**ABSTRACT**

Friulian, a lesser-spoken European language, one of the three minority languages used in the north-eastern region Friuli – Venezia Giulia, and one of the three Rheto-Romance linguistic varieties, has been, over the last few decades, in the process of revitalisation also as a means of communication within scientific circles. If on the one hand it represents a challenge merely for a limited number of nowadays’ schollars, most of them preferring to use either Italian, the lingua franca of the region, or English, today’s universal code creating the field of science, it is evident on the other that the number of academic texts and articles in Friulian is nonetheless increasing. The existing situation is in fact a symptom reflecting the problem of the identity of Friulian people, the question of their attitude toward their ‘marilenghe’ (mother tongue) and their whole cultural heritage. The problem seems a logical consequence of Friuli’s historical background, particularly of the period of the independent ‘Stât Patriarcjâl di Acuilee’, better known under the name ‘Patrie dal Friûl’ (1077–1420). During that period a pattern of parallel trilingualism evolved in the country, the language of the noble class being German, Latin prevailing to a great extent in the Roman Catholic Church and religious contexts, the Aquileia Vulgar Latin vernacular (the future Friulian) finding its way of being spread by the lower classes of society.

Therefore, the multicultural and multilingual reality of the contemporary Friuli might derive from that pattern