

Dialect contact in a border area: the birth of a new-dialect in Puglia

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The aim of this speech is to analyse a recently arisen dialect of the South of Italy. This variety, spoken in a small village called Bax, which has 409 inhabitants, seems to come out of language contact between two different varieties, one of them belonging to Apulian and the other one to the Salentinian dialect. The village was born at the end of the XVIII century as the result of the migration of incomers from two different towns (Ceglie Messapica and Francavilla Fontana) of the Alto Salento – the area where Salento meets Apulia (Rohlf 1966-1968, Avolio 1995, Sobrero/Tempesta 2002, Loporcaro 2009). On the basis of the New Dialect Formation model (Trudgill 1986, 2004), we intend to investigate whether the koine (Regis 2009, 2011; Sobrero 1996) spoken in this New Town is an effective new dialect or not. This framework, indeed, postulates that, when people speaking mutually intelligible dialects occupy a new uninhabited territory (in a so-called *tabula rasa* situation), the emersion of a new variety, come up by linguistic mixing and confluence, is highly presumptive (Kerswill 2002, Kerswill/Trudgill 2005). Our data suggest that the variety currently spoken in Bax, still not focussing, lays upon an intermediate stage of the New Dialect Formation process, which seems to be extremely variable (Hinskens/Auer/Kerswill 2005). The corpus is made of 15 hours of recordings of spontaneous speech and some recordings of elicited speech, which has been evoked by using a specific questionnaire. It points to elicit some features which are thought to be contrastive between the two mixed varieties. In particular, for the phonology we have considered the following phenomena: vowel system, aspiration of the plosive alveolar unvoiced /t/ in the consonant cluster, assimilation of nasal+plosive clusters, deaffrication of postalveolar unvoiced in weak position (V_V). To sum up, we can take advantage of this specific situation to investigate the relationship between two different language systems: Apulian and Salentinian dialects.

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