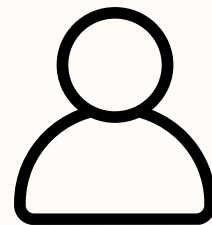


# COMPARING LANGUAGE ATTITUDES IN THE NORTHERN ITALIAN SPEECH COMMUNITIES OF EMILIAN AND VENETO

Jessica Hampton (University of Liverpool)  
& Stefano Coretta (University of Edinburgh)

# POLENTOMETRO



A project conducted by Stefano Coretta, Jessica Hampton and Simone De Cia - not funded.

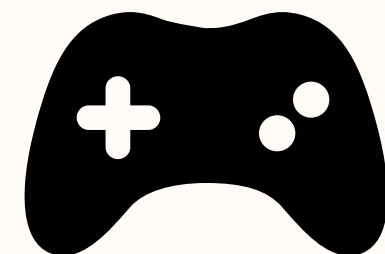


Val d'Aosta, Piemonte, Liguria, Lombardia, Emilia-Romagna, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino, San Marino, Ticino, Grigioni.



Online survey -> to assess vitality, e.g. UNESCO scores

Gamification aspect for appeal (polentometro and dialettometro)



# POLENTONE

**polentóne** (tosco. pop. **pulendóne** e ant. **polendóne**) s. m. (f. -a) [der. di *polenta*]. – **1.** Persona pigra, lenta nell'azione e nei movimenti: *Che fai, gingillone? Polendone! Stai a grattarti le anche?* (Palazzeschi). **2.** Grande mangiatore di polenta (in questo sign. è denominazione scherz. o spreg. data agli italiani del nord dai meridionali).

Someone who eats a lot of polenta

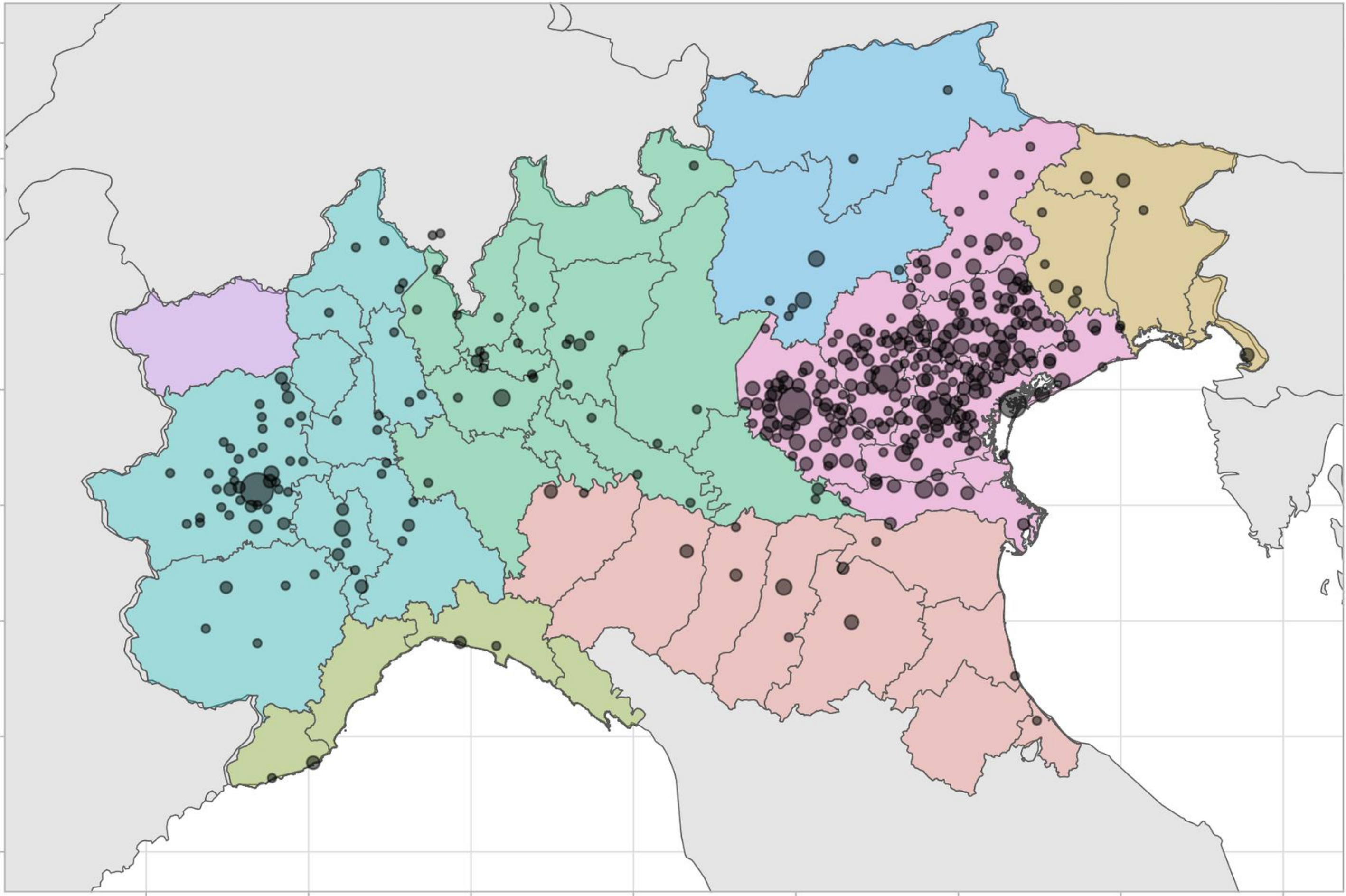
The epithet given to northern Italians by southerners, initially with joking connotations but later pejoratively

Filters: either were born or currently living in Val d'Aosta, Piemonte, Liguria, Lombardia, Emilia-Romagna, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino, San Marino, Ticino, Grigioni.

Si noti che nel presente questionario parliamo di "dialetti" come nell'uso comune della parola, ossia quelle parlate locali usate più comunemente dalle persone anziane. Per esempio, il dialetto milanese *Chi laüra ghà una camisa e chi fà nagott ghe n'à dò*, il dialetto di Modena *La sira, suvra e fögh, i balüs i buiven int la pignata scüra*, e il dialetto genovese *A bellessa a no fâ boggî a pûgnatta*.

- Demographics: age, gender, education, profession, degree subject
- Language practices: language spoken with parents/guardians, spoken during childhood, use of dialect words in Italian and vice versa, language spoken with children (U18/18+ and hypothetical)
- Self-reported competence: comprehension, speaking, reading and writing for both birthplace and current residence
- Use: how often they use the local dialect, with whom, where, about what, watch TV, listen to radio, know about media
- Attitudes: bipolar Likert scale for 8 characteristics
- Opinion on loss of the “dialect”
- Opinion on teaching “dialect” at school
- Opinion on “polentone”

Followed by optional questionnaire on Italian sentences



Filters: either were born or currently live (->how long)  
Demographics: age, gender, education, profession, degree subject  
Language practices: language spoken with parents/guardians,  
spoken during childhood, use of dialect words in Italian and viceversa, language spoken with children (U18/18+  
and hypothetical)  
Self-reported competence: comprehension, speaking, reading and writing for both birthplace and current  
residence  
Use: how often they use the local dialect, with whom, where, about what, watch TV, listen to radio, know about  
media

1. Explicit attitudes: bipolar Likert scale for 8 characteristics

Opinion on loss of the “dialect”

2. Opinion on teaching “dialect” at school

3. Opinion on “polentone”

Followed by optional questionnaire on Italian sentences

# VENETO

Enjoyed prestige due to the Venetian Republic

Local pride and community membership

It has a koine and orthography

“only” vulnerable Children shifted to Italian and women favour Italian



Pagliarini, E., Lorenzoni, A., & Navarrete, E. (2024) The Vitality of Venetan and its Implications for the Study of Bidialectalism. Available at SSRN 4806739.

Tomasin, L. (2013). Sulla tradizione grafica dei dialetti veneti. Die geheimen Mächten hinter der Rechtschreibung. L'ortografia ei suoi poteri forti, 145-158.

Tutten, E. (1997). The Veneto, in Maiden, M., & Parry, M. (eds), "The dialects of Italy". Routledge.

Ursini, F. (2012). Sono vitali le varietà venete? Parametri diagnostici a confronto. Quaderni veneti, 1(1).



# EMILIAN



Historical Via Emilia led to fragmentation and lack of koine

No standard orthography

Stigma

Definitely endangered (Ethnologue)

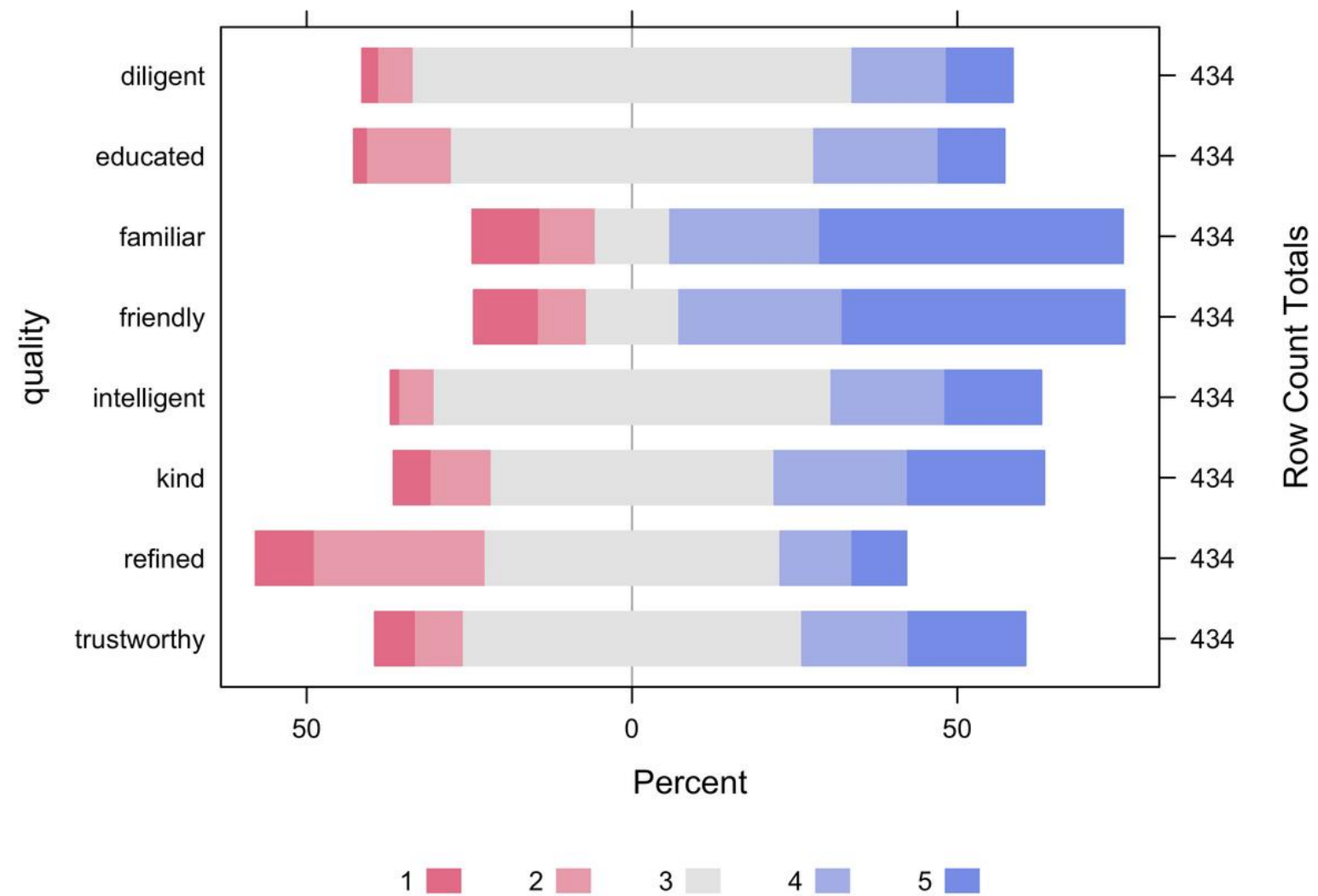
# EMILIAN VS VENETO

Tabella 1 - *Situazione sociolinguistica di emiliano, veneto e siciliano*

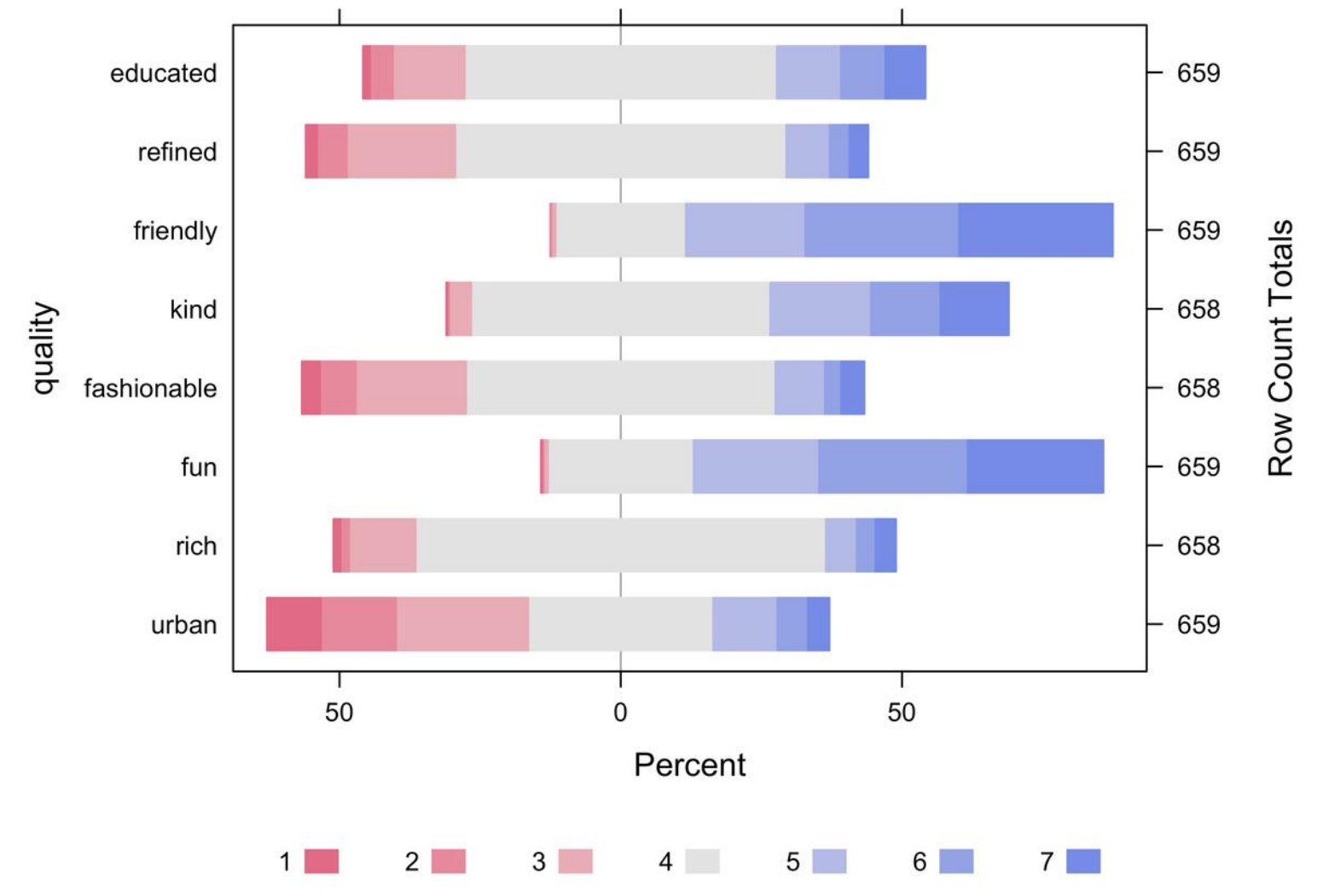
	<i>vitalità</i>	<i>ortografia</i>	<i>q.tà scriventi</i>	<i>q.tà lettori</i>	<i>standardizz.</i>
emiliano	–	DR	++	+	1
veneto	±	LL	++	++	3?-4?
siciliano	±	LC	±	++	2

Miola, E. (2017). Dalla parola alla scrittura: Il caso di emiliano, veneto e siciliano. La scrittura all'ombra della parola. Quaderni di Linguistica-Università della Calabria (LISE), 5, 59-72

# EMILIAN



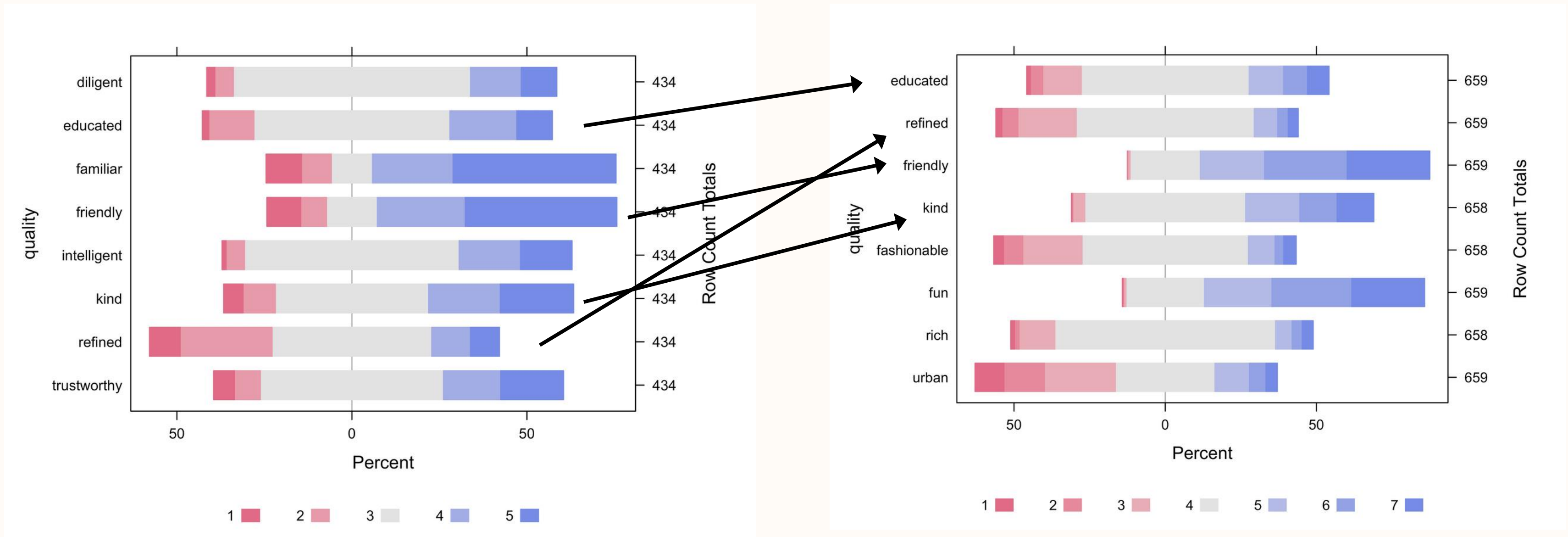
# VENETO



How do you instinctively judge a person who speaks your local dialect? (Come reputa d'istinto una persona che parla il suo dialetto locale)

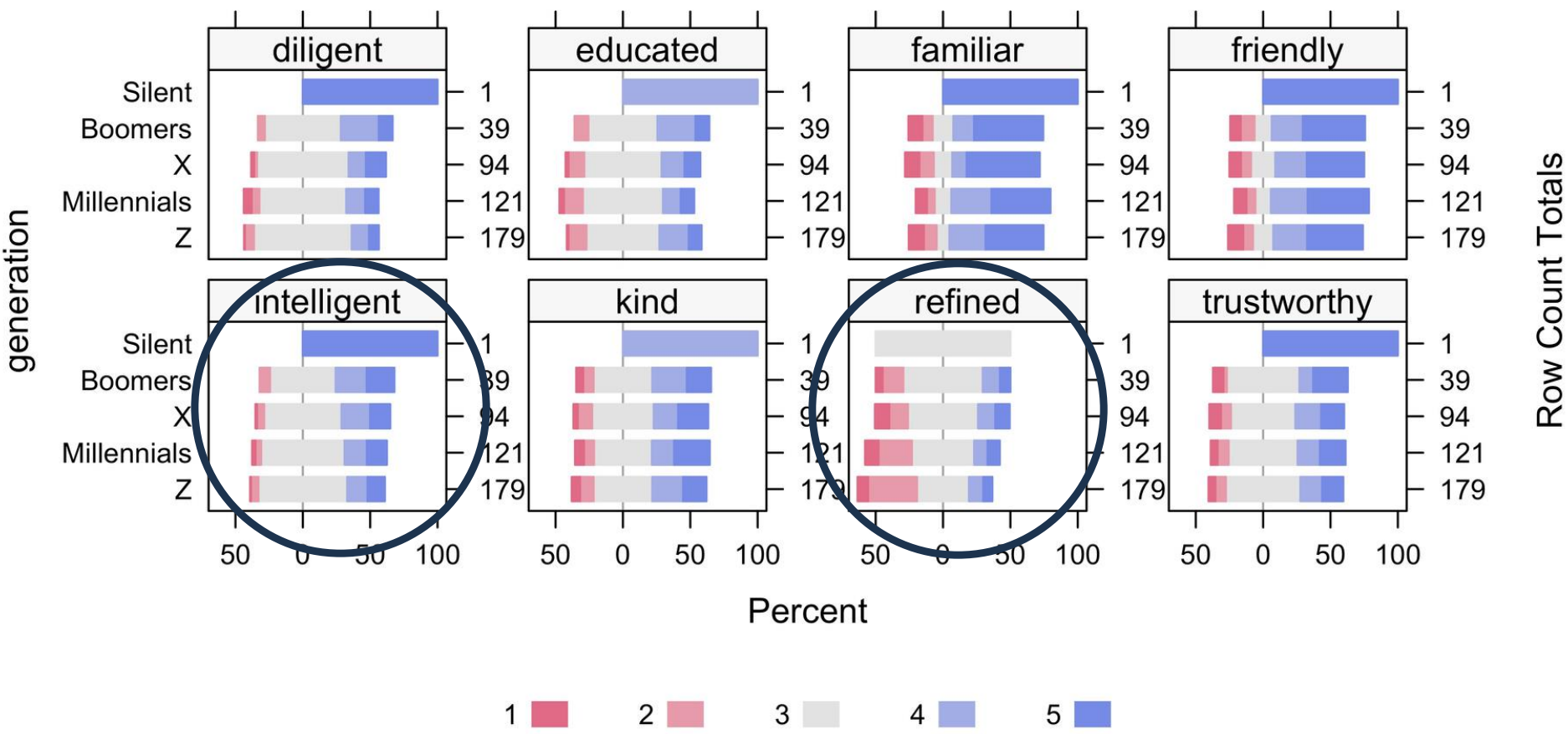
# EMILIAN

# VENETO

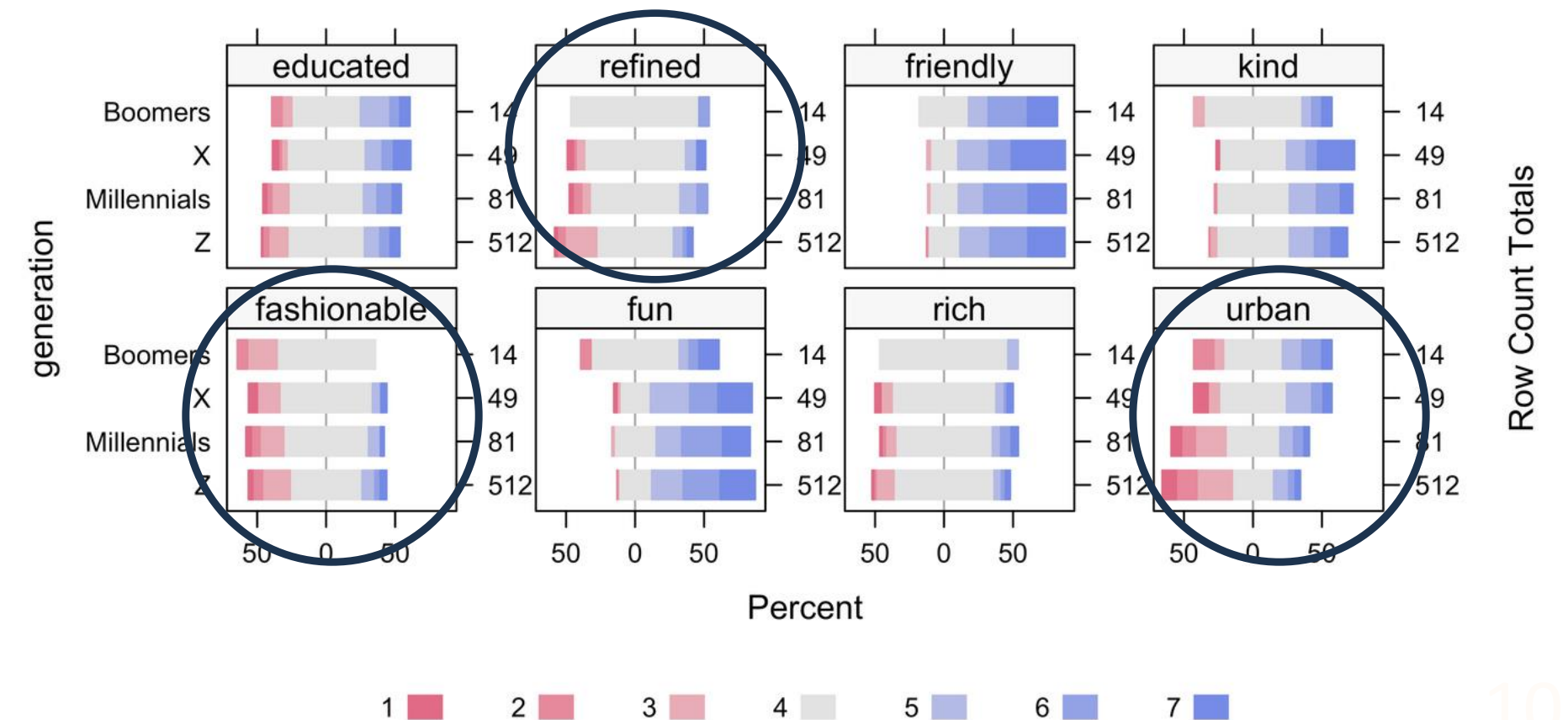


How do you instinctively judge a person who speaks your local dialect? (Come reputa d'istinto una persona che parla il suo dialetto locale)

# EMILIAN



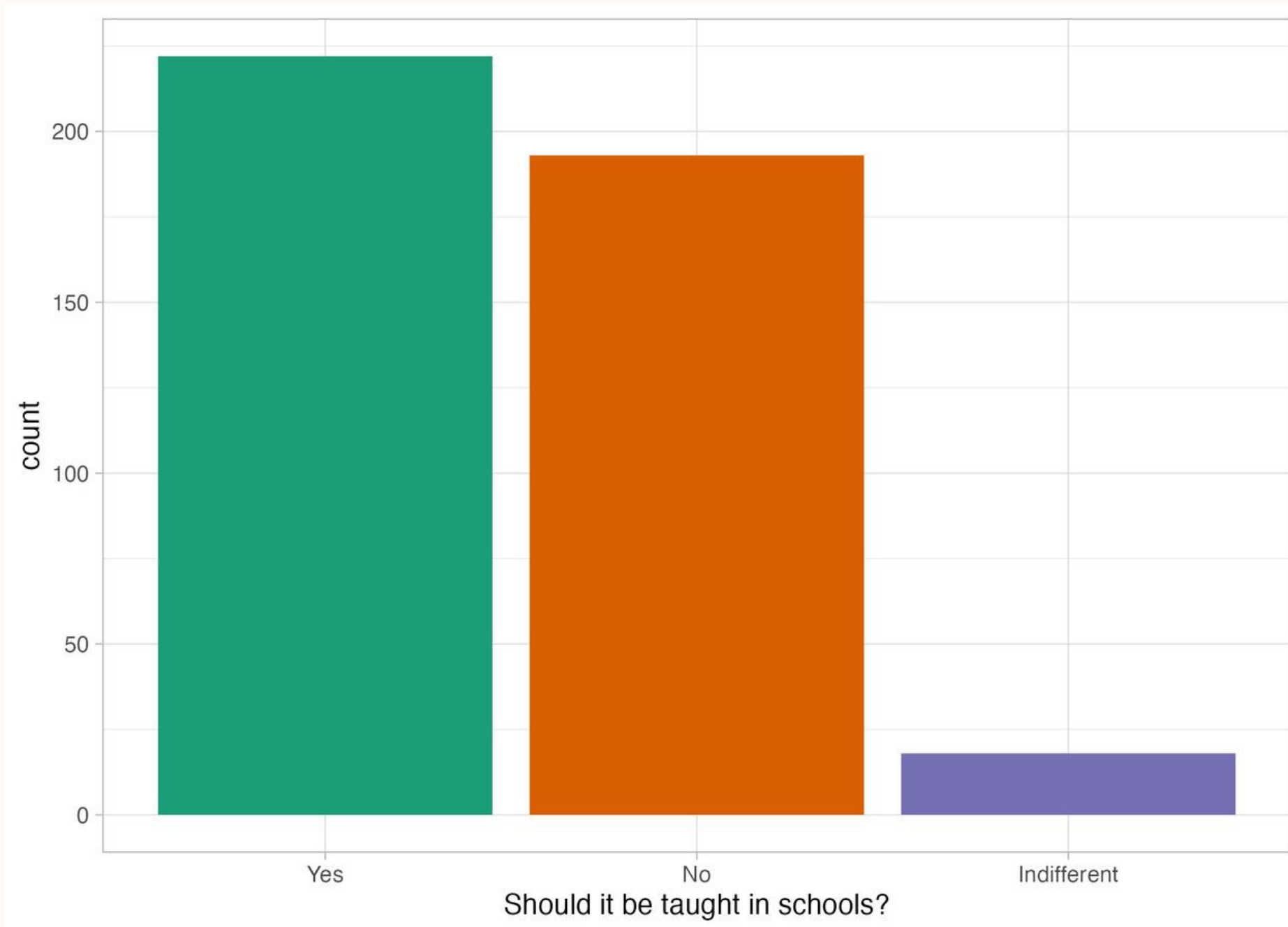
# VENETO



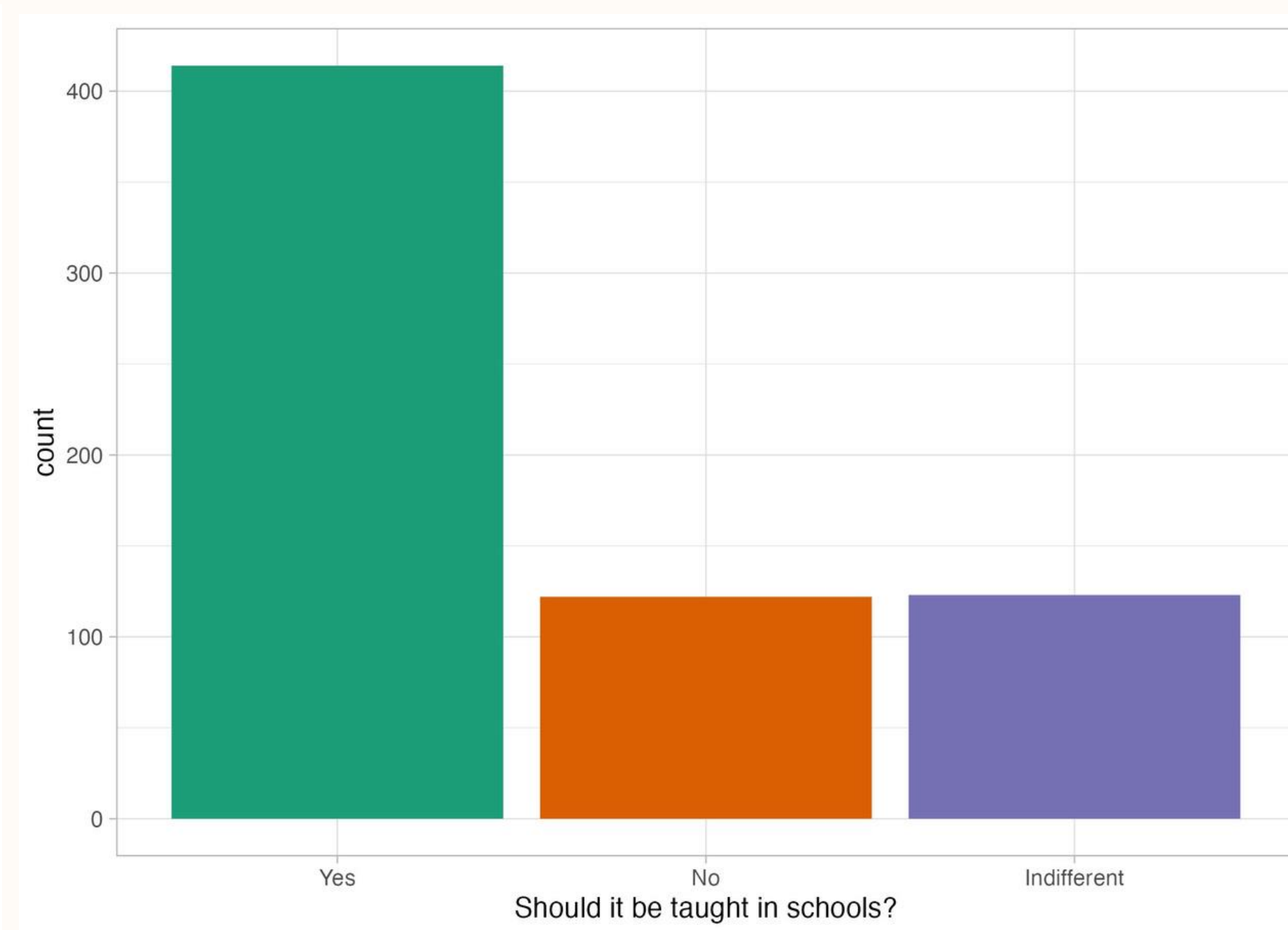
How do you instinctively judge a person who speaks your local dialect? (Come reputa d'istinto una persona che parla il suo dialetto locale)

# EMILIAN & VENETO

N=433



N=659



# EMILIAN

## Pro: part of our culture, traditions, roots/territory

"Sì, perché è una lingua che fa parte di noi"

"Yes, because it is a language that is part of us."

"Sì, perché la conoscenza del proprio territorio passa attraverso la conoscenza della lingua"

"Yes, because understanding one's own territory involves understanding the language"

"Sì, perché fa parte delle nostre radici"

"Yes, because it is part of our roots"

## Con: not widely spoken, not useful, should be transmitted in the family

"No, basterebbe tramandarlo di padre in figlio e, soprattutto, di nonno in nipote."

"No, it would be enough to pass it down from father to son and, especially, from grandfather to grandson"

*In line with ideological discursive practices in the media*

# VENETO

## Pro: culture, traditions

"Because it is a tradition and should be passed down"

## Con: fragmentation, not useful, should be transmitted in the family

"Because in an increasingly globalized world, learning a dialect spoken by so few people would not be as useful as learning a language spoken by millions and millions of people."

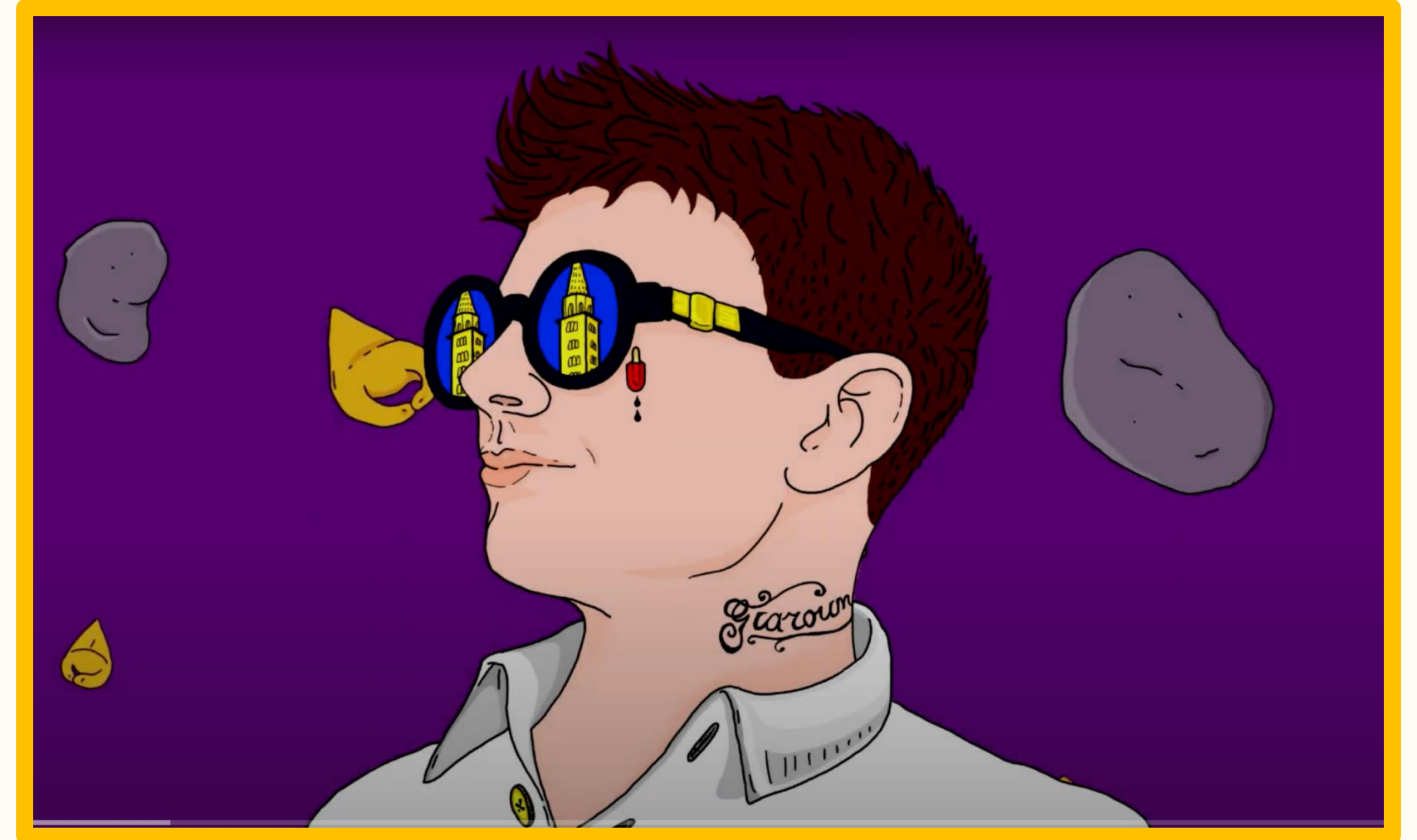
"Because even though it is culture, I still believe that the dialect remains somewhat vulgar and not suitable for everyone"

"The uniqueness of the dialect lies precisely in its distinctiveness: in school, since there are students from different backgrounds, it would be necessary to teach a different dialect for each background or a koiné (which would, however, result in losing this distinctiveness)."

# Expectation vs Reality



Old and rural



Young and urban

Connection with the land is key



# Ways forward

**ISSUE 1:** Language endangerment

**ISSUE 2:** Disenfranchisement -> speakers at peripheries geographically and politically

**ISSUE 3:** Incomplete picture of who speakers are/could be

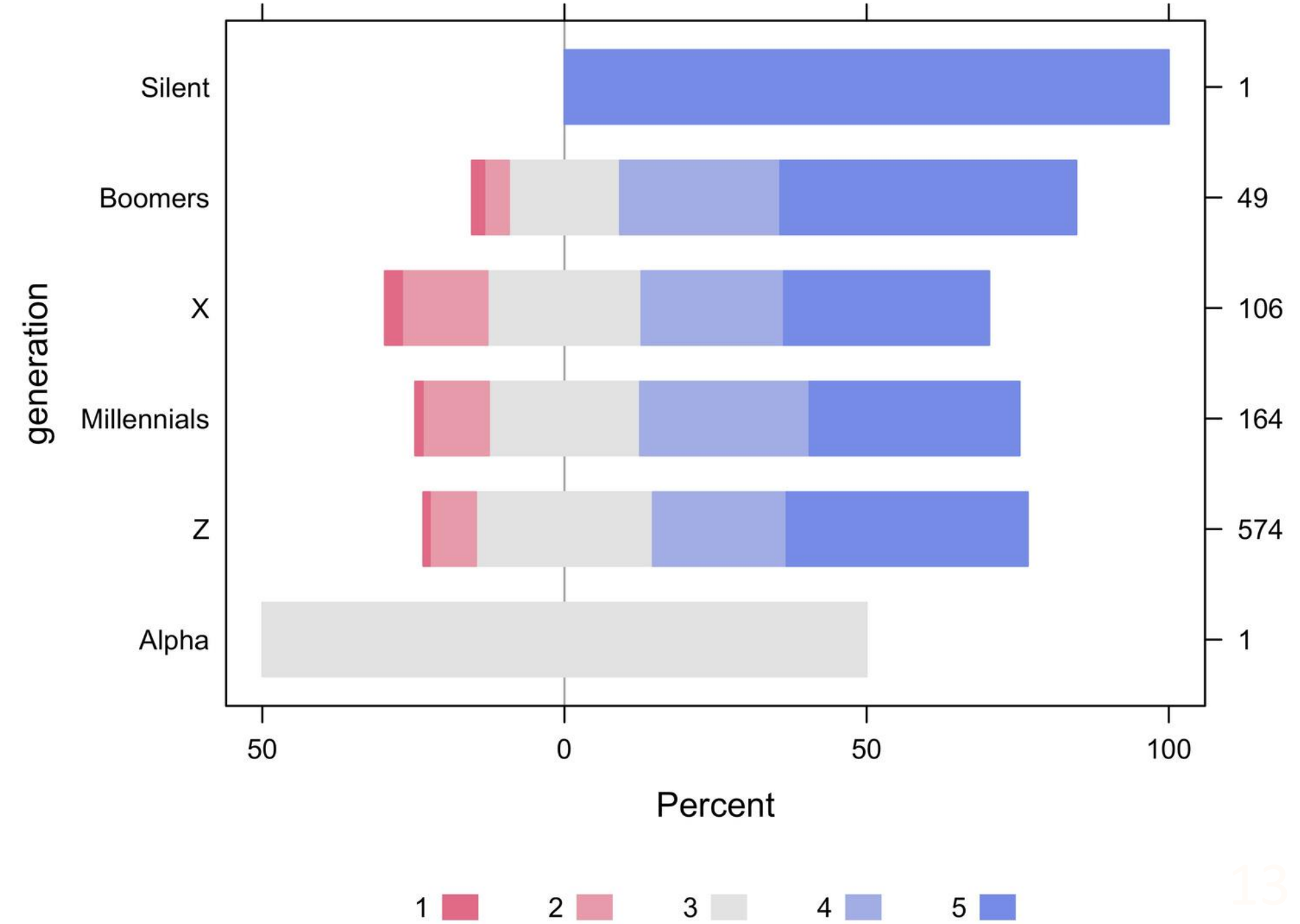
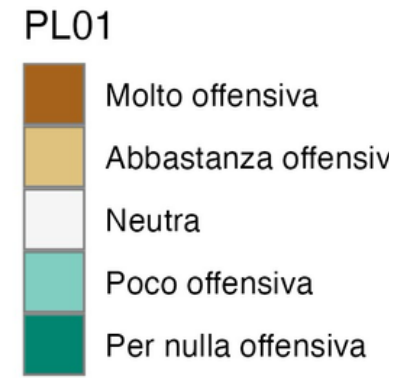
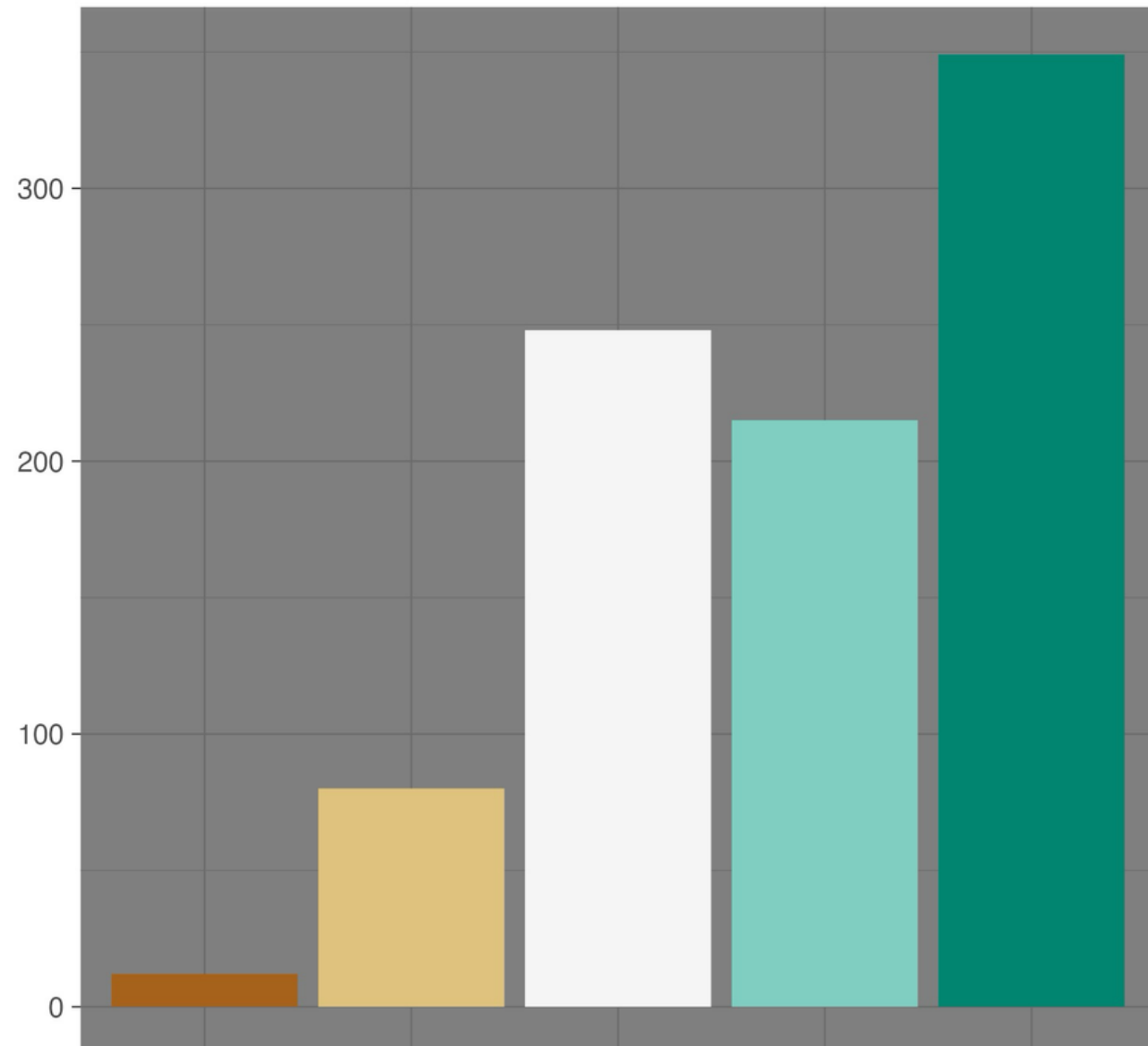
**ISSUE 4:** Climate crisis

**ONE ROOT: Neoliberalism**

**ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION:**

- Endangered languages repositories of ecological wisdom (local knowledge)
- Salience on the mundane as anti-colonial action (e.g.: Clarke & Mullings 2022)
- Language talked about as someone's roots, soil, territory
- Emilian and Veneto as languages to discuss ecological knowledge for climate crisis as opportunities for language revitalisation, climate action and grassroots empowerment

# POLENTOPINION



**THANK  
YOU**



Jessica Hampton [jhampton@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:jhampton@liverpool.ac.uk)

Stefano Coretta [s.coretta@ed.ac.uk](mailto:s.coretta@ed.ac.uk)

Simone De Cia [simone.decia@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:simone.decia@manchester.ac.uk)