

Pavia Indo-European Summer School (September 2013)

Introduction to Albanian

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Day 1: *Albanian Phonology/Orthography/Clusters/Vocabulary (for fun)*

- A. There are several letters in the Albanian alphabet that are familiar letters from Western European languages or similar to familiar ones that have a very different phonetic value; consider:

c	[ts]
ç	[tʃ]
dh	[ð]
ë	[ʌ] (with wide dialectal variation as to its realization)
gj	[ɡ̊] (with wide dialectal variation)
j	[j] (i.e., palatal glide)
ll	[l̥]
nj	[ñ]
q	[k̊] (with wide dialectal variation)
rr	[r̄]
x	[dz]
xh	[dʒ]
y	[y] (i.e. front round vowel)
zh	[ʒ]

All other letters have their familiar and expected values as Latin-based characters (including **sh** (= [ʃ]) and **th** (= [θ])); note also that **ng** (usually [ŋ] but sometimes [ŋɡ]) is not treated as a separate letter (while other digraphs are).

- B. *Some words with non-English letters* (try learning to pronounce them; note that final **ë** is not pronounced in the standard language and in most non-Southern Tosk dialects)

copë	‘piece’
çyçë	‘waterspout’
dha	‘s/he gave’
është	‘s/he is’
gjë	‘thing’
jep	‘s/he gives’
lloç	‘muddy slush’
njeri	‘man’
qe	‘s/he was’
rreth	‘around, about’
xëc	‘pitch dark’
xhuxh	‘dwarf’
yll	‘star’
zhyt	‘s/he immerses in liquid’

B. *The numbers:*

një	'one'
dy	'two'
tre	'three'
katër	'four'
pesë	'five'
gjashtë	'six'
shtatë	'seven'
tetë	'eight'
nëntë	'nine'
dhjetë	'ten'

C. *Some tricky clusters:*

brryltirë	'hairpin curve'
cfytës	'blowpipe'
çdo	'each'
çmim	'price'
çndotje	'decontamination'
çndryshk	's/he removes the rust from (something)'
çngjyron	's/he causes (something) to lose color'
kthehet	's/he returns'
ltar	'altar'
mbret	'king'
nxënës	'pupil'
nxjerr	's/he extracts'
qutetth	'small town'
shqip	'Albanian'
tmerrshëm	'terrible'
vdiq	's/he died'
zbathur	'shoeless'
zbrapset	's/he moves backwards'
zmbrapset	's/he moves backwards'
zdap	'cudgel'
zgjat	's/he lengthens'
zhduket	's/he disappears'
zhvillon	's/he develops'

D. *Some (mildly) amusing English-sounding vocabulary:*

bush	'mythical swamp-dwelling animal that causes rain by howling'
dosido	'somehow or another'
dudë	'gingiva (gum)'
dhimsun	'compassionate'
fillthi	'all alone'

sherri ‘deceit’
trash ‘s/he thickens’

E. Some useful vocabulary:

dhe ‘and’
faleminderit ‘thank you’
jo ‘no’
ju lutem ‘please’ (lit. “you I-implore”)
mirë ‘good’
mirë dita ‘hello’ (lit. “good day”)
mirupafshim ‘goodbye’ (lit. “well each-other may-we-see”, i.e. ‘may we see each-other well’)
po ‘yes’
si jeni ‘how are-you?’ (‘you’ = plural or polite singular)
si je ‘how are you?’ (‘you’ = singular)
tungjatjeta ‘hello’ (lit. “may life be lengthened”)