is, *ethnolinguistic vitality*. Ethnolinguistic vitality is by definition "...a group's ability to maintain and protect its existence in time as a collective entity with a distinctive identity and language (Ehala 2010: 1)". It entails transmitting the language and complementary cultural practices, and it is associated with social cohesion, attachment to the collective identity of the speech group, as well as, with the work of social institutions. Minority speech communities with low vitality are prone to assimilation by the majoritarian speech community, whereas speech communities with high vitality actively work on the protection of the groups' interests in intergroups settings.

A speech community could be presented with the guidelines to assess common factors of language vitality. In this way, precious information about the language would be obtained directly from its speakers. The results could indicate if the speakers feel the need to take action in order to maintain, document or revitalize their language. In other words, if the speech community expresses a strong desire to change the language shift they could seek help from relevant agencies and engage in various project and activities. Furthermore, official bodies could be the ones who want to assess the status and vitality of one or more languages



on a certain territory. In this case, the evaluator is external to the speech communities (UNESCO 2003).

## **10 The study**

### **10.1 Aims**

The overarching aim of this study is to analyse the attitudes of the speakers of the Fiuman dialect. More precisely, the aim is to analyse their attitudes towards the intergenerational transmission of the dialect, current speaking trends and linguistic variation, writing and reading in the dialect, representation of the dialect in the media and the status of the dialect. This last aspect entails attitudes toward the quality of documentation of the dialect, quality of institutional language maintenance programmes and quality of materials provided for learning the dialect. Overall, the aim is to understand the attitudes of the speakers in relation to the vitality that is, the level of possible endangerment of the dialect. In order to identify the level of possible endangerment, several factors or subtopics, which are mentioned above, were identified. The factors of interest were selected in relation to the context and previous research in the field. Furthermore, the study focuses on documenting how the speakers describe the use of the Fiuman dialect and what they think of the current situation of this minority language, as well as understanding their needs and desires in relation to the maintenance of the dialect.

### **10.2 Research questions**

This particular qualitative research study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Are the older generations transmitting the Fiuman dialect to younger generations of speakers? If not, what are the reasons for non-transmission of the dialect?
2. Is the Fiuman dialect evenly spoken by all generations?
3. What are the domains and frequency of the use of the Fiuman dialect (in relation to Italian and Croatian)?

4. Is the Fiuman dialect used for reading and writing?
5. Is the Fiuman dialect present in the media?
6. What are the speakers' attitudes towards the status and maintenance of the Fiuman dialect?

### **10.3 Participants**

There is a total of 18 participants involved in the study. The age of the participants ranges from 24 to 85. This is why the participants are divided into three categories: a) the elder generation comprises participants aged between 75 to 85 years; b) the middle generation consists of participants aged between 39 and 48; c) in the young generation, the participants are aged between 24 and 26 years.

The elder generation comprises participants who are already retired and might or might not have children and grandchildren to whom they have decided to pass the language on. The middle generation comprises six working-class participants who have children. The young generation consists of participants who are either university students or, have recently obtained their degree and started working, and do not have children.

All the participants are bilingual or multilingual. They were born in Rijeka and learnt the Fiuman in a family setting from their childhood. All the participants were registered as members of the Italian Community in Rijeka, although they are not necessarily active members any more.

	Elder generation (75-85)	Middle generation (39-48)	Young generation (24-26)	GENDER
P A R T I C I P A N T S	E1	M1	Y1	f
	E2	M2	Y2	f
	E2	M3	Y3	f
	E4	M4	Y4	m
	E5	M5	Y5	m
	E6	M6	Y6	m

Since the participants are grouped by age, the results obtained from the interviews will be compared between generations. Furthermore, each category comprises three female and three male participants, which enables the comparison by gender.

#### **10.4 Research method**

For the purpose of this research, individual semi-structured interviews were chosen among the methods commonly used to carry out qualitative research (cf. Dörnyei 2007). A semi-structured interview is a particular method of research commonly used in sociolinguistics and the social sciences that differs from a structured interview because the researcher does not have to follow rigorously the questions that have been prepared, so the structure is more open and the respondents have more space to share their ideas (Edwards and Holland 2013). Opposite to unstructured interviews, a set of question has to be prepared in advanced, but it is used as a framework. In this particular case, 25 questions with sub-questions were composed and used as guidelines for the interviewer. The questions inquired into the topics of intergenerational transmission of the Fiuman dialect, the use of the dialect for writing and reading, attitudes toward the presence of the dialect in the media and attitudes toward its endangerment, maintenance and education.

The participants were contacted via phone, e-mail or Facebook and asked if they were willing to participate. It was easy to find speakers of this language group since the researcher herself is a member of the minority group that speaks Fiuman. According to Edwards and Holland (2013), when it comes to sampling, it is common for researchers to gather participant they are already in contact with to some extent. Such sample of participants, available by means of accessibility, it is referred to as convenience sample. For instance, educational practitioners often undertake educational research among their students.

The participants could choose the location of the interviews (e.g.: household, office, etc.). Prior to the interviews, the participants were informed about the topic and scope of the research. Furthermore, the participants were guaranteed anonymity and were interviewed only after giving oral consent. Each participant was informed that the interview, lasting for approximately 45 minutes, would be audio recorded. Also, it was explained that a set of

questions would be used as a framework, but the participants could elaborate on certain aspects and ideas, choose not to answer or withdraw from the study at any point. Finally, the researcher provided the participants with her contact, in case they wanted to be informed about the results.

Each participant could choose the language of the interview. The participants were given three options: they could choose between the Fiuman dialect, the standard Italian and standard Croatian language.

A pilot study was conducted with three participants. One participant from each age group was interviewed. According to Dörnyei (2007) a pilot study is one of the essentials of launching a study. In this case, the pilot study was used to see if the interview questions were clear enough and, more importantly, if they were in line with all of the aims and research questions. However, the questions did not need adjustment, and the data gathered during the pilot study were analysed (transcribed, coded and categorized) and the obtained information was included in the results. After the pilot, fifteen more participants were interviewed.

All the interviews lasted between thirty five minutes and an hour and fifteen minutes. A mobile application named *Voice Recorder* provided on a Samsung Galaxy 7 smartphone was used for recording. After every interview, the recording was transferred and stored on a computer under a code to guarantee the anonymity of the participants. The researcher re-listened to the interviews, transcribed and coded them. This process was firstly done individually for every interview to find patterns and categorize the relevant topics. Once this task was complete, the results were compared and analysed in relation to the relevant literature in the field. Extracts of the interviews are presented in the section *Results* of this thesis and were transcribed using Jeffersonian Transcription Notation (Jefferson 1984).

## 11 Results

Out of 18 participants, 14 participants chose the Fiuman dialect as the language of the interview, one female member of the young generation chose to speak in Italian (Y3), and three participants chose to speak in Croatian. To be more precise, two male members of the young generation (Y5, Y6) and one male member of the middle generation (M6) chose Croatian as the designated language. In other words, all the participants of the elder generation, most of the participants of the middle generation (five out of six), and half of the participants of the young generation chose to speak in the Fiuman dialect while the others opted in majority for Croatian or Italian. Among the participants of the young generation, there was the biggest percentage of deviation from speaking in the Fiuman dialect. The participants were keen to explain their choices.

### Extract 1

E2: mi posso in tute le lingue far l'intervista (2.0) ma facciamo in fiuman perché xe la mia madrelingua

### Extract 2

Y5: ajmo na hrvatskom (3.0) nisam pričao fijumanski od kad sam upisao srednju školu (.)  
samo  
s mamom doma

### Extract 3

E3: idemo na talijanski tj. talijansko-fijumanski (2.0) pričam stalno talijanski na faksu pa sam se navikla

M2: MA CERTO CHE PARLEMO IN FIUMAN (.) in che lingua ti voleri parlar del fuman  
se non in fuman

Extract 4

Y6: svejedno mi je (.) koji god jezik ti hoćeš

Most of the participants said that they could speak all three languages. For the majority, the language of the interview was not important because they were multilingual. They chose the Fiuman dialect if they felt comfortable speaking it, this entails that they can express their thoughts and opinions in the dialect, and because it was the topic of the research. When asked about all the languages they speak, the participants reported to speak at least two languages, Croatian and Italian. Furthermore, the participants when mentioning the Fiuman dialect used recurrently the word Italian instead. Hence, the interviewer had to ask for clarification during the interviews.

Extract 5

E4: mi parlo italian de quando son nato

I: italian o fuman↑

E4: fuman

Extract 6

I: quante lingue ti parli↑

M1: due (.) italian e croato

I: e fuman↑

M1: si (.) questo pensavo (.) fuman e croato



I: e italian ti sa↑

M1: non so proprio el vero italian (.) se i turisti me parla in italian mi rispondo in fiuman (.)  
ma se capimo

Extract 7

M4: a casa parlo sempre in italian

I: la pensa in fiuman↑

M4: si si (.) fiuman.

I: e la sa anche el italian↑

M4: si (.) go studià in facoltà el italian come materia opzionale

When asked which language is predominant in their life, ten out of 18 participants said the Croatian standard language because it is the official language and it is used in most communicative situations (the workplace, with friends and neighbours, in stores). However, the Fiuman dialect is used with family members on a daily basis. The participants of the middle generation said to have several friends with whom they can speak in the Fiuman dialect (one or two, on average), even though it is more common to use the dialect to speak with family member. Among the young generation two out six participants said they spoke the dialect with their friends. The elder generations has mostly contacts with family members, but if they meet friends they reported to speak in the Fiuman dialect.

Among the elder generation, four out of six participants (two female, E1 and E2, and two male, E4 and E5) stated that the Fiuman dialect was predominant in their life. They always spoke Fiuman with their families, friends and acquaintances that know the dialect, and still do. In the middle generation, one-third of the participants, one female and one male (M2, M5), listed the Fiuman dialect as predominant, mostly because they speak it with all family

members on a daily basis and have friends with whom they can communicate in the language. When it comes to the young generation, one female participant (Y3) stated that Italian was the predominant language in her life because she lives and studies in Italy. Another female participant of this generation (Y2) stated that both the Fiuman dialect and the Italian standard language were predominant because the first is spoken with family and friends, and the latter was spoken during her studies in Italy and nowadays in Rijeka. The other participants of the young generation, the remaining two-thirds, stated that the Croatian language was predominant in their everyday life because the Fiuman dialect and the Italian language have a restricted use. The Fiuman dialect is used only with a few family members, and the Italian standard language was spoken at school, but not anymore. The Croatian language is used for their current education at a University level, in the workplace, with the vast majority of friends and acquaintances.

#### Extract 8

Y6: ma samo kad nazovem mamu pričam fijumanski (.) ostalo sve hrvatski (.) ma u biti i tad ponekad se prebacim na hrvatski

Several participants were exposed to more than one dialect growing up. This means that alongside the Fiuman dialect, they were in contact with the Chakavian dialect through family ties, but to a lesser extent (E5, M2, Y2). The participants that were exposed to the Chiakavian dialect can understand it, but they do not feel comfortable speaking it because they are not used to since they used other languages more often while growing up.

Extract 9

Y2: unico me dispiaze che el papà non parlava in ciakavo po non lo go imparà (.) ma dei noni sento.

I: ma ti lo capisi↑

Y2: capiso ma saria strano parlar (.) ti capisi tuto ma non ti ga mai provà

Extract 10

E5: la mama parlava ciakavo ma la ga imparà fiuman del papà

I: e con ti la parlava ciakavo↑

E5: croato

The Fiuman dialect was the language the participants of all three generations used predominantly in their household while growing up. Most of the participants, 15 out of 18, said that their mother tongue was the Fiuman dialect. The remaining participants, half of the participants of the young generation (Y1,Y3,Y6), explained that they consider both the Croatian and the Fiuman dialect to be their mother tongues since both languages were learnt from birth. More precisely, one parent would speak in Croatian to them and the other one in the Fiuman dialect.

Extract 11

M4: el papà me parlava in croato e la mama in italian

All the participants stated that they had acquired the Fiuman dialect in a family setting. Out of 18 participants, 14 participants acquired Fiuman from the mother's side, three participants acquired it from the father's side (E5, M2, Y1) and only one male participant of

the elder generation had parents who were both Fiumani (E6). Also, the participants explained that the parent who did not know the Fiuman dialect learnt it at least passively. They became able to interact using simple short sentences and one became an active speakers.

#### Extract 12

M2: sì el papà me ga imparà fiuman (.) tuti parlemo solo la mama no (.) ma la capise

#### Extract 13

I: el papà capise fiuman↑

Y4: el capise tuto quando parlemo mi e la mama (.) el risponde con si e no (.) ma mi parlo con lui in croato

Grandparents were also reported to be important for the transmission of the dialect, for several participants the most important.

#### Extract 14

M2: si con la nona sempre parlavo (.) ela me ga imparà più de tuti

#### Extract 15

Y6: i sada s nonom pričam najviše

Moreover, the participants of the elder generation explained that the Fiuman dialect was the dominant language they used in their childhood. Only when enrolled in elementary

school they started to learn the Italian and the Croatian standard languages. They underlined that when they were young it was more common to speak the Fiuman dialect with people in the street and stores, with neighbours, etc. They described this language situation in comparison to the past.

#### Extract 16

F2: el fiuman parlavimo a casa sempre (.) proprio sempre (4.0) a scola go imprerà el italian

#### Extract 17

F2: parlavimo fiuman con la mama (.) papa (.) vicini (.) amici

I: e le altre lingue↑

F2: ma solo fiuman (.) solo un poco de croato e dopo a scola go impara le regole del italian e del croato (3.0) ma la scola era italiana

Conversely, the participants of the middle and young generations used the dialect to a lesser extent in their childhood. The use was limited mostly to contacts with family members in the same household. However, all three generations because all the participants learnt the Fiuman dialect at home and only when enrolled in an Italian kindergarten or school they started learning the standard language. The results indicate that the Fiuman dialect was used more frequently before school, when Italian as a language of instruction and Croatian as both the official language in Croatia and the language of instruction, started prevailing. In Italian-medium schools, where they could meet Fiuman speakers more easily than in Croatian-medium schools, the speakers usually decided to speak Croatian anyway with them anyway.

#### Extract 18

Y5: išli smo u talijansku školu (.) ali uvijek smo pričali na hrvatskom međusobno kad nije bila nastava

I: a šta sa onim prijateljima koji si znao da su Fijumani↑

Y5: i snjima sam pričao hrvatski (2.0) ali mislim da su oni možda međusobno pričali fijumanski

According to the participants, the Croatian standard language is predominantly used in communication between co-workers in the workplace, but it is considered useful to know Italian. The Italian standard, and sometimes the Fiuman dialect, is used only if they are employed in institutions closely related to the Italian culture like Italian-medium schools, the Italian Community, the embassy, just to name a few. The participants of the young generation also testified that they heard professors talk between themselves in the Fiuman dialect in schools. However, classes were held exclusively in Italian and the professors spoke in Italian to the pupils.

#### Extract 19

I: in che lingua parlé in lavor↑

M5: in croato

I: e fiuman o Italian↑

M5: sempre te vien ben saper una lingua in più, per non se usa (.) solo croato

#### Extract 20

Y6: u školi znaju pričati međusobno fijumanski profesori (.) i moja mama isto (.) ona radi u školi

The participants' answers indicate that the middle and young generations use the dialect less in comparison the elder generation F who were used to use the dialect on a daily base during their entire lives not only in a family setting but also with neighbours, acquaintances, friends they met in the streets, etc. On the other hand, members of the middle and young generation described cases where even close members of the same family, who usually use the Fiuman dialect among themselves, tend to switch to Croatian. This happens more often between members of the youngest generation.

#### Extract 21

M2: mi parlo con la mia fia fiuman e la mia sorela parla con la sua fia in fiuman

I: e quando ve incontré parlate tute in Fiuman↑

M2: si con la mia sorela (.) ma certe volte le picie incomincia parlar in croato

I: e con voi due in che lingua le parla↑

M2: da mi le me risponde in fiuman e dopo le continua in croato tra de se (2.0) ma solo certe volte così

Also, participants of the young and middle generations reported that they tend to switch to the Croatian standard language if in their speaking group there is at least one speaker who does not know Fiuman. This means that even if there is only one Croatian speaker among five Fiuman speakers, the Fiuman speaking group would switch immediately to speaking in Croatian, even though they would be a majority in that case.

#### Extract 22

I: e con i amici ti parli mai in fiuman↑

Y2: si parlemo (5.0) però se semo in grupo e vien un croato incomincemo subito parlar tuti in croato

I: come mai↑

Y2: non so (.) non doveria esser così (.) se saria un grupo de croati e vegneria un fiuman (.) non se incominceria parlar in fiuman

The range of the topics in the Fiuman dialect varies. The participants said to speak about everyday topics in their household (e.g. cooking, school, retelling what happened during the day, etc.). Some of the participants, primarily participants of the young generation, have the impression that the Fiuman dialect has a restricted vocabulary. Most of them would not feel comfortable speaking about technical subjects because there is a lack of technical words. Other participants, primarily participants of the elder generation, said they had the impression of being able to speak about everything in Fiuman. Among the middle generation, the participants generally had the impression of being able to speak about most subjects, however they were not use to do it. They said their conversations in the Fiuman dialect revolve mostly about everyday topics.

Extract 23

M5: come ti parlerà ad esempio de ingegneria↑ te manca stručni rječnik

The participants were also asked to provide some example sentences in the Fiuman dialect. The participants gave examples of everyday sentences and topics. Code-switching was noted. Among the participants of the young generation, the researcher noticed the use of words not only from Croatian or Italian, but words like *ok* or *laptop* which come from English.



Extract 24

M4: dove xe le chiave↑

Extract 25

E6: meti te scaldar la minestra

Extract 26

Y1: Tuto xe ok (.) va ben

The participants were asked if they ever noticed that they switched languages while talking. They said it was a common and normal thing. They knew they were doing it on a daily base. If they did not remember a word in the Fiuman dialect they would code-switch and use a Croatian word in most cases. Code-switching between Fiuman and Croatian is noted in the speech samples. Also, code-switching between the Fiuman and the Italian language has been detected, but to a lesser extent that is, it was encountered in a fewer number of participants. More precisely, it was common for one female participant of the young generation (Y3) and one female participant from the elder generation (E2). As the reason for code-switching, the participants said to use the first word that comes to their minds.

Extract 27

E3: devo pagar i računi

Extract 28

Y3: frequento la facoltà di farmacia

The participants of all three generation used similar adjectives to describe the Fiuman language, *familiare* (usual) and *caldo* (warm) being the most common ones. Some of the other adjectives and words used to describe it were: *dolce* (sweet), *prestigioso* (prestigious), *antico* (old), *simpatico* (nice), *patrimonio* (heritage), etc.

The participants expressed that they do not usually read or write in the Fiuman dialect. If they write, they write short text messages to their parents, or post-it notes on the fridge. Participants of the elder generation said to write postcards in the Fiuman dialect to their family members who emigrated abroad. The participants who use social media, mostly participants of the young or middle generation, sometimes write messages on Facebook in the Fiuman dialect, if they send messages to their family members and friends. In the past, they report they did not write more. The dialect was transmitted orally and some participants even expressed the feeling they are not sure how to write in the Fiuman dialect.

Extract 29

M5: po non xe regole in Fiuman (.) penso (.) forse xe regole ma mi non le so

Extract 30

M1: ti ti me ga deto che xe se scrive con la x (.) mi scrivevo con la z

Only participants of the young generation said to know some rules because these rules were mentioned by their teacher in elementary school. All the participants of the young generation attended an Italian-medium elementary school. They recall not having the Fiuman dialect as a subject, nor mandatory or optional, but rather being offered to participate in school plays or poetry reading in the Fiuman dialect. These and similar activities were completely optional and not all the pupils were involved. However, all the pupils were

introduced to the dialect. They remembered one of the rules mentioned was not to write double letters when writing words. Another rule they recalled was to write the form of the first person of the verb to be like *xe* not *è* like in the Italian standard language. The participants of the elder generation also attended an Italian-medium school, but they do not remember being taught about the Fiuman dialect, rather being taught about the Italian standard language. Among the participants of the middle generation, only two male participants (M5, M6) attended an Italian-medium school and they do not remember being taught about the Fiuman dialect.

When it comes to reading, the participants said they are not usually in contact with texts written in the Fiuman dialect. Some of them said to have literary texts (books or magazines) written in the Fiuman dialect and stored at home (E4, E5 M2, Y2), but they were mostly unable to recall the titles. The participants said that there must be printed texts, books or journals, but they did not consult them. With the exception of one participant (Y2), the participants did not know if there are dictionaries of the Fiuman dialect. They had the feeling there must be a dictionary, but did not know which one or who wrote it. The researcher asked the participants if they could name the name of magazines or periodical published in the Fiuman dialect, if there were any, and many participants mentioned the publishing house *EDIT* as being in charge of publishing text in Italian and in the Fiuman dialect. The participants started to mention interchangeably periodicals written in the Italian standard and the Fiuman language.

Extract 31

I: ti me sa dir el nome de certi giornali in fiuman↑

M4: la Voce (.) Panorama (.) La Tore

The participants think the Fiuman dialect is represented by the mass media, but when asked to provide examples of TV or radio shows in Fiuman they were unable to do so with certainty. Independently from their age, they mentioned Radio Rijeka as radio station and Kanal Ri as a TV channel respectively as producers of content in the Italian language and possibly in the Fiuman dialect. Many participants mentioned they heard the news in Italian on Radio Rijeka and said they liked this kind of bilingual context that is, to have the news both presented in Croatian and Italian. However, most of the participants do not listen to the radio or watch the TV, even though they approve the idea of having more content in the Fiuman dialect.

Extract 32

I: ti senti el fiuman in radio o television↑

E1: si (.) ti senti in radio (.) ti ga el telegiornale in italian

I: in italian o in fiuman↑

E1: credo in italian

Participants of the elder generation generally listen to the radio and watch television, but do not use the Internet or social media (with the exception of one female participant E3). On the other hand, half of the participants of the middle generation use the Internet and social media (M2, M3, M5) and said to have seen and read content online in Fiuman. Some of them mentioned Facebook groups, but were not able to recall the exact name. All the participants of the young generation use the Internet and social media, but only one participant said to have seen and read content online in Fiuman that is, online articles written in the Fiuman dialect (Y2).

The participants were also asked to approximately estimate their knowledge of the Fiuman dialect in comparison to other languages they speak (like Croatian and Italian). Their average overall impression is that they know the Fiuman dialect, but the Fiuman dialect has a

restricted vocabulary and use. This is why the participants of the young generation expressed they knew Croatian better than the Fiuman dialect. The middle generation said they knew both the Fiuman dialect and the Croatian language equally well. The participants of the elder generations said they knew the Fiuman dialect (Italian) even better than Croatian. Once again, the words Italian and Fiuman were used interchangeably among all the generations, especially with the elder generation, but also with the other generations, and the researcher had to ask for clarification. Furthermore, the participants explained that if they had learned Italian at school they knew it, but if they had studied at a Croatian university or worked in a Croatian setting surrounded by Croatian friends, they lost proficiency in the Italian language. On the contrary, if they studied in Italy or used Italian for work, they said to be more proficient in Italian than Croatian. A participant from the young generation explained to have lost proficiency in speaking in the Fiuman dialect because she speaks mostly Italian in her life. For the participants it was hard to compare the knowledge they have of a standardized language with the dialect, because the dialect does not have so many rules, in their opinions, and it is spoken by feeling, without overthinking what rule to follow, what word is the right one, and so on. The participants also did not know much about the history of the dialect. They said the history of the dialect is mostly related to the Italian presence and influence in Rijeka.

Most of the participants think the dialect is an endangered language. To be more precise, 17 out of 18 participants expressed this attitude. The principal reason is that the participants feel there are less and less speakers of the Fiuman dialect in Rijeka. The *Fiumani* are heard only here and there, and they are usually elderly people. Younger people use it less according to the participants' opinions. Also, the dialect is heard less in the streets.

Extract 33

I: dove ti senti parlar ancora el fiuman↑

E6: in autobus (.) in piazza (.) ma meno che prima

Extract 34

I: ti credi che el fiuman xe una lingua a rischio↑

M1: mi credo che el xe in pericolo (.) che el sparirà perché sempre meno gente lo parla (.) ma non ancora

The participants themselves, five participants from the young generation (Y1, Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6) and three participants from the middle generation (M2, M4, M6) expressed the feeling they use the dialect less than in the past. The participants of the young generation listed as a reason for speaking less the fact that they are not as much at home as they were when they were younger, which disables them to speak their home language. Both the middle and young generation said they have fewer relatives with whom they can speak the dialect. The participants noticed that the lack of usage results in vocabulary problems since it is easier to forget words used in the Fiuman dialect, and consequently code-switch.

Extract 35

Y1: parlavo sempre con la nona (.) e con el papà (.) ma adeso noi xe più po non go con chi parlar tanto (3.0) la mama parla croato

Extract 36

Y4: non me posso ricordar de molte parole perché quasi sempre parlo croato (.) baš me manca le parole

Also, when trying to answer the question who the Fiumani are exactly, many participants said the term *Fiumani* refers to the *veci Fiumani*, older generations of inhabitants who used and still use the dialect actively. Especially the young generation, with the exception of one participant from this generation (Y2), define themselves as a mix of different languages and cultures, but not proper Fiumani, because they speak rarely Fiuman only in with a restricted number of participants (e.g. only the mother and her parents). From the middle generation, half of the participants did say to be both Fiuman and Croatian (M1, M3, M6). Among the answers enlisted for what being a *Fiuman* means, the participants mentioned speaking the Fiuman dialect, being part of a minority, being connected with Rijeka's history and Italian culture as defining characteristics. When the participants were asked where we can find most of *Fiumani* nowadays most of the answers were surrounded by preoccupied comments for the future of the dialect, even though the participants do not think the end of the dialect is near.

Extract 37

I: dove ti pol incontrar i fiumani↑

E2: solo in cimitero

When asked in which parts of the city live or are usually heard the Fiumani, most of the participants mentioned Kozala, Belveder and the city center. However, many noted that it is hard to locate them since they migrated a lot. According to the elder participants, many Fiumani can be found abroad in America, Australia, Canada. If we look closer, the Fiumani can also be found in Kastav and Bakar and other places nearby the city of Rijeka. This is also the reason why some participants said there are different types of the Fiuman dialect because the location of the household can influence the way of speaking.

The participants unanimously said that something should be done to maintain and promote the dialect, even though they never thought too much about it. They recognize it is hard to establish who, to what extent to intervene and how. In other words, they are not sure what kind of maintenance and promotion programmes should be set up. Their opinions regarding introducing the Fiuman dialect as a subject in Italian-medium schools is mostly negative or uncertain because they feel the curriculum is already too demanding for the pupils. Another argument mentioned was that not every child attending an Italian-medium school is a speaker of the Fiuman dialect. However, they support other actions like optional workshops, short courses, plays in schools or optional courses at higher educational levels. They support also promotional activities and activities for adults that are interested in learning and communicating using the dialect. The participants mentioned the Italian Community of Rijeka and bodies or institutions for language protections in Rijeka as the ones who should come up with maintenance programmes.

The speakers of the Fiuman dialect have generally a positive attitude towards their language. According to their answers, they consider the dialect to be their heritage and are proud of knowing an additional language. Also, they do not feel the dialect is looked down to for being a minority language. During their lives in Rijeka, they encountered mostly neutral attitudes from the inhabitants of Rijeka who are not speakers of the dialect. Some of them experienced situations where the attitudes of non-speakers of the Fiuman dialect were very positive towards them, others can recall one or two episodes where they were insulted for speaking the Fiuman dialect (Italian).

Extract 38

I: što drugi ljudi iz Rijeke koji nisu govornici fijumanskog misle o dijalektu↑

Y6: nikog nije briga



Extract 39

M6: čak su mi govorili prijatelji da sam glup sto ne pričam više talijanski (.) mislim  
fijumanski

## 12 Discussion

The participants expressed concern about the future of the Fiuman dialect and think that it is endangered. The main reason is that younger generations do not use the dialect as much as older generations. This study confirms that the Fiuman dialect is mainly restricted to a household use to talk about everyday topics with family members (cf. Crnić Novosel and Spicijarić Paškavan 2014). Following the UNESCO scale of language vitality (UNESCO 2003), the researcher would rate the dialect as *unsafe* in terms of intergenerational language transmission, the most commonly used factor for the assessment of language vitality. In other words, young speakers still learn the Fiuman dialect as their first language, but their interactions are restricted to a specific household domain. This results are in line with Bratulić et al. (2015).

Most of the participants attended an Italian elementary school, and an Italian or Croatian secondary school and university, where standard Italian and Croatian are languages of instruction, which led to an even more restricted use of the Fiuman dialect. In the educational sphere, the participants are not generally keen on introducing the Fiuman dialect as a mandatory subject, and are sceptical towards introducing it as an optional subject because of the already demanding school curriculum. Furthermore, they are not acquainted with materials for language education and literacy like, for instance, dictionaries about the Fiuman dialect or books. However, education in the minority language is vital for language vitality (UNESCO 2003).

All the Fiuman participants said they tended to code-switch with the standard Croatian language, although older participants tend to code-switch less than younger participants. Also, the participants of all generation sometimes use words from standard Italian, but to a lesser

degree than Croatian words. Participants of the young generation also reported to use English words and phrases in their everyday communication, even when they speak in the dialect.

The participants of the younger generation do not regard themselves as Fiumani to the same degree as older generations of Fiuman speakers, who used to communicate in the dialect more frequently and not only within a household setting. They rarely speak the Fiuman dialect with their friends who also speak the dialect at home, and switch to the Croatian language even when speaking with family members. Nonetheless, they are keen to pass the Fiuman dialect to their children the same way they were taught the language, simultaneously with Croatian since birth using the *one person one language method* where one parent speaks the dialect and the other speaks Croatian. In the interviewed sample, rarely are both parents speakers of the Fiuman dialect. There are cases where the Croatian speaking parent learns to speak in Fiuman, at least passively. Still, a common scenario sees the Fiuman dialect passed from the mother's side, whereas the father speaks Croatian or its Chakavian dialect. In those cases, where more there is contact with more than one dialect, the participants report that the Fiuman dialect is the predominant dialect, whereas they develop only passive knowledge of the Chakavian dialect, and do not use it for communication

The Fiuman dialect is used almost exclusively for oral interaction. Participants said that writing in Fiuman is mostly restricted to texting, and, when it comes to the oldest generation, to sending postcards to relatives that migrated abroad.

## 13 Conclusion

The thesis presents the results obtained from sociolinguistic qualitative research whose aim was to describe the attitudes that the speakers of the Fiuman dialect present towards the usage of the dialect in Rijeka. Since research in this field is limited, the thesis at hand tries to provide most recent insights on speakers' attitudes related to several aspects of language vitality of the Fiuman dialect. Beliefs, attitudes, and practices should be taken into consideration before setting up maintenance programmes since they are so important for the social life of languages (Giles and Billings 2004). Even though the analysed sample is not sufficient to draw definite conclusions it could set the path for future research.

The results obtained from semi-structured interviews with speakers of the Fiuman dialect showed that the attitudes towards the dialect are positive or neutral. The participants in this study feel that these attitudes are shared by both Fiuman and non-Fiuman speakers in Rijeka. The Fiuman dialect is appreciated as a tool that makes learning Italian easier, but is also considered part of the cultural heritage of the speakers, who are keen to transmit the language to their children using the *one person one language* method. The research also shows, that the *Fiumani* are poorly informed about media content and representation of the Fiuman dialect in the media and on the Internet. They mostly watch, listen and read programmes, books, magazines and other content in Croatian, or alternatively in Italian.

Since there are three different generation of participants and an equal number of female and male participants, it is possible to make a comparison. The results indicate that there are differences in the use of the Fiuman dialect between the elder and younger generations of speakers. Generally, younger speakers have a restricted number of persons with whom they share their minority language, and in family settings they switch more frequently to the Croatian standard language which can lead to lack of vocabulary in the Fiuman dialect. There

are not significant deviations between the answers obtained from female and male participants. Nonetheless, more male participants (one of the middle generation and two from the young generation) chose to do the interviews in the Croatian standard language versus only one female participant (one of the young generation) who chose to speak in the Italian standard language. Also, the results show that the Fiuman dialect is transmitted from generation to generation mostly on the mothers' side.

Speakers usually do not read or write in the Fiuman dialect and are not well acquainted with grammatical or orthographical rules. In other words, the dialect is used mostly orally. The vocabulary range is primarily related to everyday topics because the context of usage is restricted to a family setting. Even orally, not only in its written form, there could be differences in vocabulary manifestation of the Fiuman dialect because of the restricted usage. The lack of documented materials regarding the Fiuman dialect could present a problem for its future maintenance, if maintenance is the goal. Up to now, there is lack of documentation, but future research could document and analyse differences in manifestation of Fiuman vocabulary and orthography and produce new material for education and language literacy. All in all, the participants are keen to welcome the promotion of the Fiuman dialect and education, even though they will not intervene personally, but wait for the work of appropriate institutions.

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