

Kindergarten and the School System in Val Badia and Gherdëina

Genny Ploner, Brixen, 1 February 2017

Ladin

Ladin is a **neo-Latin language** spoken in Ladinia, the Central and Eastern Alpine regions of Italy.

- The language is the result of the Roman conquest of the central Alps in 15 B.C., when the local Rhaetic tribes were firstly defeated by the Roman Empire and then romanised in the course of the following centuries.
- In South Tyrol, Ladin is an officially recognised language, taught in schools and used in public offices.

Today, the original Ladin area is geopolitically separated into **three parts**:

- Grischun (Switzerland)
 - Friulan (Friuli, Italy)
 - **Dolomites Ladin (Trentino-South Tyrol, Italy)**
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- 79% of the total population (38,000 people) living in the five Ladin valleys around the Sella mountain group speak Ladin

Dolomites Ladin

Administrative partition: 2 regions and 3 provinces



Istitut Ladin, S. Martin, 2008

Historical Overview of Schools in Val Badia and Gherdëina

- **Until 1893:** schools in the Ladin valleys belonging to the Austro-Hungarian County of Tyrol were mostly **monolingual German**
- **1893:** introduction of 5 hours per week of Italian teaching; the use of Italian in religion classes and as an “auxiliary language“. In a broad sense, schools in Ladinia formed a **multilingual school system**
- **After World War I:** schools in Ladinia became completely **German**
- **After 1921,** under the fascist regime, schools became **Italian**
 - Almost all local teachers were dismissed and substituted by Italian teachers from other provinces
 - Kindergartens with Italian teachers were established

➤ **“Option period“ (1939-1943):**

- Children whose parents opted for Germany attended German schools
- Children whose parents opted for Italy (“Dableiber“) continued to attend Italian schools

➤ **1943:** after the invasion by the “Wehrmacht“ (armed forces), all schools became **German** again

➤ **After World War II**

- different political stances: part of the population required a German school system and the rest an Italian school system
- over the years since WWII, South Tyrol has attained a significant degree of political autonomy and protection for minority languages

- **A ministerial decree of 1948** introduced parity in the use of languages for educational purposes in the Ladin speaking valleys of South Tyrol (Val Badia and Gherdëina).
 - 50% of school subjects taught in German
 - 50% of school subjects taught in Italian
 - Ladin taught 2 hours a week

The “**multilingual Ladin school system**” was the result of a political compromise

Specific Goals of the Current Ladin Education System:

1. **preservation and promotion** of Ladin language and culture
2. **support children in attaining the same level of competence** in German and Italian

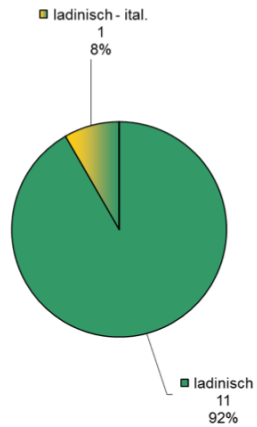
Teachers are required to pass a trilingual exam in Ladin, Italian and German, and they have to belong to the Ladin linguistic group

Ladin Kindergarten

- All kindergartens in Val Badia and Gherdëina are multilingual: children are not divided into separate language groups
- Ladin is the first official language and the main language of instruction in the kindergarten setting
- The linguistic competences of every child are taken into account: the right for children to use their mother tongue has to be ensured

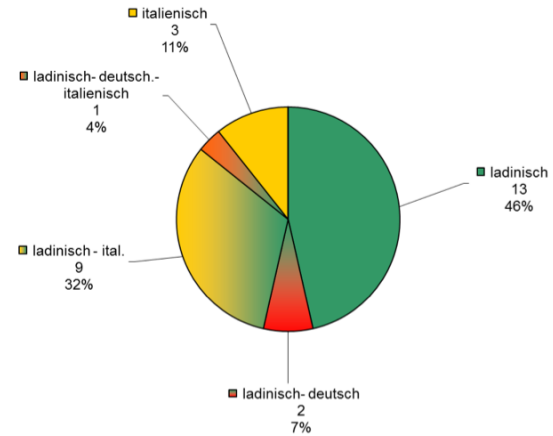
Val Badia

**KG Campill
2015/2016**



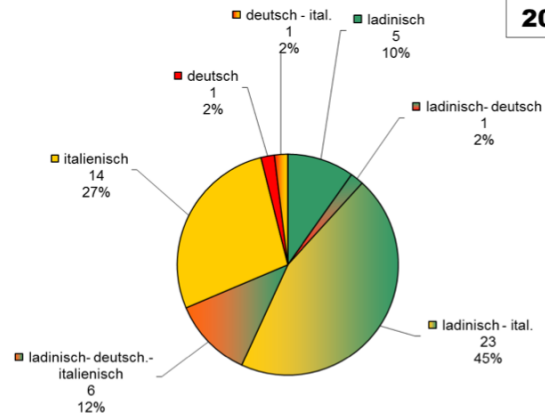
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**KG Stern
2015/2016**



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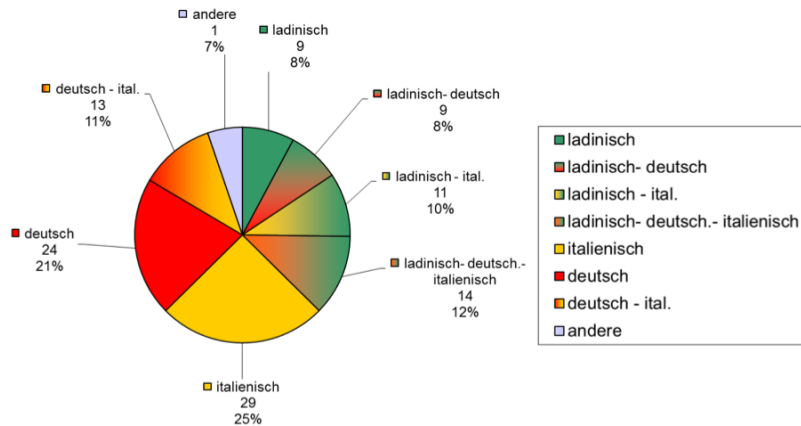
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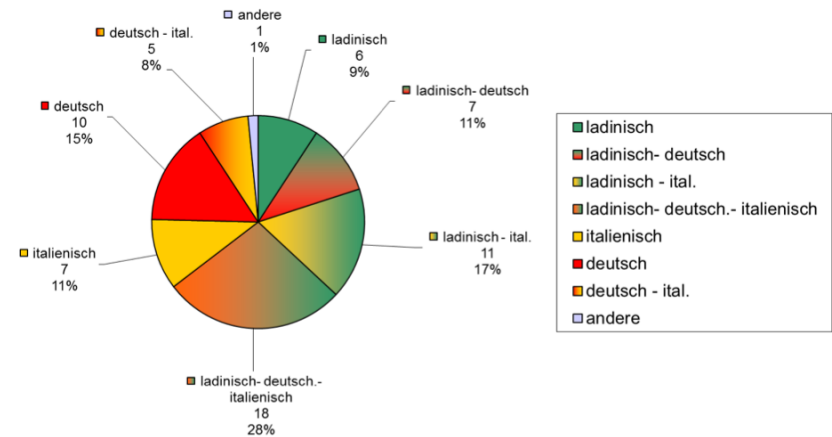
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Gherdëina

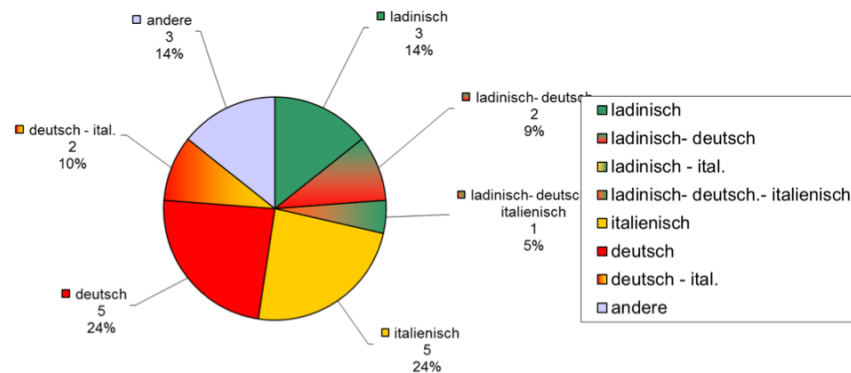
**KG Salieta
2015/2016**



**KG Wolkenstein
2015/2016**



**KG Runggaditsch
2015/2016**



- Until 2003 – songs, texts and educational games were used arbitrarily in all three languages to achieve uncoerced multilingualism
- In 2003 – an **integrated learning project** supervised by a scientific team began in the Val Badia and Gherdëina kindergartens
- Since 2003, efforts have been made to ensure the **systematic use of all three languages** in Kindergarten
 - The educational programme seeks to integrate **one hour a day** of multilingual activities
 - German and Italian languages must be used in a balanced and equal way

The Multilingual Integrated Learning Approach

- Promotion of metalinguistic knowledge
- Use of previous skills, knowledge and experiences for further language learning
- Simultaneous use of several languages
- Connection building between languages (cognition of similarities, differences, features)
- Planning and structuring of integrated language learning instead of implementing separated language learning



One language – One colour
as a visual methodological approach in Kindergarten



Phonological Awareness in Kindergarten

Phonetic structure of Ladin, German and Italian:
words, rhymes, syllables, sounds



The Ladin School System





In the past:

A wie Apfel

m di mela

p de pom

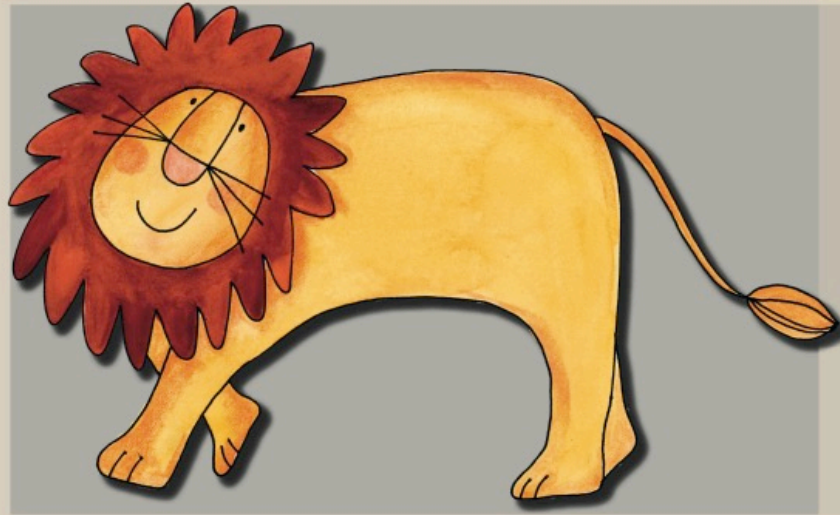


Now:

A wie Ambulanz

a di ambulanza

a de ambulanza



L I

LIUN

LÖWE

LEONE

Starting from year 2 of primary school and continuing until the end of high school, teaching has to be equally divided between hours of instruction in German and in Italian:

- **German and Italian:** equal distribution of teaching time (amount of hours depends on the school level)
- **Ladin:** 2 hours of Ladin weekly; Ladin can be used additionally as an auxiliary language, if necessary to explain content (especially in primary school)
- **English:** teaching starts in year 4 with 2 hours weekly
- **Religion:** trilingual teaching
- **Further school subjects:** equal distribution between German and Italian languages but with different organisation models
- Regular offer of teaching units in integrating multilingual didactics



- Trilingual teaching materials (Ladin, Italian and German) – books, educational games, media
- Official administrative records kept in all 3 languages
- Kindergartens and schools are publicly presented as trilingual Ladin institutions

A Ladin school qualification implies an equal level of language competence in Ladin, German and Italian, as well as a basic knowledge of English

Support Structure

- **Ladin Education and Culture Department** within the Autonomous Province of Bolzano
- The administration of teaching and management of personnel for Ladin schools is governed by the "Intendëenza por la scora di paisc ladins" (Ladin provincial education authority)
- Offices in charge of the production of schoolbooks and other didactic resources, for teacher training and research, for inspection and counselling

Free University of Bolzano

Faculty of Education, Brixen

Ladin Department:

- 1/3 of lessons in each language: Ladin, German and Italian
- Preparation of specific content for Ladin kindergartens and schools:
 - Linguistics and didactics of the Ladin language
 - Comparative philology, didactics of German and Italian
 - Ladin language and culture
 - Integrated multilingual didactics
 - Literacy
 - Internships
- Trilingual final oral examination
- Free choice of language for thesis

Conclusion

- Ladin as a culturally valuable minority language and as an original territorial language (heritage language) – **endangered language in a globalised world**
- Languages each have **a different prestige**
- Ladin: there are many different idioms and **no officially recognised written standard language**
- Ladin school as important **guarantor of linguistic and cultural balance** (however, promotion of linguistic competences and linguistic balance cannot be an issue for the education system alone)
- Need for **cooperation** between all institutions and the Ladin population
- Ladin speaking people are generally **open to languages and cultures** – multilingualism reflecting the “spirit of Europe“

- **Greater recognition of the value of multilingualism:** equal value and dignity for each language
- Neuroscience research: **cognitive and pragmatic advantages** of multilingual children compared to monolingual children
- **Additional efforts** – different language requirements of the individual pupils and students require increasing individual support and specific multilingual didactics
- Practised multilingualism: good linguistic skills in three languages, but optimal/absolute **balance in German and Italian not always achieved;** in Ladin, use of a number of **loan words and linguistic reproductions** from German and Italian
- The Ladin school system as a **political compromise** *versus* **pedagogical and didactic multilingual approach**

Thank you for your attention!

Dilan por avëi ascuté sö!