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SLOVENE AND VOJVODINA RUSYN SONORANTS – A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS STUDY

The article discusses the similarities and differences between Slovene and Vojvodina Rusyn sonorants. Slovene and Vojvodina Rusyn sonorants are divided into two groups, vowels and consonantal sonorants, and analysed, i.e. described and compared, in terms of phoneme subinventories, allophones and their effect on voicing. With regard to sonorants, the contrastive phonemic analysis shows considerable differences between Slovene and Vojvodina Rusyn.

Key words: contrastive analysis, phonology, sonorants, Slovene, Vojvodina Rusyn

The aim of the article is to compare sonorants – sounds produced with less obstruction than the obstruents (with a "spontaneous", generally non-contrastive voicing), i. e. vowels, nasals, liquids and glides (cf. Canepari, 1979: 149; Fromkin et al., 2011: 210) – in two rather distant Slavic literary languages, Slovene and Vojvodina Rusyn.[1] Although these two languages were once used in the same country, they have not yet been compared in terms of their linguistic systems. This article tries, at least in part, to fill this void by analysing and comparing a portion of phoneme inventories in both languages.

The present contrastive phonemic analysis of sonorants, based on the existing linguistic literature on Slovene and Vojvodina Rusyn, includes the description and comparison of sonorant phoneme subinventories and allophones (separately for vowels and consonantal sonorants) in the two languages.[2] The

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[1] A. D. Duličenko (2009: 129–132; cf. Fejsa, 2010: 4) places Vojvodina Rusyn in a transitional position between East Slavic (Carpatho-Ukrainian dialects) and West Slavic (dominant phonological features; mainly East Slovak dialects); cf. also South Slavic features after the period of settlement (Ramač, 2002: 528). Slovene is a West South Slavic language with divergent, West Slavic and South Slavic, basis/starting point (Šekli, 2013: 80–81). Schematic presentations of similarities and differences between Vojvodina Rusyn and other Slavic languages with respect to sound changes from Proto-Slavic can be found in Pešikan, 1974/1975.

[2] Cf. also a complementary contrastive study on Slovene and Vojvodina Rusyn consonants.

article concludes with an overview of the similarities and differences between Slovene and Vojvodina Rusyn sonorants.

VOWELS

The Slovene vowel system is composed of eight vowel phonemes /i, e, ɛ, a, ɔ, o, u, ə/ (cf. Table 1). All the vowels occur in stressed positions, in unstressed position the inventory is reduced by the absence of close-mid /e, o/. In unstressed positions the close ~ open distinction between /e ~ ɛ/ e /o ~ ɔ/ is neutralised; the neutralised vowels are closer to open [ɛ, ɔ] in post-stressed and to close [e, o] in pre-stressed positions (Srebot-Rejec, 1998: 343–345; Toporišič, 2004: 48; Jurgec, 2006: 181). According to traditional theory, in unstressed syllables only [ɛ, ɔ] occur (cf. Toporišič, 2004: 56).

The Vojvodina Rusyn (Rusyn henceforward) vowel inventory is smaller, since it consists of five phonemes /i, ę, a, ǫ, u/ (cf. Table 2) occurring in stressed and unstressed syllables; Rusyn does not have a central mid vowel /ə/ and it has only two (front and back) mid vowels /ę ǫ/ (usually transcribed as /e o/; Pešikan, 1974/1975: 111; Ramač, 2002: 14; Gustavsson, 2006: 42–43).

In both languages the vowel length is not a distinctive feature: the stressed vowels are longer than the unstressed ones, with the exception of Slovene /ə/, which is always short (cf. examples in the Table 3).

Table 1: Slovene vowel inventory

	front	central	back
close	**i**		**u**
close-mid	**e**		**o**
mid		**ə**	
open-mid	**ɛ**		**ɔ**
open		**a**	

Table 2: Rusyn vowel inventory

	front	central	back
close	**i**		**u**
close-mid			
mid	**ę**		**ǫ**
open-mid			
open		**a**	

Table 3: Examples of Slovene and Rusyn vowel phonemes

	Slovene		Rusyn	
	stressed	unstressed	stressed	unstressed
/i/	['miːti] *miti* 'to wash'	['miːti] *miti* 'to wash'	['miːli] *мили* 'dear'	['miːli] *мили* 'dear'
/e/	['meːt] *med* 'honey'	Ø	Ø	Ø
/ę/	Ø	Ø	['męːt] *мед* 'honey'	['piːʦę] *пице* 'drink'
/ɛ/	['pɛːta] *peta* 'heel'	['pɛːtɛ] *pete* 'heels'	Ø	Ø
/a/	['maːti] *mati* 'mother'	['nɔːga] *noga* 'leg'	['maːʦ] *мац* 'mother'	['nǫːɣa] *нога* 'leg'
/ɔ/	['pɔːtɔk] *potok* 'brook'	['pɔːtɔk] *potok* 'brook'	Ø	Ø
/ǫ/	Ø	Ø	['pǫːtǫk] *поток* 'brook'	['pǫːtǫk] *поток* 'brook'
/o/	['noːs] *nos* 'nose'	Ø	Ø	Ø
/u/	['muːxa] *muha* 'fly'	['siːɾup] *sirup* 'syrup'	['muːxa] *муха* 'fly'	['siːrup] *сируп* 'syrup'
/ə/	['pəs] *pes* 'dog'	['doːbəɾ] *dober* 'good'	Ø	Ø

According to the analysed linguistic studies, only Slovene vowel phonemes have positional variants. Traditionally, the stressed /i/ and /u/ in word-final closed syllables could be realized slightly lower, e.g. *sìt* [sìt] 'full', *kùp* [kòp] 'pile' (realizations ['siːt], ['kuːp] are more common in contemporary Slovene). The stressed phonemes /e i/ are neutralised when followed by [ɾ] – in this position only near-close near-front [ɪ] occurs: e.g. *večer* [vɛˈʧɪːɾ] 'evening', *mir* ['mɪːɾ] 'peace' (Jurgec, 2007: 62–63). The allophone of /ɛ/ before the word-final or preconsonantal [j] is the mid front vowel [ę] (e.g. *mej* ['męːj] G du./pl. 'border'). Similarly, the mid back allophonic variant [ǫ] of the phoneme /ɔ/ occurs before the word-final or preconsonantal [u̯] (e.g. *sov* ['sǫːu̯] G du./pl. 'owl'). In word-final closed syllables the stressed phoneme /a/ can be realized as [ɐ] (central near-open, short), e.g. *brat* ['brɐt] 'brother'; the allophone [ɐ] is in a free variation with the allophone [a], cf. ['braːt] (Toporišič, 2004: 49–50; Grošelj, 2013: 137–138).[3]

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[3] P. Jurgec (2011: 251–254, 262) considers [ɐ] an independent phoneme based on the following characterictis: (a) there is a durational and qualitative difference between [ɐ] and

CONSONANTAL SONORANTS

Slovene consonantal sonorants include six phonemes – two nasals /m n/, two liquids /ɾ l/ and two glides (approximants) /ʋ j/ (cf. Table 4). In the case of consonantal sonorants, Rusyn has a richer subinventory with eight phonemes – three nasals /m n ɲ/, three liquids /r l ʎ/ and two fricatives /v j/ (cf. Table 5).[4]

Table 4: Slovene consonantal sonorant inventory

		place of articulation			
		bilabial	labiodental	alveolar	palatal
manner of articulation	nasal	**m**		**n**	
	tap			**ɾ**	
	approximant		**ʋ**		**j**
	lateral			**l**	

Table 5: Rusyn consonantal sonorant inventory

		place of articulation			
		bilabial	labiodental	alveolar	palatal
manner of articulation	nasal	**m**		**n**	**ɲ**
	trill			**r**	
	fricative		**v**		**ȷ**
	lateral			**l**	**ʎ**

As already mentioned, Rusyn has more **nasal** phonemes than Slovene: in addition to the bilabial /m/ and the dental (alveolar) /n/, it has also the palatal /ɲ/ (Šuštaršič et al., 1999: 136; Požgaj Hadži, 2002: 47; Toporišič, 2004: 75–76; Pešikan, 1974/1975: 112; Ramač, 2002: 16, 21).

There are also more **liquids** in Rusyn than in Slovene. Both languages share only one liquid – the alveolar lateral /l/ (considered dental in traditional

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[a] – the first one is shorter and higher than the second one; (b) the contrast between [ɐ] and [a] is neutralised in unstressed position, cf. a similar neutralisation of /e, ɛ/ and /o, ɔ/; (c) [ɐ] is limited to word-final closed syllables, cf. a similar distribution in the case of /ɛ, ɔ, ə/.

[4] The examples with Slovene and Rusyn consonantal sonorants are listed in the Table 6.

Slovene linguistics; Toporišič, 2004: 74–76; cf. Šuštaršič et al., 1999: 135; Požgaj Hadži, 2002: 51–52), while there is also a palatal lateral /ʎ/ in Rusyn (Ramač, 2002: 21). The difference between Slovene and Rusyn rhotic liquids lies in the manner of articulation, cf. the Slovene alveolar tap /ɾ/ (a single contraction) and the Rusyn alveolar trill /r/ (two or more vibrations; Šuštaršič et al., 1999: 135; Toporišič, 2004: 74; Ramač, 2002: 18, 21).

      Slovene has two **approximants** (glides) – a palatal /j/ and a labiodental /ʋ/ (Šuštaršič et al., 1999: 136; Toporišič, 2004: 74–77); according to R. Šuštaršič (2005: 21), the approximant status of the Slovene consonant /ʋ/ "is based more on its phonological behaviour, which often coincides with the rest of the sonorants", while articulation-wise it behaves (at least in prevocalic position) as a (voiced) labiodental fricative. Two Rusyn **fricatives** – the labiodental /v/ and the palatal /j/ (Ramač, 2002: 16–17; Fejsa, 1990: 88, cit. in Med'eši, 2014: 83) – appear comparable to Slovene approximants. Their status is somewhat problematic: /v/ has both sonorant and obstruent characteristics – on one hand, it does not "trigger" the voicing of the preceding obstruents, e.g. [ˈʃvẹːt] *швет* 'world', [ˈmọːkva] *моква* 'thick fog', [ˈtvaːr] *твар* 'face' (as other sonorants), on the other, /v/ (at least word-initially) is devoiced before voiceless obstruents in some words, e.g. [ˈfʃaːʣi] *вшадзи* 'everywhere', [ˈfʧʧaːs] *вчас* 'early' (as other voiced obstruents; Ramač, 2002: 15; cf. Gustavsson, 2006: 43); according to Ch. Bidwell (1966: 33), the phoneme /j/ is a glide (an approximant).

Table 6: Examples of Slovene and Rusyn consonantal sonorant phonemes

	Slovene	Rusyn
/m/	[ˈmaːʧka] *mačka* 'cat'	[ˈmaːʧka] *мачка* 'cat'
/n/	[ˈnoːʧ] *noč* 'night'	[ˈnọːts] *ноц* 'night'
/ɲ/	Ø	[ˈɲẹːbọ] *небо* 'sky'
/ɾ/	[ˈɾaːna] *rana* 'wound'	Ø
/r/	Ø	[ˈraːna] *рана* 'wound'
/ʋ/	[ˈʋaːza] *vaza* 'vase'	Ø
/v/	Ø	[ˈvaːzna] *вазна* 'vase'
/j/	[juˈnaːk] *junak* 'hero'	Ø
/j/	Ø	[ˈjuːnak] *юнак* 'hero'
/l/	[ˈlaːdja] *ladja* 'ship'	[ˈlaːɟa] *ладя* 'ship'
/ʎ/	Ø	[ˈʎiːtsọ] *ліцо* 'cheek'

The number of **nasal allophones** is higher in Slovene: in both languages /n/ has a velar variant [ŋ] before /k g/ (in Slovene also /x/),[5] e.g. Slovene [ˈtaːŋkər] *tanker* and Rusyn [ˈtaːŋkɛr] *танкер* 'tanker'. Slovene /m n/ have, in addition, a labiodental variant [ɱ] before labiodental consonants /f ʋ/ (e.g. [traɱˈʋaːj] *tramvaj* 'streetcar', [iɱˈflaːʦija] *inflacija* 'inflation') and /n/ has a palatalized allophone [nʲ] in front of /j/ in word-final position or before another consonant (e.g. [ˈʋoːnʲ] *vonj* 'scent', [ˈjuːtranʲka] *jutranjka* 'dressing gown'); contemporary Slovene has – in the last case – mostly alveolar and velar [n ŋ]: e.g. [ˈʋoːn], [ˈjuːtraŋka] (Šuštaršič et al., 1999: 136; Toporišič, 2004: 75–76; Ramač, 2002: 16, 21).

In the case of **liquids**, one allophone is usually mentioned: according to traditional Slovene linguistics, /l/ can be realized as a palatalised [lʲ] in the same phonetic context as [nʲ], e.g. [ˈbuːtəlʲ] *butelj* 'nitwit', [ˈoːlʲka] *oljka* 'olive' (in contemporary Slovene, the alveolar [l] is more frequent; Požgaj Hadži, 2002: 51–52; Toporišič, 2004: 75–76).[6]

Among Slovene **approximants**, only /ʋ/ has – beside the main realization [ʋ] (in front of a vowel)[7] – additional allophones: [u] (or bilabial [u̯]) after a vowel in word-final position or before a consonant (e.g. [ˈʒeːtəu] *žetev* 'harvest', [nauˈdiːx] *navdih* 'inspiration'); voiced labial-velar [w] in syllable-initial position before a voiced consonant (e.g. [ˈwdiːx] *vdih* 'inbreath') and voiceless labial-velar [ʍ] before a voiceless consonant (e.g. [ˈʍtiːʧ] *vtič* 'plug'; Šuštaršič et al., 1999: 136; Toporišič, 2004: 74–77).[8]

Both Rusyn sonorant **fricatives** have positional variants: /v/ has a bilabial variant [w] in word-final position and before consonants (e.g. [ˈlɔːw] *лов* 'hunt', [ˈlaːwka] *лавка* 'bench');[9] the phoneme /j/ has an approximant-like variant [j̞] in word-final position and before /i/ or other consonants (e.g. [ˈmɔːj̞] *мой* 'my,

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[5] Ch. Bidwell (1966: 33) mentions all three velar consonants, i.e. /k g x/ (the description of the glotal /ɦ/ is problematic), also for Rusyn.

[6] The velarized allophone [ɫ] (similar to the Russian one) of the Rusyn lateral /l/ before consonants and junctures, mentioned by Ch. Bidwell (1966: 33), is not confirmed by other authors.

[7] The preposition /ʋ/ *v* 'in' is – exceptionally – pronounced as a bilabial approximant or [u] when followed by a word-initial vowel (e.g. *v Angliji* 'in England'; Šuštaršič, 2005: 21).

[8] Instead of [w] or [ʍ] the realization [u] is also possible (Šuštaršič et al., 1999: 136).

[9] According to S. R. Gustavsson (2006: 43), Rusyn /v/ is pronounced as [v] before a pause and a voiceless consonant.

mine', [ˈdo̞ːjˌits] *доїц* 'to nurse'; Ramač, 2002: 15–17; Fejsa, 1990: 88, cit. in Med'eši, 2014: 83; cfr. also Bidwell, 1966: 33).

SONORANTS AND VOICING

With regard to **voicing**, Slovene and Rusyn sonorants partly differ. In Slovene, before sonorants voiceless obstruents are not voiced, e.g. [ˈtsveːt] *cvet* 'blossom', [ˈtsveːtjɛ] *cvetje* 'flowers', [ˈtsveːt jɛ] *cvet je* 'the blossom is (exists)', [ˈtsveːt otˈpaːdɛ] *cvet odpade* 'the blossom falls' (Toporišič, 2004: 83).

Rusyn sonorants, on the other hand, "trigger" the voicing of the preceeding voiceless obstruent at the word boundary, e.g. [ˈxlo̞ːb ˈviːdʑi] *хлоп видзи* 'the man sees', [ˈxlo̞ːb ˈiːdʑɛ] *хлоп идзе* 'the man goes', only exceptionally also in word-internal position, cf. the sonorant /m/ in the 1st pl. imperative ending (e.g. [ˈkuːbmɛ] *купме* 'let's buy') and in the form [ˈzmɛ̞ː] *сме* '(we) are' of the verb *буц* 'to be' (Ramač, 2002: 23; Gustavsson, 2006: 23).

CONCLUSION

With respect to sonorants, Slovene and Vojvodina Rusyn appear to be relatively different Slavic languages.

Slovene and Rusyn share three vowel phonemes /i a u/; other five Slovene vowels differ from the remaining two in Rusyn, cf. /e ɛ o ɔ ə/ vs. /ɛ̞ o̞/. Slovene vowel system has, in addition, five positional variants [ɪ ʊ ɛ̞ o̞ ɐ] (the first two are characteristic of traditional pronunciation). In both languages the vowel length is not distinctive − stressed vowels are longer than the unstressed ones, with the exception of Slovene /ə/ which is always short.

The two languages differ considerably also in the case of consonantal sonorants, having in common only three phonemes − two nasals /m n/ and one lateral liquid /l/; Slovene has, furthermore, a rhotic liquid /ɾ/ (tap) and two approximants /ʋ j/, Rusyn, on the other hand, contains a nasal /ɲ/, a lateral liquid /ʎ/ (both are palatals), a rhotic liquid /r/ (trill) and two fricatives /v j/, missing in Slovene (Rusyn /r v j/ are homorganic to Slovene /ɾ ʋ j/). The number of consonantal sonorants' allophones is higer in Slovene: six Slovene allophones, i.e. [ɱ nʲ lʲ u/u̯ ʍ] (the last one can be realized as [u]), do not occur in Rusyn, while there is only one allophone appearing in Rusyn, but not in Slovene, cf. the approximant-like [j̞]. The analysed languages share the variants [ŋ w] (the last one with partly different characteristics in Slovene and Rusyn).

Slovene and Rusyn sonorants also behave differently with respect to voicing: in front of Slovene sonorants, voiceless obstruents are not voiced, while Rusyn sonorants cause their voicing at the word boundary, rarely also word-internally.

Роберт Грошељ

СЛОВЕНАЧКИ И РУСИНСКИ ГЛАСНИЦИ – КОНТРАСТИВНА АНАЛИЗА

Резиме

У раду се контрастивно разматрају гласници (у ширем смислу; упор. енгл. *sonorant*) у словеначком и русинком језику. Словеначки и русински гласници, тј. самогласници и гласници (у ужем смислу), анализирају се – описују и упоређују – у односу на инвентар фонема, алофона и утицај на једначење сугласника по звучности.

Словеначки и русински језик деле три самогласничке фонеме /i a u/, док се остали самогласници разликују, упор. /e ɛ o ɔ ə/ у словеначком и /ę ǫ/ у русинском језику. Уз то словеначки самогласнички инвентар чини још пет алофона. У оба језика квантитет самогласника није фонолошки релевантан (дистинктиван) – наглашени самогласници дужи су од ненаглашених, изузетак је словеначки полугласник /ə/, који је увек кратак.

Словеначки и русински језик се разликују и по гласницима у ужем смислу: уз заједничке три фонеме, тј. назале /m n/ и латералну ликвиду /l/, словеначке гласнике чине још вибрант /ɾ/ и апроксиманти /ʋ j/, док у русинском постоје још назал /ɲ/, латерална ликвида /ʎ/ (палатали), вибрант /r/ и фрикативи /v j/, којих у словеначком (начелно) нема (иначе, русински /r v j/ и словеначки /ɾ ʋ j/ су хоморгански гласови). Број гласничких алофона виши је у словеначком језику (осам – три), у оба језика присутни су само [ŋ w].

У погледу једначења сугласника по звучности словеначки и русински гласници (у ширем смислу) понашају се друкчије: у словеначком језику пред гласницима безвучни сугласници не претварају се у своје звучне опоненте, док се пред русинским гласницима безвучни сугласници замењују са звучнима на крају (границе) речи, у ретким случајевима и унутар речи.

Кључне речи: контрастивна анализа, фонологија, гласници (у ширем смислу), словеначки језик, русински језик

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