

Social Meanings of Written Language: The Case of Resian, a Slavic Literary Micro-Language in Northern Italy¹

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It is commonly believed that orthography, i.e., a set of rules of correspondence between sounds and letters, plays a key role in representing a language in its written forms. Recently, the development of orthography has attracted the attention of linguists and speech communities concerned with the revitalization of endangered languages that have no tradition of representation in written forms². However, there often occurs a problem of orthography not being acceptable to all speakers of a given language. This is because when orthography establishes a single “correct” spelling of particular phonemes, spelling variants take on symbolic meanings from its surrounding social backgrounds, possibly causing tension among the users. This paper explores social meanings of written language using the example of Resian, which falls under this situation.

Resian (Sln. rezijanščina/Rus. резьянский) is a Slovene variety spoken in the Resia Valley of Northeast Italy sharing its borders with Slovenia. It is called *to rozajanskë rumuninjë* by its native speakers³. Resian is currently endangered with fewer than 1,000 estimated speakers, and it is known as one of the “Slavic literary micro-languages (Rus. славянские литературные микроязыки),” i.e., minority languages where standardization as written languages is in progress⁴. In Resian, it has long been an issue which spelling – *Slovene-like* or *Italian-like* – to

¹ This paper is a revised version of my BA thesis, which was submitted to the Faculty of Letters, the University of Tokyo on January 4, 2024. I would like to thank Kumi Tateoka, Junna Hiramatsu and Goro Christoph Kimura for supervising my work. Part of this paper was presented at the 12th East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian Studies, held at Hanyang University on June 28-29, 2024. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Malinka Pila (University of Konstanz) for giving me fruitful advice during the entire process of this study. Last but not least, I would also like to thank my informant Sandro Quaglia, the current president of *Rozajanski Dum*, for helping me find my way in Resia. Of course, any errors are on my own.

² Friederike Lüpke, “Orthography development,” in Peter K. Austin and Julia Sallabank, eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 312-314.

³ Malinka Pila, “Anmerkung zur Übersetzung,” in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (Silvana Paletti and Malinka Pila, Trans.), *Te Mali Princip* (Neckarsteinach: Tintenfaß, 2021). The direct translation of *to rozajanskë rumuninjë* would be “the Resian way of speaking.” Its adverbial form is *po nās*, which means “in our way.”

⁴ Дуличенко, А. Д. Славянские литературные микроязыки: вопросы формирования и развития. Таллин, 1981. С. 9-11.

adopt regarding the representation of the phonemes /ts/ and /z/. Following various discussions, although linguists approved the *Slovene-like* spelling, the *Italian-like* spelling remains in use to this day. However, such a process of codification has not yet received much attention in general discussions on language standardization. Using the materials collected during the fieldwork in August 2023, I will examine how Resian was codified by different parties and analyze symbolic meanings of written language reflecting the social backgrounds. I will argue that because the difference between the two styles of spelling is small, that slight difference becomes crucial, which commonly leads to similar conflicts over orthography in other languages as well.

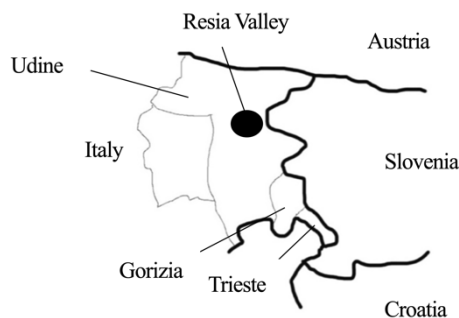
This paper is organized as follows: Section 1 offers geographical/historical and linguistic backgrounds of Resian. Section 2 describes the process of two opposing codifications, and Section 3 shows how they are reflected in practical use. Section 4 analyzes symbolic meanings of written Resian, and Section 5 presents conclusions.

1. Backgrounds

1-1. Geography and history

Most of the Slovene minority in Italy live in Trieste, Gorizia and Udine in the Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Among them Trieste and Gorizia have historically closer relationships with Slovenia. The members of the Slovene minority in these two provinces learn Standard Slovene in school and use it in daily life. Conversely, in Udine people had long been educated only in Italian and mostly unfamiliar with Standard Slovene⁵. People speak in indigenous Slovene varieties, and one of them is Resian spoken in the Resia Valley (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Friuli-Venezia Giulia



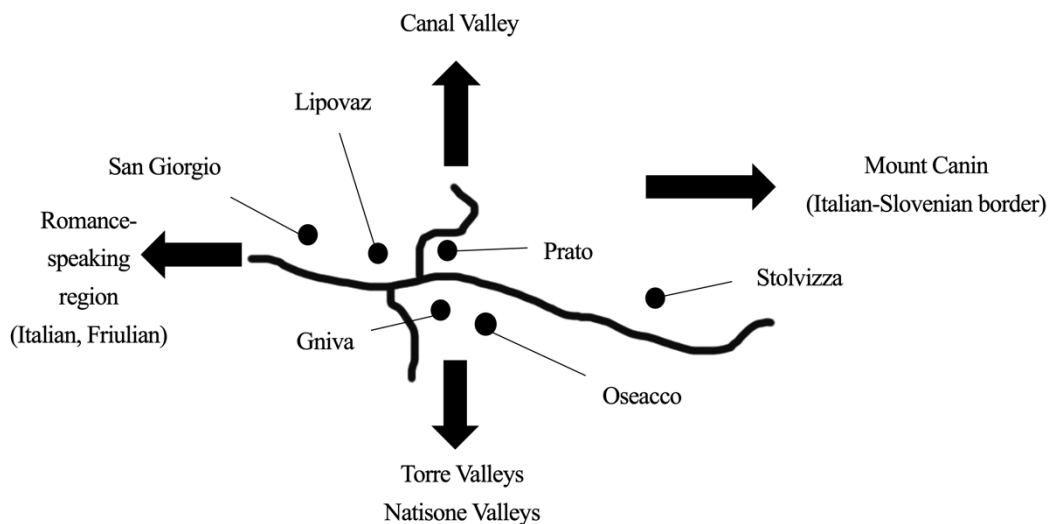
⁵ 山本真司「イタリア北東部国境地域におけるフリウリ語・スロヴェニア語間の言語接触」『ロマンス語研究』第42号、2009年、11-13頁。

To the east of Resia rises the Mount Canin (alt. 2,587 m), which is located on the Italian-Slovenian border, and traffic to and from Slovenia has long been restricted. On the other hand, the western side of the valley is connected to the adjacent Romance region, where Italian and Friulian are spoken. Males in Resia have traditionally worked in the Romance-speaking region outside the valley⁶.

The Canal Valley, which is situated to the north of Resia, originally belonged to Count Gorizia of Austria and was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy after World War I⁷. In contrast, the Resia, Torre and Natisone Valleys were annexed to the Republic of Venice in 1420 and became part of the Kingdom of Italy after the Napoleonic Wars and the subsequent Austrian rule from 1814 to 1866⁸.

As seen in Fig. 2, several villages are scattered throughout the Resia Valley. There are many steep slopes in the valley, and residents use cars to travel between villages. The straight-line distance from San Giorgio to Stolvizza is approximately 5 km.

Fig. 2 Resia Valley⁹



⁶ Han Steenwijk, "Resian as a minority language," in Mark Janse and Sijmen Tol, eds., *Language Death and Language Maintenance: Theoretical, practical and descriptive approaches* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003), p. 221.

⁷ 山本真司「イタリア共和国フリウリ地方ウディネ県のスロヴェニア系諸方言」『ブレンシェレン生誕 200 周年記念 スロヴェニア 言語・文化シンポジウム』2000 年、51 頁。

⁸ ロザンナ・ベナッキオ (土肥篤訳)「フリウリにおけるスロヴェニア語諸方言と言語接触」『西スラヴ学論集』第 15 号、2012 年、8 頁。

⁹ Adapted from Han Steenwijk, *The Slovene Dialect of Resia: San Giorgio* (Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1992), p. xxii.

1-2. Linguistic characteristics

There are significant differences between Resian and Standard Slovene, making it difficult for speakers of the former to understand the latter¹⁰. Due to the existence of natural barriers quite isolating the native speakers of Resian from the other Slovene-speaking regions, Resian shows archaic morphological features absent in other Slavic languages, which has attracted attention of renowned slavists since J. Dobrovský (1753-1829)¹¹. The proximal demonstrative of Resian is *isi*, which has the same stem *s-* as the proximal demonstrative *cb* in Old Church Slavonic. With few exceptions such as adverbs meaning “now” (*ceŭčac* in Russian, *sada* in Serbo-Croatian and *zdaj* in Slovene), this form is nowadays lost in the majority of Slavic languages¹².

On the other hand, Resian shows heavy influence from Italian and Friulian in syntax. For instance, subject doubling, though not completely grammaticalized, is observed as in the following example. It is highly likely that this is an influence from Friulian and Northern varieties of Italian, where subject doubling is obligatory¹³.

Ma	tī	tī	si	mont ¹⁴
But	you(stressed)	you(clitic)	be.2SG	pure
‘But you are pure’				

It is also notable that Resian has at least four variants on the phonological level: San Giorgio (SG), Gniva (G), Oseacco (O) and Stolvizza (S), as shown in Fig. 3. Differences within Resian generally do not affect mutual understanding¹⁵.

¹⁰ Steenwijk, “Resian as a minority language,” pp. 216-218.

¹¹ ベナッキオ「フリウリにおけるスロヴェニア語諸方言と言語接触」9頁。

¹² Marija Runić, “Issues in the Syntax of Nominals” (PhD diss., University of Padova, 2014), pp. 110-111.

¹³ ベナッキオ「フリウリにおけるスロヴェニア語諸方言と言語接触」15頁。

¹⁴ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (Silvana Paletti and Malinka Pila, Trans.), *Te Mali Princip*, p. 60. Glosses are mine.

¹⁵ Han Steenwijk, *Ortografia resiana/Tö jošt rozajanskë pisanjė* (Padova: CLEUP, 1994), p. 2.

Fig. 3 Four variants of Resian¹⁶

SG	G	O	S	Meaning
pys	pas	päs	pes	‘dog’
dyž	daž	däž	dež	‘rain’
vys	vas	väs	ves	‘all’

1-3. Ethnic identity perception of speakers

Resian belongs to the ethnolinguistic group of Slavic literary micro-languages¹⁷. This means that Resian as a language is linked to the ethnic identity perception of its native speakers as “Resian people.” People living in the Torre and Natisone Valleys consider themselves as “Slovene people” and have a complex regarding their poor economic situation compared to Friulian living in the plains. On the other hand, those living in the Resia Valley are proud of their own language and culture, and they have the identity as “Resian people.” Ethnonyms are expressed in Resian as follows, which implies that the Resians consider themselves distinct from those living in the neighboring regions¹⁸.

Fig. 4 Ethnonyms¹⁹

Ethnonyms in English	Ethnonyms in Resian
Resian people	Rozajän (singular), Rozajanavi (plural) ²⁰
Friulian people	Furlanavi
Italian people	ti Laški
Slovene-speaking people in the Torre Valleys	Görjani
Slovene people beyond the Italian-Slovenian border	ti Bolški/ti Buški ²¹

¹⁶ Adapted from Steenwijk, *Ortografia resiana/Tö jošt rozajanskë pisanjê*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁷ Дуличенко. Славянские литературные микроязыки: вопросы формирования и развития. С. 15-16. Some of the other examples include Molise Slavic, Banat Bulgarian, Burgenland Croatian and Kashubian.

¹⁸ Roberto Dapit, “Identità resiana fra mito e ideologia: gli effetti sulla lingua,” *Slavica Tergestina*, no. 9 (2001), pp. 307-309. In contrast, historical linguistic research reveals that the Resians originate from the Alpine Slaves, who were the ancestors for both the Resians and other Slovenes. See, for example, Matej Šekli, “Lo sloveno,” *Linguistik online* 130, no. 6 (2024), pp. 217-219.

¹⁹ Adapted from Dapit, “Identità resiana fra mito e ideologia: gli effetti sulla lingua,” pp. 307-309.

²⁰ The examples are attested in the following source: Silvana Paletti, *Rozajanski serčni romonenj* (Ljubljana: ZRC, 2003), p. 22, 42.

²¹ This form is associated with Bovec, which is the town on the Slovenian side at the foot of Mount Canin.

2. Process of codifications

2-1. *Slovene-like* codification

Resian was only passed down orally and its native speakers were literate only in Italian. In Resia, discussions on the orthography began in the 1970s, when its native speakers became concerned about the heritage of their language. The population of Resia was over 3,350 in 1951, but a large number of people left the valley to industrial cities in Italy and abroad. As a result, 20 years later, the population had almost halved to 1,805²². Furthermore, marriage with a non-native speaker made it difficult to inherit the language. However, Resian people have been proud of their language and culture, and strongly desired to pass down their language to the younger generation²³.

For these reasons, the native speakers of Resian began to attempt its graphization. Silvana Paletti, for instance, started her creative works as poet and writer in the 1970s²⁴. As the attempts of graphization became more active, there was a growing need for a unified orthography and grammar. The issue was which spelling – *Slovene-like* or *Italian-like* – to adopt regarding the representation of the phonemes /ts/ and /z/, since Slovene and Italian use different graphemes as follows: in the former, /ts/ and /z/ are spelled as <c> and <z>, and in the latter, as <z> and <s>.

Fig. 5 Different graphemes in Slovene and Italian

	Slovene	Italian
/ts/	Firence	Firenze
/z/	filozofija	filosofia

In Resia, it had been a problem that when children became familiar with Italian as a written language in compulsory primary education, Resian, which they had only been exposed to through oral tradition from their parents, often receded into the background in language use. Concerning its orthography, there were arguments on the one hand that children would be more likely to accept the spelling in common with Italian, and on the other hand, there were arguments that Resian should adopt a spelling that is consistent with Standard Slovene²⁵.

²² Steenwijk, “Resian as a minority language,” p. 216.

²³ Ben M. Groen, “On the problem of an orthography for the Resian dialects,” Bonno J. Amsenga et al., eds., *Miscellanea Slavica: To Honour the Memory of Jan M. Meijer* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1983), pp. 255-258.

²⁴ Marija Pirjevec, “Rezijanska pesnica Silvana Paletti,” *Traditiones* 31, no. 2 (2002), pp. 44-46.

²⁵ Groen, “On the problem of an orthography for the Resian dialects,” pp. 255-258.

Conferences on the Resian orthography were held twice, attended by its native speakers and linguists (first in 1980 and second in 1991). Soon after the second conference Luigi Paletti, the mayor of Resia at that time, commissioned a linguist Han Steenwijk, who completed a descriptive grammar of Resian as a doctoral student at the University of Amsterdam, to develop a Resian orthography and a normative grammar²⁶.

The Resian orthographical system prepared by Steenwijk was published in 1994. There he mentions that he adopts *Slovene-like* spelling because of its consistency as a writing system. His reasoning is as follows. Before the establishment of the orthography, there existed two ways of spelling in Resian. One is the *Slovene-like* spelling, in which /ts/ is spelled as <c> and /z/ as <z> (Fig. 6); the other is the *Italian-like* spelling, in which /ts/ is spelled as <z> and /z/ as <ś> (Fig. 7)²⁷. In the *Slovene-like* spelling, the role of each diacritic is uniquely defined (the acute accent and the haček represent alveolo-palatal and post-alveolar sounds, respectively), while in the *Italian-like* spelling the acute accent have two functions: one is for a voiced sound (ś) and the other is for alveolo-palatal sounds (ć, ġ). Furthermore, in the *Slovene-like* spelling the correspondence between alveolar and post-alveolar is represented by the haček (<c-č>, <s-š>, <z-ž>), while in the *Italian-like* spelling the correspondence is not clear (<z-č>, <s-ś>, <ś-ž>). For these reasons, Steenwijk concludes that the *Slovene-like* spelling is more consistent and therefore easier to acquire for beginners²⁸.

Fig. 6 *Slovene-like* spelling²⁹

	Affricate		Fricative	
	Voiceless	Voiced	Voiceless	Voiced
Alveolar	c		s	z
Alveolo-palatal	ć	ġ		
Post-alveolar	č		š	ž

The bold part is different from the *Italian-like* spelling in Fig. 7.

²⁶ Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, “Johannes Jacobus Steenwijk” [<https://www.sazu.si/en/members/johannes-jacobus-steenwijk>] (Retrieved August 19, 2024).

²⁷ Note that Resians added the acute accent for the purpose of distinguishing /z/ from /s/. The Italian orthography does not have diacritic signs on consonantal graphemes.

²⁸ Steenwijk, *Ortografia resiana/Tö jošt rozajanskë pisanjē*, pp. 67-73.

²⁹ Adapted from Steenwijk, *Ortografia resiana/Tö jošt rozajanskë pisanjē*, p. 71.

Fig. 7 *Italian-like spelling*³⁰

	Affricate		Fricative	
	Voiceless	Voiced	Voiceless	Voiced
Alveolar	z		s	š
Alveolo-palatal	ć	ǵ		
Post-alveolar	č		š	ž

The bold part is different from the *Slovene-like* spelling in Fig. 6.

2-2. *Italian-like* codification

Following the orthography, the normative grammar on Resian nouns and the Resian-Italian concise dictionary edited by Steenwijk were published in 1999 and 2005, respectively³¹. However, the *Slovene-like* codification met strong resistance from the vast majority of Resian speakers. For example, although Steenwijk's orthography was expected to be used in school education, it did not take place:

[...] as of 1999 Resian is an official subject at school. It is taught by a native speaker in the kindergarten and at school by the descendant of a Resian father living outside Resia. [...] However, the use of written Resian is shunned in order to evade orthography debate among the parents and the local authorities³².

The turning point of Resian as a written language was the year 2009, when Sergio Chinese became the new mayor of Resia. According to his website, Chinese is from Resia and has contributed to the preservation of the language and culture in Resia. For instance, he independently compiled a Resian-Italian dictionary in 2003 and established a cultural association *Identità e tutela Val Resia* ("Identity and Preservation of Resia Valley") in 2007. Chinese claims that the spelling of /ts/ in the same way as Slovene is the most problematic in Steenwijk's orthography:

The biggest problem was and still is constituted by the use of letter "c" to reproduce the sound "z". The

³⁰ Adapted from Steenwijk, *Ortografia resiana/Tö jošt rozajanskë pisanjē*, p. 72.

³¹ In addition, the normative grammar on adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, numerals and articles was published in December 2023. According to Malinka Pila (p.c.), the normative grammar on verbs is in preparation as of August 2024. These contributions will complete the standardization of spelling and morphology of Resian as a written language.

³² Steenwijk, "Resian as a minority language," p. 223.

majority of Resian population disagrees with the imposition of that letter and the feedback is evident in the animated discussions and in the manual corrections made to toponomastic bilingual road signs adopted recently. [...] In Resia, however, non-Resian scholars imposed a Slovenian writing system, this has the merit of making visible the Slavonic matrix of our language, but at the same time it makes impossible to understand exactly sounds and nuances of Resian language³³.

An example of “the manual corrections made to toponomastic bilingual road signs” is given below.

Fig. 8 Graffiti on a bilingual road sign³⁴



In November 2009, the proposal to amend the representation of /ts/ and /z/ from <c> and <z> to <ʒ> and <ʒ> was made and approved by the municipal council of Resia. In the next month, the new orthography was announced in the city bulletin³⁵.

3. Practical use of written Resian

3-1. Slovene-like spelled Resian

In Resia, both of the *Slovene-like* spelling proposed by Steenwijk and the *Italian-like* spelling approved by the municipal council are now being used. The former is seen in the publications of the cultural association *Rozajanski Dum* and newspapers dealing with the Slovene

³³ Sergio Chinese, “Resian language orthography” [<http://www.valresia.it/lingua/grafiaeng.html>] (Retrieved August 19, 2024).

³⁴ Franco Finco and Luca Merchior, “‘Toponimi esposti’ in lingua minoritaria nella regione Friuli Venezia Giulia, tra normalizzazione e autopercezione,” *apropos [Perspektiven auf die Romania]*, no. 8 (2022), p. 145. The exact shooting date is not specified.

³⁵ “Adottata la nuova grafia,” *Il Giornale di Resia* 20, no. 3 (2009), p. 3.

minority in Udine³⁶.

The cultural association *Rozajanski Dum* (“Resian Home”) was established by Silvana Paletti et al. in 1983³⁷. The association receives financial support from the Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia. According to its current president Sandro Quaglia (p.c.), the association consists of approximately 40 members, most of which live outside of the Resia Valley but maintain the connections with Resia through its activities. The members are required to pay an annual membership fee, while they receive the periodical *Náš glas*, which is mentioned later.

The website of *Rozajanski Dum* introduces their activities as follows. It is notable that here Resian is regarded as “a Slovenian dialect” and Resia is considered to be situated in “the Slovenian community.”

The activity of the Association is mostly focused on the linguistic aspect, and for this reason, from the very beginning it has cooperated with professors and universities. Over the years, the Association has organized a variety of activities such as: carrying out educational and practical lessons on the Resian culture in local primary and intermediate schools³⁸, cooperating in setting up Resian language (**a Slovenian dialect**) courses focused on spelling and grammar, dealing with the release of publications and periodicals, hosting exhibitions and cultural initiatives across and outside the Resia Valley, promoting cultural exchanges within **the Slovenian community** of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region and with other linguistic minorities within and outside the region³⁹.

Rozajanski Dum has published the periodical *Náš glas* (“Our Voice”) since 2005⁴⁰. It is a 16-page magazine which is now published almost annually. Its contents include interviews with researchers working on fields related to Resia (linguistics, literature, folklore, archeology, etc.), introductions of publications by *Rozajanski Dum*, and news on the Slovene minority in Italy.

³⁶ Matej Šekli, “Rezijanščina: geneolingvistična in sociolingvistična opredelitev,” *Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne*, no. 8 (2015), p. 210.

³⁷ Luigia Negro, “25-letnica Kulturnega društva “Rozajanski dum,”” *Glasnik Slovenskega etnološkega društva* 49, no. 1/2 (2009), p. 142.

³⁸ *Rozajanski Dum* held classes on Resian culture in the public schools of Resia from 1991 to 2007: Luigia Negro, “Rezijansko narečje: Prispevek KD Rozajanski Dum k ohranjanju domače slovenske različice,” *Glasnik Slovenskega etnološkega društva* 53, no. 3/4 (2013), p. 106.

³⁹ Resian Cultural Association “Rozajanski Dum,” “About us” [<https://rezija.com/en/circolo-culturale-resiano-rozajanski-dum/chi-siamo/>] (Retrieved August 19, 2024). Emphasis mine. Note that in legal provisions of Italy, Resian does not receive the status as a distinct language, but is included in the overall umbrella of “Slovene,” such as all the other Slovene varieties spoken in the country. See, for example, Steenwijk, “Resian as a minority language,” pp. 219-221.

⁴⁰ Luigia Negro, “Rezijansko narečje: Prispevek KD Rozajanski Dum k ohranjanju domače slovenske različice,” p. 106.

The magazine is written in Italian, Resian or Standard Slovene, depending on the content⁴¹. The following Fig. 9 shows an article in *Náš glas* which introduces a book on Resian sacred songs. Here the first two paragraphs are written in Resian, and the rest are in Italian. The use of the *Slovene-like* spelling in this article is evident from its title: *Te rozajanske svete wüže anu klavir te ravanške carkve* (“The Resian sacred songs and organ of the Ravanca’s church”)⁴².

Fig. 9 *Náš glas*⁴³

Dan librin ziz našimi wüži, ka pujamō tu-w carkvë

TE ROZAJANSKE SVETE WÜŽE ANU KLAVIR TE RAVANŠKE CARKVE

Una pubblicazione sui canti religiosi tradizionali e sullo storico organo della Pieve

Jē bil norēd pa libri *Te rozajanske svete wüže anu klavir te ravanške carkve (1849-2019) / Il repertorio musicale liturgico resiano e l'organo Valentino Zanin della Parrocchia-Santuario di Santa Maria Assunta di Resia (1849-2019)*. Jē a naredil Muzeo od tih rozajanskih judi ano za a naredit jē wsē zaplatila asoćacjun Don Eugenio Blanchini z Čividala. Tu-w isamo librinso jē napisalo karjē račē nejveč wse te stare carkwonske wüže po nes tej parvidina *Tō jošt rozajanskē pisanjē*. Ta-nutrē so nalaža pa wso štorjo klavirja ano note wuž, ki jē lōpo napisel maeštrō Luca Annoni z Pušje vase ki wsako nadējo a zwoni. So pa karjē litratow od itaa ki jē namulinano tu-w ti ravanški carkvë ano jindē tu-w Reziji. Isō to jē bilo norēd nejveč za nē zabit ise lipe ano stare wüže ki rūdi manji so pujē, ko se račējo te Svete Miše.

Nella prima parte di questo libro, edito a cura del Museo della gente della Val

Resia, con una approfondita ricerca storica, si “racconta” perché, come e quando fu installato l'organo Zanin a Prato, mentre nella seconda parte vengono presentati buona parte dei canti religiosi resiani con la relativa partitura.

Con ogni probabilità l'installazione dell'organo, che come si legge nel contratto di acquisto fu realizzato “pel decoro delle funzioni che in essa chiesa vengono celebrate”, di certo migliorò le funzioni liturgiche ma sicuramente scoraggiò, di fatto, l'assemblea a continuare a cantare in lingua locale perché i canti liturgici resiani non avevano la partitura delle melodie già predisposta e neanche si pensò o non si era in grado di predisporla.

A comprova di questa tesi vi è il fatto che nelle altre chiese della vallata, prive dell'organo, i brani in resiano furono quasi tutti preservati fino agli anni



'60 del XX secolo d.C. e, in parte, lo sono ancora utilizzati dai fedeli. Questi furono probabilmente tradotti in resiano dal latino dai sacerdoti a partire dal Concilio di Trento (1545-1563) in poi.

A far dimenticare i canti resiani agli stessi resiani fu, determinante, il sempre maggiore utilizzo della lingua italiana anche in ambito liturgico già a partire dal 1866 ed in particolare dopo il 1965 quando la Chiesa da quell'anno si adeguò a questa omologazione linguistica ed iniziò a rivolgersi alla gente con le parole della gente.

Purtroppo, nei contesti di lingua minoritaria più deboli sicuramente non incentivò l'utilizzo della lingua locale anzi decretò, in quasi tutta Italia, la lingua italiana a sola lingua utilizzata in ambito liturgico. Tranne qualche raro esempio questa situazione permane ancora ai giorni nostri.

Slovene-like spelled Resian is further found in newspapers dealing with the Slovene minority in Udine. Among such newspapers is *Dom* (“Home” in Standard Slovene), which was founded by a group of priests in the Natisone Valleys in 1966. Around 2000 copies are now published once every two weeks⁴⁴.

⁴¹ Jean L. Léonard and Ksenija D. Léonard, “Un regard sociolinguistique sur le resiano,” *Journal for Foreign Languages* 13, no. 1 (2021), pp. 269-270.

⁴² *rozajanske* and *carkve* are pronounced as [rozajanske] and [tsarkve], respectively. Here /z/ corresponds to the grapheme <ž>. Ravanca (in *Slovene-like* spelling) / Ravanza (in *Italian-like* spelling) is the Resian name of the village Prato in the Resia Valley.

⁴³ “Te rozajanske svete wüže anu klavir te ravanške carkve,” *Náš glas/La nostra voce* 16, no. 1 (2020), p. 5.

⁴⁴ Natali Birsá “*Dom in Novi Matajur – pričevanji slovenske manjšine v Beneški Sloveniji*” (BA thesis, University of Ljubljana, 2010), pp. 74-75.

Dom is written in Italian, Standard Slovene or several Slovene varieties including Resian, depending on the content. The newspaper is distributed throughout the Slovene-speaking areas in Udine, and thus only a small percentage of its readers can read Resian. It has a page named *rezija/kanalska dolina* (“Resia/Canal Valley” in Standard Slovene). The following Fig. 10 shows two articles on Resia which appeared in the July 31, 2023 issue. These are written by the same author, Sandro Quaglia. The one titled *Hüda ura ziz den močnë vitër tu-w Reziji* (“Rough weather with a strong wind in Resia”) is written only in Resian, where the use of *Slovene-like* spellings is evident in the underlined parts⁴⁵. The other titled *Arrotini di Resia in festa* (“Knife grinders of Resia in festival”) is written only in Italian. The former is local news from Resia, and the fact that it is written in Resian is more important than the content itself. In other words, it has a symbolic effect of showing the uniqueness of the inherited language and culture in Resia, and that Resian functions as a sophisticated written language. In contrast, the latter written in Italian is more informative, aiming to attract tourists to the festival⁴⁶.

Fig. 10 *Dom*⁴⁷



⁴⁵ *ziz* and *Reziji* are pronounced as [ziz] and [reziji], respectively. Here /z/ corresponds to the grapheme <z>.

⁴⁶ According to Malinka Pila (p.c.), besides the purposes of each article, there also exists a problem that it is far more difficult to formulate articles in Resian than in Italian due to the lack of vocabulary. Moreover, Standard Resian is an abstract language, which nobody really speaks. Therefore, it requires a lot of effort to be used. I will leave these issues regarding the vocabulary and standardization of Resian for future research.

⁴⁷ Sandro Quaglia, “Hüda ura ziz den močnë vitër tu-w Reziji,” *Dom*, July 31, 2023; Sandro Quaglia, “Arrotini di Resia in festa,” *Dom*, July 31, 2023.

3-2. Italian-like spelling

After the new *Italian-like* orthography was announced in December 2009, bilingual road signs in Resia were replaced⁴⁸. There the spellings of Resian changed from *Slovene-like* ones to *Italian-like* ones. In the following Fig. 11, the spelling change is seen in the underlined parts of *Rošajanskë kumün* (“Municipality of Resia”) and *Ravanžä*⁴⁹.

Fig. 11 Bilingual road sign with *Italian-like* spelled Resian⁵⁰



Italian-like spelled Resian is also found in the city bulletin *Il Giornale di Resia* (“The Newspaper of Resia” in Italian), which is published by the municipality twice or three times a year. Most of its articles are written in Italian, but some are in Resian. The crucial difference from *Nāš glas* and newspapers such as *Dom* is that articles in *Il Giornale di Resia* do not accompany Standard Slovene, and that they often narrate differences between Resian and Slovene. For instance, the mayor Sergio Chinese argues in the December 2010 issue that Resian should be defended as a language distinct from other languages including Slovene⁵¹.

The examples below show that the conflict over the Resian orthography remains to this day. In Resia, after Sergio Chinese served as mayor for 10 years starting from 2009, Anna Micelli

⁴⁸ Maurizio D. Lenardo, “Tabelle bilingui,” *Il Giornale di Resia* 22, no. 3 (2011), p. 8.

⁴⁹ Here the spellings of *-i* (*Rozajanski*) and *-a* (*Ravanca*) are also changed from *-i* to *-ë*, and from *-a* to *-ä*, respectively. Steenwijk notes that the endings *-ë* and *-ä* are unattested from his informants, and criticizes these spelling changes as arbitrary: Han Steenwijk, “L’adozione di una “Grafia Ufficiale” del Comune di Resia e le sue conseguenze,” *Nāš glas/La nostra voce* 6, no. 1(2010), pp. 7-9. One of the reviewers asked whether these spelling changes could take on symbolic meanings: it is highly likely that the use of <ë> and <ä> indicates the separateness of Resian from Slovene, since those two graphemes do not exist in Standard Slovene. But I have to leave the issue for future research.

⁵⁰ Photograph taken by the author on August 15, 2023.

⁵¹ Sergio Chinese, “Sloveni o resiani?,” *Il Giornale di Resia* 21, no. 4 (2010), p. 1.

became the new mayor⁵². She supports the linguists' argument for the consistency of the *Slovene-like* spelling, and in the December 2019 issue, where she announced her appointment as mayor, the *Slovene-like* spelling was used, which did not follow the conventions of *Il Giornale di Resia*. In Fig. 12, /z/ is spelled as <z> in the word *kazanjë* ("exhibition"). However, in the next issue it is reported that the *Slovene-like* spelling met strong opposition from some of the members of the municipal council⁵³. In that issue, the spelling is changed back to the *Italian-like* one *kašanjë*.

Fig. 12 <z> for /z/⁵⁴

KAZANJË
LITRATUW / AL
PARCO, UNA
MOSTRA SULLE
FESTE RELIGIOSE
RESIANE

Fig. 13 <ś> for /z/⁵⁵

KAŠANJË LITRÄTUW / "LE
SFUMATURE DELL'ANIMA
TRA NATURA E TRADIZIONE"

4. Discussion

So far, we have seen two different codifications of Resian and how those are reflected in practical use. It was revealed that there are two stances regarding relations between Resian and (Standard) Slovene: on the one hand, there are those who consider Resian to be a Slovene dialect and use the *Slovene-like* spelling for its representation⁵⁶, while on the other hand, there are those who regard Resian as a language distinct from Slovene and use the *Italian-like* spelling. In short, there are two opposing language ideologies in Resia, i.e., one orients toward assimilation to Slovene and the other advocates dissimilation from Slovene.

The cause of the conflict lies in the fact that the *Slovene-like* spelling was proposed by linguists for its consistency as a writing system, but this contradicts the ethnic identity perception

⁵² Anna Micelli, "Grazie!," *Il Giornale di Resia* 30, no. 2 (2019), p. 1.

⁵³ Cristina Buttolo, "Giuro di osservare la costituzione...", *Il Giornale di Resia* 31, no. 1 (2020), p. 14.

⁵⁴ "Kazanjë literatuw / Al parco, una mostra sulle feste religiose resiane," *Il Giornale di Resia* 30, no. 2 (2019), p. 4.

⁵⁵ "Kašanjë literätuw / Le sfumature dell'anima tra natura e tradizione," *Il Giornale di Resia* 31, no. 1 (2020), p. 6. It is notable that the spelling of the word meaning "portraits" also changed from *literätuw* to *literätuw*. The reason is not clear, perhaps the writer intended to express the separateness of Resian from Slovene. See also fn. 49. Steenwijk mentions in the following work that this word shows vowel alternations in its declension (*liträt* in nominative singular, *litrata* in genitive singular): Steenwijk, *The Slovene Dialect of Resia: San Giorgio*, p. 276.

⁵⁶ As one of the reviewers pointed out, whether all the people supporting the *Slovene-like* spelling recognize Resian as a Slovene dialect needs further investigations.

of Resian speakers who regard themselves as different from Slovene people. In contrast, the *Italian-like* spelling, albeit its linguistic inconsistency, has a symbolic function of distancing Resian from Slovene. After facing oppositions against the *Slovene-like* spelling, Steenwijk also confirms this in the following two quotes:

The issue of graphemes is strongly determined by the identity question. Using graphemes that are also used in Slovene, to many Resians entails the tacit confirmation that Resian and Slovene are identical. It should not be forgotten, though, that for the average Resian the only orthography he/she is acquainted with is the one for Italian⁵⁷.

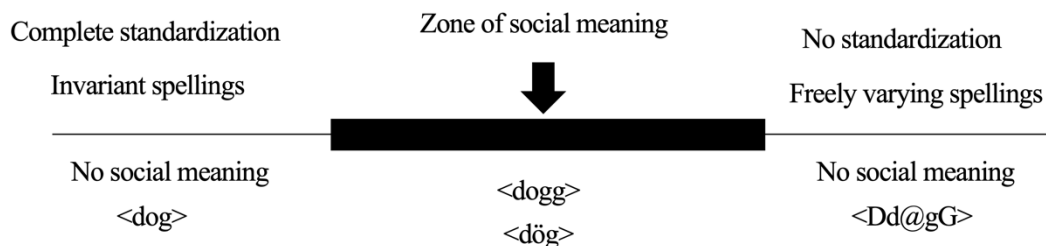
What makes the impasse very difficult to resolve is the avowed symbolical value the phonetic value of the letters c, z and s continues to have for both sides. They express positive identification with either Italian or Slovene culture and society. A unanimously accepted orthography for Resian can probably only come within reach when the issue of the symbolical connotation of the said graphemes can be defused⁵⁸.

The conflict in question can be further analyzed by applying the theory of “zone of social meaning” proposed by Mark Sebba. Sebba argues that in written language, such a “zone of social meaning” occurs when spelling is neither fully standardized nor completely out of norm. For example, *dog* is sometimes spelled as <dogg> to highlight the word, as seen in the rapper’s name Snoop Dogg. Also, it can be spelled as <dög> to indicate the German origin. On the other hand, if the word is spelled as <Dd@gG>, people cannot identify it as *dog*. The spelling <Dd@gG> is not even recognized as a deviation from the norm, and as a result it does not create any symbolic meanings⁵⁹. Therefore, written language takes on some symbolic meanings through spelling variations, but those variations are not entirely free. This can be schematized as follows.

⁵⁷ Steenwijk, “Resian as a minority language,” p. 222.

⁵⁸ Han Steenwijk, “Discussing Resian orthography: the laymen’s view,” in Ago Künnap et al., eds, *Mikrojazyki, jazyki, inter”jazyki: sbornik v čest’ ordinarnogo professora Aleksandra Dmitrieviča Duličenko* (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2006), p. 59.

⁵⁹ Mark Sebba, “Orthography as social action: Scripts, spelling, identity and power,” in Alexandra Jaffe, Jannis Androutsopoulos, Mark Sebba and Sally Johnson, eds., *Orthography as social action: Scripts, spelling, identity and power* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2012), pp. 5-9.

Fig. 14 Zone of social meaning in written language⁶⁰

I propose that in Resian, the different realizations in writing /ts/ and /z/ correspond to the “zone of social meaning.” *Slovene-like* and *Italian-like* orthography follow almost the same rules, except for /ts/ and /z/, and Resian speakers can identify a word regardless of which orthography it is written in. For instance, both of the spellings <rozajanski> and <rošajanski> are recognized as the adjective meaning “Resian.” Since there is only a small difference between the two styles of spelling, that slight difference becomes decisive.

Similar conflicts regarding orthography are found in other languages. In Lithuania, how to spell personal names of the Polish minority has long been a problem. Lithuanian spelling was first based on the Polish orthographic tradition, but in order to take a distance from Polish identity and culture, “Polish” (di)graphs <aj>, <ej>, <cz>, <sz>, <ż>, <ł>, and <w> were rejected. Instead, their alternatives <ai>, <ei>, <č>, <š>, <l> and <v>, which originate from the Czech spelling tradition, were proposed in 1901. Currently, the use of Polish letters is not allowed in Lithuania, but movements to put Polish names back are in progress⁶¹.

Another example comes from Lower Sorbian. Spellings of Sorbian previously followed the German tradition (i.e., /ts/, /z/ and /ʃ/ are written as <z>, <ʃ> and <ʃch>), but from the 19th century onwards, spellings following the Czech orthography (i.e., /ts/, /z/ and /ʃ/ are written as <c>, <z> and <š>), became more common. Recodification of Sorbian after the World War II was intended to converge Lower Sorbian with Upper Sorbian. In opposition to that, Lower Sorbian liturgy and hymnal written in the German spelling have been published since the 1990s, for the purpose of distancing Lower Sorbian from Upper Sorbian⁶².

⁶⁰ Adapted from Mark Sebba, *Spelling and society: The culture and politics of orthography around the world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 34.

⁶¹ Tomasz Wicherkiwicz, “Letters of Freedom and Captivity: Scriptal Planning and Language Ideologies in Baltic Central-Eastern Europe,” *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, no. 42 (2021), pp. 50-54.

⁶² Marti Roland, “Codification and Re(tro)codification of a Minority Language: The Case of Lower Sorbian,” in Aleksandr D. Duličenko and Motoki Nomachi, eds., *Slavic Microphilology*, Slavic Eurasian Studies, no. 34 (Sapporo:

However, there is also a case where such a conflict does not occur. Molise Slavic, which is a Croatian variety spoken in Southern Italy, is interesting when compared with Resian. Like in Resian, tradition of representation in written forms has long been absent in Molise Slavic. The orthography was developed in the 2000s, led by Professor Walter Breu of the University of Konstanz. The writing system adopted there followed the Croatian orthography, except for the addition of (di)graphs corresponding to phonemes not present in Standard Croatian (e.g., <kj> for /c/)⁶³. In Croatian, as in Slovene, /ts/ and /z/ are spelled as <c> and <z>, which is incompatible with Italian. However, according to Walter Breu (p.c.), there is no conflict over the orthography in Molise Slavic. While a detailed analysis is needed for future work, one reason for the absence of such conflicts might be that Molise is separated from the other Croatian-speaking regions by the Adriatic Sea, making the native speakers of Molise Slavic feel less threatened by Standard Croatian. On the other hand, the Resia Valley has historically been cut off from the other Slovene-speaking regions by the high mountains, but this situation is changing with the development of transportation. In addition, Resian is increasingly coexisting with Standard Slovene in media such as the magazine *Náš glas* and the newspaper *Dom*. Therefore, it is assumed that the threat of the standard language is more likely to be felt in Resia.

5. Conclusion

This paper dealt with two different codifications of Resian and their symbolic meanings reflecting the social backgrounds. Resian speakers are quite isolated from the other Slovene-speaking regions and are more closely oriented to Romance languages. While they are willing to preserve their native language associated with their own ethnic identity, they feel threatened by Standard Slovene. The adoption of *Slovene-like* orthography thus symbolizes the subordination of their native language to Standard Slovene, viewed as potentially leading to the loss of their own sociocultural identity. *Slovene-like* and *Italian-like* spellings follow almost identical norms, which highlights the symbolic meanings of their differences.

The problem involving /ts/ and /z/ in writing is inevitable whenever Resian appears as written forms such as dictionaries and teaching materials. Efforts to pass down the language are urgent, but no solution to this problem has yet been found. Future research should focus not only

Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, 2018), pp. 306-320.

⁶³ Walter Breu, *Slavische Mikrosprachen im absoluten Sprachkontakt. Teil I. Moliseslavische Texte aus Acquaviva Collecroce, Montemitro und San Felice del Molise. Glossierte und interpretierte Sprachaufnahmen aus Italien, Deutschland, Österreich und Griechenland* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), p. 21.

on the process of each codification and usage of written language within the Resia valley, but also on debates over orthography in other languages, from which we might learn some lessons.

書記言語の社会的意味：北イタリアのスラヴミクロ文章語「レジア語」を例に

鎌倉 啓伍

書記言語として表記される習慣をもたない危機言語の再活性化運動では、しばしば正書法の策定が不可欠とされる。しかし、正書法が当該言語の話者全員に受け入れられるとは限らない。なぜなら、特定の綴りが「正しい」と規定されることにより、当該言語をとりまく社会的背景から、綴りのヴァリエーションに象徴的意味が生じるためである。本報告では、北イタリアの「レジア語」を例に、社会的背景から生じる書記言語の象徴的意味を分析する。

スラヴミクロ文章語の一つとされる「レジア語」は、自然的境界によって他のスロヴェニア語地域から孤立して発達してきた。「レジア語」は、母語話者の「レジア人」という民族アイデンティティと密接に結びついている。

1970年代以降、「レジア語」の母語話者による書記化の試みが活発化し、正書法に関する議論が始まったが、音素/ts/と/z/の表記に関し、イタリア語(<z>、<s>と綴る)とスロヴェニア語(<c>、<z>と綴る)のどちらを基準とするのが問題となった。言語学者は綴りの一貫性が高いスロヴェニア語式表記を支持し、1994年に正書法が刊行された。

「レジア語」のスロヴェニア語式表記には、母語話者の多くが反対した。レジア市議会では、イタリア語式正書法への変更、すなわち/ts/と/z/の綴りを<c>と<z>から<z>と<s>に変更する提案が承認された。他方、言語学者や一部の母語話者はスロヴェニア語式正書法を引き続き使用している。「レジア語」の母語話者の多くがイタリア語式の正書法を支持する主な理由は、彼らが自らの母語をスロヴェニア語とは異なる言語として捉えているからである。「レジア語」をスロヴェニア語式に表記することは、彼らにとって自らの母語がスロヴェニア語圏に包摂されるという象徴的意味をもつ。

「レジア語」において対立する2つの正書法は/ts/と/z/の表記を除いてほぼ同一の規範に従っており、母語話者はどちらの正書法で書かれていても単語を同定できる。両者の間にほとんど

違いがないからこそ、そのわずかな違いが重大な象徴的意味を帯びる。こうした正書法の対立は、リトアニア語や下ソルブ語など様々な言語で生じている。