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ROM0B133 Minority Languages in Europe

Alguerès: the Catalan Language in Sardinia

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Introduction

One of the most important elements of Europe's cultural heritage is undoubtedly the linguistic diversity. There are now in the European Union twenty-four official languages and approximately sixty minority languages spoken by more than fifty million people.¹ These minority or regional languages have diverse degrees of vitality, many of them are facing difficulties in ensuring their maintenance and development, some of them are already under serious threat.

The purpose of this paper is to describe one of Europe's minority languages, Catalan, spoken in Alghero in Sardinia, focusing on its historical, political and socio-linguistic status. In addition, the first part will focus on language policy which allows for the development and maintenance of valued linguistic diversity in Europe, as well as on regional policy which applies to the selected language group.

1. Language Policy

1.1. Language policy in the EU

Preserving and promoting multilingualism in Europe is part of the essential documents of the European Union. Article 22 of the *European Charter of Fundamental Rights* (proclaimed in 2000 and came into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009) says that **"The Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity"**, and in Article 3 of the *Treaty on European Union* (in effect from November 1993) we read that EU **"shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced."**

European Parliament and other European institutions have been interested in the support of the position of minority languages already a few decades ago and their activity has resulted into a several resolutions. The most important of them are the following:

- Resolution on a community charter of regional languages and cultures and on a charter of rights of ethnic minorities of 16 October 1981, and the one of 11 February 1983 on measures in favour of minority languages and cultures (known as Resolution Arfé).

¹<http://www.mercator-research.eu/minority-languages/facts-figures/>,

http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/linguistic-diversity/index_en.htm

- **Resolution on the languages and cultures of regional and ethnic minorities in the European Community of 30 October 1987 (known as Resolution Kuijpers),**
- **Resolution on linguistic minorities in the European Community of 9 February 1994 (known as Resolution Killilea);**

All these documents, in addition to the protection and promotion of minority languages, have focused primarily to supporting initiatives in the field of education, culture and information.

Currently, the most complex document that deals with minority languages at European level, which is based on the above-mentioned resolutions, is the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*.

1.2. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

The Charter was opened for signature in Strasbourg on 5 November 1992 and since then it has been ratified by twenty-five states and signed by other eight.²

The aim of the Charter is to protect and promote the development and use of regional and minority languages, which are considered threatened aspect of Europe's cultural heritage, both in the private as well as in the public life. It sets out the main objectives and principles which the states undertake to apply to all regional or minority languages existing within their territory and also includes a number of specific measures designed to facilitate and promote the use of these languages in public life.

The Charter is divided in Preamble and five Parts (General provisions, Objectives and principles, Measures to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life, Application of the Charter, Final provisions) consisting of twenty-three Articles.

The Article 1 defines “regional or minority languages” as languages traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state’s population; they are different from the official language(s) of that state, and they include neither dialects of the official language(s) of the state nor the languages of migrants.

²The actual list of signatures and ratifications of the Charter is consultable on site <http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/148/signatures>

Seventy-nine languages are covered by this Treaty.³ Part II (Article 7) sets out eight fundamental principles and objectives, applicable to all languages, upon which States must base their policies, legislation and practice:

- **Recognition of regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth**
- **Respect for the geographical area of each regional or minority language**
- **The need for resolute action to promote such languages**
- **The facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of such languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life**
- **The provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of such languages at all appropriate stages**
- **The promotion of relevant transnational exchanges**
- **The prohibition of all forms of unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger its maintenance or development**
- **The promotion by states of mutual understanding between all the country's linguistic groups.**

Part III contains specific practical measures to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life. There is a choice of sixty-eight concrete undertakings in seven areas of public life. States must select at least thirty-five of those in respect of each specified language, so the commitments may vary depending on the country and language. The areas of public life from which these specific undertakings must be chosen are the following:

- **Education** (Article 8; it is in particular about make available pre-school, primary, secondary, technical and vocational education and university and other higher education in the relevant regional or minority languages);
- **Judicial authorities** (Article 9; the measures should provide that the courts in both criminal and civil proceedings, at the request of one of the parties, shall conduct the proceedings in the regional or minority languages; guarantee the accused the right to use his/her regional or minority language; allow documents and evidence to be produced in the

³The full list of Languages covered by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is consultable on site <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/AboutCharter/LanguagesCovered.pdf>

regional or minority languages);

- **Administrative authorities and public services** (Article 10 aims to ensure that the administrative authorities use the regional or minority languages and to allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages and also allow the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages);
- **Media** (the measures in Article 11, among other things, should encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one radio station, one television channel, one newspaper in the regional or minority languages);
- **Cultural activities and facilities** (in Article 12 the Parties undertake for example to encourage types of expression and initiative specific to regional or minority languages and foster the different means of access to works produced in these languages);
- **Economic and social life** (based on Article 13 the Parties undertake to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents; to oppose practices designed to discourage the use of regional or minority languages in connection with economic or social activities; to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons);
- **Transfrontier exchanges** (Article 14 aims to apply existing bilateral and multilateral agreements which bind them with the States in which the same language is used in identical or similar form and to facilitate and/ or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form).

1.3. National language policy

Italy is one of the eight countries of European Union that have signed but not yet ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The state law dealing with the minority languages is Law number 482 of 15 December 1999, *Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche* (Rules on the protection on historical linguistic minorities) and the list of languages concerned is in Article 2:

In implementation of Article 6 of the Constitution and in harmony with the general principles established by the European and international organizations, the Republic protects the language and culture of the Albanian, Catalan, Germanic, Greek, Slovenian and Croatian and those speaking French, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian.⁴

The law 482/1999 allows and regulates, as in the above-mentioned European document, the use of minority languages in education, in public administration and in the media. The official language, however, remains Italian.

Some point of this law are specified in the Presidential Decree of 2 May 2001, n. 345.⁵ The fields covered are: use of the languages of minorities in nursery and elementary schools; initiatives in the university and the school environment in favor of the languages in the protection; use of the languages of minorities on the part of members of municipal councils, mountain communities, provinces and regions; publication of official acts of the State; oral and written use of the languages in the public administration offices; recognition of the right to restore the original names; funding procedures; place names; interpreters and translators; service contract with the concessionaire company of the public broadcasting service; advisory technical committee.

1.4. Regional language policy

At regional level, the Catalan language is recognized by Regional Law of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia n. 26 of 15 October 1997, *Promozione e valorizzazione della cultura e della lingua della Sardegna* (Promotion and enhancement of the culture and language of Sardinia) specifically in Article 2:

The same value attributed to the Sardinian culture and language is recognized by reference to the territory concerned, to the Catalan culture and language of Alghero, the Tabarchino of Sulcis islands, to the dialects of Sassari and Gallura.

⁴Article 6 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic: “The Republic protects the linguistic minorities by appropriate rules.”

⁵ *Regolamento di attuazione della legge 15 dicembre 1999, n. 482, recante norme di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche.*

In this document, the Region aims to enhance language, history, traditions of living and work, written and oral literary production, art and music, technical and scientific research and cultural heritage of the Sardinian people in its specificity and originality, in its material and spiritual aspects. In Article 3 the following tasks are formulated:

The Sardinian Region

- guarantees the widest possible participation of local authorities, the social forces, schools, public and private cultural bodies at the regional cultural programming;
- prepares and coordinates annual and multi-annual action programs related to cultural activities and initiatives;
- guarantees the protection and enjoyment - in particular through the cataloging and conservation - of the regional cultural heritage;
- promotes, enhances and coordinates services appropriate to the achievement of the purposes;
- programmes the general objectives to be achieved and technical innovations related, using for this purpose also the tools required by current regional legislation.

The municipal charter of the town of Alghero in Article 9 treats the protection of language and culture of Alghero:

1. The City aims to protect, promote and disseminate knowledge of the history, of the Catalan language in the variant of Alghero, and of local culture and traditions, simultaneously enabling the comparison with other realities present in the city, in order to ensure a spirit of cooperation and tolerance;
2. In particular, it proposes to give support to all initiatives aimed at the knowledge and use of the Catalan language, in its variant of Alghero.
3. In the Municipality the place names in Alghero is equated with place names in Italian and the Municipality guarantees its contextual use.
4. The City is the institutional reference point for the language policy and it supports with financial contributions, within the limits of budget possibilities, the associations working to promote the Catalan variant of Alghero and other linguistic and cultural

expressions according to special regulation.⁶

2. *Alguerès*: the Catalan Language in Sardinia

The Catalan is one of the European minority languages though it has around 10.000.000 speakers. It is spoken in a total of four European countries: Andorra, France (region of Roussillon/Northern Catalonia), Italy (the city of Alghero) and Spain (autonomous communities of Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia, the Balearic Islands and Murcia). Actually is the only official language in Andorra and co-official in Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands.

In the rest of the regions mentioned above it has normally status of recognized minority language but there are big differences between these regions in case of application of this recognition. The Catalan language evolved from Vulgar Latin in the 9th century in the area of the eastern Pyrenees and during the Middle Age it was a very prestigious language used all over the Mediterranean. There are two organizations regulating the codified language (Institut d'Estudis Catalans and Academia Valenciana de la Llengua) and it is also important to mention the dialectal divisions of Catalan which means it is a language generally in a good condition. There are two main blocks (Western Catalan and Eastern Catalan) divided into six main dialects (Northwestern, Valencian, Central, Balearic, Rossellonese and Alguerese).

⁶The Charter is available here:

http://www.comune.alghero.ss.it/.galleries/doc-amministrazione/statuto_comune_alghero.pdf



Figure 1 (Branchadell, 2011)

The Linguistic Domaine of the Catalan language

The aim of this paper is to focus on the situation of the Alguerese dialect which is exclusive to the Italian city of Alghero (*L'Alguer* in Catalan). Before we analyse the situation, use and the vitality of this Catalan dialect, let's have look on some basic information about the city of Alghero.

The city of Alghero (roughly 225 km²) is a town and also an episcopal see in the southern Italian insular province of Sassari, in Sardinia. It has a population of 44.000 inhabitants. As we will see, it has a very specific history, a bit different from the rest of the island, which caused the fact that the Catalan still is spoken here despite a long disconnection between the city and the rest of the Catalan speaking territory. Actually the city is an important center of tourism and there is an international airport which connects it with the whole Europe.

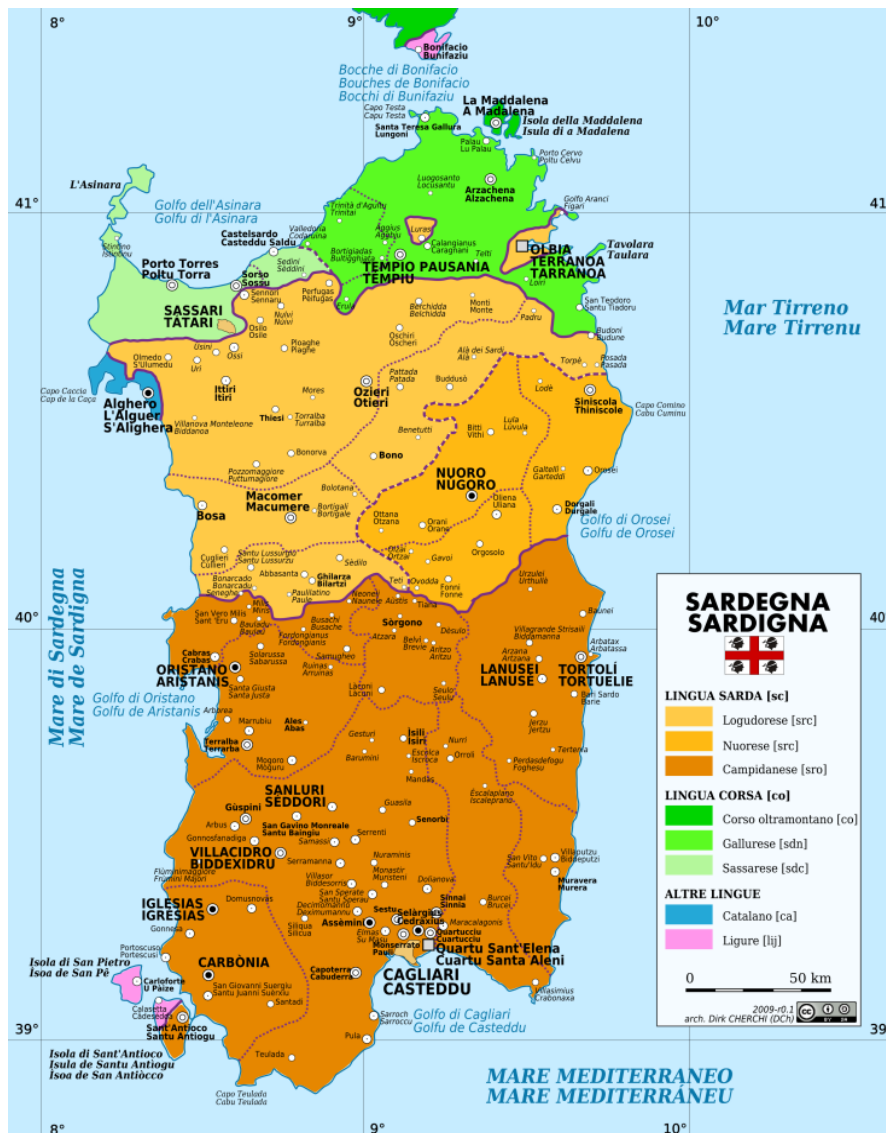


Figure 2 (Branchadell, 2011)
The Linguistic Map of Sardinia

2.1. General history of the region and of the language

Sardinia was yielded in the 13th century to the king of Aragon James II by the Pope Boniface VIII although it was not incorporated to the Crown of Aragon until 1323 after a long war. The city of Alghero was conquered by Peter III of Aragon in 1354. After numerous uprisings, the original sardinian population was deported and substituted by Catalan colonist from 1372. Later, they took new measures with the aim to exclude the autochthonous population of the public life (1391 and 1478). This policy was very common in the Crown of Aragon and actually it was the reason why the Balearic Islands and the city of Alghero today are integrated in the Catalan Linguistic Domaine. After that, the city benefited of important economic privileges that comported a strong demographical growth and a very high level of prosperity along the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. From the 17th century begins the economic

and demographical decadence of the city as a consequence of the politics carried out by the House of Austria and of the successive epidemics of plague. Shortly after the War of Succession, Sardinia was yielded in 1720 to the House of Savoia and broke the contacts with Catalonia (Farinelli, 2014: 33-77).

The Catalan turned into the language of the urban population, of the administration and of the privileged social classes after the conquest of the island in the 14th century, while the rural populations continued to speak sardinian. The predominance of the Catalan was seen reinforced by the followed of the anti-sardinian measures. That and the progressive castilianisation of the elites after the unification of the crowns of Aragon and of Castella, the Catalan continued being the dominant language (socially and administrative) until the 18th century. The incorporation of Sardinia to the Kingdom of Italy supposed the disappearance of the Catalan from the administration and from the Church and the contacts with Catalonia are increasingly scarce. Along the 20th century this situation the decadence of Catalan was also strenghtened by the imposture of Italian as a maine language and the educational language too (Farinelli, 2014: 141-180).

Despite the influence of the *Renaixença*, the conflicts between the different groups of local philologists (which brought even to the simultaneous edition of two totally incompatible grammars) poured to the failure all the projects of linguistic recovery. Actually, we know this situation very well from the case of Sardinian language during the last decades. The recovery that is living the Catalan since the 1960s owes in good part to the collaboration of the Catalan cultural associations in the cultural activities realised in the city. Like this, the Catalan has gone recovering some spaces of use that had lost (meetings of the municipal consistory, warnings to the airport) although the traditional controversies between linguists on the coding of the alguerese and of the different levels of language continue preventing the establishment of a standard variety for the Catalan of Alghero.

Also, between 1960 and 1970, more than half of the catalan speaking families that lived in the historical centre of the city went displacing to the peripheral neighbourhoods and the new farms that arose as a consequence of the agrarian transformation. Moreover, it is necessary to add an increasing trend of the alguresse population to emigrate to the continental Italy and to the rest of European Union. Simultaneously, there was a constant flow of new immigrated (mainly Sardinian, but also Napolitans and Sicilians), attracted by the increasing industrialisation of the region and the development of the tourist sector.

It means that the Catalan language in Alghero has to share the public space not only with the Italian but also with other languages and dialects (Sardinian above all). In accordance

to the last known statistics, the Italian is the main language of the majority of the population (51%) whereas the 41% has as a usual language the Algherese dialect – although more than 90% of the whole population understand it – and about 7% speaks the Sardinian language (Bosch i Rodoreda, 2002).

2.2. Presence and use of the Catalan for sectors

Education

Except in some situations we can say that there never has existed a legislation or a specific official politics on the use of the minority languages in the educational system. Only the circular 73/94 of the Ministry of the Public Instruction contemplates the possibility of support the respect to the linguistic minorities. The Catalan language is not use in the preschool education and in the secondary, whereas its presence in the primary education is very low.

A better situation presents higher education. In the city of Alghero there is no university, but in the near Sassari, the capital of province, *Universita degli studi di Sassari*⁷ offers the possibility of university studies of Catalan Language and Literature.

There are also courses of Catalan for adults provided by Generality of Catalonia, still very popular.

Judicial authorities

The Italian is the only language used in the courts and so far only exceptionally there is a use of Catalan in the case than a person was not able to express properly in Italian or if the lawyer of one of the parts requests it. If it gives this circumstance, the expenses on translation and interpretation are charged to the interested person.

Authorities and public services

The Catalan hasn't have any presence in this sector, attended that only some communications of the company of electricity, of the service of telephonic and of the offices of posts do from time to time in Catalan and some times also it has been allowed to register the Catalan shape of names and surnames till the last years but now it changes a little bit.

⁷ Webpage of the Department of Catalan Philology and Literature on the University of Sassari: <http://hostweb3.ammin.uniss.it/php/proiettoreTesti.php?cat=1086&xml=/xml/testi/testi30981.xml&item=1>

There is a very special example of that. The webpage of the municipality of Alghero (http://www.ciutatdelalguer.it/comune_alghero.htm) theoretically has the two language versions (the Catalan and the Italian one) but actually, during these months of our research, the Italian version of the webpage seems doesn't function while the Catalan version does.

Media and technologies of the information

The reform of the Italian system of television from 1975 contemplated a shy initiative of regionalisation in order to put end to the monopoly of the RAI. Yet, the back proliferation of private televisions left the regions without hardly participation in the sector. Regarding the press, a newspaper in Alghero publishes fortnightly (since 1994) a small supplement of comics in Catalan. Also they exist two periodic publications that use partially the Catalan: *L'Alguer* (cultural magazine bimestral) and *Revista de l'Alguer* (magazine of annual publication devoted mainly to philological subjects). The city council of Alghero assumes a part of the expenses on impression and distribution.

There is also a local radio which is broadcasting in Alguerese but not all the time and for example the announcement are always in Italian. The local television issue a 10% of programs in Catalan and films doubled to the Catalan for TV3. This channel is funded exclusively with local capital and with the support of the city council of Alghero⁸.

Literature and culture production

The literary production in Alguerese is very limited . It treats especially of books for boys, poetic works and of thematic religious. Every year it celebrates a festival of traditional music and numerous concerts of popular song.

Regarding the theatre, exist two stable companies of fans that receive the aid of the city council and of private entities. The representations take place two blows the year and each work is represented during three days. Other cultural activities that take place in Alguerese are: conferences, photographic exhibitions, parties and religious celebrations (Farinelli; Branchadell, 2011).

Familiar and social use of the language

⁸ The topic of the Alguerese TV is something which is still changing. Some actual information may be found here: <http://www.vilaweb.cat/noticies/la-televisio-alguerese-estrena-un-programa-en-catala/>

Seemed to be that the parents's majority that have the Catalan as a main language continue to transmit the language to his children and that only a 11% of these would adopt the Italian as a main language but these data are from late 1990s. Today, according to the notes of prof. Branchadell (2011) still more and more people of Alghero adopt Italian as a main language to their children. Yet, the use all days of the Catalan is much more elevated in the grandparents's generation and of the parents (42%) that no in the new generations: hardly 13% of the children speak Catalan between them⁹. On the other hand, in numerous families the parents speak in Catalan to the biggest children and in Italian to the youngest, which thing would indicate a fast process of abandonment of the traditional linguistic behaviours. In spite of the progressive descent of the use of the Catalan to the family, this continues being the main vehicle of learning of the language (60,6%), followed of the fellow (29,7%). Instead, only a 3% of the population declares to have learnt Catalan thanks to the radio and the television.

Regarding the future evolution of the language, only a small minority of the people of Alghero thinks that the Catalan is in danger of extinction, although those that consider that the language is initiating a solid process of recovery only represent a light majority of the population; but actually the majority seems more and more indifferent towards the language question, although it may be caused by the world economic crisis and eventually adopting more competitive habits in the worlds market which means shift towards Italian as a more global language.

Cross-border Cooperation and International Relations of Alghero

Alghero keeps cultural and tourist relations important with its sister cities Tarragona and Palma de Mallorca, both of them also on the territory of Catalan-speaking countries. Also it seems that the process of linguistic politics carried out by the Generality of Catalonia have had a considerable impct on the linguistic attitudes of the alguerese inhabitants.

The most important task in the area of International Relations is hold by the Catalan Government via *Ofici de l'Alguer de la Delegació del Govern a Itàlia*¹⁰. As they say at their webpage, the aim of this office is to

- 1) Organise the institutional acts of the Generality of Catalonia in Alghero and back the

⁹ <http://llengua.gencat.cat/web/.content/documents/dadesestudis/altres/arxius/eula2004.pdf>

¹⁰ Webpage of the department:

http://afersexteriors.gencat.cat/ca/representacio_a_l_exterior/delegacio-del-govern-a-italia/ofici-a-lalguer/

organisation of the official visits of its representatives;

- 2) Facilitate the tramits of performances related with the Administration of the Generality and provide information on the rest of administrations of Catalonia;
- 3) Propose anddo the follow-up of the agreements and bilateral conventions between the Generality and the municipal administration of Alghero, of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia and the rest of institutions and entities of the territory;
- 4) Back the actions in favour of the Catalan language in Alghero, of the institutions, organisms, companies and entities of Alghero and Sardinia.

Also very important for the linguistic situation of Alghero was the connection established between Alghero-Fertilia Airport and Girona Airport in Catalonia in 2004. From that date there was an increasing tendency in cultural and linguistic exchange between Catalonia and Alghero which beneficiated the position of Alguerese in the island. In 2009 Alghero Airport became Ryanair hub and there was still a regular line Girona-Alghero. In february 2016 Ryanair announced that it will close this hub from the winter season 2016/2017 which means there will be no longer direct flights between Catalonia and Alghero.

3. The Algherese: Linguistic Overview

Algherese (also seen as Algherese; in Catalan: Algherès) is one of the variants of the Catalan language. Actually it is spoken only in the city of Alghero in Sardinia. Note that the Catalan is a Romance language spoken, as we have mentioned above, in northeastern Spain, Andorra, south part of France and precisely the Italian city of Alghero.

As other Romance languages, the Catalan evolved from Vulgar Latin and according to various academies of languages (RAE, IEC, etc.) it is linguistically very close to the Italian, Occitan, French and Spanish. This variant (Algherese) belongs generally to the group of Eastern Catalan dialects, but in fact comports a mix of eastern and western elements, that do difficult the inclusion of the Algherese in any one of the two conventional blocks. Also, this dialect **has received strong and always increasing influences of the Italian, the Sardinian and the Spanish**. Also it has a bunch of archaisms, consequence of its isolation from the peninsular Catalan.

Now, we would like to present some of the main differences of this variant from the standard Central Catalan. There is just a **very basic enumeration** of the differences in phonetics, morphology and the lexical part¹¹:

3.1. Phonetics

- Like in other languages of Sardinia /ɛ/ and /e/, and /ɔ/ and /o/ may merge into mid vowels [ɛ̃] and [ɔ̃].
- Coalescing of unstressed vowels /a/, /ɛ/ and /e/ to [a] (unlike the rest of Eastern Catalan that uses [ə]).
- Algherese preserves /v/ as a distinct phoneme from /b/, like Balearic variant.
- Mutation of intervocalic /l/ to [r] known as “rotacisme”; e.g. 'Barceloneta' (little Barcelona): Eastern Standard [bərsətu'nɛtə], Algherese [bərsətu'nɛtə]; and the mutation of syllable final /r/ to lateral [l], and the possible resulting group /r/ + consonant is further simplified to [l]; e.g. *forn* ('furnace, oven'): Standard [forn], Algherese [forn].
- Depalatalization of syllable final sonorants: lateral /ʎ/ to [l], nasal /ɲ/ to [n]; e.g. *any* ('year'): Standard ['aɲ], Algherese ['an].

¹¹ For further information on the differences between Central and Algherese variant of Catalan, you can see this paper: PEREA, Maria-Pilar. 2010. “The Dialect of Alghero: Continuity and Change“. In Millar, Robert McColl (ed.) 2010. *Marginal Dialects: Scotland, Ireland and Beyond*. Aberdeen: Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ireland, 131-149.

Online text: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/pfrlsu/documents/Perea,%20The%20Dialect%20of%20Alghero.pdf>

3.2. Morphology

- Simple past has been replaced by present perfect (present of *haver* "to have" + past participle), possibly due to Italian influence.
- Imperfect past preserves etymological -v- in all the conjugations: 1st -*ava*, 2nd -*iva*, 3rd -*iva* (unlike modern standard Catalan which has 1st -*ava*, 2nd -*ia*, 3rd -*ia*).
- Classical shape of the masculine determinate article: lo/los (pron. lu/lus) and feminine la/les (pron. la/las), but after vowel can pass to [-l-], [-ls], [-s]).
- Reduction of the three degrees of demonstrative pronouns of the medieval Catalan to only two: vicinity (*aquest/aqueix* interchangeable) and distance (*aquell*, plur. *aquellos*).

3.3. Vocabulary

The Alguerese has a big number of expressions that, absent in the Central Catalan, appear so much in Western or Valencian and Balearic dialects. Many of these terms correspond also with the Sardinian, the Italian or the Sassarese. Many archaisms have preserved or reactivated also for influence or calque of the Italian or of the Sardinian. Here just a little example of words used in Alguerese coming from other Catalan dialects (archaisms) or other Romance languages.

- Archaisms from other Catalan dialects (alguerese expression/catalan expression): **bastiment/vaixell** (ship), **bòria/boira** (fog), **costumar/acostumar** (adapt, get used to), **debaix/sota** (under), **matalaf/matalàs** (mattress).
- Calques from the Sardinian: **alboni** (field), **becu** (ram), **brujar** (burn), **forment d'Índia** (corn), **siddadu** (safe), **síndic** (mayor), **trilibiqui** (locust).
- Spanish expressions (mainly aquired via Sardinian language): **assustar** (scare), **averiguar** (find out), **carinyo** ("honey/darling"), **iglésia** (church), **raio** (lightning).
- Calques from the Italian: **alhora** (then), **auguris** (greetings), **cartolina** (postcard), **diventar** (happen), **esparir** (disappear), **fatxa** (face), **farfal·la** (butterfly), **una volta** (once).

4. Language Vitality and Endangerment

According to the document created by *UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages* about language vitality and endangerment, there are in total nine factors to be considered and as the document says: “**No single factor alone can be used to assess a language’s vitality or its need for documentation**”¹².

The following table, we rate it according to the obtained materials, in a purely statistical issues has been drawn from the data of Alghero of the year 2004¹³, which is offered by the Generalitat de Catalunya. For illustration we also marked the vitality of Catalan in Catalonia to show the contrast between the Catalan official and recognized governmentally and the Alguerese dialect which does not count with the same support from the government of Sardinia/Italia.

| | ALGUERESE | CATALAN |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION | 3+ | 5- |
| ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS | 20.000 | 5.000.000 |
| PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS WITHIN THE TOTAL POPULATION | 2 | 3 |
| SHIFTS IN DOMAINS OF LANGUAGE USE | 2 | 4 |
| RESPONSE TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA | 3 | 5 |
| AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND LITERACY | 3+ | 5 |
| GOVERNMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STATUS AND USE | 3 | 5+ |
| COMMUNITY MEMBERS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR OWN LANGUAGE | 3 | 4 |
| TYPE AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION | 4 | 5 |

¹²

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/Language_vitality_and_endangerment_EN.pdf

¹³ <http://llengua.gencat.cat/web/.content/documents/dadesestudis/altres/arxiu/eula2004.pdf>

Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission

As we can observe in the statistics, the language is spoken by all generations but it is no longer being learned as the mother tongue by children in the home. The major part of the parents prefers to establish Italian as a mother tongue and the language of the family base. Of course, when we talk about larger family, the use of Alguerese could be important in the contact between generations.

Factor 2: Absolute Number of Speakers

According to the data of the webpage ethnologue.com and the data of the Generalitat de Catalunya there are about 20.000 people in Alghero speaking the language. In total, there are more than 44.000 people living in Alghero, so nearly the half-part of them can be considered as Catalan speaking.

Factor 3: Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population

As we have seen above, in Alghero there is a minority speaking the Catalan dialect, so the score for this factor can be only 2 (“severely endangered”).

Factor 4: Shifts in Domains of Language Use

The Alguerese really is used only in limited social domains, for example at community centers, at festivals etc, but it is not present in the administration.

Factor 5: Response to New Domains and Media

We see the Alguerese as a receptive, it is used in new domains, especially in TV, radio and the Internet nor it has limited use in these new media channels (hours/week, 1 hour/day).

Factor 6: Availability of Materials for Language Education and Literacy

The Alguerese was given a score of 3+ because of the availability of written materials of Catalan and also this dialectal variety. Although there are materials, it necessarily does not mean the children are exposed to them.

Factor 7: Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use + Factor 8: Community Members’ Attitudes towards Their Own Language

Basically there is a lot of indifference towards the situation of Alguerese in the city.

The ninth factor is talking about the type and quality of documentation. In this regard, the Catalan and all its dialectal variants are well documented; there are also guides specifically about the Alguerese dialect.

To conclude this, we have seen that our scoring concurs with the general evaluation done by *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, 3rd Ed (2010) where the Alguerese belongs to “definitely endangered” languages.

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(Documents of the language policy mentioned in the text are not mentioned here; the chapters focusing on the alguerese proceed from the studies below.)

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