



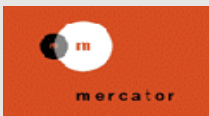
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New research shows strong support for Sardinian



Cagliari, Friday, 11 May 2007 by Andrea Oppo
New research launched this week entitled "The Common Sardinian Language: A Socio-linguistic Study" shows strong support for the language and that Sardinian is faring better in rural areas.

The research, commissioned by the Sardinian government, was conducted by the Universities of Cagliari and Sassari.

68,4% of Sardinians state that they "know and speak at least one of the variants of Sardinian". In municipalities with less than 4,000 people this percentage rises to 85,5%, while in municipalities with more than 100,000 people it decreases to 57,9%.

31,9% of Sardinians are against the use of Sardinian in public offices, whereas the majority, 57,7% , are "completely or partially favourable to the introduction of a unified written form of Sardinian for publishing official documents of the Sardinian Regional Government."

29% of those interviewed state that, while they could not speak Sardinian, they could understand it. Only 2,7% said that they could not speak or understand it at all.

In urban areas the percentages are particularly significant. In Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia, the 59,3% affirm that they know and speak Sardinian, and 36,7% say that they can only understand it. In Nuoro 66,7% speak Sardinian, and 62,7% in Olbia.

Finally, 89,9% of Sardinians "strongly agree" with the sentence: "The local language must be protected as it is a part of our identity." Furthermore, 78,6% of Sardinians agree with the teaching of Sardinian in public primary and secondary schools, and 81,9% agree that the teaching of languages at school should include Italian, a foreign language, and Sardinian.

In the debate held after the launch the Regional President, Mr Renato Soru, said: "It's time we taught Sardinian in public schools. And it's time that teachers of Sardinian got official credits for their work just as English or Italian teachers get." He added: "I don't understand why politics should protect only old walls and archaeological sites and not care about a living thing like a spoken language. In fact, a language tells us much more than a few old stones - it speaks about a whole people and is much more important."

In the run up to the study's launch, there were some disagreements among scholars on the reliability of the research, the main criticism being that the research overestimated the real knowledge that people have of Sardinian. Referring to the critics, Mr Soru said, "this is exactly what matters to me as a politician, if people pretend to know Sardinian better than they effectively do, this means they are interested in it, they recognise its value and they probably regret not knowing it." (EuroLang 2007)

Sardinian government website, video with speech in Sardinian
<http://www.regione.sardegna.it/jv/25?s=46240&v=2&c=220&t=1>

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