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Features of the verbal system in Mallakstra variety

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Abstract

Based on the data we have collected through probes in the field and comparison with the data offered by present dialectological studies, in this article we shall make a comparative and narrative presentation of the main features of the verbal system in Mallakstra variety. In order to do this, we shall use not only the conclusions of the actual studies, but also examples to support our arguments.

Keywords: Albanian, dialect, Mallakstra, verbal system, variety

I. Introduction

Although the continuous enrichment of Albanian dialectological studies has led to identification of distinguishing features of its two dialects, as well as subdialects, variety groups and special variety, such results presented in the publication "Dialectological atlas of Albanian language", the studies in the field of linguistic geography are still ongoing.

The first articles about the dialects in the Albanian language appeared in XIXth century from Albanian and international researchers. Even though their aim was not to provide specific data but the study of various grammars brought to light the existence of dialects. These findings based on general, partial and at times not as accurate knowledge, have had orienting importance. (Gjinari, 1989:42).

As Çabej pointed out (2008:210), although the dialectical separation of the Albanian language cannot be traced back historically, because it was written only lately, the separation of today is not very old.

In this dialectical separation, the variety of Mallakstra is recognized as part of the western variety group of the northern tosk subdialect.

In this short article, we shall not elaborate all the features that unite or separate this variety from others in the group. We shall focus on presenting the most essential features of the verbal system, as one of the main parts of the speech, which appears in various phonetic and morphologic shapes in different Albanian dialects.

For this purpose, we shall consider the data collected through our probes oriented with specific questionnaires (prepared by Floqi, Shkurtaj, Domi), trying also to tackle the features of the respective variety groups, dialects and subdialects.

2. General features

- Passive and reflexive form of the verbs in imperfect tense appears in synthetic form such as: *vritsha* (killed), *lodhca* (tired), *mersha* (took).
- There is no infinitive form as in the geg dialect *me punue* (to work) but some of its functions are performed by the form created with the particle *për* (for), particle *të* (to) and part of the verb *për të bërë* (to do), *për të fletur* (to sleep), *për të kërkuar* (to ask) etc.
- 4. The forms of the compound verbs such as *kam pasë shkuar* (I had gone) are missing;
- The first person in the present simple affirmative with verbs such as *laj* (wash), *punoj* (work) they take the ending *-nj*: *lanj*, *punonj*;
- The future tense of verbs is presented in the form (will/shall) *do + infinitive* (I shall go) but in the spoken language, due to the speed, *the part 'të' falls*, leaving only 'do shkoj'.

3. Specific features

Something that is noticeable in the subdialect we are examining, but also in other subdialects,

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is that the features may be grouped through comparison with other spoken languages of the group, the dialect and subdialect on one hand but also with the language spoken in specific villages. The circles that are created join and separate in specific points, creating some ‘zones’ and ‘subzones’ of features which sometimes unite and sometimes divide two units from each other.

Since the appearance of such linguistic features does not have clear borders, we cannot be strict in this classification, but in the description of the phenomena we shall give information on whether one feature is common or specific to the units we have mentioned above. Below we shall number some of the features that are noticed in the area of Mallakastra and among them elements, which appear differently in each village.

A. Conjugation

- Passing of some verbs from one conjugation to another and the unification of morphological units in some verb classes are two features in the variety of Mallakastra. We should also mention here that the endings of the verbs are changing from one village of the region to another.

In Mallakastra variety, both verb groups of the second conjugation are flattened. They all take the ending *-s* in the first person singular and all the persons in plural. This feature is brought to light in other studies as well (such as Gjinari, 1962), in examples as those of the verbs in the standard language that have two endings (*-t* or *-s*) in the first person of the present simple affirmative: *prashis* (hoe), *fus* (enter), *zbus* (tame), *mbështes* (support), *këpusëm* (cut), *prashisëm/prashisim*, *prashisën/prashisin*. The same as the verbs in this group are considered some verbs, which take the ending */nd/*, such as: *muns* (wrestle), *tuns* (shake/wave) *shkuns* (shake) etc. which pass on to the second conjugation with these endings.

The reason why they are considered to belong to this conjugation and adding the respective endings relates to the fact that */d/* sound is silenced in these verbs and turned to */t/*.

B. Affirmative form

- In previous studies, it is noticed that in this variety the rule provides that the verbs ending in a consonant, in the first and third person plural, in the present simple affirmative shall take the endings *-ëm* and *-ën* and not *-im* and *-in*: *shkelëm/shkelim* (tread), *vdesën/vdesim* (die), *shkoqëm/shkoqim* (scatter), *pjekëm/pjekim* (bake/roast), *korrëm/korrim* (harvest), *dalën/dalin* (exit), *prashisëm/prashisim* (hoe), *gojosën/gojosin* (slander), *presën/presin* (cut), *mbledhën/mbledhin* (collect), *tjerrën/tjerrin* (weave), *azhdisëm/azhdisim* (visit), *zgjatëm/zgjatim* (extend). (Gjinari).

This feature differentiates this variety from the neighboring regions such as Myzeqe and Berat but brings it closer to mountainous regions of the south. But we have found in our research that the educated speakers mainly use the verbs with the endings *-in* or *-im* in examples such as: *ndodhin keto historira* (such things do happen), *godasim vezët* (hit the eggs), *nuk e hapim derën* (we don't open the door), *mbjellim farë gruri* (scattering grain seeds), *I pjekim si patate* (bake/roast them like potatoes), etc.

- Some of the verbs with vowels, in the passive voice form present simple affirmative take the nasal sound */n/* instead of */h/* which in some cases appears as */j/* or */nj/* sound and in other cases the presence of neither is noticed. For example:
 - *më/në bënem, bënet, bënes* (be/become), *kujtonem* (remember), *çonesh* (get up), *trashëgonet* (a wish made in weddings for the bride and groom) etc.
 - *më/j* or */nj/* - *çojesh/çonjesh* (get up)
 - without */h/sound* – *haet/hahet* (eaten), *laet/lahet* (washed), *beet/bëhet* (done/made) *ankoet/ankohet* (complains), *çpoet/çpohet* (pierced), *shëroet/shërohet* (heals), *piet/pihet* (drank), *ngatëroet/ngatërrohet* (confused), *ftoet/ftohët* (invited), *s'kaptuet/s'kaptohet* (cannot be accepted/tolerated), etc.
- unlike the general ending *-ni* for the active voice in the second person plural and *-(h)eni* for the passive voice, in some villages such as Çorrush and villages around it, we notice that this form has the ending */i/*, especially in passive voice verbs (*pse nuk mbliidhi/pse nuk mbliidheni* - why don't you get together; *talli/talleni* – make fun of; *do futi/do futeni* – are you coming in?; *do gdhithi/do gdhitheni* – are you staying up all night? This is noticed in the imperative form, too: *ngrihi (ngrihuni)* – get up; *shkoni meru vesh me filan (shkoni merruni vesh me filanin)* – go and talk to x person; *I lidhi mire me njari – tjatrin (I lidhni mire me njëri – tjetrin)* - connect them well one with another, etc.

C. Optative mood

- The suffix of optative mood we have come across in three allomorphic variants: *fsh/sh/ç*, of which:
 - Variant *-sh* is used less
 - *-fsh* is used mainly for the verbs of the first conjugation and for some verbs of the second conjugation, like *befsha* (may I do), *vrafsha* (may I kill), *me qafsh* (may you cry), *mos u fryfsh* (may you never fell fed up), *t'u thafshin sytë* (may you never see). *-sh* of this variant is in the third person singular because of the ending *-të* with the allomorph *-fsh*, as a result of the difficulty in pronouncing the three consonants *-fsh*: *t'u shtrëngoftë shpirti* (may you never be happy); *T'u befte jeta shesh me lule* (may you always prosper).
 - Variant *-ç* is used for a part of the verbs of the second conjugation, for irregular verbs and for cases when forming suffix in other spoken language and in Albanian standard language is *-sh*: *mos me arç* (may you never come). *Vajçe e mos ardhç* (may you go and never come back); *Heqç kemben xvarr* (may you bring the same luck); *për të mira u arçim* (may we always meet for good events); *të varroça të gjall'* (if only you could die); *E lënç kokën rrugës* (may evil be with you); *Ngelç në derë të babait* (may you never marry); *Rënç që aty e vdeksh në vënd* (may you fall and die at once); *Mbeç shkretë moj qaf e xhamisë!* (may you always be lonely).
- Another specific feature that we have noticed in our survey is the ending *-sha* in the past: *un vjedhurazi çosha nga krevati* (I woke up without being noticed), *shkosha e mjelsha me një dor* (I went and milk the cow with one hand), *rrija kshu e shikosha e veshtrosha* (I stayed like this and looked and stared). In the first

sentence we have the use of grammatical part *-u* in the imperfect tense that we think it happens for the analogy with simple past in Albanian (*e kryer e thjeshtë*) Conjunctive Mood.

- The second person in singular of verbs of the first three conjugations in the present of conjunctive in all the villages of the area have the consonant *-ç*, but in the verbs of the second conjugation the last consonant of the word (with no ending) is melted with the ending: *të vraç* (to kill); *të shoç* (to see); *të vdeç* (to die), *të marrç* (to get), *të prashç* (to hoe), *të ngaç* (to drive), *t'na heçç* (to remove), *ta leç* (to allow), *të fleç* (to sleep), *të rriç* (to stay), *të haç* (to eat), etc.

In some villages verbs of the third conjugation in conjunctive mood have the ending *-ç*: *të punoç* (to work), *te beç* (to do), *te quaç* (to call someone's name), *të shikoç* (to look\to see), *te gjuaç* (to hit), *te mbuloç* (to cover), etc. Whereas in villages like Drenovë, Greshicë, Visokë and in the places around we do not have only the consonant /ç/, but we have the group /nç/ *të punonç* (to work), *të ndertonç* (to build), *t'urdhonç* (to order), *të vinç* (*të vish*) (to come), *të gjenç* or *të gjëç* (*të gjesh*) (to find), etc. (Gjinari 1962: 166). In the villages near Vjosa river and in Myzeqe like Varibop, Peshtan, etc., come out even with the consonant group/nç/, like in the case of: *të bënëç* (to do), *të ndronç* (to change), *të shtronç* (to lay) etc, but in most of the cases they come out with /jç/ or /jsh/ for example in the words: *të çajç* (to break), *të shtrojç* (to lay), *të çajsh* (to break), *të bëjsh*, *të shkojsh* (to do, to go), *ta shtrojsh* (to lay), *të shkarkonjç* (to download), *ta shkarkojsh* (to download), *ta shkurtonjç* (to cut), *ta ndronç* (to change), etc.

As far as the form of the second person singular in the present of conjunctive mood is concerned, we notice that the spoken language of Mallakastra has a similiarity with the places around like, Berat dhe Myzeqe, despite of some cases in some villages

- Verbs of the first, second and third conjugation, in third person singular of present conjunctive have the ending *-i*, like in the cases. *te dali* (to go out), *te shkeli* (to touch), *ta mjeli* (to milk), *ta ngasi* (to drive), *t'i vari* (to hang out), *te veri* (to put), *te prashisi* (to hoe), *te qepi* (to sew), etc. But we have also other cases where they might come out with the ending *-ë*, which can be felt little during the pronunciation, mainly for the verbs of the second conjugation and those of the third one: *te zer* (te zere) (to catch), *te bler* (te blere) (to buy), *te ngas* (te ngase) (to drive) *etj*, *te fler* (te flere) (to sleep), *te bjer* (te bjere) (to fall), etc.

In villages Visoke, Drenove, Greshice, Fratar dhe Drizar (mainly in the villages of the upper part of Mallakastra verbs of the third and the second conjugation, the first class in the present of conjunctive have the endings *-nj*, for example. *te vinj* (to come), *te rrinj* (to stay), *te hanj* (to eat), *te rronj* (to live) etc. Whereas in the villages near Vjosa and the villages in the southern part of Mallakastra have the ending *-j* like in the words, *te bej* (to do), *te vej* (to put), *te shoj* (to look), *te dimoj* (te ndihmoj) (to help), *te mbaj* (to keep), *te rroj* (to live), *te rrij* (to stay), *te haj* (to eat) etc.

In the past tense of the conjunctive mood the verbs *marr* (take\get), *jap* (give), etc. Comes out in apophonic form: *te mar* (to take\get) – *te mirte* (to get\to take); *te jap* – *te jipte* (to give).

D. Other features

- A common feature with other Tosk variety is the use of the unadulterated form created with the particle *for*, particle *to* and the part of the verb as a form of the infinitive: to hide, to send, to do, to go, to wash, to take, to eat, etc.
- It is also noticed the use of the unadulterated form to build words with the particle *a/an*: a tie, a hearing, a jump, by stealing, by looking for. Also the unadulterated negative form with the particle without: without doing, without going out, without knowing, without moving, without stopping, without filling etc.
- Another common features with all the spoken language of the toskërisht (southern spoken language) is the creation of the future tense with the grammatical particle *to* + the verb in the conjunctive mood. Even in this spoken language the particle *to* of the conjunctive mood it is not felt in cases where before the word topic of the verb there is no short form of the subject pronoun, for example in cases: *do hapëm* (will open), *do rujmë* (will save\protect), *do rrynj* (will enter), *do shkonj* (will go), *do dali* (will come out), *do prashç* (will hoe) *do mbjellëm* (will plant), *do rrokemi* (will play\joke) etc., but, even when there are cases when there is short form (grammatical category, like in the cases: *do ma bjeç* (will do for me), *do ma mbajç* (will keep smth. for me), *do na vij* (will come for us), *do i vari* (will hang out), *këto do e dorovisnin me lek* (will give money to this), *do na shohi në bostant* (will see us in the watermelon field) etc. But when the short form of the subject pronoun is in the third person singular, the particle *to* of the conjunctive mood is listened when pronounced: *do ta gjenj* (will find), *do ta marr* (will take), *do ta mbaj* (will keep), *do ta arrij* (will arrive), etc.) but in this case it may happen that the particle *to* together with the vowel /o/ of the particle *to* not to be felt (*do preç* (will wait) – *do ta preç* (will wait), *da shesë ne apo dja japëm shtetit* (will we sell it or will we give it to the state?), *da ndërzenj* (will put somebody against somebody), *do nxjerrëm* (will give out), *s'kishte kush da blente?* (nobody to buy it?), *s'do mari* (will not get), etc.).
- A common feature between Mallakastra and Myzeqe dialects is that verbs with vowels in the imperfect tense affirmative take different endings than those with consonants.

Therefore, for the verbs with vowels we have the endings: *-nja* or *-njam*, *-nje*, *-nim* or *-njim*, *-njit* (*((did)bënja* – *bënja* – *bënje* – *bënje* – *bënim* – *bënit* – *bënin*, *dinja* – *dinje* – *dinim* – *dinit* – *dinin*; *bënjam* – *bënjim* – *bënjit* – *bënjim*, *dinjam* – *dinjam* – *dinjam* – *dinjam*).

Verbs with consonants take the endings: *-ja* or *-jam*, *-je*, *-te*, *-m*, *-it*, *-ni* (*killed*) *vrisja* – *vrisnjam*, *vrisje*, *vriste*, *vrisim*, *-vrisit*, *-vrisin etj*.)

The difference between the two endings in the first person is that the first ones (*-nja*, *-ja*) are used in Mallakastra e Eger and the second ones (*-njam*, *-jam*) in the villages of Mallakastra e Butë. Meanwhile the three persons in plural for verbs with vowels take the endings *-nit*, *-nim*, *-nin* in the spoken language in most of the villages in the region and the villages near near Myzeqe they take the endings *-njim*, *-njit*, *-njin*.

4. Conclusions

With regard to the main features of verbal system in the spoken language of Mallakastra, through comparing the concrete data collected by canvassing and respective analyses with the features resulting in the main previous studies conducted so far on the groups of spoken language, subdialects and dialects of the Albanian language, we have presented above common and specific features of spoken language in the region of Mallakastra, which make it part of the western group in the northern tosk spoken language and features which distinguish it as a separate spoken language.

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