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Linguistic Enclaves and Enclave Communities In the Mediterranean

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ABSTRACT

A linguistic enclave is a restricted linguistic area where an X-speaking community is surrounded by a Y-speaking society. This article reviews some cases of Mediterranean enclave speech communities, while specific concern is devoted to Alghero (*l'Alguer*), a Catalan-speaking enclave in Sardinia, in the western Mediterranean. Often the linguistic landscape of enclaves involves the intertwining of language diversity and multilingual contact from which several sociolinguistic phenomena arise, since the emergence of a diverse language repertoire is a common outcome. I emphasize family and societal multilingualism, local identities and ideologies, and local language regression and progression. Diversity embraces not only language, but culture and religions too. These features make language enclaves appropriate sites to study the historical dynamics of languages and peoples. Most of the communities considered are under cultural and political pressure and their patrimonial language is subject to functional restriction, language shift and/or language obsolescence and death. However, they are, first and foremost, examples of long-lasting language maintenance under challenging conditions. Their origins typically stem from historical migrations and further settlement. Not all enclave communities are permanently settled: the Rom have been traditionally a nomadic people. I consider the case of Catalan Gypsies in France. They moved from the Catalan countries and their ethnic language is a variety of Catalan. Top-down and bottom-up revitalization measures in the Catalan-speaking community of Alghero are also considered with respect to both corpus planning and status planning.

Keywords: Linguistic Enclaves; Family/Societal Multilingualism; Language Repertoire; Language Maintenance/Shift; Language Ideologies; Language Revitalization

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1. Introduction

Language diversity is no longer perceived as an obstacle to progress and political unity or as a hindrance to economic development. Cultural rights are acknowledged to add to political and social rights, and some corporations make the most of diversity in a segmented market. Certainly, this trend emerges neither always nor everywhere, but it is making its way. At a deep level of human development diversity is an adaptive resource, a source of social and environmental knowledge; it creates human bonds, avoids monolithic thinking, offering a range of viewpoints on problem solving, and it is a manifestation of humankind's creative capacity. Regrettably, this trend arrives when a great deal of world linguistic diversity is gone forever or is highly endangered.

A linguistic enclave, termed *Sprachinsel* in German, suggests geographic isolation, a restricted linguistic area where an X-speaking community is surrounded by a Y-speaking society. The "island" and the environment, the insiders and the outsiders—i.e., a society's origins, interaction, permeability, cleavages and boundaries—should be considered together. Often linguistic enclave communities are thought of as remnants of the past and considered as paradigm local communities. Nonetheless, enclaves are inhabited by people with life trajectories and expectations in the modern global world and subject to its pressure. As I will show, some enclaves are not only places where linguistic diversity might be endangered from the outside but examples of internal language diversity.

2. Linguistic Enclaves

Enclaves are usually conceived primarily as "a part of the territory of a state that is enclosed within the territory of another state" [1]. Enclaves, are predominantly studied from a political, administrative or economic perspective. Vinokurov (2007, 3), whose first concern was with the economic development of Kaliningrad, gives two major reasons to study enclaves: "for the sake of the enclave dwellers themselves, and for the sake of relations between the mainland state and the surrounding state" [1]. Indirectly, this second motivation puts us on the track of the peripheral character of enclave communities; even more, of their doubly peripheral character: with respect to the political centre and its national society—that is, with the dominant state and surrounding society—and with respect to their fatherland, their linguistic and in some cases cultural centre [2,3]. Vinokurov estimates 3.000.000 people in the world living in enclaves. Of course, he is referring to territorial political enclaves, i.e., "national" territorial discontinuities. These "isolated" territories may or may not be linguistic enclaves—these being our specific concern. We do not know how many people out of that figure are members of linguistic enclave communities.

Two relevant reasons should be added from a linguistic perspective. The first reason bears on the fact that enclaves yield information related to language contact: by their nature enclaves often are the only places where languages X and Y are in contact. Occasionally, more than two languages are in play. The second reason bears on the fact that enclave languages are privileged witnesses to typically conservative forms of a language or language family. As is the case of many endangered languages, this information may be crucial for historical and theoretical linguistics at the same time as being a window on a better knowledge of the relationship between language and social cognition or between language and the making of cultural identities, social boundaries and cleavages, or eventually to identify specific and "unknown" forms of verbal culture.

Members of enclave communities interact with one another in a local communicative space, but may or may not interact with their surrounding neighbours. At the same time, communities may be more or less permeable to linguistic and cultural influences from the outside language and mainstream society. Thus, among Amish communities in the United States, some communities preserve their traditional customs and pattern of life, including religion and language—namely Pennsylvania German—, and keep themselves segregated from American society, whereas other communities are more permeable to the surrounding modern culture and language, namely English [4]. Typical cases of non-permeability are liturgical languages such as Ethiopic Christians' Ge'ez or Christian Copts' Coptic.

The economic support of many enclave communities was until recently subsistence economy. They were devoted to agriculture, fishing, and crafts, for internal consumption or minimal interchange. Nowadays many of them have developed into poles of tourist attraction and com-

merce. These small communities make a transition from the dialectics of the world inside vs. the world outside into the dialectics of the local vs. the global, even if they continue in a precarious and always mediated existence.

3. On Mediterranean Enclave Communities: Cases, Phenomena and Research Methods

In what follows I will review some cases of Mediterranean enclave speech communities, while specific concern is devoted to two Catalan-speaking enclaves in the western Mediterranean basin. This review is based both on secondary sources and on first-hand knowledge. Research underlying case studies is predominantly based on ethnographic methods and fieldwork carried out in each site. Main instrument of research are interviews between native people and fieldworkers. These latter, either have a good command of the local language or are themselves speakers of local and other languages or varieties. Also, natural or induced language conversations between natives have been analysed with a view posed on how they construct discourses conveying language ideologies. I emphasize internal multilingualism, local identities and ideologies, and local language regression and progression processes.

The analysis of revitalization efforts looks at bottom-up advocacy and top-down language planning. For bottom-up advocacy, engagement of local speakers in activities addressed to either corpus planning or status planning has been considered, as these are community-bounded. For top-down policies, language legislation and language planning have been studied both from legislative and language-policy directives, and from the point of view of their implementation.

Conceptual and critical analysis is a relevant part of research methods and spirit in this article.

3.1. Gibraltar

Gibraltar is, by virtue of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), a British enclave at the far south of the Iberian Peninsula. Spain maintains its claim on the Rock, since this is a geopolitical strategic point, but this is not our concern here. Gibraltar is a linguistic enclave where several languages and language varieties are spoken, as an outcome of political, demographic and migratory processes. This multilingualism reflects the ethnic complexity of the Rock's population either by origin, occupation or migration, under British rule, that is Spaniards, Britons, Sephardic Jews, Genoese, Portuguese, Indians, and Maltese. Beside Standard English, local English and Spanish, a local mixed variety, Llanito, is spoken. Llanito or Yanito has the characteristics of an English/Andalusian Spanish code-switching pattern, with lexical remnants of Hebrew, Maltese and Italian [5]. Other languages are spoken, but I pass over their consideration here. Gibraltarians' use of British English aligns them with their British counterparts, whereas the use of Llanito is intended to express ethnic local identity.

3.2. Catalan in Alghero (Sardinia)

Alghero (*l'Alguer*), a sea-port town in north-western Sardinia, is a Catalan-speaking linguistic enclave, and it will be of special concern throughout this article. Nowadays the island is part of the Republic of Italy, but in medieval times it was part of the Aragonese-Catalan Crown. Sardinia stands out for its relative language diversity [6]. Beside Italian and Sardinian—with its main varieties, Logudorese in the northern part of the island and Campidanese in the southern part—other local languages are spoken: Gallurese and Castellanese in the north of the island, both Corsican-related languages; Sassarese—a mixed variety of old Tuscan, Corsican, Logudorese plus lexical remnants of Catalan, Spanish, and Italian dialects—in the region of Sassari, and Catalan in Alghero. Tabarchino, a Ligurian variety, is found in the adjacent islands of the Sulcis Archipelago in southwest Sardinia. There is also an Istrian enclave: Fertilia, a small village seven kilometres north of Alghero. Founded in 1936, Fertilia was built by the Fascist regime and was to be populated mainly with people from the province of Ferrara in north-western Italy if the Second World War had not converted it into an emergency reception centre for exiled Istrians. Seemingly, their language, Istriot, faded away.

Three main codes coexist in Alghero: the Catalan local variety, named Algherese (*alguerès*); Sardinian and Italian, both local and standard Italian. Occasionally, Sassarese may be heard. Moreover, standard Catalan is not completely absent. Lexical loanwords from Neapolitan and Sicilian abound, mainly in maritime vocabulary, as do

remnants of other Italic dialects like Genoese. Algherese is the most distinctive of the territorial varieties of Catalan, given the diverse origins of Alghero's settlers (both Eastern Catalan and Western Catalan speakers), the historical, geographic, administrative and political discontinuity with respect to continental Catalan, and the fact that Alghero is the only place where Catalan comes into contact with Sardinian and Italian. Until the sixties of the twentieth century the Catalan-speaking community of Alghero was increasing in numbers, since many Sardinians used to migrate to the town to earn a living. For that purpose, they needed to learn Catalan—at the same time they brought their native Sardinian into the town.

Moving progressively towards the East, my review of Mediterranean enclave communities briefly deals with the Arbresh (*Arbëreshë*) or Albanian colonies established in south Italy and Sicily from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries, as well as the *Arvanítika*-speaking or Albanian communities in Greece, the Christian Maronite Arabic-speaking, or *Sanna*-speaking community in Cyprus, and the Aramaic-speaking Chaldean Christian Assyrian communities in Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey. I heavily rely on secondary sources in my comments about these cases.

3.3. Albanian in Sicily (Arbëreshë)

From the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Albanian colonies settled in south Italy and in Sicily (Piana degli Albanesi and Santa Cristina Gela). These people fled from their homeland which was occupied by the Turks. In their new home they were allowed to retain their Orthodox rites. Their Albanian variety and their ethnic name is Arbresh (*Arbëreshë*). Arbresh-speaking people are a majority in Piana degli Albanesi, though Italian and Sicilian are also spoken. Nowadays, however, factors such as school, socio-economic changes and internal migration, as well as monolingual Italian mass media put overwhelming pressure on speakers and their language. Thus, though the language is passed to children, it loses functionality—it progressively is pushed to home domains—and is subject to attrition. Both processes interact with each other. The speakers have a positive attitude towards Arbresh and show strong language loyalty. However, though the language is not stigmatized, the speakers show symptoms of language attrition [7,8]. Derhemi remarks that speakers' positive attitudes do not guarantee language survival and she thinks that revitalization should be addressed not to promote language status, but corpus planning. In this process, she suggests, the possibility should not be dismissed of taking advantage of the relationship between the local dialect and homeland Albanian as well as to Sicilian and Italian (Derhemi 2004)—an option not without controversy [7,9].

3.4. Albanian in Greece (Arvanítika)

Albanian communities in Greece speak *Arvanítika*, a conservative variety of the southern Albanian dialect *Tosk*, which jointly with the northern dialect *Geg* are the two main Albanian dialects. These communities settled in Greece five centuries ago, as a consequence of the social and demographic changes at the end of the Byzantine era. The hegemony of the dominant language, Greek, and of the Hellenic nationalistic discourse is manifested by a behaviour pattern that has been named *self-deprecation* (Tsitsipis 1998, 11-13) and gives birth to what Tsitsipis (2004), borrowing Bakhtin's term, called "internally persuasive discourse", by which "a kind of ideology that shifts from praising the Arvanítika to viewing it in negative terms coexists with congruent linguistic ideology that faithfully reproduces the dominant discourse" [10,11]. *Arvanítika* speakers present a variety of sociolinguistic profiles, from fluid speakers to terminal speakers. The latter are bilingual and their *Arvanítika* lexical and grammatical competence is highly diminished compared with the former's. Terminal speakers' age distribution in different communities is variable, but the pattern is always the same. In this context, Tsitsipis (1989) studied language obsolescence (Dorian 1989) and other emergent effects in verbal interaction, such as code-switching and crossing (Tsitsipis 1998), as well as the maintenance and adaptation of the traditional verbal genres and narratives [12–14], the conflict between local linguistic ideologies and the hegemonic nationalistic ideology, expressed by hegemonic discourse and the contradictions of local discourse [11,15], and the negotiation of identities [16].

3.5. Arabic-speaking Maronite community in Cyprus

The members of the Maronite community in Cyprus,

established in the island more than twelve centuries ago, speak a kind of Arabic—named *Sanna* by themselves—, strongly influenced by Cypriot Greek with residual Aramaic elements. This influence and their condition as Christian Arabs put them on a peripheral position, both with respect to Muslim Arabic communities and the Christian Arabic communities in the Levant, from where they reached Cyprus (plausibly from Lebanon). The historical separation of Sanna from other Arabic varieties gives the language a conservative flavour, with features of pre-Arabic (Syriac/Aramaic) origin, and its contact with Cypriot Greek induced linguistic developments diverging from the rest of Arabic varieties, including those from the Levant. Thomason and Kaufman (1988, 105-109) suggest it to be a mixed language as a result of "abnormal language transmission"—their basic model to explain "non-genetic" language development [17].

The linguistic repertoire of the Maronite community in Cyprus includes in first place Indo-European (Greek) and Semitic languages and language varieties. First, both Cypriot and Modern standard Greek; on the other hand, Arabic and its Cypriot variety, Sanna. Moreover, Syriac, an ancient classic variety of Aramaic, emerges in the liturgical domain, as we will see immediately. In a certain way, this could be considered a case of double diglossia.

The main Maronite community was the village of Kormakitis—considered the cradle of Sanna —in the zone currently under Turkish rule [18,19]. In my first visit to the village of Kormakitis (2012) in the occupied territory, I was accompanied by Michalis Hatziroussos, then president of the cultural and language-advocacy association *Hki fi Sanna* ('Speak our language'). After having crossed the frontier under the Army surveillance, a multilingual sign welcomes the visitor in Turkish, Greek and English. Hence, two new languages add to the linguistic repertoire and landscape. Mr. Hatziroussos wanted us to hear a Syriac rite mass at St. George's Church. I was struck by the graphic layout of the hymn books: the Syriac text on the left page is juxtaposed with its transliteration into Greek alphabet (for faithful to sing the hymn) and the translation of the Syriac text into Greek (for faithful to understand what they sing), both on the right page—Greek is the commonly known language of the faithful; Syriac is a liturgical language, as Latin was for Europeans. The consecration ritual, however, calls for the exclusive use of Syriac, even if it is learned by heart — and thus it is reflected in the hymnal.

Members of the Maronite community are, therefore, familiar to an extent with various writing systems (Arabic, Syriac, Greek and Roman). The Maronite community together faces both multiple languages and literacies. Below, we refer to the existence of revitalization projects. The necessary standardization of a language of oral transmission has been raised in this context. In 2007 professor Alexander Borg, a well-known scholar in Cypriot Arabic, proposed to the community an alphabetic writing system on the basis of the Roman alphabet with additions from the Greek alphabet and a few special characters [20]. However, Karyolemou reports, apart from some individual efforts and despite the fact that it was regularly used in the Maronite press, the new writing system was never properly implemented or widely used.

As a consequence of the Turkish invasion (1974), the population fled to the Greco-Cypriot part of the island. Such a disruption of social networks is an effective way to induce cultural dislocation and to push people involved towards language shift. In spite of these historical vicissitudes, efforts addressed to language revitalization by members of the community are increasing [21]. Also, Sanna is recognized as a minority language by the Republic of Cyprus and their speakers somehow maintain multiple identities, based on the following facts: (i) their religion links them to the Christian world; (ii) the association of Kormakitis with migration evokes their Levantine past; (iii) the privilege lately conceded by the Turkish Cypriot authorities of a periodic return to Kormakitis, binds them to the homeland and to their Cypriot identity, and (iv) by means of their involvement in the revitalization of Sanna they recognize their Arabic and pre-Arabic heritage [19].

3.6. Aramaic and Clasical Syriac in Middle East

Aramaic is the oldest—and currently the weakest—of Semitic languages. In ancient times it was a *lingua franca* spread across Mesopotamia—Aramaic *Beth Nahrain*, "the land between two rivers"—and was highly influential in the development and diffusion of alphabetic writing across

the Levant and Asia.① Nowadays, it is precariously maintained in a few villages of the Middle East, especially in Christian-Chaldean communities in Iraq. In spite of dialect split naturally to any language, Aramaic Christians have maintained Classical Syriac as a standard written language across centuries. According to Naby (2004) [22], today four main varieties of Aramaic are distinguished: (i) the liturgical language of Christian communities, i.e., both the Apostolic and Orthodox Churches; (ii) the dialects of modern Assyrians, incorporating a number of Akkadian words; (iii) the Aramaic spoken by small Mandaean communities—followers among others of John the Baptist—in Iraq and Iran: these communities have adopted the Arabic language, except for religious rites; (iv) the small villages of Bakhaa and Jubbaadin, and the village of Maalula in Syria, a community distinguished by its retention of Aramaic both among Eastern Christians and by those converted to Islam, though many of the latter have shifted to Kurdish.

4. The Case of Ethnically-Based Non-Settled Linguistic Enclaves

The cases mentioned up to here are territorially-based enclave communities. They present ethnic and linguistic complexities and manifest historical vicissitudes such as migration, conflict, backwardness, self-deprecation, acculturation, cultural and language disruption—but also multilingualism and long-term language maintenance in hostile settings. More often than not nowadays, language attrition, language shift and language death are likely to be in progress or threatened. But my concern is not only with enclaves as geographically determined places, but also with enclave communities formed by individuals living in the modern world and having their own expectations—even if their future as a human collective is unsure. So, I am also concerned with ethnically-based enclave communities with no stable settlement. One of these cases is the Rom people, and specifically the so-called "Catalan Gypsies" in southern France.

I cannot go into detail about the origins and historical itinerary of European Roms. They are an Indo-European people whose original homeland was somewhere in central India. In successive waves they migrated towards the northwest, crossing Kashmir, north Pakistan, Iran—before the Islamic invasion—, Kurdistan, south Caucasus, Anatolia—before the Ottoman conquest—, the Balkans (Greece and Slavic countries), and spreading across Europe from there. This history conceals the unity of the Romani language. Precisely the lexical strata of Romani reveal this migratory path [23]. Romani came into contact with Indic, non-Arabized Persian and Kurdish, Armenian and other southern Caucasian languages (Ossetic, Georgian), Greek, southern Slavic languages (Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian). Along this journey Romani suffered a double process of linguistic structural convergence towards, and of lexical divergence from, the environmental languages—thus granting a degree of unintelligibility in the presence of non-Gypsies. Also, out of this process emerged mixed languages, sometimes named *Para-Romani* [23,24], such as Anglo-Romani in England or Romano-Kaló in Spain [17].

Since the ancient times of their nomadic life, then, Gypsies have been an archipelago of minority cultures. In a way, all Gypsy people live in enclave communities in Europe and everywhere in the world. I draw your attention to one of these. The Gypsy community in Perpignan (Perpinyà), the capital of North Catalonia (or French Catalonia), is well known, as their members retained their Catalan language while people around were giving it up and shifting to French. In this way Catalan turned out to be an ethnic language marking distance from the *Paios* (non-Gypsies). Though closely related to northern Catalan, this "Gypsy Catalan" is peculiar because of its contact with (some kind of) traditional Romani, yielding substrate effects and distinguishing this variety from both mainland and island Catalan [25,26]. Gypsy communities form a network of ethnic, family and human bonds: many French Catalan Gypsies are closely connected with Gypsy communities in Catalonia, south of the French-Spanish border. Moreover, according to Casanova (2016), other self-recognized "Gypsy Catalan" communities are found across Occitan lands and perhaps far beyond in France [27].

① It was the language most used in the old Assyrian Empire (which fell c. 610 B.C.): Aramaic replaced Akkadian, the royal language, because of its use of an alphabetic, rather than cuneiform, writing system. It is the modern language that has been most continuously spoken and written in the Middle East.

5. On Multilingualism and Language Shift in Enclave Communities

To approach linguistic enclaves in terms of a pair of languages X and Y in contact is a useful starting point, but we have seen that there are enclaves where a more diverse language repertoire is present.

As a case in point, let us remember what has been said about the different codes coexisting in Alghero. One of my informants, a man in his early sixties—hereafter Ego—says that when he was a child three generations lived together at home and several languages were heard: his grandparents spoke Sardinian with each other. His parents, instead, spoke local Catalan with each other. However, his mother spoke Sassarese with her sister—Ego's maternal aunt—and Sardinian with her parents—Ego's grandparents. Ego's maternal aunt spoke Algherese with her brother-in-law—Ego's father—, but Sassarese with her sister—Ego's mother. Ego declares that Italian was his home-acquired language, but Catalan (Algherese) the language he learnt in the street in order to be able to interact with other children and be accepted by them in their games. Even accepting that there might be some imprecision in (the memory of) this "linguistic genealogy", Ego's story clearly shows to what an extent family multilingualism could be a complex matter to manage—and this is certainly not an isolated case in the town (**Figure 1**).

Linguistic enclaves have been also considered as appropriate places to study language attrition—a process that goes far beyond simple borrowing or interference [13,28]. Indeed, both language shift and its extreme case language death are in progress in many enclave communities [28]. As ethnographic approaches reveal, language shift should not be explained by a direct relationship between macrosociological processes, such as industrialization and modernization, and the disruption of language transmission, but by discovering the intervening variables in between [29]. Otherwise stated, explanation should articulate the macro level of social determinants and the micro level of communicative interaction—that is, it should find the link between, on the one hand, long-lasting historical processes, and, on the other hand, processes emerging in ongoing interaction between agents concurrently and simultaneously inhabiting the same time and space, and sharing—or not—a cultural background. The disruption of dense social networks, the connotations of each language in contact, the self-presentation of speakers before the interlocutor, and local ideologies of language have been identified, among others, as instances of intervening variables. This amounts to saying that we should not underestimate the role of individual speakers, the way how speakers afford language shift, their reactions—either of language loyalty or social accommodation—and their redefinition of identities with regard to other peoples and themselves. It is in this vein that I reproduce the following pieces of field recording by speakers of two different enclave communities (my translation).

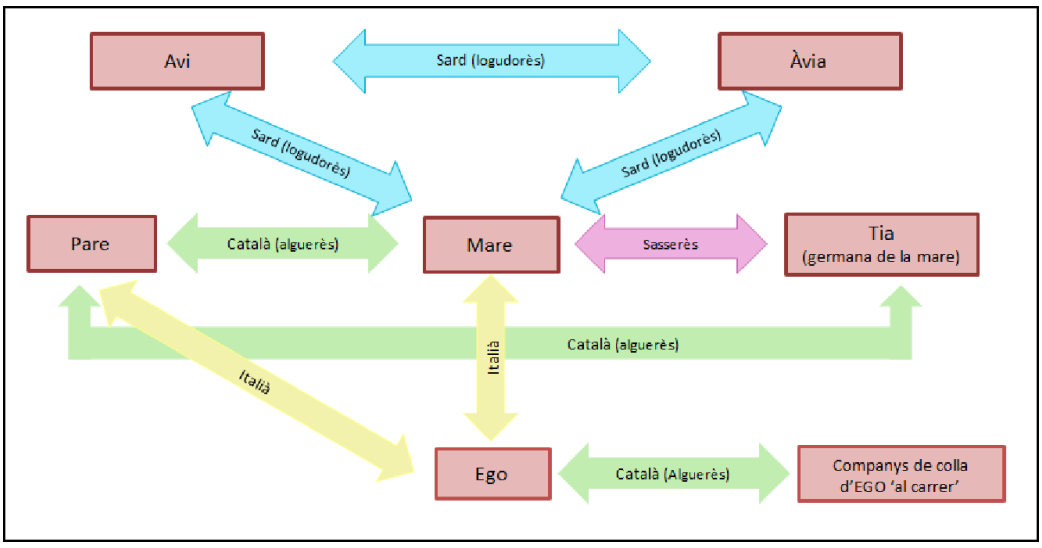


Figure 1. On (familiar and societal) multilingualism and language shift in enclave communities: EGO's kinship relationships and the languages spoken at home in his childhood. The final 'tip' towards language shift and the break of language transmission.

The first one is by the same person in Alghero I introduced to the reader earlier and I named Ego. À propos of his view of the current situation of the traditional language in Alghero and its near future he said:

—*"My, eh…, let's say, lea- learning* [truncated form] *of Algherese, my* [feminine form of the article instead of masculine]*, my* [self-correction] *learning of Algherese has partly grown in these… discussion between dad and mum, but above all in the street, when I had to play with the other [children], when I had to play with the other [children] it was crucial, at that time, to know and speak Algherese, because there was not… no alternative: either you were, either you spoke Algherese or you were somehow excluded, <…> people said "Sardinian with the tail" for the people who came from villages and didn't know, and still had not learnt to speak Algherese. [...] I knew a different Alghero, and nowadays I see that this Alghero is… no longer exists. Today children are not like my… like I was. They don't have the necessity of… learning Algherese to play in the street, on the contrary… if they don't speak Italian, they don't play. This is… Language shift is already completed here. There has been no social react- reaction against this language shift, it's a kind of flat table where everyone and everybody tries to sow something."* (interview with E.L., Alghero, 2009)

This speaker has been involved in left-wing militancy and reached a high position in local political life. Morever, he was involved in language/cultural advocacy in a local cultural association. His words illustrate current Alghero by opposing an idealized past of childhood—or else remembering a time when the local variety of Catalan was a functional environmental language—to an uncertain present and future. According to him, the traditional language was about to become no longer functional, no longer necessary, for living in the town; and he projects this situation towards the immediate future in terms of the death of the dialect—or else, as the speaker said in the same interview, as its survival as a mixed Algherese – (standard) Catalan variety ('a kind of *Catarès*', he said), a variety whose legitimacy is challenged. His attitude vis-à-vis this emergent code points towards a local language ideology, a topic on which I will not dwell now [30]. Occasionally, however, his own local Catalan tends to converge with the standard Catalan of the interviewer. This speaker lived language shift in progress as something either completed or out of his control, something that he regretted deeply, but did not try to contend.

A somewhat contrasting reaction in the face of ongoing language shift appears in the following fragment of an interview between the researcher and a Catalan Gypsy (J.S.) in southern France, namely the latter's answer to a question by the former [31].

—*"Inasmuch as the old people will be here* [= as long as they are alive] *it will go well. But it won't last long. The way the Gypsy people are going is a* catastrophe*. They* [= Gypsies] *mix it* [= Catalan] *with the language spoken where they are. From time to time, my daughter and my son break into French, and I say: Hey! Slow down, I am still here! The day I'm not here, do as you like.*" (interview with J.S., Perpignan, 2010)

As is the case with Catalan in Alghero, Gypsy Catalan suffers the overwhelming pressure of 'national language', French in this case, and cultural reproduction and language transmission are not guaranteed. However, speaker J.S. is proud of his received though recessive language, is averse to the dominant language and, although he is conscious that Gypsy Catalan is not as it was, demonstrates that he still wants to keep control over the fate of his language and over his descendants' language choices.

These examples illustrate two speakers' diverging attitudes toward language shift, though both know that this is an ongoing process in their respective communities, perhaps an irreversible language decay conducive to language death [28].

6. On Language Revitalization Measures in Alghero

In spite of ongoing language shift in Alghero, one may wonder whether this process may be reversed (Fishman 1991) or has to be assessed as irreversible language decay close to final language 'tip' [32,33], that is, close to the break point of language transmission from the ancestral language to the societally dominant language, that is, from local Catalan to Italian.

For one thing, language shift is not a linear irreversible process: it may have its back and forth. However, some scholars argue that language advocacy and specifically "revival movements", are a "facet of language death" (Brod-

erick 1999, 172)—more often than not entailing conflicting local ideologies [36]. As a matter of fact, recent worldwide counter-hegemonic discourse on language diversity helps to launch language revitalization processes, though it does not guarantee the desired output by itself. Many people in Alghero are favourable to language maintenance, but implicitly relinquish their responsibility to others, while transmitting Italian to their children. Researchers on Alghero sociolinguistics have described this incongruous behaviour in terms of "emotional language loyalty"—or "moral language loyalty"—and in terms of "politically correct" discourse [35–38].

However, let us introduce a bit of optimism. The conjunction of top-down and bottom-up efforts towards functional language recovery and towards spreading its use is at the basis of the relatively successful language policy in Catalonia. This conjunction is crucial to successfully reversing language shift. In what follows I heavily rely on Argenter [3].

As to bottom-up policies, local associations in Alghero devote their efforts to language advocacy aiming at language maintenance and revitalization. They organize cultural activities (lectures, debates, festivals, theatre); publish modest journals, as well as creative literature, addressed to both adults and children; publish an electronic newspaper managed by continental Catalan advocates; train language teachers; promote adult language instruction as well as language teaching in schools on teachers' voluntary basis and a consensual basis of the school community, including parents; Algherese was occasionally used in the church and the municipality, and so forth.

In another order of things, for some years regular Ryanair flights and a regular Grimaldi seaway line connected Barcelona and Alghero. An increase of Catalan tourism to Alghero favours the use of Catalan by locals as it becomes endowed with an economic value. As an indirect witness to this phenomenon and its consequences, let me quote two lines of a song composed and performed by troubadour and folk singer Claudio Gabriel Sanna (2007), an Algherese native speaker. These lines belong to the composition *Santa mare llengua* ("Holy Mother Language"), and read "*Santa, Santa, Santa / Santa, Santa Ryan / Santa, Santa Ryan Air / salva l'alguerès, salva l'alguerès*" ("Saint Ryan Air … save our Algherese") [39].

From the point of view of corpus planning, a so-called 'local standard' of Catalan, devised by local people, was revised and sanctioned by the Institut d'Estudis Catalans [40,41], the Catalan academy of science and humanities responsible for modern Catalan codification. Theoretically, this initiative should avoid the problem that Derhemi (2004) identified in the Arbresh enclaves in Sicily, mentioned above [7]. Alghero avoids this pitfall by adopting a 'local standard' that takes account of both standard Catalan and a local verbal repertoire arising from long-term language contact and hybridization. In addition, in March 2018 the Municipality of Alghero approved the regulations for the establishment and operation of the Civic Consultation for Language Policies of Catalan in Alghero. This initiative gathers a number of civic and cultural associations that work for the promotion of the local language. The Working Group for the Standardisation of Catalan in Alghero is created and the result of its labour is published [42].

In earlier time (1999), two cultural associations and the Council of Alghero launched a project taking Catalan into school for one hour per week within the official school timetable. The project ranged over all levels of school teaching: kindergarten, primary and secondary school (for an up-to-date recent appraisal, see the work by Ballone (2025)) [43].

As to top-down policies, two important legislative measures must be mentioned. Firstly, the parliament of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia passed a bill on the 'Promotion and worth of the culture and language of Sardinia' in 1997, whose provisions apply in their entirety to the Catalan language in the town of Alghero. Secondly, the Italian parliament passed a bill on the protection of historic linguistic minorities in Italy in 1999, implementing Article 6 of the Italian Constitution more than fifty years after it was proclaimed. However, the regional law is addressed to preserving the cultural and linguistic heritage of Sardinia rather than to furthering language use [44]. Moreover, it was passed with no budget assigned. That is, legislation helps better than nothing, but it does not guarantee per se a decided policy of language revitalization. Even if the passing of the national bill can be attributed to political opportunism rather than to effective planning [45], it was also the result of the Italian linguistic minorities' pressure on national Government. It should be added that the Italian Republic

signed the *European Charter of Minority and Regional Languages* in 2012—twenty years after it was proclaimed in Strasbourg by the European Parliament (1992), under the auspices of the Council of Europe—, and one should be reasonably entitled to hope that this formal commitment will have real consequences for the promotion of Catalan in Alghero. If so, the concurrence of grassroots initiative and legislative action provides some reason to be hopeful with regard to the future of the traditional language, but one cannot forget Fishman's (2001) warning about disregarding the importance of family- and neighbourhood-based measures in addition to institutional policies [46]. Even if the local language is finally taught at school as a subject on a regular basis, the school should not turn out to be merely a ghetto for the local language or the only ecological niche where it is to be legitimately used.

7. Conclusions

The idea that enclaves imply that local X-speakers are isolated from other X-speakers or from an X-speaking majority, fits with a western, political point of view, but this condition is too restrictive. A broader concept should include small X-language communities surrounded by Y-language society even if X is spoken nowhere else—or not by a majority in another country, as would be the case with Amish, Aramaic-speaking communities or with indigenous isolated small hunter-gatherer communities in Amazonia or in the Pacific. Currently, these are communities with no distant homeland.

Other communities are sometimes considered as linguistic enclaves because they are X-speaking political or administrative enclaves, but their status as *linguistic* enclave communities is dubious, since there is a linguistic continuum across political or administrative borders. This would be the case of the Val d'Aran, an Occitan-speaking enclave in northwest Catalonia, a valley on the Atlantic slope of Pyrenees, where a variety of Gascon, called Aranese (*aranés*), is spoken. Aranese has recognized official status in Catalonia and has been the object of corpus language planning, i.e., it has been codified. Nowhere else in its entire domain has Occitan official status or an official standard form. Even taking into account that the Occitan variety in Aran is alive and has official and social support, the point is that there is a linguistic continuity between Aran and the historical domain of the Occitan language—a circumstance that theoretically would play against considering Aran a linguistic enclave [47].

Though it is difficult to generalize, enclave communities have common territorial and linguistic features, as well as ethnic and cultural ones. First, we have identified the respective local X and the surrounding societal Y languages in each case. *Arberëshë*-speakers in Sicily and *Arvanítika*-speakers in Greece share part of their Albanian repertoire, but are in contact with distinct national languages (Italian vs Greek). In other cases, we have identified a rather complex repertoire of coexisting codes, each code iconically aligning with an indexed identity. While English associates with British identity, Llanito (or Yanito) aligns with Gibraltarian. In Alghero, native people identify themselves as Catalan-speaking Sardinians, differing thus from other Sardinians and from Catalans; at the same time they are familiar or have a good command of Sardinian, Italian and occasionally other languages in Sardinia. Maronites in Cyprus speak a singular variety of Arabic, but share Cypriot Greek with other Cypriots, and are in contact with an ancient sacred language, liturgical Syriac. This confronts them not only with multiple languages, but multiple literacies too (Arabic, Greek, Syriac, as well as Roman alphabets, since English and Turkish are part of the linguistic landscape). Enclave communities may differ, however, in specific aspects, as for instance the weight of religion in their identity and formation or the choice to remain segregated from the mainstream society or to be permeable to it. Most of these communities are under cultural and political pressure and their language suffers functional restriction, language shift and/or language obsolescence and death. Be that as it may, enclave communities are first and foremost examples of long-lasting language maintenance under difficult conditions. Indeed, they are the result of history and geography, of long-lasting settlement or an ancient migration, but their members live in the modern world, are subject to current social change, carry distinct sociolinguistic histories and project themselves onto the future. Enclaves are microcosms inhabited by people with multiple identities or identity conflicts, with a complex verbal repertoire—each code iconically aligning with a distinct identity—, including multilingualism and hybridization, with consensual or conflicting linguistic ideologies,

with strong or split language loyalties, with specific verbal cultures and with dense social networks, not exempt from attenuation. All these are subjects to be studied, but at the same time these are factors out of which people have built themselves a community in a specific small geopolitical setting.

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Data Availability Statement

Catalan recordings may be found in the Institut d'Estudis Catalans Archive.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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