

PHONOLOGY in Italo-Albanian dialect: San Benedetto Ullano, Province of Cosenza, Italy

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Abstract

This paper reports a normative study on the phonological development of the Italo-Albanian dialect of San Benedetto Ullano.

It is a description that including geographic isolation of the speakers and the rudimentary state of informants' knowledge. Many villages today have lost the dialect.

To give a general notion of the structure of this dialect it is convenient at the outset to list the phonemes which are used by the people. The phonemes are ordered on the basis of their sequential distribution in the dialects, or forms of speech, under discuss.

Italo-Albanian has, like all Albanian dialects, for each of its consonants rather few readily perceptible allophones, e very few allophones indeed. All consonants are articulated with moderate tension. It is the consonant articulation that perceives the most marked characteristics of individual variation in the dialect.

Many of the general features of consonants accord with the well known characteristics of Italian articulation.

Phonology of a language constitutes a highly organized system of knowledge. It is useful for anyone interested in how learners acquire such knowledge.

Keywords: San Benedetto Ullano phonological development, gender

1. Introduction

The following study is a phonological description of Italo-Albanian dialect of San Benedetto Ullano¹. This work requires a specific study and would like to give a precise classification of the current situation of this speech, handed down orally.

Speech structure is very flexible, strong and a defined construction, welded to the strain from but also detected by vigorous differences.

The research work is based on a corpus of community texts². The collected material was obtained by various procedures, including various portable tape recorders. Then it was reproduced in large phonetic transcription. Many data were collected by recording stories, poems and occasional conversations. Typical original informants have made the best to identify changes and / or processing of the original language where the choice of solution has different changing implications. The survey was very thorough and careful.

To determine the direction of the sounds in question must normally turn to original and mainly produced elements of the vocal mechanisms.

For the diplomatic transcription of analyzed materials we will refer to the alphabet of the Standard Albanian language with grapheme that complement the dialect in question; it refers to the graphetic symbols /ç/, /ÿ/ e /k/. Regarding the phonetic transcriptions it will be used the International Phonetic Alphabet.

The basic units in phonology are minimally distinctive. The distinctive features are the ultimate distinctive entities of language since no one of them can be broken down into smaller linguistic units. The distinctive features combined into one bundle form a phoneme; the entity can be reversed in the same context because variation of meaning.

The phonological system is the set of phonemes of a language that constitute a closed and uncountable class; it may change and it is in each language.

Phonological description of the dialect.

San Benedetto Ullano dialect has 31 consonant phonemes, among them we have six vowels and phonemes semi-vowel 2, they are:

8 plosive: /p/ /b/ /t/ /d/ /k/ /g/ /c/ /ʃ/

¹ San Benedetto Ullano is a village (native name Shën Benedhiti), with a population of somewhat more than 2000 practically all of whom speak San Benedetto Ullano dialect situated in Calabria. The village lies on the winding mountain road that connects Montalto Uffugo to Fuscaldo.

The villages are all perched on knob-like outcroppings in the hillsides, overlooking steep slopes of the brownish-yellow soil which is characteristic of the region. The tortuous folds in the hillsides, which gush forth hundreds of darting rivulets in a heavy rain, charm the onlooker with as many hundreds of kaleidoscopic vistas of refreshing variety and arresting composition.

The life of the people is based almost exclusively on agriculture, and all tillable slopes are used. The chief products are olives, figs, grain, and a lesser extent chearries, pears and nuts.

The animal population is low standard. The only animal that is really numerous is the pig.

Children go to school, where they first learn Italian for a various number of years.

By far the most important unit is the family, and some families are very ramified and influential.

² This transcription material has an high documentary value about dialectological Italo-Albanian studies and, represents the important San Benedetto Ullano literature.

4 affricate: /ts/ /dz/ /tʃ/ /dʒ/

7 fricatives and spirants: /f/ /v/ /θ/ /ð/ /ç/ /x/³

4 hissing: /s/ /z/ /ʃ/ /ʒ/

3 nasal: /m/ /n/ /ɲ/

4 equivalents: /ʎ/ /ʎ/ /r/ /r/

6 vowels: /i e ə a o u/

2 semivowels: /j/ e /w/

In most of the Italo-Albanian villages is records the phoneme /ʎ/ that in San Benedetto Ullano is expressed by a slightly palatalized lateral dental /lʎ⁴.

The dialect records several differences with the Albanian literature today, we haven't in Albanian lexicon bottom [ç] fricative palatal voiceless, the rounded front high vowel / y / of the Albanian standard that becomes high not rounded front vowel /i/ with the neutralization of the tract rounded high front vowel.

Our dialect is marked by the expression of the lateral /ʎ/, palatalized, in standard Albanian it became alveolar /l/ , this is the reason because in initial position we have palatal /ʎuʎe/⁵, /ʎ/ switch to /j/ in intervocalic context and also in the follow clusters [ʎk] [ʎb] [ʎq] [ʎp] [ʎth] like /e -'biʎa/⁶ > /bija/, /eʎb/⁷ /ejb/, /heʎq/⁸ > /hejq/, /jaʎper/⁹ > /jajper/, /kaʎθ/¹⁰ > /kajθ/, /uʎk/¹¹ > /ujk/ probably /ʎ/ + consonant becomes j and then it is reduced in the consonant

³This grape we have in Marri dialect (Marri is a *frazione*, the term means that the place is administratively not a separate village, it is far less 3 km; the two dialect record many differences).

⁴L. M. Savoia, *Grammatica e Pragmatica del linguaggio bambinesco (Baby Talk): la comunicazione riutilizzata in alcune culture tradizionali*, Editrice CLUEB, 1984.

⁵ flower

⁶ daughter

⁷ barley

⁸ pull

⁹ snake

¹⁰ little horse

¹¹ wolf

link [fʃ] in each position, then it turns into /ʃ/ example /ʃijŋ/¹².

The Italo-Albanian group is homogeneous to a high degree. Though vocabulary differs, mainly as a result of different sources of loanwords, the structure is very similar from dialect to dialect, the principle differences amounting to perhaps three or four nearly automatic phonemic replacements and something else so the peculiarities suggest Prof. Solano to explain a scheme that establish some different areas about linguistic reference. San Benedetto Ullano dialect has features of area II¹³..

The area II is characterized by outcome /c/ e /ʃ/ of ancient consonantic clusters *kl*, *gl* as in the examples *klajŋ* > *caŋ* and *gləmb*¹⁵ > *jəmb*. As regards old clusters formed by labial occlusive consonant or labial fricative plus more lateral liquid have the passage of lateral liquid¹⁶ to semi-vowel /j/, and then *plot*¹⁷ > *pjot*, *bleŋ*¹⁸ > *bjeŋ*, *fleta*¹⁹ > ‘*fjeta*, *vloŋ*²⁰ > *vjon*.

Albanian language is spoken over an area and there are two major dialect, *Geg* and *Tosk*, the dividing line between the two dialects is roughly the River Shkumbini, with *Geg* to the North and *Tosk* to the South.

These systems were accentuated by the lack of contact during the Turkish rule. It has main linguistic differences because the *Geg* dialect is prone to:

- vowel elision,
- diphthongs monophthongization, it presents vowel long / short phonological opposition
- consonant assimilation
- nasal vowels

and it records numerous Slavs and, sometimes, Turkish loans.

Tosk dialect preserves better the old diphthongs and the indistinct vowel *ë* that often isn't in *Geg*, it gets lost.

Lexicon of *Tosk* base has

- full of Greek and Neogreek loans
- medium vowel length
- primitive syllable *vo-* outcome by Latin *o*, in *Tosk* presence is *va-* such as in the words

¹² see

¹³ Marri dialect has a change between voiceless velar spirant /x/ and correspondent voiced /ɣ/, it is a characteristic feature of area IV restricted isogloss. This has origin by beginner velar resonant spirant. Phoneme /x/ in Marri is /ɣ/.

The two dialects are different in phonemes inventory, resonant velar spirant [h] of /krehem/ in San Benedetto Ullano is voiced in Marri [ɣ] by an intervocalic context and in the other positions. It is a modern process, it is in /ɣəŋgra/, /kreɣem/.

¹⁴ cry

¹⁵ thorn

¹⁶ E. Çabej, Studime gjuhësore vol. IV *Nga historia e gjuhës shqipe*, Prishtinë, 1976 and , Gj. Gjinari, *Dialektologjia Shqiptare* Tiranë pagg. 44 – 60, 1988

¹⁷ full

¹⁸ buy

¹⁹ leaf

²⁰ save

*voj*²¹ - *vaj*.

- nasal intervocalic -n- is in Geg, in Tosk undergoes rhotacism: *venë*²² - *verë*

- in some Tosk varieties y gets lost labialization and becomes i, *yll*²³ - *ill*

The two alternatives language have differences:

- sometimes Tosk th or o have Geg *uthull*²⁴ / *ufull*

- tosk diphthong *ua* in Geg is *ue*, *vua*²⁵ - *vuej*

- clusters *mb* and *nd* in Tosk are clearly articulated while in the major part of Geg linguistic land is without the second element, *mbaj*²⁶ - *maj*.

- by labial influence *i* in Geg is *y*.

- morphological considerable is the future (analytical), it had many geg makes use of the verb "have" and Tosk uses the verb "will"; in Tosk the use of to have shows necessity *kam për të shkuar*: *I have to go*.

- infinite is.t it is replaced with a subordinate clause, Geg has "paskajoria"²⁷ such as subordinate clauses curtailment introduced by *me*, *me shkue*.

It should be noted that the speech of San Benedetto Ullano, as other Albanian spoken in Italy have common features to the Albanian southern dialect²⁸.

2. Vowel phonemes

There are 6 vowel phonemes, they are used both in unstressed situation that in tonic situation:

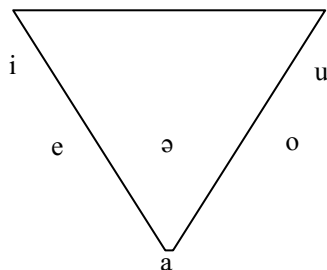


Figure 1. According to the position of the part of the tongue that is highest in their articulation

²¹ oil

²² wine

²³ star

²⁴ vinegar

²⁵ suffer

²⁶ hold

²⁷ infinitive

²⁸ G. Pellegrini, *Introduzione allo studio della lingua albanese*, Padova 1977; *Avviamento alla linguistica albanese*, 1998

/i/: high front vowel unrounded closed /ki/, /ci'ri/, /li'mun/	“candle, lemon”
/u/: high rounded back vowel closed: /kuʃ/, /u'naza/	“who, ring”
/e/: media front vowel unrounded half-closed: /me'nat/, /ejb/	“tomorrow, barley”
/o/: average rounded half-closed back vowel: /'zog/, /ko'pila/	“bird, girl”
/a/: low central vowel unrounded open: /baʔ/, /arbə'reʃ/	“forehead, Italo-albanian”
/ə/: mid-central vowel unrounded: /'zəmərə/, /'əmər/	“heart, name”

These phonemes are more open and relaxed than literary Albanian²⁹, they are also different from each other in different contexts, like [e] is [+ tense] than [ɛ] [– tesa], and consider with precision, the phonemes should treat all the allophones³⁰): [ɪ] vocoid more relaxed and more open [ʊ] it is a form more relaxed and more open [ɛ] half front vocoid open unrounded spoken [ɔ] back vocoid, half-open, rounded, oral [ɐ] in unstressed syllable with opening less accentuated [ə] few labialized vocoid half-open.

To determine the length of a vowel phoneme are specified the phonetic elements, by the accent, important is syllable nature and location (with particular articulation of the contiguous consonants) then a first assessment of our dialect is not prominent the distinctive length. It is possible that a length vowel is in a series of limited objections.

Between Italo-Albanian dialects /ə/ has a different situations, this phonological rule is variable and optional that in the spoken in pre-tonic position is annulled would be registered except in few context.

In post-toned position or between two consonants as in /u bəra/ the phoneme outshines in free syllable and passes to /ɐ/.

The alternations of the form is preserved [‘zəmər]³¹ ~ [‘zəmra]³².

²⁹Jubani–Conforti, 2004 Tiparet akustike të theksit – krahasim i sistemit zanor të shqipes standarde dhe i të folmes së Shën Benëdhitiit, në Calabri, *Studime filologjike* – Tiranë.

³⁰ Malmberg, *Manuale di fonetica generale*, 1977

³¹ heart

³² Marri records the same situation as in example: [‘krɛɣər] ~ [‘krɛɣri]

A characterized and relevant expression is the shift of /ə/, central indistinct vowel in /u/, the rear vowel phoneme that is followed by a veil consonant and is determined by pre-tonic position as in the following: [[kəputs]³³ ~ [kuputs], [kəmiʃ]³⁴ ~ [kumiʃ], [vəʔa]³⁵ ~ [vuʔa], [fəmiʃə]³⁶ ~ [fumiʃə].

Another recurring phenomenon in pretonic position is the transformation of /ə/ changes in /i/:, front vowel double-closed, [ləkur]³⁷ ~ [likur], [ləver]³⁸ ~ [liver].

3. Diphthongs and Vowel Groups

Vowel sequences show two distinct categories that are one of the diphthongs and that of groups vowel. The diphthong is the union of a vowel with a semi-vowel, represented by /j/ or /w/, thus understood is that precedes the vowel is that follow it. The diphthongs are both descendants and ancestors, the first are characterized by the internal accent on the first vowel element (tonic vowel + unstressed vowel (semivowel)).

[aj] /'ajɛr/ "air"

[ej] /a'tej/ "there"

[ij] /pij/ "I drink"

[oj] /vjɔj/ "I save"

[uj] /uj/ "water"

[əj] /bəj/ "I make"

The second group includes ascending diphthongs and they are that groups in which *i* or *u* semivowel are in first position, semivowel + tonic vowel on the second vowel element:

[ja] /'pjaku/ "old man"

[je] /'vjɛn/ "I come"

³³ shoes

³⁴ shirt

³⁵ brother

³⁶ children

³⁷ skin

³⁸ cloth

[jo] /'pjot/ “full”

[ju] /'bjuaɟ/ “grind”

[we] /' kueɟ/ “horses”

[wa] /'dʒwani/ “John”

The vowel groups [ua], [au], [ie], [□□], [eu], [iu] even have the accent on the first element are expressed with two distinct syllables:

[ua] /'θua/³⁹ [au] /'kau/⁴⁰ [ie] /ʔəbier/⁴¹ [ia] /'diaɫ/⁴² [eu] /'ðeu/⁴³, [iu] /'miu/⁴⁴.

Most Italo-Albanian dialects have the vowel group [□□], in San Benedetto Ullano becomes [ia] /'diaɫ/⁴⁵, /'miaɫ/⁴⁶, /'qiaɫ/⁴⁷.

The vowel phonemes switch replaces morphophonematic (radical vowel + inflectional affix) of apophony (vowel alternation), vowel alternation between the present theme- root and the past theme-root:

Presente	Past	Alternanza
marr “io prendo”	mora	a/o
pres “io aspetto”	prita	e/i
xë “io inizio”	xura	ë/u
siell “io porto”	sola	ie/o
shtie “io getto”	shtura	ie/u

and EVP (metaphony) that is in paradigmatic pushups (inflectional affix):

Present I pers. sing.	Present II pers. plur.	Alternation
marr “I take”	merr	a/e
dash “I give”	desh	a/e
Present II pers. sing.	Present II pers. plur.	Alternation
merr	mirr	e/i

4. Consonantic Phonemes

Italo-Albanian has for each of its consonants rather few readily perceptible allophones, and

³⁹ to say
⁴⁰ cow
⁴¹ to lost
⁴² devil
⁴³ earth
⁴⁴ mouse
⁴⁵ devil
⁴⁶ flour
⁴⁷ sky

very few major allophones indeed. This fact may find a correlation in the rather large number of consonants which the language possesses. The consonants are 31, they are characterized like below:

		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Interdentals	Dentals	Palatal–Alveolars	Palatals	Velars
Occlusive	voiceless	/p/			/t/		/c/	/k/
	voiced	/b/			/d/		/ɟ/	/g/
Affricate	voiceless				/ts/	/tʃ/		
	voiced				/dz/	/dʒ/		
Spirant	voiceless		/f/	/θ/	/s/	/ʃ/	/ç/	/h/
	voiced		/v/	/ð/	/z/	/ʒ/		
Nasal		/m/			/n/		/ɲ/	
Liquid	laterals						/l/	/ʎ/
	monovibrant				/r/			
	polivibrant				/r/			
Approximant						/j/		

Description of consonantic phonemes

The consonantic phonemes are expressed according Albanian standard orthography.

Occlusive phonemes

- p [p] occlusive bilabial voiceless: /'pɟot/, /'pes/ “full, five”
- b [b] occlusive bilabial voiced /'baθ/, /'buk/ “bean, bread”
- t [t] occlusive dental voiceless: /'trimi/, /me'nat/ “boy, tomorrow”
- d [d] occlusive dental voiced: /'drita/ /'darða/ “light, pear”
- q [c] occlusive palatal voiceless: /'pac/ /cind'roŋ/ “has, stay”
- gɟ [ɟ] occlusive palatal voiced: /'jeʎ/ /'juri/ “rooster, knee”
- k [k] occlusive velar voiceless: /'kaʎ/ /'mjekra/ “horse, beard”
- g [g] occlusive velar voiced: /'zog/ /'gruʃt/ “bird, fist”

Phonemes affricats

- c [ts] affricat dental voiceless: /'tsopə/ /tsɟap/ “piece, billygoat”
- x [dz] affricat dental voiced: /'dzaθur/ /'ndzora/ “barefoot, remove”
- ç [tʃ] affricat palat–alveolar voiceless: /'matʃe/ /'citʃi/ “cat, key”
- xh [dʒ] affricat palat–alveolar voiced: /dʒa'pi/ /dʒi'pun/ “green lizard, racket”

Fricative phonemes

f [f] spirant labiodentale voiced: /'fik/ /'foʎa/	“fig, spoke”
v [v] spirant labiodentale voiced: /'vap/ /'verə/	“warm, wine”
th [θ] spirant interdental voiceless: /'θikə/ /'θom/	“knife, say”
dh [ð] spirant interdental voiced: /'ðejpəɾ/ /'ðəmbə/	“fox, tooth”
z [z] spirant postdentale voiced: /'zop/ /'zəmər/	“lord, heart”
sh [ʃ] spirant palato alveolare voiceless: /'ʃi/ /'ʃpi/	“look, house”
zh [ʒ] spirant palato alveolare voiced: /vra'zher/	“brazier”
hj [ç] spirant palatal voiced: /'raç/ /'çe/	“hill, shadow”
h [h] spirant velare voiceless: /'həngra/ /ha're/	“eated, joy”
gh* ⁴⁸ [ɣ] spirant velar voiced: /ɣa're/ /ɣangra/	“joy, eated”

Phonemes liquid

ll [ɫ] liquid lateral postdental velarized: /'moʎə/ /'maʎ/	“apple, melancholy”
l [ɭ] liquid lateral palatal: /'ɭumi/ /'kaɭi/	“river, horse”
r [r] liquid monovibrant dental: /'dore/ /'verə/	“hand, wine”
rr [r̄] liquid polivibrant dental: /'ruʃ/ /'rotə/	“grape, wheel”

Phonemes nasal

m [m] nasal bilabial: /maɭ/ /'məmə/	“mountain, mum”
n [n] nasal postdental: /'nənə/ /'hundə/	“grandmother, noise”
nj [ɲ] nasal palatal: /ɲə/ /'ɲetər/	“one, other”

Phonemes approximating

j [j] palatal approximant: /javə/	“week”
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⁴⁸ gh* is not an Albania grapheme (by standard alphabet).

5. Neutralization and Consonant Combinations

Interesting is that the Albanian standard language and the Italo-Albanian dialect have the muffling of occlusive/plosive, affricats and spirants (blocking voiced consonants) defined resonant if they are before voiceless blocking consonants, it is caused by regressive assimilation, like for example: [u mbjoðtin]⁴⁹ > [u mbjoθtin]. This process is very linked with the impossibility to arrange voiced + voiceless or contrary, some examples are: sh + p > shpi⁵⁰ or s+t > studjonj⁵¹ and and z+ gj > zgjedh⁵².

It is possible to find link with three elements where it is needful compatibility between the first two consonants (voiced + voiced),(voiceless + voiceless) and the third is a liquid, such as *r, rr* or semiconsonant *j*: shk + r > shkret⁵³, sht + r > shtrat⁵⁴, mb + j > mbjedh⁵⁵.

These become resonant even if they are blocking voiceless consonants like as: /^ʋvaʃəza/⁵⁶ - /vaʒza/ that is not the only opportunity in which resonant is neutralized; there are many resonant opportunities at the end of the words (in final position) if it is in position post-nasal or if it is followed by occlusive or affricate resonant phones.

In the first case they muffle, they structure is not similar because the first suggests a phonetic propensity while the second explains a phonetic "historic" law that is resonant consonant neutralization. In final position (at the end of the word), if the voiceless consonant doesn't become voiced it is because follows the long vowel. This should be a universal phonetic condition that has long vowels in initial position than voiced blocking.

Phonology and syntax often manifest analogical structural properties

6. Phonosyntax

In linguistic phonosyntax indicates the phonetic phenomena that relate the words in the sentence, that is, in the spoken chain. Are typically elision or truncation, doublings consonant assimilation and in some cases are also represented in writing. In our speech, the elimination or syncope of syllables is sometimes replaced by long vowel. We have two types of elision, one is the ending of the accusative determined that includes the suffix definite but doesn't include the issue; it extends the stressed vowel and supports the final consonant as in the case of *gjardh*⁵⁷ or in the third person, plural, in indicative in *lidh*⁵⁸ and then the fall of the

⁴⁹ gathered

⁵⁰ home

⁵¹ study

⁵² choice

⁵³ poor

⁵⁴ bed

⁵⁵ collect.

⁵⁶ girl

⁵⁷ siepe

⁵⁸ legare

consonant that precedes the particle, it marks accusative case as in *gjiri*⁵⁹.

For notions of syntax it is to highlight an expanded use of the definite article which in our case is postpotted and is also used with proper names. For the correlation we pairing name + adjective, if the adjective follows the name and it is agree with this in gender and number doesn't accept the endings case, however, it uses a particle of conjunction that is regularly declined: *burri i mirë*⁶⁰, *grua e mirë*⁶¹; instead if the adjective precedes the name, it shall reject the endings and it varies only in number, while the adjective is declined regularly: *i bukuri trim*⁶².

7. Conclusions

In this study have been analyzed results of an elaborated fairy tales (in the last century) to exam some phonological characteristic of San Benedetto Ullano speech, in the perspective to have informations relating to the belonging of the subdivision phonological scheme that established the concern speech.

However, the data also showed other types of information that need to be depth specifically with further investigations.

The analysis of the results of the materials used for this study, highlights some identified data that, today have necessity to revalue the phonological material in a different time, it is when speakers have different linguistic.

On the other hand, it is a work that constitutes only of piece of a broader search, especially in phonosyntax elements which need development.

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⁵⁹ parente

⁶⁰ l'uomo buono

⁶¹ la donna buona

⁶² il giovane bello

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