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Overview of clusters and diphthongs in the discourse of Rahovec and its district

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Abstract. The paper aims to reflect the state of clusters and diphthongs in the discourse of Rahovec and its district. The study methodology has been done through unstructured interviews and free conversations with the subjects. Whereas, the results show these types of clusters and diphthongs: vowel cluster **ue**, vowel cluster **ye**, cluster **ie** and **je**, cluster **ae** and **oe** as well as the transition of the group **vo** to **va**. Based on the findings of the study, we can come to the conclusion that the discourse of Rahovec with its district has an old origin from the Indo-European and Latin languages.

Keywords. clusters, diphthongs, Rahovec, Albanian language, discourse

Introduction

The issue of Albanian cluster and diphthong has attracted the interest of many Albanian and foreign scholars. Among Albanian scholars include: E. Çabej, A. Dodi, S. Riza, K. Topalli, Gj. Shkurtaç, Q. Murati etc., whereas among foreign scholars include: N. Jokli, G. Mayer, V. Cimohovski, etc. Their research results have been published in various monographs on specific discourses or in specific research in the field of language history.

The monophthongization of the diphthongs **ue**, **ye**, **ie**, as in many places, in the northern discourse it is present and widespread even in the discourse that we are investigating. For instance, verb particles: *to go (me shku)*, *to work (me punu)*, *to read (me lexu)*, or to nouns: *hands (dur)*, *horseshoe (patku)*. It has been emphasized by many scholars that Albanian language has inherited diphthongs from the Indo-European language. K. Topalli emphasizes: the Indo-European language from which Albanian derives, there have been short and long vowels in its phonetic system, also short and long diphthongs, consequently. Their general feature is the reduction to a simple vowel. But for the type of vowel, linguists' opinions do not always match. Even the time when this process was carried out is difficult to determine, as the borrowings of the historical period, in order to help in this case, they have followed other paths which differ from those of inherited diphthongs. At the time of the diffraction of Indo-European vowels, the Albanian dialects followed different paths. Thus, the Indo-European vowel **o** in the Southern dialect was decomposed into **ua**, whereas in the Northern dialect it was decomposed into **ue** (K. Topalli, *On the history of nasal vowels in the Albanian language, ASHSH, Tirana 1996, pp. 29-30*). According to K. Topalli, If the Albanian language had in addition to the series

of short vowels and long vowels also short and long diphthongs, then we think that the hyper-length of vowels in the discourse of Krusha e Madhe and its district is a very old phenomenon of Albanian language.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the issues of clusters and diphthongs, such as: vowel cluster **ue**, vowel cluster **ye**, cluster **ae** and **je**, cluster **ae** and **oe**, and the transition of the **vo** cluster into **va**. These clusters and diphthongs will be treated only in the municipality of Rahovec and its district area.

Methodology

Albanian dialectology has a tradition in dialectological research, such as the study of Çabej, Gjinari, Shkurtaj, Ajeti, Mulaku, Murati, Mulaku, etc. This study has investigated vowel clusters and diphthongs in the municipality of Rahovec. Participants of both genders were included in the study. The age of the participants in the study was over 60 years. The type of this research is qualitative, therefore, the primary focus was the collection of expressions in which the vowel clusters and diphthongs are included: **ue**, **ye**, **ie**, **je**, **ae**, **oe**, **vo**, **va** and their analysis in the discourse of Rahovec. The data for this study were collected through unstructured interviews and the selection of research participants was random. Data analysis was conducted based on the *Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language (2007)* which is a guide for studies in this field.

Results

Vowel cluster **ue**

Even in the discourse of Rahovec, as in many other discourses, in the dialects of Gheg between Drin and Mat, in Malësi e Madhe and in some discourses of Kosovo, Tropojë and Kukës, these clusters appear only in the final open syllables but here instead of the cluster **ua**, cluster **ue** is used, for example: *grue*, *mue*, *thue*, *blue*, etc. (*J. Gjinari- Gj. Shkurtaj, Dialectology, SHBLU, Tirana 2003, p. 214*).

H. Agani emphasizes that in Kujundzinci's dictionary, we encounter this group of vowels quite rarely. He has explained that there, in addition to *knu*, even *knue* is encountered, kom pas *kujtue*, *mue*, etc. Whereas in other cases the second vowel is assimilated into u and this is the predominant state of this vowel in that dictionary (*H. Agani, Kujundzic Dictionary, Rilindja, Prishtina, 1981, p. 96*).

This phenomenon in point 35 (that represents Xërxa, the point which is within the discourse under consideration), in map number 4 of ADGJSH the state of the vowel cluster '**ue**' is provided as a monophthong but that is heard rarely (*Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p. 82*). In S. Haxhiaj's book "Flamutari i Kosovës Isa Buletini", which represents the area of Rahovec, the vowel cluster **ue** is presented regularly preserved:

*"tash tye zânë due me t'kallxue,
Diku larg une kishna fluturue,
Ushqym zogjvet per me i prue".
"ç'kanë mendue krenët e Serbis
Thue se ka dek Pasha i Gucis".
"Bukën para me iua shtrues"*

(*S. Haxhiaj, Flamurtari i Kosovës - Kënga e shtatë, Munich, 1967, p. 45*)

The vowel cluster *ue* undergoes monophthongization in all the villages of the municipality of Rahovec and in all positions except the villages of Vrajakë, Bratatin and Pataçan i Ulët, where the older generation retains this vowel cluster, such as: *patkue*, *punue*, *gatue*, *pastrue*. The monophthongization of the vowel cluster *ue* in *u* is heard in three areas with the exception of the villages that we mentioned above in the words: *dur* (*duer*), *patku* (*patkue*) and in the participle of the verb which is a common phenomenon of the entire northern dialect, such as, *punu* (*punue*), *gatu* (*gatue*), *pastru* (*pastrue*).

The cases in the final syllables should be excluded where the vowel group *ue* in the village of Ratkoc and Vrajakë within their district is heard sporadically, such as: *Ka shkue me punue*. *Ka shkue me livrue*. *Mu çue se u bâ von*, *mu çue lemza*, etc.

Vowel cluster *ua* when found in the final syllables closed as in the words *duar*, *muaj* and *buall* that are given in map number 51.a of ADGJSH (Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p. 166), in the discourse of three areas is monophthongated in *u*. In the open final syllables, in the words *grua*, *ftua*, *dua*, presented on map number 51.b, as presented in ADGJSH (Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p. 169), this group of vowels is reduced to *u* in some sporadic cases even *ue* is heard, for instance: *grue*, *ftue*, *due*. Whereas, the data presented in maps 51.c and 52 in the words: *gruaja*, *bualli*, *shkruaja*, *mësues*, *sulmues*, in all three areas the diphthongs *ue* have been reduced to *u*, thus, there they are: *gru*, *bull*, *shkrujsha*, *msus*, *sulmus*, etc.

Vowel cluster *ye*

In terms of the state of the vowel cluster *ye*, the discourse of Rahovec is not unique within itself. In ADGJSH, the state of the vowel cluster *ye* presented in point 35, map number 53a, the vowel cluster *ye* and the phonetic variants in the phonemic composition of the words where it is found in the closed final syllable *dyer*, *thyer*, the state of the vowel cluster *ye* is presented as monophthongal in *y* (Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian Language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p. 172), which means that what was as a process in the time of Sheh Maliqi's Divan and in the time of L. Kujundzic had already ended. Map 53.b presents the state of the vowel cluster *ye* and the phonetic variants in the phonemic composition of the words where it is found in the open final syllables for the words: *u thye*, *u lye*, *u kthye*, etc., ADGJSH provides the cluster *ye* monophthongated: *u thy*, *u ly*, *u kthy*, etc., (Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p. 173).

In case we refer to H. Agani in L. Kujundzic's Dictionary, the vowel cluster *ye* is assimilated into *y*, except in some rare cases as in the verbal form *kthye*, but even this, Kujundzic had often written *kthy* (H. Agani, Dictionary of Kujundzic, Rilindja, Prishtina, 1981, p. 96). Therefore, we have the right to think that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the vowel cluster was in the developmental stage of monophthongization.

Regarding this phenomenon prof. Kolec Topalli, after acknowledging that the vowel cluster *ye* is one of the understudied diphthongs and lists the opinions of linguists who have dealt with the study of the history of the vowel cluster *ye*, thinks that we are dealing with a complex problem, where many issues arise in order to be clarified. The difficulty of this problem is obvious, if we take into account that the sources of this vocabulary have been investigated in phonetic changes and sometimes in morphological causes. Relating this process with the Indo-European language and sometimes with the ancient Albanian until the late dialectal changes (K. Topalli, On the history of the nasality of vowels in the Albanian language, ASHSH, Tirana 1996, pp. 160-161).

Presentation of the vowel cluster in the maps 53b of ADGJSH for point 35. The words *thyej, u thye, u lye, u krye, u shkye*, (especially the passive form), etc., which ADGJSH presents them as monophthongated in the villages of Pataçan i Ulët, Pataçan i Epërm, Sopniq, Nashpallë and especially in Vrajakë and Bratatin, the vowel cluster *ye* is heard. For instance: *m'u thye n'dor, u thye mashtrapa, u krye pa pare, u shkye maica*. We find it non-monophthongated even in the infinitive form: *me krye, me shkye, me lye, me thye*, etc.

Map 53.c. where the vowel cluster *ye* and the phonetic variants in the phonemic composition of the words where it is found in open inner syllables, for instance: *fyelli, lyeja*, etc. ADGJSH for point 35 presents the vowel cluster *ye* monophthongated in *y* ((Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p.174), for instance: *fylli, lyja (lyja varren me iñyr)*, etc.

The monophthongization of the vowel cluster *ye* in *y*, as presented in ADGJSH, is noticed even in some nouns and in some verbs, in almost all positions where diphthongs are located (*Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p. 82*).

The monophthongization of the vowel cluster *ye* is heard in the middle of the word: *Fyll, pyll, dyll, ngjyj, thyhem, lyj (lyej), fyj (fyej), fys (fyes)*,

Qabani e shtini fyllin n`çant dhe i lshoj dhet.

Msus n`ije qysh pom fyn Agimi.

Qoe qiko djaln m`i fry te plaka.

Here we should exclude some sporadic cases of the noun *krye (kokë)* which in some cases, not only preserves the cluster *ye* but is also heard in the form of the feminine gender *kryekreje*, which must be a very old form (Robert d'Angely, Grammaire Albanaise Comparee, Paris 1998, p. 32).

E ka kryet e fort, nuk ja nin.

Shka i ungj krye veñit.

Ka ble kapuç p`r kryen.

E ka kryen e fort (in Zaçisht and its district).

Kryefort â ai.

Whereas, in all the villages of the Ratkoc area, the vowel cluster *ye* is almost monophthongated in *y*, in the villages: Vrajakë, Bratatin, Noshpall, Sopniq, Pataçani i Ulët and Pataçan i Epërm, also the vowel cluster *ye*, as the cluster *ue*, is heard in a number of verbs with open syllables, for instance: *u krye (kryer, mbaru), u kthye (kthyer nga pazari), kapërcye, kcye, frye, âsht frye viçi n`janxh*, etc.

Cluster *ie, je*

Regarding the vowel cluster *ie / je*, it should be emphasized that in the discourse of Rahovec and its district, the diphthongs *ie* and *je* are heard in both variants, but also monophthongated: Analyzed historically, among the old writers (*Buzuku, Budi, Bogdani, Bardhi*), these clusters are presented with the vocal group *ie*. H. Agani describing the discourse of Rahovec through Kujundzic's Dictionary, describes number *ten (numrin dhjetë)* as "*dhjet vjet, eng. ten years*", but also as *dhët*. We think that the words *dhjet and nxjerr* are difficult to have been heard as presented by Agani (*H. Agani, Kujundzic's Dictionary, Rilindja, Prishtina, 1981, p. 100*). However, the cluster *je* is heard in many words: *zjem, vjel, vjerr, pshtjell, njeri, sivjet, vjet, vjeta, vjen*, etc. The path of development of this phenomenon is divided into two directions: where the group had a significant role, *ie* was reduced to *i*, whilst where the group was *je* has gone towards the reduction to *e*.

Also in ADGJSH, point 35 map number 54a, for the words: *diell*, *miell*, *ziej*, presents a complete reduction in the first vowel: *dill*, *mill*, *zij* / *a dit me dill* /, / *kum ble mill* /, / *zij xhith* / (*Dialectological atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p.175*). On map 54.b. point 35, the cluster of vowels *ie* and phonetic variants in the phonemic composition of words when found in the open final syllable: *bie*, *u zie*, etc., are presented as monophthongated as they are found today (*Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Napoli 2007, p.176*). Also the map 54c / 1 point 35, The cluster of vowels *ie* and the phonetic variants in the phonemic composition of the words where they are found in open inner syllables, respectively the noun *dielli*, ADGJSH presents the cluster *ie* monophthongated, (*Dialectological atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p. 177*) / *ka dilli*, / *ka le dilli* /, of this nature are also the words: *qilli*, *milli*, *bi*, “*u vrâ qilli*, *hupi dilli*, *bi pi shkallëve*, *mu sos milli n'magje*).

On map 54c / 2 point 35 for the verb *ziej* is presented with *je*, respectively the form *zjeva* (*Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p.178*), which we think that this point of ADGJSH has not reflected in complete the discourse of Rahovec and its district, in the area of Ratkoc is heard, for instance: *ziva mishin*, *zita pasulin*, in some cases even: *e zeva pasulin*, etc.

Cluster *je*, respectively *ie*, in the phonemic composition of the indicative present tense form of the singular person of the verb *vjel*, in map 55.a point 35 is part of the group of countries that preserve this group (*Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Naples 2007, p. 179*). Even during the survey we have heard, for instance: / *vjel specat* / *vjel rrushin* // *e ka dhez zjemin* /, etc.

Cluster *je* in the phonemic composition of the participle form of the verb *vjel* on the map of ADGJSH number 55.b the group *je* is preserved unreduced (*Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language, ASHSH, Napoli 2007, p. 177*).

Clusters *ae* and *oe*

In the discourse of the Rahovec area, they are heard in full in their two forms: *e kam pae*, *m'ka shae*, *m'ka rae*, *mu ka thae*, *m'ka e pae*, *kujna ia dhae*, but the same words are also heard monophthongated: *me pa*, *me sha*, *tha*, *ra*.

The vowel cluster *oe* is heard in the interrogative sentences in open syllables, these diphthongs are clearly heard: *çfar voe?* *Për çfar droe pa flet?*

Passing of the *vo* group to *va*

Gj. Shkurtaç assesses: “Ancient Albanian has had a number of words that started with *vo* (*voj*, *votër*, *vorr*, *vok*, *i vokët*, *i vorfën*, *vorfno*, *vojta*, *vojta(ë)*, etc.) In these words, in time, the process of the passage of *o* in *a* and today they are distinguished from the similar forms of Gheg dialect: in Tosk dialect the above words appear with *va* (respectively: *vaj*, *vatër*, *varr*, *vak*, *i vakët*, *i varfër*, *varfëroj*, *vajta*, *vajtur*, *vajtje*, etc.), which means, as this has been noticed earlier in dialectological studies, “constitutes an innovation in Tosk Albanian”, because the etymology of the words affected by this phenomenon proves to us that the primary forms were those with *vo*, such as, *voj* (from lat. *oleum*), *i vorfën*” (Gj. Shkurtaç, *Shqipja e sotme*, Ufo-Press, Tirana 2010, p. 110).

The cluster *va* in the phonemic composition of the words: *vaj*, *vatër*, *i vakët*, *i varfër*, etc., presented on map number 56 of ADGJSH, as in all discourses of Gheg dialect in the three linguistic areas of Rahovec we hear it with *vo*, for instance: /*nata e par e vo:rrit*/ *votra jon â e vogel*/ *â vorros sod*/ *â vok uji*/ *â i vorfen* (*vobekt*).

Conclusions

As a conclusion regarding the vowel cluster *ue*, as other scholars have emphasized, H. Agani in Kujundzic's Dictionary and in the historical review K. Topalli, etc., we think that this diphthong has followed the same path along with the other discourses of the northeastern Gheg. The vowel cluster *eu* is monophthongated, *eu* is rarely heard in the villages mentioned above.

In conclusion, as for the vowel cluster *ye* presented in ADGJSH, map 53b in particular is not in accordance to the situation on the field. In the villages: Vrajakë, Bratatin, Pataçan i Epërm, Pataçan i Ulët, Sopniq, etc., when cluster *ye* is found in final syllable, it is heard non-monophthongated, for instance: *u thye, u lye, u krye, u shkye, u frye*.

Cluster *je*, in Albanian language is created from the diffraction of the short vowel of Indo-European and Latin. This is the only inherited sound that has had a spontaneous phonetic development by developing a diphthong from a simple vowel (K. Topalli, *On the history of nasal vowels in the Albanian language, ASHSH, Tirana 1996, p. 75*). Regarding the cluster *je*, we can say that in ADGJSH, the situation of this cluster is presented realistically. Here we would exclude only the map 54c/2 because point 35 does not represent the whole area of Rahovec, during the surveys we have conducted in any area we have not heard the form of the simple past *zjeva*, but *ziva, zita*.

The cluster *ae* is heard complete and monophthongated. Whereas, the vowel cluster *oe* is heard in the interrogative sentences in open syllables, these diphthongs are heard clearly.

Even in this process of development in the discourse of Rahovec and its district has followed the same path of development as in other Gheg dialects, for a historical development of these groups, Professor Gj. Shkurtaj has written, who among other things says: "Ancient Albanian has had a number of words that started with *vo* (*voj, votër, vorr, vok, i vokët, i vorfën, vorfnoj, vojta, voj(ë)*, etc.) In these words, in time, the process of the passage of *o* in *a* and today they are distinguished from the similar forms of Gheg dialect: in Tosk Albanian the above words appear with *va* (respectively: *vaj, vatër, varr, vak, i vakët, i varfër, varfëroj, vajta, vajtur, vajtje*, etc.), which means, as this has been noticed earlier in dialectological studies, "constitutes an innovation in Tosk Albanian", because the etymology of the words affected by this phenomenon proves to us that the primary forms were those with *vo*, such as, *voj* (from lat. *oleum*), *i vorfën*" (Gj. Shkurtaj, *Shqipja e sotme, Ufo-Press, Tirana 2010, p. 110*). The words that in the standard start with *va* in the discourse of Rahovec come out with the group *vo* as in: *voj, voter, vorr, vok, vorfen, (vaj, vatër, votër vak, varfër)* etc.

Despite being a necessary and important overview for further studies of the Rahovec discourse and its district, this study has a limit. The limit of this study is that there is no set age for the interviewed participants and there is a possibility that there are differences between the generations in terms of discourse.

Future studies would be recommended to expand the findings of this study with more ideas and examples from Rahovec's discourse and its district or even beyond. As well, to conduct research on more combinations about vowel clusters and diphthongs either in the municipality of Rahovec or outside. Ultimately, to have an organization of age groups in order to see the differences in communication discourse amongst the generations.

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