

Pačesová, Jaroslava

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JAROSLAVA PAČESOVÁ

SOME NOTES ON ITALIAN PHONOLOGY

In Standard Italian there are some sounds which are rather problematic as to their status of being independent phonemes or merely allophones.

As for vowels, many a discussion has been raised to attribute the proper value to *ɪeɪ*, *ɪɛɪ*, *ɪoɪ*, *ɪɔɪ*; in the system of consonants, scientists are not in agreement on the points of evaluating *ɪsɪ* and *ɪzɪ*.

Let us put forward a general view on these sounds in question: *ɪeɪ* and *ɪɛɪ* are by most researchers in Italian phonology, usually accepted as independent phonemes on the basis of the Florentine system. Their function is shown in doublets like: *affétto* — *affétto*, *corrèsse* — *corrèsse*, *légge* — *légge*, *pésca* — *pésca*, *vénti* — *vénti*, *télo* — *télo*, *téma* — *téma*; *bótte* — *bótte*, *cógli* — *cógli*, *tórta* — *tórta*, *fóro* — *fóro*. As the examples illustrate Italian *ɪeɪ* and *ɪɛɪ* are in contrast with *ɪeɪ* and *ɪoɪ* in stressed syllables. With regard to unstressed position, it has generally been taken for granted that the midvowels are always closed. The problem of partial complementation arose when E. B. Davis¹ published a study to show that unstressed midvowels are determined, as to their degree of openness, by certain phonetic laws. In his investigation the degrees of openness are established on an increasing scale 1—5, where the lowest degree is identified with close *ɪeɪ* and *ɪoɪ* and the highest with open *ɪeɪ* and *ɪoɪ*. Unstressed *ɪeɪ* and *ɪoɪ* are of the fourth and third degree of openness respectively if they are in a syllable closed by a liquid, and of the second degree elsewhere.

G. L. Trager² commented on Davis's results and proposed a phonemic analysis which reflects the American view. According to this, Standard Italian has 7 vocalic phonemes; in the case of the correlative pairs *ɪe* — *ɛɪ* and *ɪo* — *oɪ*, the presence of phonemic distinction of openness in stressed syllables makes it possible to assign the unstressed vowel also to one or the other phoneme. Accordingly, a phonemic orthography should distinguish the open *ɪeɪ* and the open *ɪoɪ* also in unstressed syllables. Trager's analysis imposed a requirement of biuniqueness on the phonemic transcription, i.e. one to one correspondence between the phonemes and the physical sounds and, in addition, phonetic *ɪeɪ* and *ɪoɪ* must be identified with their respective phonemes even in an unstressed position where such a difference is not distinctive, on the basis of the principle that "once a pho-

¹ cf. E. B. Davis: *Italian e's and o's*; *Italica* 14, 1937.

² cf. G. L. Trager: *Comment on Italian e's and o's*, *Italica* 16, 1939.

neme, always a phoneme." This strong biuniqueness requirement was thought to be indispensable for linguistic analysis. But even on these grounds Trager's analysis fails in the fact that there is no criterion for assigning the degree 3 openness either to the close or to the open phoneme.

As for *IsI* and *IzI*, they are in complementary distribution in most cases; intervocalically, however, these two sounds seem to be contrastive for some speakers of Central Italy. But even here both *IsI* and *IzI* appear in different words (often varying from one speaker or one district to another, cf. e. g. *casa Ika:saI* but *Isposa:reI*). As to other regions, it is mostly *IsI* in Southern Italy (cf. *Ika:saI*, *Isposa:reI*) and *IzI* in Northern (cf. *Ika:zaI*, *Isposa:reI*). Opinions as to their status in Standard Italian differ. G. Porru³ considers *IsI* and *IzI* as two variants of one phoneme *IsI*. So does R. A. Hall,⁴ W. Belardi,⁵ G. Bonfante—M. L. Porzio Gernia⁶ and M. Saltarelli.⁷ B. Malmberg⁸ on the other hand, insists on two phonemes *IsI* and *IzI* on the basis of minimal pairs such as *fuso* — *fušo* in Florentine. B. Migliorini,⁹ A. Castellani,¹⁰ J. Arce¹¹ and most recently the Yugoslav linguist Ž. Muljačić¹² and the German K. Licheim,¹³ too, have the phoneme *IzI* in their consonantal system of Standard Italian.

As shown above, the four sounds present a double example of partial complementation: the distinction *ɛI* — *ɛ̃I* and *ɔI* — *ɔ̃I* is phonemic if the vowel is stressed but dependent on the following segment if unstressed. Likewise, *IzI* and *IsI* seem to be in contrast intervocalically but clearly in complementary distribution elsewhere. *IzI* occurs only before voiced consonants (both paired and unpaired, cf. *sdentato*, *sraggionare*, *smarrire*), *IsI* before voiceless consonants, before vowels then initially, medially and finally, cf. *stentato*, *salato*, *casa*, *lapis*.

R. A. Hall¹⁴ takes up the issue of partial complementation in Italian in a further effort to reach a feasible solution. Interpreting C. F. Hockett's¹⁵ discussion on the problem, he rejects both the American solution (which incidentally was adopted in his "*Descriptive Italian Grammar*") and that of the Prague school (represented by G. Porru) which involves setting up an archiphoneme, in neutralized position, in addition to the phoneme *IsI* and *IzI* intervocalically. In his article "*Italian IzI and the Converse of the Archiphoneme*" Hall decides that the Prague-type archiphoneme has the disadvantage of adding extra units to one's analysis. The American procedure, on the other hand, is wasteful in that it insists on symbolizing differences where they are not significant and proposes to establish the phonemic contrasts

³ cf. G. Porru: *Anmerkungen über die Phonologie des Italienischen*, TCLP, vol. 8, 1939.

⁴ cf. R. A. Hall: in his *Italian Phoneme and Orthography*, *Italica* 21, 1944 and in his *Descriptive Italian Grammar*, Ithaca-New York 1948.

⁵ cf. W. Belardi: *Introduzione alla fonologia*, Roma 1952.

⁶ cf. G. Bonfante—M. L. Porzio Gernia: *Cenni di fonetica e di fonematica con particolare riguardo all'italiano*, Torino 1944.

⁷ cf. M. Saltarelli: *A phonology of Italian in a Generative Grammar*, The Hague—Paris 1970.

⁸ cf. B. Malmberg: *A propos du système phonologique de l'italien*, *Acta linguistica* 3, 1942.

⁹ cf. B. Migliorini: *Pronunzia Fiorentina o Pronunzia Romana*, Firenze 1945.

¹⁰ cf. A. Castellani: *Fonotipi e Fonemi in Italiano*, *Studia di Filologia Italiana* 14, 1956.

¹¹ cf. J. Arce: *Il numero die Fonemi in Italiano in Confronto con lo Spagnolo*, *Lingua Nostra* 23, 1962.

¹² cf. Ž. Muljačić: *Fonologia Generale e Fonologia della Lingua Italiana*, Bologna 1969.

¹³ cf. K. Licheim: *Phonetik und Phonologie des heutigen Italienisch*, Berlin 1970.

¹⁴ cf. R. A. Hall: *Italian IzI and the Converse of the Archiphoneme*, *Lingua* 9, 1960.

¹⁵ cf. C. F. Hockett: *A Manual of Phonology*, Indiana Univer. Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics, Vol. 11, 1955.

which are valid in all positions in the language under analysis, and then regard cases of further partial differentiation under any given set of circumstances as involving the addition of a further phonological component, which is significant only in those special circumstances and not elsewhere. Thus, if Italian *IsI* and *IzI* stand in contrast only intervocally, one can solve the problem best by recognizing only one phoneme and then, between vowels, to recognize an added contrast between voice and voiceless by adding a dot underneath the symbol *IsI* which would indicate the additional component of voicing. A similar solution, i.e. adding an additional mark of openness under stress is proposed with the phoneme *IeI* and *IoI*. For this procedure to apply, the strong requirement of biuniqueness must be abandoned, and the result is semi-componential transcription. This procedure is identified by the author himself with "rephonemicization"¹⁶ and is further discussed by Z. S. Harris.¹⁷ In his opinion, rephonemization breaks up some segments into two elements, each of which is assigned to a different phoneme. The effect is to regularize the distribution of phonemes for the purpose of eliminating exceptional distributional limitations, or more exactly of increasing the freedom of occurrence of exceptionally restricted phonemes. Further on he suggests eliminating some of these exceptional restrictions, not by modifying our operational definition of a phoneme nor by changing the criteria which we seek to satisfy, but by performing a further operation, if possible, on restricted segments in order to make them amenable to those phonemic groupings which would satisfy our preference. An operational definition of a phoneme requires only a *weak* principle of biuniqueness on phonemic writing in Harris's views. The criteria which are to be satisfied and maintained and for which this further operation of "rephonemicization" is motivated are: 1. number and freedom of occurrence of phonemes; 2. symmetry in the representation of sounds; 3. relative and complete phoneme stock; 4. symmetry of environment.

M. Saltarelli¹⁸ compares Hall's analysis with the American view to see whether the former's motivation for rephonemicization is justified in view of the scope and place in a linguistic analysis of this remedial operation, as discussed by Harris. The American view would set up two phonemes: the consonants *IsI* and *IzI*: the former occurs initially, medially in the intervocalic position and in combination with a voiceless consonant, and finally; the latter medially in the intervocalic position and in combination with a voiced consonant.

Hall, on the other hand, sets up two contrasts as follows: *IsI* and *I.I* — the latter is just the feature voice — which occurs in these environments:

IsI initially, medially either intervocally or in combination with a consonant, voiceless or voiced; and finally.

I.I only intervocally, never as a single segment but always in connection with (*s*). In this case Hall's analysis results in no reduction in the number of contrasts. In addition, symmetry of environment is reduced, which is the very opposite of the purpose for applying rephonemicization. And, last but not least, there is a phonemic unit *I.I* whose environment is shared according to Saltarelli by no other phoneme in the language.¹⁹

¹⁶ cf. R. A. Hall: *Leave Your Language Alone*, Ithaca—New York 1950, p. 87—88 and *The Reconstruction of Proto-Romance*, *Language* 40, 26, 1950, p. 306.

¹⁷ cf. Z. S. Harris: *Methods in Structural Linguistics*, Chicago 1951, p. 90.

¹⁸ cf. M. Saltarelli: l.c. (Note 7) p. 23 ff.

¹⁹ It may, in our opinion be shared with by the affricate *tsI*.

In the case of the vowels the American analysis would set up 4 phonemes: *ɪɛI*, *ɪoI* under stress and unstressed, closed by a liquid; *ɪeI*, *ɪoI* under stress and unstressed, not closed by a liquid, while the Hall's analysis has but two phonemes:

ɪeI, *ɪoI* stressed and unstressed;

I^AI only under stress, never as a single segment, but always in connection with *ɪe*, *oI*, in other words, the vocalic system is shorter of two phonemes, but again one pays in symmetry of environment which is contrary to the purpose of rephonemization. And, similarly as with *ɪsI*, there is a phonemic unit *I^AI* which is maximally limited in occurrence.²⁰

In view of the above, Saltarelli argues that with regard to the phonemic system of Italian as a whole Hall's semi-componential analysis of *ɪsI*, *ɪzI*, *ɪeI*, *ɪoI*, *ɪeI*, *ɪoI* is not motivated. More than that, it defeats its own purpose by introducing highly restricted phonemes and consequently reduces symmetry of environment in the system.

Compared to the former analyses, however, Hall's is more suited to the particular purpose of solving the problem of partial complementation in Italian. This argument seems to hold its own, but in comparison with the American solution does not offer any advantage in that to achieve its purpose the price to be paid in freedom of occurrence of phonemes and in environmental symmetry is very high.

M. Saltarelli proposes another approach which, in his opinion, meets the problem without compromising the validity of the analysis in some other way, namely, a distinctive feature analysis in accordance with the tenets presented by M. Halle for a phonological component in a generative grammar, according to which a set of ordered rules predicts morphologically and phonologically governed features. Thus, in the case of Italian *ɪsI* and *ɪzI* we regard these two segments as bundles of distinctive classificatory features, distinct because the feature *voice* is *minus* for one and *plus* for the other. Accordingly, using a variable coefficient for voice, tenseness and vocality, he has in his analysis the following morpheme-structure rules:

1. *ɪsI* is voiced or voiceless if followed by a voiced or voiceless consonantal segment respectively. It is voiceless finally and initially before vowels,

2. unstressed *ɪeI* and *ɪoI* are closed or open depending on whether they are followed by a cluster the first member of which is a liquid or a non-liquid.

These rules assign binary values of voicing and closeness. Later indices of closeness etc. are assigned to the abstract distinctive features to reproduce the exact physical qualities of the sounds. Saltarelli's transcription contains no coefficient for the features of *voice* and *closeness* where they are environmentally predicted by the rules above. Clearly this phonemic writing coincides with the level of analysis traditionally known as morphophonemic level which is here followed by an ordered set of rules mapping it directly into a phonetic representation. Linguistic theories agree on the necessity of both levels of analysis. Nobody imposes a biuniqueness requirement (either weak or strong) for the former, but everyone for the latter.

The results show that Saltarelli's analysis of Italian *ɪsI*, *ɪzI*, *ɪeI*, *ɪoI* accounts for exactly the same phonetic facts as with which other theories have dealt.

²⁰ In his 1971's monography, *La Struttura dell'Italiano*, Roma, 1971, R. A. Hall has 20 consonant phonemes (while admitting of possible adding another one) and 5 vowel phonemes (with possible addition of two more under stress).

In addition, he does not add extra phonological units in his phonemic writing as the Prague solution has done. He does not have two phonemes in complementary distribution which Trager and the American school would need in Italian nor does he reduce environmental symmetry among our phonological elements, maximally restricted in the voice I . I and openness $I^{\wedge}I$ as in Hall's semi-componential analysis. On the contrary, his phonological elements on which the set of rules operates, acquire extended freedom of occurrence and maximum possible symmetry in his phonemic system. Partial complementation is automatically handled in his analysis. It can only become a problem if one insists on a biunique phonemic-type representation rather than a feature representation.

In our opinion, however, in a phonemic analysis the vocalic and consonantal phonemes should be treated separately, because each of them build up their own system based on different features. Stress, quantity and openness are relevant proprieties for vowels, voice, strength or gemination for consonants. Within these the sound environment plays a certain role for both categories.

Let us deal first with the vocalic sounds in question, namely IeI , IeI , IoI , IoI :

IeI has three quantitative variants, i.e. short, semilong and long. As for quality, all the three variants are open, the degree of openness being, however, not very high in Standard pronunciation. As to their occurrences, they are the following:

1. stressed position

a) the short variant appears initially, medially and finally, in combination with most of the consonants, cf. *ebbro, ecco, esse, ceffo setta; è, tè, rè* (most of the words containing the open IeI finally, are however, of foreign origin, cf. *caffè, canapè, cupè, aloè, toppè, tsè-tsè*);

b) the semi-long variant appears initially and medially in a syllable closed by a sonorant (mostly IrI and by an affricate $ItsI$,²¹ cf. *ergere, ermo, erba, erpete, ersi, elfo; quercio, riserva, tempio, venti; inezia, Vezio*;

c) the long variant appears initially and medially, in combination with any other vowel and with most of the consonants, cf. *ieri, miele, trincea, creò, neutro, sei, vorei, leguleio; epoca, epa, erica, egro, tepita, sede, remora, regola, altero, celere*;

2. unstressed position

As quoted above, it has generally been believed that open IeI does not occur in unstressed positions, while the occurrence of the close IeI is fairly common in unstressed syllables initially, medially and finally with no restriction as to the sound environment, cf. *erede, esitare, ebbrezza, efficiente, egretta, enterico, eldorado, elvellico, emblema, ergotino; festino, penultimo, perire, pertinace, petraria; parlare, rasare, smarrire*. Davis's study, however, shows that the mid vowels may have a certain degree of openness if they appear in a syllable closed by a liquid. This idea was accepted e.g. by Hall, who in his "Descriptive Grammar" (p. 7) offers examples of IeI occurrences as follows: *bene I'be:neI, sette I'setteI, servire Iser'vi:reI* and by Saltarelli (p. 25). In his latest work, "La struttura dell'italiano"²² Hall exemplifies, however, the occurrence of unstressed open IeI not only in the position

²¹ In this position, in our opinion, the vowel is not *short*, as is generally taken for granted in regard to the combination of a vowel + aconsonantal cluster, nor *long* as is presupposed in the case with $ItsI$. For further details cf. J. Pačesová, *Quantità, Accento o Correlazione di Contatto?* in *Etudes Romanes di Brno* 1974, p.

²² cf. R. A. Hall: l.c. (Note 20) p. 23.

before a consonantal cluster whose first member is a liquid but even in the position before a single consonant, either liquid or nasal, cf. *pelare* *lpe'la:reI*, *ferire* *lfe'ri:reI*, *serrato* *lser'ra:toI*, *benone* *lbe'no:neI*, *gemmato* *ldʒe'ma:toI* when, on the other hand, the following consonant is non-sonorant, the *reI* has a close character, cf. *vedere* *lve'de:reI*, *metteva* *lmet'te:vaI* *bevute* *lbe'vu:teI*. Unfortunately he does not mention whether this statement of his is the result of experimental investigation. In our opinion, the heterosyllabic consonant (either sonorant or non-sonorant) can hardly exhibit any influence on the preceding vowel. Doubts may be raised even as to the case of a tautosyllabic sonorant exercising influence on the quality of a preceding vowel in an unstressed syllable when it does not do so in a stressed syllable.

As the following examples illustrate, in the stressed syllables closed by a sonorant both *reI* and *leI* appear in free variation, cf. *grembo* *l'gremboI* — *lembo* *l'lemboI*, *membro* *l'membroI* — *sembro* *l'sembroI*, *tempio* *l'tempioI* — *empio* *l'empioI*; *sentia* *l'sentiaI* — *trenta* *l'trentaI*, *venti* *l'ventiI* — *venti* *l'ventiI*; *centro* *l'tsentroI* — *dentro* *l'dentroI*; *belga* *l'belgaI* — *scelga* *l'felgaI*, *svelse* *l'zvelseI* — *scelse* *l'felseI*, *delta* *l'deltaI* — *scelta* *l'feltaI*; *scerpo* *l'ferpoI* — *sterpo* *l'sterpoI*, *erma* *l'ermaI* — *ferma* *l'fermaI*, *perdere* *l'perdereI* — *verde* *l'verdeI*, *alterco* *l'al'terkoI* — *cerco* *l'ferkoI*, *stamberg* *l'am'bergaI* — *verga* *l'vergaI*, *alterno* *l'al'ternoI* — *scherno* *l'skernoI* — *sterzo* *l'sterzoI* — *scherzo* *l'skertoI*.

In any case, the fact that the *reI* and *leI* are in contrast only under stress, cannot be changed by admitting the existence of a more or less open variant in an unstressed syllable under certain phonetic laws.

As the open *reI*, so too the close *leI* has three quantitative variants, namely short, semilong and long. As for quality, all the three variants are closed, the degree of closeness being, however, not very high in Standard pronunciation. As to their occurrences, they are as follows:

1. stressed position

a) the short variant appears initially, medially and finally. As for the frequency, *reI* is very rare in the initial position, occurring but in a few pronouns, cf. *ella*, *essa*, *esse*; medially, however, it is fairly frequent and combines with most of the consonants, *teppa*, *nebbia*, *avemmo*, *freddo*, *penna*, *secco*, *bevve*, *sapessi*, *breccia*, *gregge*. Finally, *reI* occurs in mono- and dissyllables as *mé*, *tré*, *ché*, *sé*, *né*, *perché*, *finché* and in "passato remoto," cf. *credé*, *poté*;

b) the semilong variant appears initially and medially when followed by the consonants *lɔI*, *lɛI*, *lʃI*, or by consonantal clusters, the first member of which is a sonorant, cf. *egli*, *legno*, *pegno*, *pesce*;²³ *empio*, *elce*, *endice*, *erno*, *erpice*; *lembo*, *semplice*, *venti*, *cencio*, *scelto*.

c) the long variant is quite exceptional in initial position, cf. *esca*; medially, its occurrence is more frequent in the open syllables followed by some simple consonants, cf. *cometa*, *avena*, *neve*, *difesa*, *obeso*, *cece* and before the semivowel *riI* in "passato remoto", cf. *vendei*, *dovei*, *potei*.

Comparing the two phonemes in respect to their occurrences in stressed syllables, we may say that, in the initial position, the vast majority of *e-s* are the open ones and, concomitantly, the contrastive pairs are very rare, cf. *esse* — *ésse*, *èsc* — *ésc*. So they are in the final position, cf. *rè* — *ré*, *tè* — *té*, where most of *e-s* sounds have — in the fundamental domestic stock of words — the closed quality.

²³ In combination with these consonants the close *reI* is the only possibility (with one exception, i.e. *mègli*) while before *lɔI* the open *reI* occurs in all instances.

Medially, however, neither *ɪɪ* nor *ɛɪ* is limited and both of them appear in free variations in any sound environment (but for the few exceptions mentioned above). A list of words, mostly in alphabetical order, are to be found in textbooks on Italian pronunciation to illustrate the fact that the open, respectively close, character of this front mid vowel is the only feature to distinguish the meaning or the word-categories in doublets like *accètta* — *accétta*, *affétto* — *afféto*, *arèna* — *aréna*, *collèga* — *colléga*, *corèsse* — *corésse*, *lègge* — *légge*, *mèzzo* — *mézso*, *pèsca* — *pésca*, *pèste* — *péste*, *tèlo* — *télo*, *tèma* — *téma*, *vènti* — *vénti*.

What has been said about the mid-front vowels, holds good also for the mid-back vowels:

ɔɪ has three quantitative variants which are open (once again with not a very high degree of openness). They appear:

1. in stressed position

a) the short variant initially, medially and finally in the neighbourhood of most of the consonants, cf. *ovvio*, *offa*, *oggi*, *olla*, *otto*; *piovve*, *goffo*, *poggio*, *colla*, *forra*, *coppa*, *gobbo*; *nò*, *sò*, *dò*, *ciò*, *però*, *dìrò*, *farò*, *pagherò*, *amò* (and in foreign words as *roccocò*, *falò*, *oblò*);

b) the semilong variant initially and medially next to the consonants *ɪtsɪ*, *ɪɫɪ*, *ɪfɪ* and in combination with a liquid + consonant, cf. *ozio*, *sozio*, *foglia*, *voglia* (but *móglie*); *fioscio*, *camoscio*, *croscio* (but *móscio*); *corpo*, *morbo*, *dorma*, *porta*, *mordo*, *orto*, *forzo*, *orzo*, *torcia*;

c) the long variant initially and medially in combination with most vowels and with most of the consonants, cf. *uomo*, *luogo*, *poi*, *buoi* (but *nói*, *vói*, *cói*); *ova*, *oca*, *solido*, *folia*, *alloro*, *arboreo*, *rosa*, *toga*, *oca*, *nono*, *brodo*, *nota*, *coma*, *probo*, *topo*; *rospo*, *costa*, *chiostro*, *bosco*;

Close *ɔɪ* appears:

a) the short variant medially in the neighbourhood of the geminated *Immɪ*, *Innɪ*, *Iɪɪ*, *Ikkɪ*, *Issɪ*, cf. *gomma*, *somma*, (but *còmma*); *colonna*, *gonna* (but *dòmma*); *condotta*, *gotta*, *botte* (but *bòtte*, *flòtta*, *patriòtta*), *fosse* (but *fòsse*), *tocco* (but *tòcco*);

b) the semilong variant initially and medially when followed by the consonant *ɪɲɪ*, cf. *ogni*, *sogno*, *fogna*, *verdognolo* and in combination with consonantal clusters the first member of which is the nasal or liquid (mostly *|l|*), cf. *pompa*, *bomba*, *onta*, *sconto*, *onda*, *gondolo*, *volto* (but *vòlto*), *solco*, *volgo* (but *vòlgo*), *golfo*, *dolce*;

c) the long variant initially and medially in combination with some consonants, e.g. *|s|*, *|tʃ|*, *|r|*, *|v|*, cf. *acetosa*, *viscosa* (but *còsa*, *pòsa*); *croce*, *voce*, *noce* (but *sòcio*, *ciòcia*); *ora* (but *òra*); *ove*;

The comparison of the two *o*-sounds in stressed syllables produces a similar picture to that with the two *e*-sounds. As for the short close *ɔɪ*, it is still more restricted in occurrence. It does not appear either initially, nor finally. Medially, it does occur and, though limited to a certain consonant environment, it forms contrasts of *close* vs. *open*, cf. *cóppa* — *còppa*, *fósse* — *fòsse*, *bòtte* — *bòtte*, *tócco* — *tòcco* etc.

As for the semilong *ɔɪ* and *|o|*, they appear medially in free variation in the neighbourhood of some consonantal clusters, cf. *sórta* (v.) — *sòrta* (sb.), *tórta* (sb.) — *tòrta* (adj.), *vólgo* (sb.) — *vòlgo* (v.), *vólto* (sb.) — *vòlto* (adj.).

The same may be said about the long variants of *|o:|* and *|õ:|*. They form contrasts in some situations, mostly medially, while initially they acquire a contrastive

function rarely, cf. *fòro* — *fòro*, *ròsa* (v.) — *ròsa* (sb.), *scòpo* (v.) — *scòpo* (sb.), *vòto* (sb.) — *vòto* (adj.).

2. in unstressed position

What has been said in connection with the occurrence of the open /e/ in unstressed position, holds good, in our opinion, also for the open /o/. In spite of the examples given by Hall, cf. *buono* *ibu:noi*, *colto* *ikoltoi*, *dormire* *idormi:rei* in his "Descriptive Grammar" (p. 7) and *dormire*, *mòlissimo*, *cònoscere*, *còmune* in his "La struttura dell italiano (p. 23)" and Saltarelli's thesis on the quality of mid vowels in the syllables closed by a liquid, we rather believe that, from the phonetic point of view, all the unstressed o-sounds belong under the category of closed vowels irrespective of the degree of closeness or openness they might possess in a certain consonant environment. As for their phonetic function, the feature *open* or *close* is distinctive in the stressed syllables where /o/ and /o/ are in contrast, cf. *bòtte* — *bòtte*, *còppa* — *còppa*, *fòsse* — *fòsse*, *indòtto* — *indòtto*, *tòcco* — *tòcco*, *accòrsi* — *accòrsi*, *cògli* — *cògli*, *còlto* — *còlto*, *sòrta* — *sòrta*, *tòrta* — *tòrta*, *còrso* — *còrso*, *vòlgo* — *vòlgo*, *vòlto* — *vòlto*, *fòro* — *fòro*, *vòto* — *vòto*, *òra* — *òra*.

To sum up both the pairs of the mid-vowels under discussion, i.e. /e/-/e/ and /o/-/o/ are, in our opinion, independent phonemes, as they fulfil the demand expected from the phoneme as such whatever criterion might be chosen; they may and do occur in the same sound environment and are capable of distinguishing the meanings of words.

As for /s/ and /z/, they are grouped under the heading of fricatives in the Italian consonantal system. Let us compare the individual representatives of this category. As the plosives, so too the fricatives, form contrasts which are based on some of the following properties: place of articulation (which differs the fricative phonemes as /s/ (*festa* — *sesta*), /v/ (*valva* — *salva*), /ʃ/ (*senza* — *scienza*), /ʎ/ (*pila* — *piglia*), /r/ (*vampa* — *rampa*); strength of articulation which differentiates the geminated fricatives from the simple ones, cf. /ff/ (*tuffo* — *tufo*), /vv/ (*bevve* — *beve*), /ss/ (*cassa* — *casa*), /ll/ (*palla* — *pala*), /rr/ (*carro* — *caro*); voice, the presence or absence of which forms the contrast in fricatives /f/v and /s/z. And here we are faced with the problem as to whether these two pairs have the same value, i.e. whether each member of the pair is an independent phoneme or just an allophone.²⁴ There is hardly any doubt about the pair /f/v. Both the labiodental fricatives appear initially and medially, in combination with vowels and sonorants and are capable of differentiating the meaning of the words such as *Iaro* — *varo*, *folto* — *volto*, *inferno* — *inverno* etc. As for the other pair, namely /s/ and /z/, however, the situation is rather complicated. They are in contrast in many languages, with the exception of consonantal clusters, where /s/ as a paired voiceless consonant may be combined only with voiceless paired consonants, and the same limitation holds good — vice versa — with the voiced /z/. In other positions, however, /s/ and /z/ are not restricted and appear initially, medially and finally, in free variation in the same sound environment, i.e. in combination with all vowels and sonorants.

²⁴ There is no other pair based on the presence or absence of voice in Standard Italian in the system of fricatives, cf. the fact that /ʃ/ in spite of being a paired consonant in most languages, in Italian (i.e. in fundamental domestic stock of words) the voiced counterpart /ʒ/ is missing. The rest of the fricatives in Italian are non-paired.

In Standard Italian, however, the positional situations of *s/z* are as follows: *IsI* appears initially a) when followed by a vowel, cf. *sale, solo, suono*;

b) when followed by a voiceless consonant, cf. *sperare, scrivere, studiare*;

medially a) when followed by a voiceless consonant, cf. *rispettare, costare, cascare, disfatto*;

b) when preceded by a sonorant, cf. *verso, falso, pensiero*;

c) intervocally when standing either in the prefix or suffix, cf. *disotto, animoso, bramosia, curiosità, calabrese, resipose, risposero*;

d) in compounded words, cf. *girasole, stasera, ventisette, portasigarette*;

finally a) in words of foreign origin, cf. *lapis, gratis, gas, caos, omnibus, usus*. *IzI*, on the other hand, has the following occurrences:

initially — only when followed by a voiced consonant, paired or unpaired, cf. *sbagliare, sdegnare, sgabello, svenire, sgellare; sloveno, smarire, straggiare, snellezza*;

medially — intervocally, when standing in the stem-syllable, cf. *asola, caso, esame, paese, pavesare*. There are, however some exceptions to this rule, cf. the pronunciation *naso, posa, asino, casa, cosa, così, mese, peso, riso* with voiceless *IsI*.

As the examples illustrate, *IsI* and *IzI* are in complementary distribution. The few cases when they form a contrast and differentiate the meaning are but exceptional, cf. *fuso — fušo, chiese — chieše, presente — prešente, rosa — roša*.

Restriction concerns also another feature, typical of Italian consonants, namely, the strength of articulation. As is generally known, most of the consonants have two forms, namely, the simple and the geminated forms. The difference between them is one of the complex of proprieties which helps to differentiate the doublets as *tuffo — tufo, bevve — beve, palla — pala, carro — caro, aggio — agio, facce — face, fummo — fumo, penna — pena, coppia — copia, brutto — bruto, cadde — cade, ebbe — ebe, ecco — eco, fugga — fuga* etc. This holds good also for */s/*, cf. *IssI — IsI, cassa — casa, spesso — speso*, but not for the voiced *IzI*. This consonant does exist but as a simple form, while the geminated is absent from the Italian sound system.

In summary then, *IzI* compared to other consonantal phonemes, stands apart and has not, in our opinion, the standard of independent phoneme. As shown in the examples above, its occurrence is very restricted as to position. But for the few exceptional cases where the two sounds, namely *IsI* and *IzI* are in contrast intervocally, they are in complementary distribution everywhere and represent, in our opinion, the two allophones, voiceless and voiced, of a single phoneme */s/*.

NĚKOLIK POZNÁMEK K ITALSKÉ FONOLOGII

V systému současné spisovné italštiny existují některé hlásky, jejichž fonologický statut je problematický. Ve vokalikém systému jsou to středové samohlásky přední, tj. *ɪeI* a *ɪeI* a středové samohlásky zadní, tj. *ɪɔI* a *ɪɔI*. Většina fonologů se shoduje v názoru, že každá z těchto samohlásek představuje samostatný foném; na druhé straně však nechybí ani názor, že se jedná o pouhé varianty. Podobně v systému souhláskovém se badatelé neshodují ve fonologickém hodnocení frikativ *IsI* a *IzI*.

V předložené studii se autorka pokouší o konfrontaci názorů domácích i cizích fonologů, kteří se touto otázkou v italštině zabývali. Sama pak provádí zvukový rozbor těchto hlásek, věnuje si jejich fonetických i fonologických vlastností i pozičního výskytu ve slovech domácích a přejatých. Dospívá zhruba k těmto závěrům: samohláskový systém spisovné italštiny má 7 vokaliokých fonémů, tj. *iɪ*, *ieɪ*, *ieɛ*, *iaɪ*, *ioɪ*, *ioɛ*, (*u*), i když protiklad otevřený—zavřený se uplatňuje pouze ve slabice přízvučné. Pokud se týče fonologického hodnocení souhlásek *isi* a *izi*, přiklání se autorka k názoru, že představují dvě kombinatorické varianty jediného fonému *isi*.