

Founded in 1924 by Matteo Bartoli, Atlante Linguistico Italiano (ALI) is a linguistic atlas dedicated to collecting data on Italy's local languages or dialects. Counting over 1000 surveys in 947 locations from 1925 to 1965, ALI's extensive dataset, estimated between 2 and 3 million records (Rivoira 2016), makes it an essential tool for studying Italian dialects. Digitization of the atlas is underway as part of the "Changes" project in the context of the Italian national program PNRR (*Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza*).

While ALI primarily focuses on geographical variation, valuable insights on historical and social variation can be gleaned from the informants' profiles and interviewers' observations contained in the survey reports (Massobrio et al. 1995); moreover, the informants were often aware of variation in their dialect, revealing historical and real-time social variation.

For instance, in 128-Omate (Lombardy), a 36-year-old woman (born in 1923) and his father (born in 1890) were interviewed. Her speech loses some of the more local features, yielding to more "urban" and less marked forms: she uses [kal'dera] (Q757) for 'cauldron', as in Milan, while he employs the local [kul'dera]; she abandons the marked plural for 'teeth' used by her father, [dītj] in favor of the unmarked [dīt]. In 25-Coggiola (Piedmont), the informant's (born in 1879, 58 years old) observations shed light on the gradual dismissal of the older forms of the singular definite article [a] (fem.) and [u] (masc.), in favor, respectively, of the less local forms [la] and [əl], the latter previously occurring only before non-coronal consonants.

Elsewhere, societal and historical changes in demography and administration can be linked to linguistic facts, as in the case of 696 Fondi (Lazio), historically part of the Gaeta district of the "Terra di Lavoro" province, where a southern dialect was spoken. In the 1930s, this area became part of the province of Latina, a "new town" gravitating towards Rome. This led to a linguistic reorientation of the local southern dialects towards the dialect of Rome. In 1953, a female informant from Fondi (66 years) stated that she "no longer used" older, local forms, e.g. Q75 "January" [dʒə'n:arə] (cf. Rome dialect *gennaro*) replaced the older [jə'n:arə].

At the present stage, retrieving this kind of data is labor intensive since they are not readily accessible and scattered throughout the almost one thousand maps of the printed atlas, and above all, they are not systematized. The paper will show how the wealth of data of "first generation" linguistic atlases can be reworked to be fully digitized and easily searchable, with their data arranged in a corpus-like fashion, by treating the informant's profiles and metalinguistic remarks and the interviewer's external observations as well, as metadata attached to each entry of the atlas.

References

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