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The dialects of Veneto: towards a common spelling

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Alla mia famiglia

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Abstract

In recent decades a general reevaluation of dialects has occurred, both in the academic environment and outside. Especially at local and regional level, dialects are considered as part of the cultural heritage of the region. Real dialectal literature exists and this fact raises the issue of how dialect can be expressed in writing, since it is not codified, contrary to standard Italian language. The aim of this thesis is that of suggesting a common spelling of Veneto dialects, taking into consideration the suggestions made previously by other authors. Starting from a general presentation of Veneto dialects and from detection of their characteristic sounds, focusing on those which are problematic to transcribe, I will continue analysing the orthographies proposed over the years: the spelling proposed by Ruzante, Marin Sanudo, Carlo Goldoni, and Giuseppe Boerio, the *Grafia Veneta Unitaria* suggested by the Regional Council of Veneto in 1995, the alphabets adopted by some present-day authors who come from the Vicentino and the Paduan area, and the dictionaries written by four authors from Polesine, Belluno and Treviso. Then data gathered from some websites are presented, more specifically Michele Brunelli's online grammar manual of Veneto, the spelling used to write articles in the magazine *Quàtro Ciàcoe* and in the journal *Raixè Venete* and the *Grafia Veneta Riformata* proposed by Paolo Pegoraro. After a critical analysis of these proposals, I present my suggestion of a common Veneto spelling and a way to spread it and have it adopted by people.

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Introduction

According to the data collected by Ethnologue¹, Veneto dialect is spoken by 7,852,500 people in the world, who are distributed as follows: 3,800,000 speakers in Italy, 4,000,000 in Brazil (in Caxias do Sul area), 50,000 in Croatia (in most of Istria peninsula, in the city of Fiume, in some cities of Kvarner and in coastal Dalmatia) and 2,500 in Mexico (in Chipilo). In Italy it is spoken in Veneto, in Trentino Alto Adige (in central and eastern part of Trento province), and in Friuli Venezia Giulia (most of Pordenone province, in southern Gorizia province, in Trieste province). It is defined with the term “Venetian” or with the alternative words “Talian”, “Venet” or “Veneto” and it includes the following dialectal subgroups: Istrian, Triestino, Venetian proper, Bisiacco, Paduan, Rovigoto, Belumat, Buranelo, Caarloto, Ciosoto, Liventin, Maranese, Pordenonese, Trentin, Trevisan, Veronese, Vicentino (<https://www.ethnologue.com/>).

Sometimes it is called Veneto dialect, other times Veneto language. But where are the real difference between the terms ‘dialect’ and ‘language’? The word ‘dialect’ comes from the Latin *dialēcto* and from the Greek *diálektos* with the meaning of ‘discussion’ and ‘linguistic peculiarity’ (Zingarelli 1996, 511) and it is defined as:

“A linguistic system of restricted geographic or cultural field, which has not acquired or has lost autonomy and prestige faced with other systems with which it genetically forms a group”².

(<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/dialetto/>)

“A way of speaking that belongs to a certain geographic area, opposed to national language”.

(<http://www.garzantilinguistica.it/ricerca/?q=dialetto>)

“Language that belongs to a certain region or city, opposed to national language”.

(<http://www.dizionario-italiano.it/dizionario-italiano.php?parola=dialetto>)

“A special linguistic system used in restricted geographic areas”.

(Zingarelli 1996, 511)

¹It is a research project, which deals with the cataloguing of all living languages of the world. It makes use of the collaboration of hundreds of linguists and other researchers.

² My translation.

The same dictionaries report the following definitions of the word ‘language’:

“A system of distinct and significant articulated sounds (phonemes), lexical elements, that is words and expressions (lexemes and phrases), and grammatical forms (morphemes). It is accepted and used by an ethnic, political or cultural community as means of communication to express thoughts and feelings. It has specific features and phonetic, morphological and syntactic laws”.

(<http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/lingua/>)

“A phonemic, grammatical and lexical system by which the members of a community communicate with each other”.

(<http://www.garzantilinguistica.it/ricerca/?q=lingua>)

“Language as human faculty in linguistic system, formed by words, sentences, and phrases arranged in a lexical and morpho-syntactic system, which allows the members of a community to communicate with each other. It has orthographic and stylistic rules associated with writing and reading”.

(<http://www.dizionario-italiano.it/dizionario-italiano.php?parola=lingua>)

“A lexical and grammatical system through which the members of a community communicate with each other”.

(Zingarelli 1996, 973)

Therefore, dialect is defined as a language spoken in a restricted geographic area, opposed to national standard languages. Language, on the other side, is a codified system with its own orthographic and phonetic laws, used as means of communication by a community.

In section 2 of the regional law no. 8 of 13th April 2007, Veneto Region declares that “the specific languages historically used in Veneto territory and in the places in which they have been kept alive by the communities, form Veneto or Veneto language” (<http://www.consiglioveneto.it/crvportal/leggi/2007/07lr0008.html?numLegge=8&annoLegge=2007&tipoLegge=Alr>).

Nevertheless, the Italian state does not recognize Veneto as a language. In section 2 of the law no. 482 of 1999 it is declared that “[...] The Republic defends the language and culture of Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Slovenian, and Croatian people as well as those who speak French, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan and Sardo”

(<http://hubmiur.pubblica.istruzione.it/alfresco/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/a838f175-f878-4b2d-b249-bbbfbd7d60f9/legge-482.pdf>) and it numbers them among linguistic minorities.

In addition, UNESCO puts Veneto in the group of “vulnerable” languages, because it is spoken by the majority of children but it is restricted to certain domains, for example at home” (<http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php?hl=en&page=atlasmap>).

This corresponds also to my personal experience. I can state that dialect is my mother tongue; at home I have always spoken dialect, with my relatives too. Only when I was three, once I was enrolled in nursery school, I learned Italian. At elementary school, the majority of my school friends used only Italian to communicate at home and at school. The position of my school friends towards dialect was, in general, negative: I remember very well that those who used some dialectal expressions were mocked and considered less well-educated than the others. I must acknowledge that this has influenced me a lot. I felt obliged to learn Italian perfectly, to care about pronunciation and to use it in all contexts to communicate, ending up Italianising the dialect I spoke at home. I saw this negative attitude towards dialect vanish at high school and above all in the last five years at university. During my studies in Venice I had the opportunity to learn linguistics and dialectology, and I discovered that what I experienced in my childhood mirrored the “national” attitude and had historical and sociological roots. Studying dialect from a formal point of view, I have learned that in all linguistic aspects it is at the same level as standard language. I think that Max Weinreich’s statement fits perfectly: “a language is a dialect with an army and a navy”, since being codified and used to write official documents it gains more power and prestige. Thanks to the studies I have undertaken, I began to appreciate my mother tongue, the one that binds me to my native environment, so that at present I often use dialect to communicate with friends and acquaintances. My personal re-discovery of dialect has brought me to the conception and writing of this final thesis, which focuses on the creation of a common spelling with which all dialects of Veneto could be written, taking into consideration the proposals made by other authors from 1500 until today.

The outline of the thesis is the following: in chapter one the classification of Veneto dialects and their characteristic phonemes is presented, focusing on the sounds that are problematic to transcribe. In chapter two some Paduan, sixteenth-century works of Ruzante, Marin Sanudo's *Diaries*, some Goldoni plays and the spelling proposed by Giuseppe Boerio in his *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano* are analysed. The third chapter deals with the *Grafia Veneta Unitaria*, created by the Regional Council of Veneto in 1995. In chapter four the orthographic systems adopted by some local poets and writers (Nico Bertoncello, Elio Girelli, Angelo Bertacco, Eugenio Ferdinando Palmieri and Fernando Bandini) are described. In chapter five Michele Brunelli's *Manual Gramaticale Xenerale de la Léngua Vènetà e le so varianti*, the spelling used to write articles in the magazine *Quàtro Ciàcoe* and in the journal *Raixè Venete* and the *Grafia Veneta Riformata* proposed by Paolo Pegoraro are examined. In chapter six data gathered from the dictionaries of four authors from Polesine, Belluno and Treviso (Giovanni Beggio, Silvio Lancerini, Luigi Pianca, and Gianni Sparapan) are presented. Finally, in the seventh and eighth chapter I present my proposal of common Veneto spelling as well as a project to spread it at school, taking into consideration the linguistic policy adopted in Italy from the Unification until today, not to mention the activities and initiatives promoted by Veneto Region.

1. The dialects of Veneto: sounds and problems of transcription

In this chapter I will first of all discuss the way in which the dialects of Veneto are classified and the lack of a standard set of graphemes to put the dialect in writing. Then I will describe the International Phonetic Alphabet, which is used in official scientific transcriptions. Lastly, I will analyse the specific sounds of the dialects spoken in Veneto.

1.1 Classification of Veneto dialects

Giovan Battista Pellegrini (1977, 26) puts the dialects of Veneto in the group of northern Italian dialects, together with the Gallo-Italian³ ones, since all these varieties share similar linguistic phenomena, which are described by Grassi, Sobrero and Telmon (2003, 52-4):

- Lenition (or voicing) of voiced intervocalic plosives, which happen to drop if they are dental or velar:
 - (1) Lat. PIPER > tor. *pèiver*, lomb. *pèver* ‘pepper’
 - (2) Lat. CATENA > lomb. *kadèna*, fassano *ciadena*, piem. *cèina* ‘chain’
 - (3) Lat. URTICA > milan. and venez. *urtiga*, torin. *ürtia*, fassano *ortìa* ‘nettle’
- Halving of geminate consonants:
 - (4) piem., lomb., ven. and fassano *spala* ‘shoulder’
- Assibilation, which means that the Latin velar *c* becomes sibilant before the palatal vowels <*e*> and <*i*>, such as in:
 - (5) ven. *sénere* ‘cenere’, *siéra* ‘cera’
- Conservation or palatalisation of the consonant clusters *cl* and *gl*, which I will examine at the end of this chapter.

Having said that, the Veneto varieties are different from the Gallo-Italian dialects due to the following features: the lack of the front rounded vowels <*ü*> and <*ö*>, the

³Piemontese, Lombardo, Ligure, and Emiliano-Romagnolo. At the beginning they had a Celtic substratum, but later they were influenced by Italian culture and language, which evolved in Tuscany and spread to some cities such as Milan, Pavia and Bologna. The designation “Gallo-Italian” differentiates them from “Italo-Romance”, which refers to all the other dialects of Italy, and “Gallo-Romance”, or Franco-Occitan dialects (Grassi Sobrero Telmon 2003, 23).

preservation of word final vowels⁴, and the assimilation of the Latin consonant cluster *ct* (Grassi Sobrero Telmon, 54). Focusing on Veneto dialects, further and finer linguistic differences can be pinpointed among the varieties spoken in the different geographical areas, which correspond to the provinces represented in Fig. 1. Speaking of this, Zamboni (1974, 9) suggests that Veneto dialects should be divided in the following way:

- Venetian or Eastern Veneto, which includes Chioggiotto, Pellestrinotto, Buranello, Caorlotto and the mainland varieties;
- Paduan-Vicentino-Polesano or Central Veneto;
- Veronese or Western Veneto;
- Trevigiano-Feltrino-Bellunese or Northern Veneto, which includes Liventino and Agordino-Zoldano;
- The Ladin dialects of Veneto, which include Comelicano, Cadorino and Livinallese.



Fig. 1 The provinces of Veneto (<http://www.italyworldclub.com/veneto>)

Dialect speakers in Veneto communicate most of all orally. Although many dictionaries and grammar books have been written over the last years, an official set of rules have not yet been set up. The dialect is not taught at school; children learn it mostly at home together with standard Italian. Nevertheless, dialect happens to be put into writing: besides dialectal literature and poetry, one should think of the websites that collect Veneto sayings and customs. In addition, the use of dialect for digital communication

⁴ Except after <n> and <r>: *pan* (instead of *pane*) ‘bread’, *ciacolar* (instead of *ciacolare*) ‘chat’.

and on social networks such as Facebook is more and more popular. Since dialect is passed on orally and it is not taught at school, there is no official set of graphemes. Moreover, some of the sounds that will be described below are difficult to write for speakers with an Italian substratum. Therefore, dialect is written in an inconsistent and unprecise way.

1.2 The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is used to represent the sounds of all languages in phonetic transcriptions. It is based on the Latin and Greek alphabet and consists of 107 letters and 52 diacritical marks, which are represented in Fig. 2. It was invented in Paris in 1886 by some phoneticians of the International Phonetic Association. In recent years it was repeatedly revised; the latest revision dates back to 2005⁵. The main feature of the IPA is that each symbol corresponds to one and only one sound, and vice versa.

The first chart in Fig. 2 shows the division of pulmonic consonants⁶ according to: the way in which they modify the stream of air coming out from the lungs; the place of the phonatory system in which the articulation of sound occurs⁷; the type of phonation. The eight moods of articulation are vertically classified: plosives (the stream of air is blocked), nasals, trills, taps or flaps, fricatives (the stream of air is forced to go out through a narrow way, so that a sound of friction is produced), lateral fricatives, approximants (absence of friction), and lateral approximants. The places of articulation are horizontally listed: bilabial, labiodental, dental, alveolar, postalveolar, retroflex, palatal, velar, uvular, pharyngeal, and glottal. With regards to the type of phonation, a distinction is made between voiceless and voiced consonants, depending on whether the vocal cords vibrate or not while air passes through them. Then, the trapezium indicates the distribution of vowels, which are divided according to the opening degree of the oral cavity (open, open-mid, close-mid, and closed vowels), the place of articulation (front or palatal, central, back or velar), and the possibility for lips to become round (rounded and non-rounded vowels). The other charts represent diacritics, which mark the

⁵ For further information visit: <https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org>

⁶ Opposed to the non-pulmonic consonants, which do not make use of air of the lungs.

⁷ Lips, teeth, alveoli, palate, soft palate, uvula, pharynx, and glottis.

modification of a sound pronunciation, and the suprasegmentals, which indicate modifications of stress, tone, and intonation (Canepari 2006).

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2005)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC) © 2005 IPA

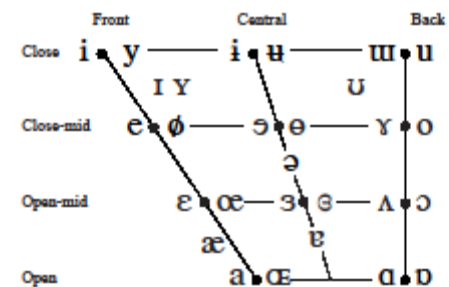
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			ʀ					ʁ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
⦿ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	ʼ Examples:
Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	pʼ Bilabial
! (Post)alveolar	ɟ Palatal	tʼ Dental/alveolar
ɸ Palatoalveolar	ɠ Velar	kʼ Velar
Alveolar lateral	ʄ Uvular	sʼ Alveolar fricative

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

OTHER SYMBOLS

ɱ	Voiceless labial-velar fricative	ɕ ʑ	Alveolo-palatal fricatives
ʋ	Voiced labial-velar approximant	ɺ	Voiced alveolar lateral flap
ɥ	Voiced labial-palatal approximant	ɧ	Simultaneous ʃ and x
ħ	Voiceless epiglottal fricative		
ʕ	Voiced epiglottal fricative		Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary.
ʡ	Epiglottal plosive		

kp̚ ts̚

DIACRITICS Diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. ɲ̥

̰	Voiceless	̱	Breathily voiced	̤	Dental	̦	Apical
̥	Voiceless	̜	Creaky voiced	̧	Alveolar	̨	Laminal
̨	Aspirated	̩	Lingual	̪	Lingual	̫	Lingual
̜	More rounded	̬	Labialized	̭	Nasalized	̮	Nasalized
̝	Less rounded	̯	Palatalized	̰	Nasal release	̱	Nasal release
̞	Advanced	̲	Velarized	̳	Lateral release	̴	Lateral release
̟	Retracted	̵	Pharyngealized	̶	No audible release		
̠	Centralized	̷	Velarized or pharyngealized				
̡	Mid-centralized	̸	Raised				
̣	Syllabic	̡	Lowered				
̤	Non-syllabic	̢	Advanced Tongue Root				
̥	Rhoticity	̣	Retracted Tongue Root				

SUPRASEGMENTALS

- ˈ Primary stress
- ˌ Secondary stress
- ː Long eː
- ˑ Half-long eˑ
- ˑˑ Extra-short eˑˑ
- | Minor (foot) group
- || Major (intonation) group
- Syllable break pi.ækt
- ˘ Linking (absence of a break)

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS LEVEL CONTOUR

- ẽ˥ Extra high ẽ˥ or ˥ Rising
- ẽ˦ High ẽ˦ Falling
- ẽ˧ Mid ẽ˧ High rising
- ẽ˨ Low ẽ˨ Low rising
- ẽ˩ Extra low ẽ˩ Rising-falling
- ↓ Downstep ↘ Global rise
- ↑ Upstep ↘ Global fall

Fig. 2 Official chart of IPA symbols

(<https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/content/full-ipa-chart>)

1.3 Veneto phonemics

The dialects of Veneto have 27 phonemes in all, including 19 consonants, seven vowels and one semi-vowel, and they are distributed in the following way (Zamboni 1974, 10):

Consonants							
		Bilabial	Dental	Labiodental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Plosives	Voiceless	[p]			[t]		[k]
	Voiced	[b]			[d]		[g]
Nasals		[m]			[n]	[ɲ]	
Fricatives	Voiceless		[θ]	[f]	[s]		
	Voiced		[ð]	[v]	[z]		
Liquid	Trill				[r]		
	Lateral				[l]		
Affricates	Voiceless					[tʃ]	
	Voiced					[dʒ]	

Vowels		
	Front	Back
Close	[i]	[u]
Semi-close	[e]	[o]
Semi-open	[ɛ]	[ɔ]
Central	[a]	

Fig. 3 Consonants and vowels of Veneto dialects

The semi-vowel is the palatal [j] and it appears in words such as *tajare* ‘to cut’, *fameja* ‘family’, *mejo* ‘better’, *oyo* ‘oil’, *jutare* ‘to help’.

As regards the plosives [p, b, t, d, k, g], the nasals [m, n, ɲ], and the labiodental fricatives [f, v] there are no significant differences between Italian and dialect, either in the manner or in the place of articulation.

As far as the articulation of the trill [r] is concerned, in Italian the tip of the tongue touches twice against the alveolar ridge in a stressed syllable, while it touches once when the syllable has a secondary accent (Canepari 2006, 69). In the dialects of Veneto [r] is always and only produced with a single tap of the tongue. The other consonant sounds have to be discussed more in detail.

1.3.1 The alveolar fricatives [s, z]

The voiceless alveolar fricative [s] can be found in the following phonetic environments:

- Between vowels: *mé[s]e* ‘Mass (pl.)’, *ca[s]a* ‘box’, *tó[s]e* ‘cough’, *ró[s]a* ‘red’;
- At the beginning of a word followed by a vowel: *[s]avère* ‘to know’, *[s]èrpe* ‘snake’, *[s]ucato* ‘courgette’;
- Before a voiceless plosive: *[s]péndare* ‘to spend’, *[s]tansa* ‘room’, *[s]canpo* ‘escape’;
- Before the voiceless labiodental fricative: *[s]forso* ‘effort’;
- Before the voiceless palatal affricate [tʃ]: *[s]-ciopo* ‘shotgun’, *[s]-ciantizo* ‘flash, lightning’.

On the other hand, the voiced alveolar fricative [z] can be found in the following contexts:

- Between vowels: *mé[z]e* ‘month’, *ca[z]a* ‘house’, *tó[z]e* ‘girls’, *rò[z]a* ‘rose’;
- At the beginning of a word followed by a vowel: *[z]óna* ‘addition’, *[z]èro* ‘zero’, *[z]èbra* ‘zebra’, *[z]énte* ‘people’;

- Before a voiced plosive: [z]brègo ‘pull, rent’, [z]dopiarse ‘to double’, [z]grafón ‘scratch’;
- Before the voiced labiodental fricative: [z]vodare ‘to empty out’;
- Before a liquid consonant: [z]largare ‘to enlarge, to expand’, [z]rodolare ‘to unroll’;
- Before a nasal consonant: [z]musàre ‘to round off’, [z]netàre ‘to clean’, [z]gnapa ‘Grappa⁸’, [z]gnarada ‘nestful’;
- Before the voiced palatal affricate [dʒ]: [z]-gionfo ‘swollen’.

Looking more closely at the intervocalic contexts, we find a group of minimal pairs: *mé[s]e* ‘Mass (pl.)’ - *mé[z]e* ‘month’; *ca[s]a* ‘box’ - *ca[z]a* ‘house’; *tó[s]e* ‘cough’ - *tó[z]e* ‘girls’; *ró[s]a* ‘red’ - *rò[z]a* ‘rose’. Therefore, [s] and [z] are two phonemes and have to be kept separate. In my opinion, one should think of them as two different phonemes in all the contexts described above; in other words, one should not consider them as two allophones of [s]. Consequently, two distinct graphemes have to be chosen and used to represent the two phonemes.

1.3.2 The dental fricatives [θ, ð]

Some dialectal varieties of Veneto including Trevigiano, Feltrino, Bellunese, and Polesano are characterised by the presence of the dental fricatives [θ, ð], while in standard Italian the sound is palatal and in the other dialects of Veneto is fricative (Zamboni 1974, 54-5). Here are some examples:

- (1) Stand. It. [tʃ]ento > Ven. Dial. [s]ento > North. Ven. Dial. [θ]ento ‘a hundred’
- (2) Stand. It. pe[dʒdʒ]o > Ven. Dial. pè[z]o > North. Ven. Dial. pè[ð]o ‘worse’

According to Corrà (1991, 136-37), who has written a recent paper about the dialect of Valdobbiadene (Treviso), the use of the dental fricatives is currently in decline. Even though the voiceless dental is still used, the voiced dental is increasingly being replaced by the voiced alveolar [d] or by the voiced fricative [z], especially among young people.

⁸ It is an Italian alcoholic beverage.

Zamboni (1974, 36-7) claims that the dentals exist also in the central varieties of Veneto, but this information needs updating. As regards the Paduan varieties, Rizzi (1989, 142-43) maintains that in the last years the sibilants are widely used instead of the dentals. In my town and in the towns nearby we do not use dentals. Some people use the alveolar [d] instead of [z] for some words such as *dontare* ‘to add’, *pedo* ‘worse’, *medo* ‘middle’. In some varieties such as Polesano, these words displays affricates (*pe[dz]o*, *[ts]ento*) as you will see in chapter six from the data given by Beggio.

1.3.3 *The different pronunciations of [l]*

In all Veneto dialects, this consonant is pronounced as a clear [l] when it is placed inside a word and it is preceded or followed by a consonant, such as in *balcon* ‘balcony’, *albaro* ‘tree’, *polmon* ‘lung’, *folpo* ‘octopus’. When [l] is placed between vowels or is at the beginning of a word followed by a vowel, it is instead characterised by a peculiar pronunciation, which differentiates geographically (Tomasin 2010, 729). According to Lepschy (1962, 18-9):

“non si tratta più di una laterale, ma di un’articolazione in cui l’aria passa attraverso un avvallamento nella parte centrale del dorso della lingua, sollevato verso la volta palatina, mentre i due lati del dorso della lingua sono a contatto con i lati della corona dei denti superiori”.

(It is not a lateral any longer. The air flows through a hollow in the central part of the tongue blade, which has raised to the soft palate, while the two sides of the tongue blade touch the sides of the upper teeth⁹.)

Lepschy believes that the sound has a blade-palatal articulation similar to [j̥] and he writes it with the grapheme <ɭ̥>. However, Zamboni (1974, 13) describes it as a middle semi-vowel on a level with [e] and he uses the grapheme <ɛ̥> to write it. For the moment, I will choose the symbol <ɛ̥> to represent this particular sound. Here are some instances taken from Venetian:

⁹ My translation.

- (3) Intervocalic [l]: *gondoḷea* ‘gondola’, *soḷeo* ‘only’, *muḷeo* ‘mule’, *baḷar* ‘to dance’
 (4) Initial [l] + vowel: *ḷate* ‘milk’, *ḷongo* ‘long’, *ḷuna* ‘moon’

In the examples above [l] is commonly known as “evanescent el”, as Tomasin (2010, 729) points out. It is spread in Central and Eastern Veneto, but it has some exceptions or a different distribution¹⁰; anyway, it seems not to exist in the northern and western varieties.

A third allophonic variant of [l] occurs when [l] is between vowels and contiguous to the front vowels [e, i]. In this case the complete palatalization takes place, that is to say [l] is no longer pronounced: *fiØar* ‘to spin’, *veØa* ‘sail’, *de Øana* ‘(made) of wool’, *de Øegno* ‘(made of) wood’ (Tomasin 2010, 729)¹¹.

1.3.4 The palatal affricates [tʃ, dʒ]

They come from the Latin consonant clusters *cl* and *gl* and they can be placed both at the beginning and inside a word (Grassi Sobrero Telmon 2003, 53 – 4):

- (5) a. lat. CLAMARE > dial. [tʃ]amare ‘to call’
 b. lat. CLAVE > dial. [tʃ]ave ‘key’
 c. lat. GLAREA > dial. [dʒ]ara ‘gravel’
 d. lat. OCULU > dial. o[tʃ]o ‘eye’
 e. lat. MACULA > dial. ma[tʃ]a ‘mark, spot’

1.3.5 Conclusion

To sum up, the problems of transcription relate above all to the following phonemes: the voiceless and voiced fricatives [s] and [z]; the voiceless and voiced dentals [θ] and [ð]; the so called “evanescent el”.

¹⁰ In my variety, for example, [l] is evanescent only when it is placed between vowels. When it is at the beginning of the word followed by a vowel, I pronounce it [l], such as in *late*, *longo*, *luna*.

¹¹ In this case, my pronunciation of *fīar* and *vea* corresponds to Venetian, while in the other two contexts I pronounce a clear [l]: *de lana*, *de legno*.

2. Dialectal writings from 1500 to 1700: Ruzante, Sanudo, Goldoni and Boerio

This chapter deals with four authors who adopted different varieties of Veneto dialect to write their works: the Paduan variety for Ruzante and Venetian in the case of Marin Sanudo, Carlo Goldoni, and Giuseppe Boerio.

2.1 Ruzante and the Paduan dialect

Angelo Beolco (Padua c. 1496 – Padua 1542), better known as Ruzzante or Ruzante, was a playwright and an actor. Since he came from a wealthy, influential family, he received a good education, and he soon began to write scripts and to organise plays in Padua and Venice with the help of other young noblemen. His plays are written mostly in Paduan, even though the language is often mixed (<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/angelo-beolco-detto-ruzzante/>).

One may ask why Ruzante chose precisely the Paduan dialect as the language of his plays; there are several answers to this question. Some scholars like Lovarini (1965) think that Ruzante had a true interest in peasants and in their language; others argue that he simply followed the vogue of that time to write literature in dialect. A third group of people, notably Baratto (1965) believe that it was a sign of rebellion against the strict linguistic canons of that time. Finally, there are scholars like Contini (1954) who claim that the dialect was a means that offered new possibilities of expression. Ruzante's language has two main features: it is both natural and distorted. It is natural because Ruzante pays great attention to the reproduction of the rhythm of spoken language, and at the same time the language is distorted because he exaggerated certain linguistic features in order to achieve a theatrical satirical language and to produce a reaction from the audience. This results in a satirical language that changes according to the character's origin, personality and social class. Goldoni, too, as will be explained in paragraph 2.3, will use this method (Carroll 1981, 120-28).

In order to analyse Ruzante's alphabet more deeply, I am going to quote a few short passages taken from some of his works. They are chronologically ordered.

- (1) [el vien in scena parlando tra sé e imprecando a le so pene amorose. Quindi, avvicinandose a la casa de Betía, el canta na canzon che dise: «Vego la ca' e no vego l'amore». Finia la canzon, el dise lamentandose:]

Oh, maledeto sea Amore,

elo e chi l'ha impolò!

Perché el m'ha sitò

d'un d'i suò bolzon,

drito in lo magon

una gran sbolzonà;

e tocò ancora n'ha zà

quela traitora,

che de ora in ora

me va pì a tromentando.

A' vago a smaniando

con farae un can,

né da sera o da doman

a' cato armiedio o arposso mé.

E fremamen a' sganghirè,

a' dighe, presto presto!

[el se senta par tera, el pianze e el se despera]

(1522 – 1525: *Betia*, atto primo)

- (2) MENATO Vegnú adesso adesso de campo? o siu stò amalò? o in preson? Haí una mala çiera, compare. A parí un de sti traditoron. Perdonème, compare: a he vezú çento apiché che n'ha sí mala çiera con haí vu. A no dighe, compare — intendú — che habiè mala çiera de omo, intendú, mo che a si pàlito, marzo alfumò. Càncaro, a ghe n'haí bu una streta da can.

RUZANTE O compare, l'è i cassiti de fero che fa ste male çiere. Tanto che i pesa, tanta carne i tira zò. E po el mal bèere, el piezo magnare. S'a fossè stò on son stato io mi...

MENATO Càncaro a favelè moscheto, compare. Haí muò la lengua: a favelè a la fiorentinesca de Breseghela.

RUZANTE Mo compare, chi va per lo mondo fa cossí. E po a giera co i sbreseghegi da Robín; a favelàm a sto muò. Mi mo se a favelasse françese, a m'intendessè ben, mo. Che a imparí da paura a favelarghe in t'un dí. Càncaro, igi è supirbiusi quando i dise: «vilan, cuchín, pagiaro, per le san Diú, a te magnerè la gola».

(1528: *Parlamento de Ruzante che iera vegnù de campo*, scena seconda)

- (3) DINA Chi sbate?

PITARO Amigo, figiuola. Di ch'a vorae dire na parole a messiere.

DINA Chi sívu?

PITARO Dì pur ch'a son mi, ch'a ghe vuò faelare, e l'intenderà ben elo.

DINA El vegnirà zò adesso.

BILORA Aldí: dighe ch'a n'he mazò no so quanti, ch'a son sbandizò, saívu?

PITARO Moa, moa tasi! Tuòte via. A m' hetu instornio.

(1528: *Dialogo secondo o Bilora*, scena settima)

- (4) Puovero mi! A' me la catiè pure con puoca faíga. I dise ben vero che l'è puoco a catarse n'amigo, mo' l'è ben assè a saerlo tegnire.

Mo' che cancaro t'he-gio fato? Desgraziò ch'a' saré sempre mè, per to amore, dí e note. Mo' me te poesse almanco tuore d'anemo; ché, con a' me ricordo de quigi vuogi lusinti co' i spiegi, de qui dente liosi co' è na speciaria, de qui dente de ravolò... - No dir pí, Menato, no dir pí, ch'a' me sento vegnir de mile colore, el sangue me bogie co' fa l'aosto un tinazo de mosto.

(1528: *La moscheta*, scena seconda)

- (5) RUZANTE Deh, cara la me Fiore, no vuogìè essere tanto cruele, a farne morire inanzo ora. Pota, a' si' pur bela, a' deessè an essere piaseole. De San Crescinçio! El me pare aér vezú el lovo, che 'l se me è rizolà i cavigi. E sí me par aére un formigaro per tuta la me vita, per ste parole che a' me aí slainò. Deh, uogio me de velú de sea, a' ve priego e strapriego e domando de bela desgrazia che a' fagàm sta pase.

(1531-32: *La Fiorina*, atto primo, scena prima)

Having examined the graphemes in these quotations carefully, I can draw the following conclusions:

- The voiced alveolar fricative [z] is at times represented with the grapheme <s> (*dise, amorose, preson, pesa, tasi, pase*) and occasionally with <z> (*pianze, zò, piezo*);
- The voiceless alveolar fricative [s] is represented with a simple or a double <s> such as in the words *adesso, cassiti, fosse, cossì, intendesse, messiere, assè, poesse, essere*;
- The grapheme <ç> is used to represent the voiceless interdental fricative as in *çiera, çento, françese, San Crescinçio*. For some words, instead, the grapheme <z> is adopted (*canzon, bolzon, sbolzonà, tinazo, inanzo, rizola, desgrazia*);
- The lateral *l* is expressed in all phonetic contexts; therefore the evanescent pronunciation seems not to be present at that time.

A positive aspect about Ruzante's writing is the use of the grapheme <ç>, which marks the voiceless dental fricative, while a negative aspect is that two different graphemes, <s> and <z>, are used to represent a single phoneme, that is to say the voiced alveolar fricative.

2.2 Marin Sanudo's *Diaries* (1496 – 1533)

Marin Sanudo (Venice, 1466 – Venice, 1536) was a man of letters, an historian and a politician, who was born in a noble family of Venice, and he received a classical, learned education. From 1496 to 1533 he devoted himself to writing *The Diaries*, in which he told what happened every day in Venetian councils and around the city in general, including letters, documents, reports about culture, commerce, costumes and public works

(http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sanudo-marin-il-giovane_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/).

Reading some selected pages of his *Diaries* (edited by Margaroli 1997) I have collected a number of words written with the graphemes <s>, <ss>, <z>, and <x> in order to compare his spelling with that of the other authors:

- Words containing <s>: *rason* 'reason', *defesa* 'defence', *provision* 'commission', *trevisana* 'Trevigiana', *brusar* 'to burn', *persuasion* 'inducement', *dismontar* 'to disassemble', *presa* 'taking, catching', *conclusion* 'conclusion', *cose* 'things', *crose* 'cross', *ti se* 'you are', *pranso* 'lunch', *disordine* 'mess', *presente* 'present, current', *disegno* 'drawing', *dodese* 'twelve', *viso* 'face';
- Words containing <ss>: *cosse* 'things', *messa* 'Mass', *duchessa* 'duchess', *esser* 'to be', *pessima* 'terrible (fem.)', *dosso* 'on, on top of', *grossi* 'thick (pl.)', *interessi* 'interests';
- Words containing <z>: *forze* 'strenghts', *comenziando* 'beginning', *zenaro* 'January', *piazza* 'square', *zorno* 'day', *dipenzer* 'to depend', *zercha* 'about', *leziera* 'light', *arzivescovo* 'archbishop', *palazo* 'palace', *zenero* 'son-in-law',

zentilomeni ‘gentlemen’, *mezo* ‘middle’, *pezi* ‘pieces’, *zuoba* ‘Thursday’, *senza* ‘without’, *amazar* ‘to kill’, *zente* ‘people’, *pezo* ‘worse’, *naranze* ‘oranges’, *brazo* ‘arm’, *zifre* ‘figure (pl.)’, *zerman* ‘cousin’, *zoveni* ‘young people’, *zeneral* ‘general’, *za* ‘already’, *pianzevano* ‘(they) cried’, *zeneri* ‘ashes’, *zentile* ‘nice’, *dispiaze* ‘(he/she) regrets’, *zima* ‘summit’, *ragazi* ‘boys’, *taze* ‘cups’, *anzoleti* ‘angels’, *zenochioni* ‘on one’s knees’;

- Words containing <x>: *caxa* ‘house’, *mexe* ‘month’, *chiexia* ‘church’, *spexe* ‘expence’, *marchexe* ‘marquess’, *suspexi* ‘hanging’, *voxe* ‘voice’, *prexon* ‘prison’, *raxon* ‘reason’, *cuxino* ‘cousin’, *exercito* ‘army’, *auxilio* ‘help’, *paxe* ‘peace’, *milanexi* ‘Milanese (pl.)’, *ixola* ‘island’, *piaxe* ‘(it) likes’, *caxo* ‘case’, *doxe* ‘doge’, *exordio* ‘opening, beginning’, *exercitio* ‘exercise’, *proximo* ‘next’, *exatori* ‘collectors’, *Trevixo* ‘Treviso’, *extremo* ‘extreme’, *expugnare* ‘to overcome’, *exponendo* ‘to explain’, *ellexé* ‘(he/she) elected’, *exprimer* ‘to express’, *extirpar* ‘to eradicate’, *excessi* ‘excesses’, *crucefixo* ‘crucifix’, *genuflexo* ‘genuflected’, *Veniexia* ‘Venice’.

I have noticed that some words have orthographic variants, for example *rason-raxon-ragion* and *trevisano-trevixano-trevigiano*.

2.3 Goldoni’s Venetian plays

While Goldoni (Venice, 1707 – Paris, 1793) was writing his plays, linguistic standardisation in Italy had not yet occurred. Cultivated people in northern Italy spoke a more or less Italianised dialect, which was often rich with words of French origin. Language was a very important issue for Goldoni, because theatre required a direct and steady communication with the audience (Folena 1958, 24).

The originality of Goldoni’s language consists in the fact that he considered language as the chief means of communication in society. He believed that language could express the customs and conventions of society and could give voice to characters coming from different social classes. Since his plays were set in Venice, the most suitable language to use for them was the Venetian dialect. The aim, however, was not that of obtaining a comical or exotic effect. Venetian was the every-day language used by citizens to

communicate with each other. No character speaks exactly like another, because language was the means to express the personality, social environment and job of a particular character. Moreover, the use of dialect is not constant and uniform in Goldoni's plays. His early works are characterised by a multilingualism, which includes French, Spanish, English, Bergamasco, Tuscan and Venetian, while in later plays he used almost exclusively Venetian (Carroll 1981, 134-41).

In Goldoni's plays, the writing of Venetian is very similar to Italian and the graphemes do not always correspond to their respective phonemes (Folena 1958, 35). Goldoni mentions the issue of orthography in the introduction of *I Rusteghi*, even though in a very sketchy and concise way:

“Anche l’ortografia Veneziana altera talvolta il significato, ma chi vi abbada l’intende, ed è l’ortografia regolata secondo il suono della pronuncia. Noi, per esempio, non diciamo "bello", ma "belo", non "perfetto", ma "perfeto"; e per regola generale quasi tutte le consonanti doppie da noi si pronunciano semplici. Però in alcune voci le lettere semplici da noi si raddoppiano, come in luogo di "cosa" noi diciamo "cossa", ma queste sono pochissime.”

Venetian orthography also changes the meaning, but those who pay attention can understand it. Orthography is modelled on pronunciation. We, for example, do not say “bello” but “belo”, not “perfetto” but “perfeto”. Generally speaking, almost all doubled consonants are pronounced as simple, even though in a limited group of words, consonants are not doubled, for instance we say “cossa” instead of “cosa”¹².

In the following passages, taken from some of his Venetian plays and arranged in chronological order, one can note the alphabet used by Goldoni:

- (6) “[...] Figurarse, l’autuno se andava do o tre volte al teatro; el carneval cinque o sie. Se qualchedun ghe dava una chiave de palco la ne menava all’opera, se no, alla comedia, e la comprava la so bona chiave, e la spendeva i so boni bezzeti. [...] Co stevimo po in casa, gh’avevimo sempre la nostra conversazion. Vegniva i parenti, vegniva i amici, anca qualche zovene; ma no ghe giera pericolo, figurarse.” (1760: *I Rusteghi*, atto primo, scena prima)

¹² My translation.

- (7) LUNARDO Ve recordeu de la prima muggier? Quella giera una bona creatura; ma questa la xè un muschieto!
- SIMON Ma mi, mato bestia, che le donne no le ho mai podeste soffrir, e po son andà a ingambararme co sto diavolo descaenà.
- LUNARDO Al dì d'ancuo no se se pol più maridar.
- SIMON Se se vol tegnir la muggier in dover, se xè salvadeghi; se la se lassa far, se xè alocchi.
- (1760: *I Rusteghi*, atto secondo, scena quinta)
- (8) LUCIETTA Sì, sì, ma mi no son de quelle che fa vegnir i omeni in casa. Qualche volta, se pol dar, cusì de sbrisson, co vago a trar el vin; ma do parole, e via: no voggio che i possa dir, se me capì...
- SGUALDO Eh siora sì, ve capisso.
- LUCIETTA Credème, sior Sgualdo, che no me despiase tanto per mi d'esser vegnua via de quella casa, quanto per la mia povera paronzina.
- SGUALDO Perché? No la xè contenta siora Meneghina? No la ghe piase gnanca a ela sta casa?
- (1761: *La casa nova*, atto primo, scena prima)
- (9) “Sior sì, xe andà tutto ben; ma no per vu, no per la vostra direzion. Muè sistema, sior Pellegrin; za che sior missier ha mandà via de casa sior Desiderio, preghelo che el ve faccia operar, che el ve prova, che el se prevala de vu. In quel che no savè, sior Meneghetto ve assisterà. Mi pregherò sior missier de compatirme, de averme un poco de carità, de non esser con mi cussì aspro, de non esser in casa cussì suttilo. Ringraziamo el cielo de tutto, e ringraziamo de cuor chi n'ha sofferto con tanta bontà; pregandoli, che avendo osservà che brutto carattere che xe l'indiscreto, che xe el brontolon, no i voggia esser contra de mi né indiscreti, né brontoloni”. (1761: *Sior Todero Brontolon*, atto terzo, scena ultima)
- (10) TOFFOLO E vu, donna Pasqua, voléu?
- PASQUA De diana! la me piase tanto la zucca barucca! Démene un pezzo.
- TOFFOLO Tolé. No la magné, Lucietta?
- LUCIETTA La scotta. Aspetto, che la se giazze.
- (1762: *Le baruffe chiozzotte*, atto primo, scena seconda)
- (11) DOMENICA Oh! son qua; che i compatissa, se son stada un pocheto troppo. I m'ha chiamà in cusina; son andata a dar un'occhiada. Perché, sàla? se no fusse mi in sta casa, no se farave mai gnente.
- MARTA Eh! savemo che puta che la xè.
- BASTIAN Quando magnémio sti confetti, siora Domenica?
- DOMENICA Oh! per mi? l'ha ancora da nasser.
- (1962: *Una delle ultime sere di Carnevale*, atto primo, scena settima)

By reading carefully these passages one can infer that:

- The voiced alveolar fricative [z] is represented with <x> only for the forms of the verb *to be*, such as in *se xè salvadeghi, no la xè contenta siora Meneghina?, xe andà tutto ben, savemo che puta che la xè*, while in other words the grapheme <s> is used, such as in *piase* and *casa*;
- The voiceless alveolar fricative [s] is represented with <s> or <ss>. Although the geminate *s* does not exist in Venetian, Goldoni uses it for a large number of words, for example in *lassa, sbrisson, capisso, missier, assisterà, cussì, compatissa, fusse, nasser*. He doubles also other consonants such as *g* in *voggio, muggier, f* in *soffrir, sofferto, t* in *suttilo, carattere, c* in *zucca barucca, z* in *pezzo, bezzetti, giazze*, but not in a methodical and consistent way. Other words are in fact written with a single consonant, such as *mato, pocheto, tropo*. However, these examples are a minority, which seems to clash with Goldoni's statement in the introduction of *I Rusteghi*;
- The voiceless and voiced palatal affricates are represented with the trigraph <chi> and the digraph <gi> respectively, as can be seen in *chiave, muschieto, chiamo, muggier, giera, voggio, giazze*;
- The lateral *l* is written clear in all contexts; the evanescent pronunciation seems not to exist.

Having said that, the remarks above are inferred from a small number of quotations. A much more exhaustive and careful examination was carried out by Gianfranco Folena in *Vocabolario del veneziano di Carlo Goldoni* published in 1993. In the introduction Folena explains that Goldoni's dialectal writing is not consistent, not even in a single play, in some cases. There are actually many orthographic variants, which represent:

- Words that belong to different varieties, specifically Bergamasco, Chioggiotto, Levantino and Italian;
- The differences within Venetian, which shows variants such as *niovo/novo, anemo/animo, cognosser/conosser, zentil/gentil*;
- The orthographic instability of the dialect, which is characterised by variants such as *abandonar/abbandonar, furbazzo/furbasso* and phonetic variants such as

in *zentil/gentil*, *corezer/correzer/corregger/correger*. Instability is mostly found in the distinction between the voiceless and the voiced alveolar fricatives: the latter is sometime represented with <x>, especially when it is placed inside a word (*diexe, dixè*), but seldom at the beginning of a word (*xelosia, xente*), except for the forms of the verb *to be*. (Folena 1993, XXXI)

Folena points out that the orthographic variants are caused, besides Goldoni himself, by publishers who over the course of time distorted the writing of the plays (Folena 1993, XXXII). To mention some examples, the orthographic variants of some words present in the quotations are reported below:

(12) *Cusì/ cussì/ così* ‘so’

Mugier/ muggier/ muggiere (ch.¹³) / *muier* (bg.¹⁴) / *moglie* (ital.¹⁵) ‘wife’

Vogia/ voggia/ voia (bg.) ‘wish, desire’

Giazzo/ ghiazzo ‘ice’

Zuca/ zucca ‘pumpkin’

Sofrir/ soffrir ‘suffer’

At first sight, Goldoni’s alphabet seems to be characterised by a lack of homogeneity. This feature might be considered a negative one, as inconsistency could create confusion in the mind of modern readers. An aspect to take into consideration is the fact that Venetian pronunciation could have changed from the end of the eighteenth century until today. For this reason, the modern reader might have difficulties in knowing the exact pronunciation of Venetian words at that time. A positive aspect, instead, consists in the use of the grapheme <x> to represent the voiced alveolar fricative in order to distinguish it from the voiceless alveolar fricative, even if it is not applied systematically.

¹³ Chioggiotto.

¹⁴ Bergamasco.

¹⁵ Italian.

2.4 Giuseppe Boerio's *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*

Giuseppe Boerio (Lendinara, 1754 – Venice, 1832) took a degree in law at the University of Padua and began his career as official for the Serenissima, which lasted until the fall of the Republic. He was a prolific writer of law books; however, his most significant work was a linguistic one, the *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, published from 1826 to 1829. In 1856 a new expanded edition was printed, which included the Italian-Veneto index ([http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-boerio_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-boerio_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)). In the introduction to the dictionary, the author describes the method and the principles used in writing it, and devotes a specific paragraph to the orthographic rules he adopted. The basic rule consists in “writing, if possible, as people speak” (Boerio 1856, 11).

The rules and principles followed by Boerio are summarised as follows:

- All the uses and rules of Italian grammar are kept, included accents, apostrophes and punctuation marks, unless the word is modified by the contrast of pronunciation;
- Consonants are never doubled, except when doubling distinguishes two words, such as in *spesso* and *cassa*, which are different from *speso* and *casa*;
- Use of the grapheme <x>, instead of <s>, to represent the voiced alveolar fricative, but only for the forms of the verb *to be* because, if placed at the beginning of the word, *s* is pronounced as “harsh” (Boerio 1856, 803). However, in all other cases Boerio adopts the grapheme <s> to represent both the voiceless and the voiced fricative;
- Use of the grapheme <c> both before the vowels *a*, *o* and *u*, when it corresponds to the plosive sound [k], such as in *costa*, *caro*, *cuor*, *camelo* and before the vowels *e* and *i* when it corresponds to the voiceless alveolar affricate [tʃ] such as in *cena*, *certo*, *cibo*, *cerchio*, *cera*. Boerio claimed that he took into consideration the possibility of using the grapheme <ç> to represent [tʃ]; however, he ruled out this possibility because in many European languages, especially in French, word pronunciation does not correspond to the writing, in addition to the fact that conservative people would have severely criticised this

orthographic choice. Finally, considering that the dictionary was addressed only to speakers of Veneto, the author was convinced that they would have immediately known the correct pronunciation (Boerio 1856, 12). The digraph <ch> represents instead the palatal sound [tʃ] in words such as *chiamare*, *chiodo*, *chiave*, *chiesa*. In Italian <ch> represents instead the voiceless velar plosive [k]. The author refers to the fact that at that time the lower classes started to pronounce the words beginning with *ce* and *ci* as if they begin with a “soft” *s* such as in *sinque*, *sinquessento*, *seola*, *sata*. He maintains that it is only a bad habit acquired during childhood because of ignorance and poor education (Boerio 1856, 12). He refused other scholars’ suggestion to adopt this orthographic variant;

- Lack of the use of the grapheme <sc> to represent [ʃ], as the voiceless postalveolar fricative does not exist in Veneto dialect. It is replaced by the voiceless alveolar fricative, in some cases also geminate, such as in *pesse*, *siatica*, *simia* instead of *pesce*, *sciatica*, *scimmia*;
- Preservation of the grapheme <gl>, despite the fact that Venetian pronunciation diverged from the usual writing, so that he was not obliged to change orthography. The result was that speakers were free to pronounce it according to their habits. So the words *spadiglia*, *maniglia*, *pastiglia*, *artiglier* were pronounced *spadilgia*, *manilgia*, *pastilgia*, *artilgièr* by Venetians at that time.

Therefore, Boerio’s alphabet does not differ greatly from the Italian orthographic tradition. The only grapheme which is not present in Italian is <x>. However, it was used with some restrictions and among learned people who knew Latin was a familiar grapheme. The author does not take into consideration the pronunciation of *l*; this could mean that in Venice at the end of the eighteenth century the pronunciation of evanescent *l* had not yet spread. The fact that the author did not use unusual symbols that are not present in standard Italian is positive from a certain point of view, especially because he wrote the dictionary only for speakers of Veneto, who would immediately recognize the words and pronounce them according to their habits. In a more negative interpretation, instead, this writing might be considered too inaccurate because some graphemes such as <c> and <s> correspond to more than one phoneme, therefore it is necessary to know

how Venetians spoke at the end of the eighteenth century to pronounce the words in the dictionary correctly. Another positive aspect consists in the use of the grapheme <x> to represent [z] in the forms of the verb *to be*. It is a grapheme to take into consideration in order to distinguish [z] from [s], applying it systematically to all words containing the voiced alveolar fricative.

2.5 Conclusion

To sum up, the four orthographic systems presented in this chapter seems not to be homogeneous. Especially for the alveolar fricatives, more than one grapheme is used to represent a phoneme, apparently without a regular and logical rule. However, this is a provisional conclusion drawn after a superficial analysis. In chapter six, comparing data gathered from some recently published dictionaries of northern and central varieties of Veneto dialect, a possible explanation for this apparent inconsistency will be suggested and the correspondence between the fluctuating phonemes and graphemes is analysed in more detail.

3. The handbook of *Grafia Veneta Unitaria*

The handbook of *Grafia Veneta Unitaria*¹⁶ is a publication edited by the Regional Council of Veneto in 1995 to document the condition of the language written by Veneto people, pointing out the most suitable ways of transcribing the different sounds attested in the dialects spoken within the region. In the handbook traditional graphemes together with the description of their phonetic meaning are listed. The drawing up of the handbook was edited by a scientific Committee appointed through resolution number 4277 of the Regional Council of Veneto of September 14th, 1994. The Committee included the following members: Manlio Cortelazzo, Silvano Belloni, Luciano Canepari, Dino Durante, Mario Klein, Gianna Marcato, Sergio Sacco, Maria Rosaria Stellin, Ugo Suman, and Alberto Zamboni. The principles that have been adopted by the Committee are the following:

- Diverge as little as possible from Italian graphic customs so that people are not obliged to learn new, specific symbols;
- Represent every dialectal variety of Veneto, even the narrowest varieties;
- Adopt simple and pragmatic solutions;
- Give the possibility of using some alternative graphemes to those proposed;
- Maintain current pronunciation.

The graphemes proposed and described in the handbook are the following:

<a>: open central vowel. Examples:

- (1) *aqua* ‘water’
- (2) *man* ‘hand’
- (3) *ara* ‘farmyard’

<â>: non-rounded back vowel. Examples:

- (4) *âla* ‘she’
- (5) *sân* ‘judgement’
- (6) *tâla* ‘star’

The vowel is present in Dolomitic Ladin as well as in some other dialects of the Ladin-Veneto transition area. In these varieties, if the above-mentioned words are pronounced

¹⁶ A common Veneto writing.

with the simple open central <a>, they take on a different meaning, *ala* ‘wing’, *san* ‘healthy’ and *stala* ‘cattle shed’ respectively.

: voiced bilabial plosive consonant. Examples:

- (7) *barba* ‘beard’ and ‘uncle’
- (8) veron. *butèl* ‘child’ and ‘boy’
- (9) *sbaro* ‘shot’
- (10) *cespo* ‘bush’

<c>: voiceless palato-alveolar affricate consonant. It is used with this phonetic value only before the vowels <e> and <i>. Examples:

- (11) *cèrega* ‘cleric’
- (12) *òcio* ‘eye’
- (13) *ciaro* ‘clear’
- (14) *macia* ‘spot’
- (15) *recia* ‘ear’

Alternative grapheme: <ċ>. At the end of the word the grapheme <c’> is also used:

- (16) comel. *ciuc* ‘fresh cheese’
- (17) agord. *moc* ‘nasal mucus’

<c>: voiceless velar plosive consonant. It is used before the vowels <a>, <o> and <u> and at the end of the word. Examples:

- (18) *coa* ‘tail’
- (19) *pèca* ‘footprint’
- (20) *tacuin* ‘purse’
- (21) *poc* ‘little’

<ch>: voiceless velar plosive consonant. Examples:

- (22) *checa* ‘magpie’
- (23) *chèba* ‘cage’
- (24) *chiete* ‘quietness’
- (25) *paròchia* ‘parish’

<d>: voiced dental plosive consonant. Examples:

- (26) *cadena* ‘chain’
- (27) *dendiva* ‘gum’
- (28) *dèner(o)* ‘son in law’

<đ>: voiced interdental fricative consonant. Examples:

(29) comel. *đandīvi* ‘gums’

(30) livent. *lanpiđea* ‘(it) flashes’

Alternative grapheme: <dh>. Examples:

(31) ven. sett. *fredha* ‘cold’

(32) *ordho* ‘barley’

(33) *sordho* ‘mouse’

<è>: semi-open front vowel. Examples:

(34) *ghènga* ‘group of people’

(35) *perèr* ‘pear-tree’

(36) *sènenò* ‘celery’

<e>: semi-closed front vowel. Examples:

(37) *feta* ‘slice’

(38) *renga* ‘herring’

(39) *semo* ‘(we) are’ and ‘dumb’

(40) *tenca* ‘tench’

<é>: semi-closed front vowel. This grapheme is only used in three contexts:

- In oxytones, not in consonants: ampezzano *paré* ‘wall’, ladino *tabaché* ‘to take snuff’, trevis. *trapié* ‘three-legged stool’;
- In proparoxytones: *fémena* ‘woman’ and ‘wife’, *méscolo* ‘wooden spoon’, *pévare* ‘pepper’.
- In some homonyms: *sé* ‘thirst’ (vs. *se* ‘if’), *né* conj. (vs. *ne* pronoun)

<f>: voiceless labial fricative consonant. Examples:

(41) *finco* ‘chaffinch’

(42) *finferli* ‘type of mushroom’

<g>: voiced palatal affricate consonant. It is used with this phonetic value only before the vowels <e> and <i>. Examples:

(43) *gèmo* ‘ball’

(44) *giara* ‘gravel’

Alternative grapheme: <ġ>.

<g>: voiced velar plosive consonant. It is used with this phonetic value before the vowels <a>, <o>, <u>:

(45) *gato* ‘cat’

(46) *fīgo* ‘fig’

(47) *gua* ‘knife sharpener’

<gh>: voiced velar plosive consonant. It is used before the palatal vowels <e> and <i>:

(48) *ghèto* ‘ghetto’

(49) *in ghingari* ‘dressed up’

In ancient texts, the grapheme <gh> is extremely rare.

<gl>: palatal lateral consonant. Examples:

(50) *artiglièr* ‘gunner’

(51) *bataglia* ‘battle’

(52) *maniglia* ‘handle’

This sound is not present in Veneto dialects but sometimes it is used, especially in the case of Italianisms.

<gl>: voiced velar plosive consonant + alveolar lateral consonant. Examples:

(53) *glàndola* ‘gland’

(54) *valsug. glòbo* ‘balloon’

(55) *glòrgia* ‘fame’

<gn>: palatal nasal consonant. Examples:

(56) *cugnà* ‘brother in law’

(57) *gnaro* ‘nest’

(58) *vegna* ‘vineyard’

Alternative grapheme: <ñ>.

<h>: voiceless postalveolar aspirate consonant. Examples:

(59) *ahari* ‘business’

(60) *la me hémèna* ‘my wife’

(61) *de hèr* ‘ironed’

This kind of pronunciation is typical of rural Feltrino.

<i>: close front vowel. Examples:

(62) *venez. fio* ‘son’

(63) *intrada* ‘entry’

<j>: front semi-consonant. It substitutes the grapheme <i> in two cases:

- At the beginning of the word: *jèri* ‘yesterday’, *judissio* ‘judgement’, *jutar(e)* ‘to help’.
- Between two syllabic vowels: *ajo* ‘garlic’, *mèjo* ‘better’, *mujèr(e)* ‘wife’.

<k>: voiceless velar plosive consonant. Examples:

(64)*karèga* ‘chair’

(65)*pako* ‘parcel’

(66)*kubia* ‘couple’

<l>: alveolar lateral consonant. Examples:

(67)*làrese* ‘larch’

(68)*molton* ‘ram’

(69)*stèla* ‘splinter’

<ɫ>: relaxed dorso-palatal semi-consonant. It is the so called “evanescent el”. It is present in two cases:

- At the beginning of the word after a non-palatal vowel (<a>, <o>, <u>): *late* ‘milk’, *tongo* ‘long’, *tuna* ‘moon’.
- Between non-palatal vowels: *gota* ‘throat’, *gòndola* ‘gondola’, *paròta* ‘word’, *(s)votare* ‘fly’.

Other proposals were rejected:

- <ɫ>, a grapheme already used in Polish alphabet with a totally different phonetic value;
- <ɭ>, because the apostrophe normally stands for elision and this is not the case;
- <l>, already used for another sound;
- <j>, used in some scientific transcriptions because it is similar to the front semi-consonant, even if they are not exactly the same sound;
- <ɣ>, even if it is close to the real pronunciation and which is often adopted in popular works, also in the simpler form <e>;
- <‘>, that is a simple apostrophe, which would stand for the complete drop of a sound, but this is not the case.

<m>: bilabial nasal consonant. Examples:

(70)*mare* ‘mother’ and ‘sea’

The consonant clusters *mb* and *mp* are replaced with *nb* and *np* already in ancient texts as in: *entranbi* ‘both’, *conplir* ‘to do’.

<n>: velar and alveolar nasal consonant. Examples:

(71) *ponaro* ‘hen house’

(72) *topinara* ‘mole’

(73) *fon* ‘(we) make’

<ñ>: velar nasal consonant. The use of this sound is restricted to some Ladin-Veneto dialects in which a word can have different meanings depending on whether it has a dental <n> or a velar <n>. Examples:

(74) *ladin* ‘easy’ and ‘quick’

(75) *piroñ* ‘fork’

(76) *son* ‘(we) are’

<ò>: semi-open back vowel. Examples:

(77) *fiòco* ‘bow’

(78) *gòto* ‘glass’

(79) *pòro* ‘leek’

<o>: semi-closed back vowel. Examples:

(80) *bote* ‘barrel’

(81) *fogo* ‘fire’

(82) *vose* ‘voice’

<ó>: semi-closed back vowel. This grapheme is used in some specific contexts instead of <o> that is when it falls on:

- Oxytones that do not end with a consonant: gardesano *bogó* ‘snail’, ampezzano *botaruó* ‘container’, agordino *dapó* ‘after’.
- Proparoxytones: *dódese* ‘twelve’, *mónega* ‘nun’, *órdene* ‘order’.
- Homonyms: *són* ‘sound’ (vs. *son* ‘(I) am’).

<p>: voiceless bilabial plosive consonant. Examples:

(83) *despèrder(e)* ‘to miscarry’

(84) *popà* ‘father’

<q>: voiceless velar plosive consonant (+ a semi-consonant). Examples:

(85) *quacio* ‘crouching’

(86) *quadro* ‘picture’

(87) *quarèò* ‘brick’

Italian words such as *acqua* ‘water’ are written in Veneto dialects as *aqua*, because doubling does not exist in these dialects.

<r>: alveolar vibrant consonant. Examples:

(88) *borèla* ‘bowl’

(89) *retiro* ‘retreat’

(90) *vara* ‘look’

Phonetic variants of this vibrant are not taken into consideration because more graphemes should be introduced.

<s>: voiceless alveolar fricative consonant. Examples:

(91) *ars* ‘burned’

(92) *baston* ‘stick’

(93) *salgaro* ‘willow tree’

(94) *soto* ‘under’

(95) *sòto* ‘lame’

Between vowels the grapheme <ss> is adopted: *còssa* ‘what’, *cussì* ‘so’.

<s>: voiced alveolar fricative consonant. It represents the voiced <s> between vowels or before a voiced consonant:

(96) *àseno* ‘donkey’

(97) *sbaro* ‘shot’

(98) *sdentegà* ‘toothless’

<ś>: voiced alveolar fricative consonant. It represents the voiced <s> in the following cases:

- At the beginning of the word after a vowel: *valsug. śio* ‘lily’.
- After a consonant: *orśo* ‘barley’, *vèrśa* ‘savoy’ and ‘open’.
- In final position: *garàs* ‘garage’.

<š>: voiceless palato-alveolar fricative consonant. It corresponds to the sound which in Italian is represented with the digraph <sc>. Examples:

(99) *ampezzano mešedà* ‘to mix’

(100) *šchena* ‘back’

(101) *šenta* ‘seat’

<s-c>: voiceless alveolar fricative consonant + voiceless palatal affricate consonant. The hyphen means that the two consonants are to be pronounced separately. Examples:

- (102) *mas-cio* ‘male’ and ‘pig’
 (103) *s-censa* ‘splinter’
 (104) *s-ciantiso* ‘lightning’

Alternative grapheme: <sc̣>.

<t>: voiceless post-dental plosive consonant. Example:

- (105) *butiro* ‘butter’

<u>: close back vowel. Examples:

- (106) veron. *bussonarse* ‘to push’
 (107) ampezz. and grad. *duto* ‘all’

<v>: voiced labiodental fricative consonant. Examples:

- (108) *ava* ‘bee’
 (109) *vaca* ‘cow’
 (110) chiogg. *vuòvo* ‘egg’

<x>: voiced alveolar fricative consonant. It is used to replace <ś> in the following cases:

- With the third person singular of the present indicative of the verb *èssar(e)* ‘to be’, also with enclitics: *xe* ‘(it) is/ (they) are’, *xeo?*, *xea?*, *xei?*, *xee?* ‘Is he? Is she? Are they?’;
- Between vowels: *piaxe* ‘(it) likes’, *roxa* ‘rose’, *dixe* ‘(he/she) says’;
- After a consonant: *pianxe* ‘(he/she) cries’, *vèrxex* ‘(he/she) opens’ and ‘savoy’s’;
- At the beginning of the word: *xonta* ‘addition’, *xèro* ‘zero’.

They do not recommend the use of <x> to represent the voiced <s> before a consonant: *xdentegà* ‘toothless’, *svampido* ‘foolish person’.

<z>: voiceless alveolar affricate consonant. This sound is the same as that of the Italian *z* in *marzo*, in all positions except between vowels:

- (111) *zata* ‘leg’
 (112) *zélega* ‘sparrow’
 (113) *zeola/zéola* ‘onion’

<ɹ>: voiced dental affricate consonant. It is placed between vowels:

- (114) *leziér* ‘light’
 (115) *pèzo* ‘worse’

<ɹ̣>: voiced dental affricate consonant. Examples from Vittoriese:

- At the beginning of the word after a consonant: *ženòcio* ‘knee’, *ziòba* ‘thursday’, *zogo* ‘play’;
- After a consonant: *franza* ‘fringe’, *vèrzar* ‘to open’.

<**ž**>: voiced palato-alveolar fricative consonant. This sound is present only in some dialectal varieties such as Ampezzano:

- (116) *agažon* ‘flood’
- (117) *žal* ‘yellow’
- (118) *žat* ‘cat’
- (119) *ruža* ‘caterpillar’

<**zh**>: voiceless interdental fricative consonant. Examples:

- (120) *agord. mèzh* ‘half’

Alternative grapheme: <**ž**>: *petaža* ‘idler’.

<**zz**>: voiceless dental affricate consonant. It is only used between vowels:

- (121) *fazzoet* ‘handkerchief’
- (122) *nòzze* ‘wedding’
- (123) *razza* ‘duck’ and ‘race’
- (124) *felizze* ‘happy’
- (125) *grazzia* ‘grace’
- (126) *nazzion* ‘nation’

This set of graphemes is without doubt much more complete and precise compared to the graphic systems suggested by the authors of the past. Moreover, it takes into consideration all dialectal varieties spoken in Veneto.

Sometimes two or more graphemes are proposed to represent one phoneme:

- For the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate: <*c*>, <*ć*> and <*c'*>
- For the voiced interdental fricative: <*đ*> and <*dh*>
- For the voiced palatal affricate: <*g*> and <*ǰ*>
- For the palatal nasal: <*n*> and <*ñ*>
- For the voiceless alveolar fricative + voiceless palatal affricate: <*s-c*> and <*sć*>
- For the voiceless interdental fricative: <*zh*> and <*ž*>
- For the voiced alveolar fricative: <*x*> and <*s*>

The presence of different options is of doubtful usefulness, as both graphemes might be used without distinction, and the writing turns out to be disjointed. In addition, the graphemes with diacritics should be used sparingly because they could be difficult to understand.

4. Veneto writings by some present-day authors

In this chapter works by some Vicentino writers and poets are analysed: Nico Bertoncello from Bassano del Grappa, Elio Girelli from Schio, Angelo Bertacco from Marostica, Eugenio Ferdinando Palmieri and Fernando Bandini from Vicenza. Furthermore, I have analysed some stories told by Ceo Pajaro from Fontaniva (Padova). All the works analysed are dated from the 1960s to the 1990s. The aim is to compare the more recent systems of writing of the Veneto dialect.

4.1 Nico Bertoncello's poems

Nico Bertoncello was born in 1948 in Bassano del Grappa, where he lives and works. He took part in some poetry competitions and was awarded a number of prizes such as the first prize "Guido Modena" in 1981 and "Bettanin" (1983), the second prize "Lions Club Milano Duomo" (1982), "Campagnola" (1983) and "Vita" (1986), the third prize "Fratangelo" (1985) and "L'esagono" (1986). In 1981 he published a book of poems in Veneto titled *Na sbatua de ae*.

(1) So 'l nostro 'ndar
come paveje ne 'a note
in serca de 'na luçe
ne piove 'dosso
'a sénare del tenpo,
ne core drìo
voçi e paroe
come on sbajàr de cani
e se catemo so 'e spàe
on peso che ne inpianta.
Come fae 'e sisie
volare cussì lesiére?

(Bertoncello 1987, *Come paveje*, p. 9)

(2) S-cese de vita

màsenà i so passi
a' scuro del tenpo,
sémena pensieri
insenbrài de ricordi
e speranse;
fora so 'e seje
fa eco el siensio
dove che se stanpa
come al cine
onbre
in bianco e nero.
Sti oci sarài
xe balconi
che sconde
sfese de luçe.
Ma 'assa passare
'e lagrime.

(Bertoncello 1987, *A' scuro*, p.14)

(3) Se alsa el vento

stamatina
e 'na pioveta lesiera
me pissega 'e masèe;
'a visèa sol canpo
ingropa i cai
pa' fermare el vento
ma basta on buso...
'na sfeséta...
El vento passa par de 'à
come 'a me libertà.

(Bertoncello 1987, *El vento*, p. 31)

(4) Se ga desfà

anca l'ultima ilusion
al ciaro del soe
e i ricordi zai,
'ndai,
spetenai,

xe fii de erba
che dorme
soto el fredo
de 'a neve,
...ma no' i more!
(Bertoncello 1987, *Se ga desfà*, p. 44)

(5) Dove 'ndàvee a finire
'e anime dei gatei, de 'e bisèrboe,
de tuta 'a zente che moriva?
Mi credevo che on colpo o l'altro
'e tornase indrio.
...'desso so
che 'a vita no' xe on zugo,
che nessuno ga voja de scondarola;
...'desso so
che pa' sta strada
se passa 'na volta sola.
(Bertoncello 1987, *Desso so*, p. 51)

(6) Sol ciacolar del vento
'speta l'ultima sisìa,
'a vardà sto mondo rabià
che 'no ga pì stajon.
El gnaro ga perso 'e péne
anca de l'ultima coà
'e foje ormai seche
no' voe pì zugare;
so 'a grondana giassà
no' 'a poe pì stare!
Mejo vardare el soe
che core verso sera
mejo 'assare el fio
a quei che vegnarà.
'a stajon che 'a serca
'a xe 'n'altra primavera
dove che 'a zente triste
ga voja de cantare.
(Bertoncello 1987, *L'ultima sisìa*, p. 82)

(7) Ga a voçe dei merli

L'istà che se rapossa
so 'e coste dei monti
dove finise el bosco
e scumisia 'e vece case
de Valgoda, paese sbandonà.
copi fruài dal tempo
'assa passare 'e lagrime
so i travi carolà
e i balconi in sfesa
ciacola col vento
a sofegar ricordi.
On vecio so 'a porta
varda el cieo griso
de 'na primavera sfantà
quando che 'e pèrgoe
faseva onbrìa
ai zughì dei boce
e ai gerani in fiore.
...se rànpega
da 'a vac
'na strada bianca,
ultima speransa
pa' i passi de l'omo.
(Bertoncello 1987, *Paese sbandonà*, p. 85)

By reading these poems we can infer that:

- The voiced *s* is represented for the majority of cases with <*s*> such as in *sbajàr* 'make a mistake', *màsenà* 'grind', *visèa* 'vineyard', *buso* 'hole', *sfesa/sfeséta* 'crack', *illusion* 'illusion', *case* 'houses', *sbandonà* 'abandoned', *griso* 'grey'; in few cases it is represented with <*z*> such as in *zai* 'yellow', *zente* 'people', *zugo/zugare*¹⁷ 'game/to play'; with <*x*> only for the forms of the verb *to be* as *xe* '(it) is';
- The grapheme <*ç*> is used to express the voiceless dental fricative as you can see in the words *luçe* 'light' and *voçe* 'voice';

¹⁷ Probably the author writes them with *z* to distinguish them from *sai* '(you) know', *sente* '(he/she) hears', *sugo/sugare* 'sauce/to dry', which have a different meaning.

- The author often uses the geminate *s* as you see in *'dosso* ‘on’, *cussì* ‘so, in this way’, *passi* ‘steps’, *passare* ‘pass’, *pìssega* ‘(it) stings’, *'desso* ‘now’, *giassà* ‘frozen’, *rapossa* ‘(he/she) takes a rest’; the other intervocalic consonants are not doubled (*note* ‘night’, *stamatina* ‘this morning’, *fredo* ‘cold’);
- Regarding the lateral *l*, sometimes it is omitted such as in *paroe* ‘words’, *spàe* ‘shoulders’, *soe* ‘sun’, *bisèrboe* ‘lizards’, *masèe* ‘cheeks’ and *pèrgoe* ‘arbours’, sometimes it is represented with <l> such as in *scondarola* ‘hide-and-seek’ and *ciacolar* ‘chat’;
- The author often uses <j> to express the palatal semi-vowel as you can see in *paveje* ‘butterflies’, *voja* ‘will, desire’, *stajon* ‘season’, *mejo* ‘better’;
- The grapheme <s-c> in words such as *s-cese* ‘splinters’ is adopted to show that the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless palatal affricate are to be pronounced separate.

4.2 Elio Girelli’s poems and stories

Elio Girelli was born in Schio on 27th April 1924, and lives in Malo.

- (8) Tuta ‘sta roba, me nona la gavea ‘mucià dentro el staloto del mas-cio ch’el stava ‘pena fora de casa, dentro la nostra cortesela. Chesta piccola costrussion quadrada de do metri par parte, la jera fata de sassi neri e bianchi, tegnù uno sora l’altro da poca malta e col punaro sora la jera alta gnanca quatro metri.

(Girelli 1992, *Scarpe de pessa e scarpe de vernisa*, p. 27)

- (9) Ch’el sia belo el ze belo, ma anca se par disgrassia nol fosse sta stanpà, nessun saria morto d’on colpo, d’on colpo invesse se more, quando se vede cossa ch’el costa. [...] pì de tuto co ghe xe la brentana [...]

(Girelli 1992, *Cúrta critiga mulisina al grosso libro “La Val Jolgara”*, p. 39)

(10) Chesta ze la me scola
mai desmentegà
da la seconda
la go scomissìa
parché la prima go fato
in granaro del Muniçipio
co' la monega par maestra.
me ricordo pì de tuto
in seconda e tersa
co' la maestra Pissardina
che a casa me mandava
quasi suito ogni matina
a laorar in so botega.
Ma l'ano pì amaro
lo go ripetuo da somaro!
in quarta e quinta
co' la maestra "Girafa"
che tanto fasea danare
da vero discolasso!
Parché portavo a scola
anca calche carbonasso
e moreje, rane, brunbuli
parfin crote e ligaori
par far co' 'ste fote
scapare e sigare
maestra e scolare.
tusi, tose se vuli inparare
mai ve vegna in mente
de come de mi fare
le maestre far danare!
Tegneghe conto de 'sta scola
rimodarnà rinverdia bela
cressua in Media supariora
che tanto insegnarà ancora!
E mi seben sia za vecio
tanto me piazaria sentarme
ancora sul me banco
propio anca par ciaparme
tante sberle e sbachetà

da la maestra risparmià
e tanto saria contento
anca pien de stramuson
pagare el me debito
che da tanto tenpo
go dentro nel magon!
(Girelli 1992, *La me scola*, p. 64-65)

(11) El marascalco

Ch'el fasea el laoro
Del feracavai
Jera el scarparo
De tuti i cavai.
Gavea botega
Tuta fumegà
Par la forja
Senpre inpissà
Dove sagomava
De fero batuo
Feri par cavalo
In gran quantità.
Ligà soto el portego
El grandò quadrupade
El ghe alsava la ganba
Propio zenocion
E col martelo
Gh'inciodava soto
El fero tondo.
Rabatui i ciodi
Propio par ben
Co la longa raspa
Ghe limava l'onja
Fasendoghe parfin
Laor de pedicur.
Cossì i cavai
Ben scarpai
Caminava ben
Tirando careti
Timonele e biroci.

Pecà no sentir pì
 El dolce tamburo
 Del passo e del troto
 Che le ciampe de fero
 Del feracavai
 Batendo par tera
 Le somejava batesse
 I secondi del tempo
 Zolà tanto svelto
 Del me zovane mondo!
 (Girelli 1992, *El marascalco*, p. 76-77)

We can make the following comments:

- The author uses the grapheme <j> to express the palatal semi-vowel as in *jera* ‘(it) was’, *moreje* ‘mice’ and *somejava* ‘(it) seemed’. The grapheme <j> is also used to represent the voiced palatal affricate as you can see in *onja* ‘nail’ and *forja* ‘forge’;
- The geminate *s* is adopted such as in *costrussion* ‘building’, *sassi* ‘stones’, *disgrassia* ‘disgrace’, *nessun* ‘nobody’, *invesse* ‘instead’, *cossa* ‘what’, *scomissia* ‘begun’, *discolasso* ‘rebellious’, *carbonasso* ‘a type of snake’, *cressua* ‘grown up’, *inpissà* ‘switched on’, *passo* ‘step’, *cossì* ‘so, in this way’; the other intervocalic consonants are not doubled, for example *soto* ‘under’, *matina* ‘morning’, *tuta* ‘all’, *nona* ‘grandmother’, *tera* ‘earth’, *fero* ‘iron’, *troto* ‘trot’;
- The lateral *l* is always represented with <l>: *staloto* ‘cattleshed’, *cortesela* ‘little courtyard’, *picola* ‘little’, *belo* ‘nice’, *scola* ‘school’, *martelo* ‘hammer’;
- The grapheme <s-c> is used in words such as *mas-cio* ‘pig’ to show that the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless palatal affricate are to be pronounced separate;
- The grapheme <ç> is used to represent the voiceless dental fricative such as in *Muniçipio* ‘registry office’;
- With regard to the voiced *s* the graphic representation is not always the same: sometimes the author adopts the grapheme <s> (*casa* ‘house’, *desmentegà* ‘forgotten’, *tusi* ‘boys’, *tose* ‘girls’, *stramuson* ‘a slap in the face’), sometimes

he uses <z> (*zovane* ‘young’, *zola* ‘flown’, *zenocion* ‘on one’s knees’, *za* ‘already’). For the forms of the verb *to be* both <s> and <z> are adopted.

4.3 Angelo Bertacco’s rhymes

Angelo Bertacco was born in Marostica on 28th June 1939. He lives and works in Crosara.

(12)Ti, lodoleta, che tel cel seren
sempre te canti fando larghi giri,
che, l’ocio fiso, in su senpre te miri
che no te vui restar do in mezo al fen,
che mai te a moli de strucarte in sen,
testarda, chii impulsibili deziri,
che te toca, co dibuli sospiri,
tornar desconsolà do sol teren
te me sumiji, che na gran speranza
rento mi strendo. Ma la mente scura
che de sconfite a ghi n’a vio bastansa
de senpre ritentare a se inpaura...
Ze inutile par mi vere costansa,
inutile sognar la gioja pura?
(Bertacco 1986, *La lodola*, p. 21)

(13)Ricordo de on picol prezepe
coe statue metà mutilae,
ricordo dee sere pasae
pae caze “La Stela” a cantar.
Ricordo dea gioja dea ceza,
de la confesion inocente
contando puciti de gnente
al prete dal fredo ingelà.
Ricordo del ndare aa novena,
coe calse e le do sganbarele
cantando l’Adeste Fidele”
poldarse pi belo in ladin.
Ricordo de on pranso felice

co tante persone soa tola,
co fina na meda brezola,
co fina na tasa de vin!
(Bertacco 1986, *Nadale*, p. 29)

(14) Do pa la pista de la neve bianca
squazi zolando disende el siatore,
agile el gira a drita come a sanca
sprusiti sollevando de candore.
A zigzagar coi si mai no l se stanca
che l prova gusto mato al corpo e al core.
Distante da l'uficio o dala banca,
distante dal negosio e dal rumore,
le forse el se ritenpra a l'aria bona,
dal grasso el se dezlivra e dai tosine,
dai dani dela sedentarietà.
Chea tinta el ciapa po che a tuti dona,
chea linea znela, ben zlanciata e fine
che dea salute imagine ne dà.
(Bertacco 1986, *El siatore*, p. 47)

(15) Fin che in caza scrivea le me storielle
vardavo i me du gati che dugava:
jero incantà da quante che i ghin fava,
i balava, i saltava, i fea sfrezele!
Su driti prima i stea so le satele
da drìo, po...tan! indoso i se lanciava!
Morti i pareva da come i zmiagolava
invese i se fazea le gatarele!
Difisilmente credo che se trova
spetacolo pi belo e pi perfeto!
O...ma ae signore dala caza nova
che tuto e vole come on specio neto
ghe farà schifo, che teror le prova
a pensar sol divan qualche peletto!
(Bertacco 1986, *I du gatei*, p. 49)

Having examined the graphemes used in these passages we can note that:

- The author uses the grapheme <z> to represent the voiced s, for example *mezo* ‘middle’, *deziri* ‘desires’, *ze* ‘(it) is’, *prezepe* ‘crib’, *caza* ‘house’, *ceza* ‘church’, *brezola* ‘chop’, *squazi* ‘almost’, *zolando* ‘flying’, *znela* ‘slim’, *zlanziata* ‘tall and slim’, *zmiagolava* ‘to mew’, *fazea* ‘(it) made’;
- The lateral *l* is always represented with <l>, even when it is evanescent: *lodoleta* ‘little lark’, *moli* ‘soft (pl.)’, *desconsolà* ‘depressed’, *belo* ‘nice’, *tola* ‘table’, *brezola* ‘chop’, *znela* ‘slim’, *salute* ‘health’, *storiele* ‘stories’, *balava* ‘(he/she) danced’, *satele* ‘paws’, *zmiagolava* ‘(it) mewed’, *gatarele* ‘tickle’, *spetacolo* ‘show’;
- The intervocalic consonants are never doubled: *fiso* ‘fixed’, *mato* ‘crazy’, *dani* ‘damage (pl.)’, *tuto* ‘all’, *neto* ‘clean’;
- The grapheme <j> is adopted to represent the palatal semi-vowel such as in *sumiji* ‘(you) look like’, *gioja* ‘joy’, *jero* ‘(I) was’.

4.4 Palmieri’s and Bandini’s poems

Eugenio Ferdinando Palmieri (Vicenza, 1903 – Bologna, 1968) was a poet and comedy writer in Veneto dialect as well as drama and film critic. His comedies stand for a criticism of the close-minded and mean middle-class society, which is attacked with sarcastic and lively language (<http://www.ef-palmieri.it/>).

(16) Descalza e spetenada,
morsegà da la voia,
la Nina se remena
se remena sul prà.
Istà, sbornia de verde.
Gh’è un fiocheto de nuvola
Che per zogo ‘l se rùgola.
Istà, sbornia de fogo.
Ogni rama se impissa
Ogni panocia rissa.
La Nina me sgiaventa
Un saludo che s-cioca.

L'ordina che me senta.

Mi ghe palpo la boca,

ghe palpo le tetine

onore del paese

do tete berechine

veludo de sarese.

E i àrzari se infiamo,

se infiamo le golene.

Morsegà da la voia,

la putela me brinca.

Spalanchemo le vene.

Scominzio dai zenoci,

me ràmpego me buto

me perdo...

Oè, poeta!

Un'ostia, me ne frego.

Me godo come un mato,

me sprofondo, me nego.

(Palmieri 1966 in: Buzzatti 2001, *Istà*, pp. 24-25)

Reading this poem we comment that:

- The grapheme <z> is adopted to represent the voiced *s*: *zogo* 'game', *zenoci* 'knees';
- The lateral *l* is always represented with <l>, even when it is evanescent: *nuvola* 'cloud', *rùgola* '(he/she) rolls', *saludo* '(I) say hello', *putela* 'child (fem.)';
- The author uses the geminate *s* as you can see in *impissa* 'to light up' and *rissa* 'to curl', while the other intervocalic consonants are never doubled: *boca* 'mouth', *buto* '(I) throw myself', *mato* 'crazy';
- The grapheme <s-c> in words such as *s-cioca* '(it) cracks' is used to show that the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless palatal affricate are to be pronounced separate;
- The grapheme <i> is used to express the semi-vowel palatal sound as you can see in *voia* 'will, desire'.

Fernando Bandini (Vicenza, 1931 – Vicenza, 2013) was a poet, writer and teacher of stylistics and prosody. Andrea Zanzotto described him as follows: “Bandini is an excellent poet, he is between calm and meditation; he is a trilingual poet”. In 2008 he was awarded the Senigallia prize and in 2012 he won the Librex Montale Prize (https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fernando_Bandini).

(17) Qua da ste parti
ghe xe posti valivi,
co mus-cio de oro verde.
Qua, a ramòcia, l'ombra xe parona,
se se perde
par cavedagne mòrbie
come le fossolete de na dona.
Dopo le sìe de sera,
co tase le campane
e le sfese e le rame
s'inpenisse de osèi che va a dormire,
se sente un sgrisolare
de vento e foie in giro
e dai scaranti
vien fora i puteleti del vampiro.
I zuga coi botoni
del so camisolin
i fa le pirolete
tegnendose a delin,
i denti ga macete
de sangue e spanavin;
britolete e massanghi
i gussa co la pria,
fin che l'ultima giossa
del giorno xe finìa
e dei so oci resta solo el bianco.
Riva un nuvolo basso
che ingiotisse el celeste;
sarà porte e finestre
le case ga 'l tremasso.
Luri fa 'l girotondo,
i se conta falope,

ze paroni del mondo.
 E ghe sbrusa la voia
 de scoar co le strope
 le tete a le putele
 indromensà te camare de luna,
 de garzar gole,
 vèzzare vene latarole in cuna.

(Bandini 1994 in: Buzzatti 2001, *I puteleti del vampiro*, pp. 56-58)

From this poem we can note that:

- The author uses the geminate *s* between vowels, for example in *fossolete* ‘dimples’, *inpenisse* ‘(it) fills with’, *massanghi* ‘pruning knives’, *gussa* ‘sharpen’, *giossa* ‘drop’, *basso* ‘low’, *ingiotisse* ‘(he/she) swallows’, *tremasso* ‘shaking’;
- With regard to the voiced *s*, sometimes the author uses the grapheme <*s*> such as in *tase* ‘(he/she) keeps silent’, *sfese* ‘cracks’, *osèi* ‘birds’, *sgrisolare* ‘shiver’, *case* ‘houses’, sometimes <*z*> is adopted such as *zuga* ‘(he/she) plays’ and *ze* ‘(it) is’. For the forms of the verb *to be* the grapheme <*x*> is often used;
- The lateral *l* is always represented with <*l*>: *valivi* ‘below, downhill’, *fossolete* ‘dimples’, *puteleti* ‘children’, *britolete* ‘billhooks’, *falope* ‘lies’;
- The grapheme <*s-c*> in words such as *mus-cio* ‘moss’ is used to show that the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless palatal affricate are to be pronounced separate.

4.5 Ceo Pajaro’s tales

Ceo Pajaro owns a restaurant in Fontaniva, a town in the province of Padova which is close to the boundary between Padova and Vicenza. To be more precise, his stories are about events told orally to Gino Isoli, the author of the book, who has recorded and transcribed them according to his way of writing.

- (18) “El ze saltà fora de qua, pui tocare, el ze ancora caldo”. E cussita proemo tocare ancora noaltri con palmo dea man: el jera ancora caldo el tereno. [...] “Coro sùto e, pataton pataton, rivo aea fatoria de Nei Canaia, trovo a dona e ghe digo: “Siora, siora, ze qua che stà Nei Canaia?” “Sì si

caro a me dise – e me marìo el ze in fondo, te fè el giro del pajaro e teo cati chel ghe fa e ponte ae rapeghe”. [...] El mastega quatro bestieme tra i denti, el se mete a caricare ‘ste broche, el sara a boca del s-ciopo [...]

(Isoli 1986, *El gevare incioà*, p. 6-7)

(19) Me ricordo ‘na sera, al cinema de Fontaniva, che ghe jera ancora ‘ncora Don Emilio, nell’intervaeo tra el primo el secondo tempo, par farghe piassere ae persone el fasèa na s-cianta de musica coi dischi veci.

(Isoli 1986, *El prestigiatore*, p. 8)

(20) Ogni uno gaveimo ‘na borsa de curame, un elmeto e a borsa a jera piena de tritoeo, micia, detonatori e altri mestieri che i ne servia par far scopiar e bombete, e in compenso de ‘sto lavoro no voeimo s-chei, ma damigiane de vin, soppresse, ossocoi de puro mas-cio. [...] proprio el coeore dee bombete a farfaea, e cussi aea sera e anca de notte andaimo in giro, faseimo ‘na busa e meteimo soto el menèstro par metà, fora soeo coa roseta, cussi i paroni dei posti i vedèa ‘sta bonbeta e i vegnèa ciamarne. [...] “Vegnì presto, ghe ze ‘nantra bomba e i putèi ghe zuga torno”.

(Isoli 1986, *E bombete a farfaea*, p. 10)

(21) “Parecia el musso che quasi gavemo finìo”. E intanto se alsava un temporae moro come el peccato, dei quei temporai come ‘na note senza luna. [...] Jerimo soto el portego e nel cortie comissiava e prime gosse de piova tanto grossa. A me dise: “Ceo, eco e patate cote e e ze tanto calde”.

(Isoli 1986, *El musso*, p. 16)

(22) Costruisso el capano aea matina presto, vao drento e speto che comissia el passajo dei Rocheti proprio al disnove marso del mienovesentotrentanove aea festa de San Giuseppe, o San Bepi.

(Isoli 1986, *I Rocheti*, p. 25)

(23) Ghemo deposità i atressi del mestiere. Also i oci al soe e lo vedo beo e senza un peo de aria. Cominsia rivare e lodoe da tute e parte e mi col fis-ceto: tio, tio, tio e col fusìe: pum da una parte, pum da chealtra, ‘e vegnea zo come a tempesta, e fortuna che gaveimo drìo un toso che ‘l se ciamava Costante Guiaro che ‘ndava a torle su e nantri dai, ancora col fusie che ‘l gera quasi caldo.

(Isoli 1986, *E lodoe*, p. 28)

The author of the book:

- Uses the grapheme <j> to express the palatal semi-vowel such as in *jera* ‘(it) was’, *pajaro* ‘straw stack’, *jerimo* ‘(we) were’ and *passajo* ‘passage’;
- Uses the geminate *s*, for example *cussita* ‘in this way’, *piassere* ‘pleasure’, *sopresse* ‘a Venetan type of sausage’, *cussì* ‘so’, *musso* ‘donkey’, *gosse* ‘drops’, *grossa* ‘thick’, *costruisso* ‘(I) build’, *comissia* ‘(It) starts’, *passajo* ‘passage’, *atressi* ‘tools’; the other intervocalic consonants are not doubled, such as *tereno* ‘ground’, *dona* ‘woman’, *eco* ‘echo’, *cote* ‘cooked’, *note*¹⁸ ‘night’;
- Represents lateral *l*, if evanescent, with the grapheme <e>: *aea* ‘at’, *intervaeo* ‘break’, *tritoeo* ‘TNT’, *coeore* ‘colour’, *farfaea* ‘butterfly’, *soeo* ‘only’;
- Adopts the grapheme <s-c> in words such as *s-ciopo* ‘shotgun’, *s-cianta* ‘a bit’, *mas-cio* ‘pig’ and *fis-ceto* ‘whistle’ to show that the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless palatal affricate are to be pronounced separate;
- Regarding the voiced *s* the graphic representation is not always the same: both the grapheme <s> (*dise* ‘(he/she) says’, *fasèa* ‘(he/she) made’, *faseimo* ‘(we) made’, *busa* ‘pit’, *disnove* ‘nineteen’, *fusie* ‘shotgun’, *toso* ‘boy’) and <z> are used (for the forms of the verb *to be* and other words like *zuga* ‘(he/she) plays’ and *zo* ‘under’).

4.6 Alessandro Mocellin’s *Free Veneto Spelling* (2010)

Alessandro Mocellin (Cassola, 1988) is a law student at the University of Padua. He has always been interested in the language, history and identity of Veneto and in his book he suggests a universal spelling based on the principle of freedom of use. This *Free Universal Spelling*, a type of spelling planned by the author and called “descriptive” by himself, combines the graphic symbols used crosslinguistically to build the specific sounds of every single language, provided that the value of these symbols is sufficiently sharable and widespread. The compound sounds are represented by single graphs, digraphs or trigraphs and the pronunciation of such sounds is the result of reading the letters in sequence.

¹⁸ This word is also found with the geminate: *notte*.

In the following section I will analyse Mocellin's *Free Veneto Spelling*. This is the Veneto alphabet suggested by the author:

- Open front vowel: <à>
ex. *Càn* 'dog'
- Voiced bilabial plosive:
ex. *Boca* 'mouth'
- Voiceless palatal affricate: <tsj>
ex. *tsjodo* 'nail'
- Voiced dental plosive: <d>
ex. *Dare* 'to give'
- Voiced interdental fricative: <dh>
ex. *Dhenocio* 'knee'
- Semi-close front vowel: <é>
ex. *Véna* 'vein', *paéo* 'post'

It is also used to represent the evanescent *l*. The author claims that from the point of view of the articulation it is not a sound, but a compound phonemic phenomenon. In phonetics the sound is simply *è* and it becomes evanescent because of a reaction with the adjoining vowel sounds. Moreover, if *é* is placed between two vowels and at least one of these vowels is palatal, it is absorbed and disappears such as in *péo* 'hair'.

- Semi-open front vowel: <è>
ex. *Zèro* 'zero'
- Voiceless labiodental fricative: <f>
ex. *Fen* 'hay'
- Voiced velar plosive: <g>
ex. *Gas* 'gas'
- Voiced palatal affricate: <dzj>
ex. *Giaca* 'jacket'
- Close front vowel: <i>
ex. *Pico* '(I) hang'
- Palatal glide: <j>

- ex. *Paja* ‘straw’
- Voiceless velar plosive: <*k*>
ex. *Kan* ‘dog’
- Alveolar lateral: <*l*>
ex. *Luna* ‘moon’
- Bilabial nasal: <*m*>
ex. *Mar* ‘sea’
- Alveodental nasal: <*n*>
ex. *No* ‘no’
- Palatal nasal: <*ɲj*>
ex. *Manjar* ‘to eat’
- Semi-close back vowel: <*ò*>
ex. *Ciòdo* ‘nail’
- Semi-open back vowel: <*ó*>
ex. *Cónto* ‘bill’
- Voiceless bilabial plosive: <*p*>
ex. *Paca* ‘blow’
- Trill: <*r*>
ex. *Arare* ‘to plough’
- Voiceless alveodental fricative: <*s*>
ex. *Santo* ‘saint’
- Voiceless dental plosive: <*t*>
ex. *Toco* ‘piece’
- Voiceless interdental fricative: <*th*>
ex. *Canthon* ‘corner’
- Close back vowel: <*ù*>
ex. *Cùbo* ‘cube’
- Voiced labiodental fricative: <*v*>
ex. *Vin* ‘wine’
- Labiovelar glide: <*u+vocale*>
ex. *Guera* ‘war’, *cuadro* ‘picture’
- Voiced alveodental fricative: <*z*>

ex. *Cazerma* ‘barracks’

- Voiceless alveodental affricate: <ts>

ex. *Natsion* ‘nation’

- Voiced alveodental affricate: <dz>

ex. *Dzente* ‘people’

4.7 Conclusion

In the following chart the set of graphemes chosen by the authors taken into consideration in this chapter are summarized and schematized:

	Voiced <i>s</i>	Evanescent <i>l</i>	Voiceless dental fricative [θ]	Palatal semi- vowel [j]	Voiceless alveolar fricative + voiceless palatal affricate	Use of geminate consonants
Bertoncello	<s> <z> <x>	<l>	<ç>	<j>	<s-c>	<Ss> Other intervocalic consonants are not doubled
Girelli	<s> <z>	<l>	<ç>	<j>	<s-c>	<Ss> Other intervocalic consonants are not doubled
Bertacco	<z>	<l>	-	<j>	-	No doubling
Palmieri	<z>	<l>	-	<i>	<s-c>	<Ss> Other intervocalic consonants are not doubled
Bandini	<s> <z>	<l>	-	-	<s-c>	<ss>
Isoli	<s> <z>	<e>	-	<j>	<s-c>	<Ss> Other intervocalic consonants are not doubled
Mocellin	<z>	<é>	<th>	<j>	-	-

Fig. 4 Set of graphemes adopted by the authors

Looking at the table one can notice that the graphic representation of the voiced *s* is not uniform. The three graphemes proposed by the authors are <*s*>, <*z*> and <*x*>. <*x*> is used by one author out of seven and only in few cases, namely with the forms of the verb *to be*. <*z*> is used systematically by three authors, while the other four alternate <*z*> and <*s*> as graphemes which represent the voiced alveolar fricative. With regard to the evanescent *l*, the majority of the authors have opted for <*l*>, while the minority (two out of seven) have adopted the grapheme <*e*>. <*ç*> is used by two authors to express the voiced dental fricative; one author adopts <*th*> while the other four have not taken into consideration such sound. The palatal semi-vowel is in the majority of cases expressed with <*j*>, in only one case with <*i*>. The representation of the phoneme composed of the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless palatal affricate is also uniform: the grapheme proposed is <*s-c*>. Finally, with regard to the use of geminate consonants, four authors out of seven double the voiceless alveolar fricative but not the other consonants, while only one author does not double any consonant.

5. Veneto dialect on the Internet

In this chapter I will present data gathered from some websites. More specifically I will analyse an online handbook of Veneto grammar (Brunelli 2012), the spelling used for the articles of the magazine *Quàtro Ciàcoe* and the periodical *Raixe Venete* and the *Grafia Veneta Riformata*¹⁹(GVR) proposed by Paolo Pegoraro.

5.1 *Manual Gramaticale Xenerale de la Léngua Vènetà e le so varianti*²⁰

The *Manual Gramaticale Xenerale de la Léngua Vènetà e le so varianti* (Brunelli 2012) was first published on the Web in 2005. The edition examined in this thesis is the fifth²¹. This handbook is defined by the author as the first common, descriptive grammar of Veneto language based on a scientific method and written in Veneto. It was conceived to spread this information on the Internet. In the first section of the handbook the author explains that the Veneto varieties are recognizable for some differences in pronunciation. Some examples follow:

- (1) *Bala* – *baea* ‘(he/she) dances’
- (2) *Fòrsa* - *fòrza* – *fòr~~z~~ha* ‘strenght’
- (3) *Voia* – *vogia* ‘desire, will’
- (4) *Mèxo* – *mè~~dh~~o* – *mèzo* ‘middle’

They are changeable or floating sounds, which change according to the geographic variety of Veneto dialect. The author has opted for graphemes which would allow these words containing floating phonemes to be pronounced in different ways according to the dialectal variety spoken by the speaker, maintaining a fixed written form.

¹⁹ Reformed Veneto writing.

²⁰ Common Grammar Handbook of Veneto language and its varieties.

²¹ A more accurate and detailed edition is in preparation.

The graphemes are the following:

- <ł> or <ł̣> called “cut *l*”: the symbol <ł> is read in two different ways, depending on whether the speaker pronounces words like the following with evanescent *l* or not:
 - (5) *Bala* ‘(he/she) dances’
 - (6) *Ciacole* ‘chitchat’
 - (7) *Balon* ‘ball’
- <j>: also in this case one symbol is used to express two pronunciations. The first corresponds to the palatal semi-vowel [j]; the second corresponds to the voiced palatal affricate [dʒ]. The second case is typical of the Venetian dialect.
 - (8) *Voja* ‘will, desire’
 - (9) *Jutar* ‘to help’
 - (10) *Joani* ‘John’
- <s·c>: it shows that the voiceless alveolar fricative represented with <s> and the voiceless palatal affricate expressed with <c> are to be pronounced separately.
- <s>: in the consonant clusters *sb*, *sd*, *sg*, *sl*, *sm*, *sn* and *sv* it represents the voiced *s*, in other cases it expresses the voiceless *s*.
- <x>: it always represents the voiced *s*.
- <ç>: grapheme adopted for the voiceless alveolar affricate [tʃ], the voiceless interdental [θ] and the voiceless alveolar fricative [ʃ] in words such as:
 - (11) *Força* ‘strength’
 - (12) *Çima* ‘peak’
 - (13) *Çento* ‘a hundred’
 - (14) *Çavata* ‘slipper’
 - (15) *Braço* ‘slipper’
- <z>: it is used to represent the voiced alveolar affricate [dz], the voiced interdental [ð] and the voiced alveolar fricative [z] in words such as:
 - (16) *Zo* ‘down’
 - (17) *Zente* ‘people’
 - (18) *Mèzo* ‘middle’
 - (19) *Pèzo* ‘worse’

What follows is the introduction of the *Handbook* in order to have an idea of how the graphic system adopted by the author appears visually:

I dialetti vèneti i fa tuti parte del steso sistèma lengüístico, el vèneto, parché i condivide le stese strutture lengüistiche de baxe, cuele vènete apunto: donca i xe tuti varianti de la léngua vènetà. 'Sto manual gramaticale cuà no 'l xe mia stà fato par spiegar na variante sola (solo el vèneto veronexe, solo el vèneto venesian, solo el vèneto feltrin-belunexe, solo el vèneto trevisan o solo el vèneto centrale cioè vèneto vixentin-padovan-połexan) ma par dar na descriçion del vèneto. Dopo, soto le spiegaçion, vièn mese anca de le note co le carataristiche speciala de le varianti pi gròse. Xe chiaro che no l'è mia un lavoro parfèto fin 'ntei detaji pi cèi e de seguro se podarà zontarghe calcòsa, ma cuele che xe inportante l'è che el scòpo del MGX de la Léngua Vènetà el xe cuele de dar na vixion de tuta la Léngua e parlar de le so règołe fundamentali metendo in chiaro le strutture comuni che gh'è soto le diversità de pronunçia: chele règołe che le ne fa dir che el venesian el xe vèneto come el belumàt, anca se fra de luri i è ben difarènti; chele règołe che fra noaltri Vèneti podemo capirse anca se vegnemo da parte diverse e gavemo parlade un fià diverse mentre i "foresti" (cioè cuei che i vièn da fora, deto sença cativèria) i fa fadiga capirne. Da ùltimo, in fondo al libro xe stà riservà un capìtoło particołar, curto, par el dialeto veneto dell'italiano che 'l vièn parlà dai toxati e 'nte le çità, in mòdo da far védar le diversità pi gròse che 'sto cuà el ga rispèto a la léngua vènetà.

5.2 The magazine *Quàtro Ciàcoe*

Quàtro Ciàcoe is the title of a monthly magazine set up in 1982 by a group of volunteers very keen on dialect studies who, with the help of correspondents from all over Veneto, deals with writing about Veneto culture and tradition. The aim is that of regaining customs, traditions, and habits which belong to the history of Veneto people (<http://www.quattrociacoe.it/>).

The orthographic symbols adopted by the magazine are summarized here:

- Use of <l> to represent the lateral l, as you can see in *tola* 'table', *salute* 'wealth', *quele* 'those', *cariola* 'wheelbarrow', *picola* 'little (fem.)', *sela* 'saddle', *pedalava* '(he/she) cycled', *palo* 'pole', *scandalo* 'scandal', *saloto* 'living room', *fiolo* 'son';
- Use of <j> to represent the palatal semi-vowel such as in *vantajo* 'advantage', *jera* '(it) was', *oji* 'olios', *mojere* 'wife', *sfojava* '(he/she) turned over the pages', *voja* 'will, desire', *fameja* 'family';

- Use of the grapheme <*s-c*> to indicate that the voiceless alveolar fricative represented with <*s*> and the voiceless palatal affricate expressed with <*c*> are to be pronounced separately, such as in *ris-ciare* ‘to risk’ and *mas-ceti* ‘little pigs’;
- Extensive use of the geminate *s*: *sènplisse* ‘easy’, *èssare* ‘to be’, *regression* ‘regression’, *possibile* ‘possible’, *alimentassion* ‘feeding’, *interessarse* ‘to be interested’, *medessina* ‘medicine’, *sodisfassion* ‘satisfaction’, *discussion* ‘discussion’, *rosse* ‘red’, *tosse* ‘cough’, *vissio* ‘bad habit’, *procession* ‘procession’, *disgrassia* ‘disgrace’, *professoressa* ‘teacher’, *giovinessa* ‘youth’. The other intervocalic consonants are never doubled;
- To represent the voiced *s* three graphemes are used: <*s*> in the majority of cases for example *acusà* ‘accused’, *esistensa* ‘existence’, *pesava* ‘(he/she) weighed’, *cesa* ‘church’, *paese* ‘country, nation’, *tusiti* ‘children’, *sposi* ‘newly-wed couple’, *diese* ‘ten’; <*x*> for the forms of the verb *to be* such as *xe* ‘(it) is’; <*z*> in rare cases such as in *zanocio* ‘knee’ and *zolare* ‘to fly’.

These are some extracts of articles of the magazine, in which one can see how it is written:

Senpre più “problematica” diventa ancò la risposta par chi, sentàndose a tola par consumare anca un sènplisse pasto el se domanda: “Saralo un magnare genuin? Che ’l sia stà tratà co sostanse danose, che pol farte vignere un càncaro?...” Interrogativi motivà che lassa senpre più dubioso l’omo de ancò, che no ’l ga da èssare acusà de regression se ’l studia de tornare par quanto possibile a la natura, co n’alimentassion manco “sofisticà”, che ghe daga più garansie par la propia salute. El solo fato de interessarse e de ’ndare in cerca de le erbe, xe za na medessina, e no da poco. La distension, l’aria sana e l’evasion, i xe fattori inportanti, insostituibili ne l’esistensa de l’èssare uman; senza contare che la sodisfassion de èssarse procura calcossa de genuin completa el “condimento” del piato, anca el più rùstego de erbe de canpo. [...] Xe fora discussion che el vantajo xe de sicuro de ste ùltime. Dopo sto “doveroso” preànbolo, passemo a menzonare qualcheduna de le erbe de largo consumo che in sto periodo, inissio de la primavera, podemo rancurare co tranquillità senza ris-ciare de tor sù quele tòsseghe.[...]
(Scarpi R.: *Erbe selvàdeghe...bone da magnare*. Anno XXXIII, n. 3, Marzo 2015)

Lu, piccolo e magro incandio, el pesava ’pena qualche eto sora i trenta chili. El savéa fare solo un mistiero: menare la cariola. La Togna no la gavéa le fòrse par urtare la cariola, ma la gavéa inparà fin da picola, a nare in bicicletà, na bicicletà da omo, pescà a na sagra de paese. Ma la lo faséa in un modo strano: la man

sinistra tegnèa el manubrio e la destra tegnèa la sela. La pedalava con dó ganbasse rosse e grosse 'fà du mas-ceti da late. Le ganbe, causa la bicicleta col palo, le mostrava fin le mudande che, par fortuna, le ghe rivava al zanocio. La jera na dona forte, mai non la gavèa 'vudo gnanca un raffredore, solo da putela, la tosse canina. La Togna però la gavèa un brutto vissio: la bestemava come un turco e non la voléa savérghene né de santi né de madone. Rento le porte de la cesa la ghe jera nà, par forza, solo quando la ga sposà Filipeto. A i so tenpi la jera un scàndalo par tuto el paese. Chi lo gavarìa dito? Quando la ga distirà i ossi, al so funerale drio la bara a piè, caminava solo el prete col campanaro. Par ela diséa su qualche rechie solo don Prosdocimo, che mai la gavèa vista in cesa, e no i lo gavèa gnanca ciamà par darghe i oji santi. Quando xe mancà Filipeto, morto pi par le fadighe che par un vero male, drio la so bara portà a spale, ghe jera tuto el paese e l'Assion Catòlica ghe gavèa oferta anca la bela ghirlanda. Quando par le strade del paese xe passà el so funerale, tute le porte jera sarà e òmini, done e tusiti, tuti drio la bara, gnanca la fusse na procession, e tuti jera convinti de conpagnare al simitero non un omo del quale gnanca i conosséa la vosse, ma poco manco de un santo e la canpana da morto la ga sonà tanto a lungo da pensare che tuto el paese fusse colpìo da na gran disgrassia, tanto che, anca se jera alto el sole, no te sentivi zolare na mosca.[...]

(Maraschin A.: *La Togna e Filipeto*. Anno XXXII, n. 12, Dicembre 2014)

Elide jera professoressa de le Superiori: na bela dona, nel pieno de la so florida maturità. El suo jera stà on matrimonio fortunà e felice: la gavèa sposà on dirigente de na assienda che incontrava i favori de la richiesta del mercato. Nessuna preoccupassion gravava su chei du sposi e 'l so matrimonio tocava, proprio in chel giorno, i diese ani de convivensa. Mojere e mario, chela sera jera sentà in saloto: ela coregèa cònpiti e lu sfojava on giornale de economia. Ma se pareciava la burasca: la vissinansa tra i du jera talmente tesa che la fiama de on fuminante sarìa bastà a scadenare l'uragano. El momento jera cupo; on silensio che oprimeva tuti du e l'atesa del colloquio jera spasmodica. A on serto punto lu ronpe el silensio e el la ciama par nome, anca quello segno de la studià distansa: "Elide, fursi te go amà o te me piasevi on tenpo. Ma adesso dubito parfin che 'l mio sia stà on vero amore. 'Desso non te vojo pi ben. E volendo essere sincero, go incontrà nantro amore che par mi credo ideale. Sto novo amore me ga dà tuto parché no 'l gavèa altri inpegni o doveri ne la so vita. La me ga dà el so corpo, el so tenpo, la so intelligenza, la so ànima e... anca la so giovinessa." "Lo gavevo capìo – la ghe ga risposto. – Non ocoreva che te me lo disessi. Ma pènsèghe: oltre a le sodiffassion de le to inprese personali, quello che a nantri ne xe mancà, xe stà soratuto on fiolo. Se ti, invesse de pensare solo a i to afari, te gavessi possudo la sera, anca se straco morto, strenzare in brasso on fiolo, chel fiolo gavarìa fato de nantri na vera fameja e mantegnù vivo, ansi el gavarìa senpre pi ricreà l'amore." [...]

(Maraschin A.: *On fiore drio na strada*. Anno XXX, n. 2, febbraio 2012)

5.3 The periodical *Raixe Venete*

Raixe Venete is a bimonthly periodical written in Veneto and started in 2002. It deals with cultural and historical issues as well as with customs and current events, without any political purpose. The aim is to keep the identity, history and culture of Veneto people alive. The editor of the periodical is a group of volunteers called *Associazione Culturale Veneto Nostro – Raixe Venete*. Apart from writing articles for the periodical, the group is engaged in working together with politicians in order to achieve official recognition of Veneto language and teaching of Veneto language in schools. Furthermore, the group plays an active part in organizing events, meetings and debates around Veneto in collaboration with municipal administration and other associations (<http://www.raixevenete.com/>).

What follows are extracts of some articles of the journal:

Lissa, ixola del mare Adriatico, la xe la pì distante de la costa dalmata, conosuda in te la antichità come Issa, pì volte nominà dai jeografi grèsi. La xe sta na baxe navale de la Republica Veneta fin al 1797. El “fatal 1866” el xe scomisià politicamente a Berlino co la firma del pato de Ałeansa fra la Italia e la Prusia l’oto de april. El 16 de jugno xe s-ciopà la goera fra la Prusia e l’Austria e el 20 de jugno co’l proclama del re la Italia la ga dikiarà goera a l’Austria; la baldansa dei tajani la xe stà però subito smorsà pòke ore pì tardi (24 de jugno) a Custoza dove ke el exèrsito tricołore el el xe sta sconfito da l’exersito asburjico (dove ke i miłitava i soldai veneti). Fra el 16 e el 28 de jugno le armade prusiane le ga invaxo l’Hannover, la Sassonia e l’Assia e el 3 de lujo ghe xe sta la vitoria dei prusiani a Sadowa. Dopo do di el inpero asburjico el ga decixo de ceder el Veneto a la Fransa (co tàsito acordo ke dopo el fose dà ai Savoia) pur da concludare on armistisio. In Italia i xe sta però contrari a sta proposta ke la umiñava le forse armae tajane e, viste le condision pietoxe de l’exersito dopo la batosta de Custoza, i ga puntà so la marina par riportar na vitoria sol nemigo ke ghe dese la posibilità de sarar onorevolmente (na volta tanto) na goera. I tajani no i podeva de sicuro pensar de catar so la so strada i Veneti, osadura de la marina ostriaca. La marina miłitar ostriaca la xera praticamente nata in tel 1797 e xa dal nome se capiva on mucio de robe: “Oesterreich-Venezianische Marine” (Inperiałe e Reja Veneta Marina). Equipaji e uficiałi ke i rivava praticamente tuti da la area veneta de l’inpero (veneti in senso stretto, jułiani, istriani e dalmati, popołi fradei dei quałi a non podemo dismentegar el atacameto a la Serenisima) e i poki “foresti” i gaveva capio on mucio ben le so tadision nautike, miłitari, cuturałi e storike. La lengoa ke se doprava la xera el veneto, a tuti i livełi. In tel 1849, dopo la rivolusion veneta capitanà da Daniele Manin, ghe xera sta, xe vero, na serto “ostrisixasion”: in te la denominasion uficiałe la espresion “veneta” la xera sta cavà, ghe xera sta on grosso ricanbio fra i uficiałi e el tedesco el xera diventà la lengoa “prinsipale”. Sto cambiamento però no’l

podeva mia esar asorbìo in tel jiro de poki mexi; e no se pol alora darghe torto a Guido Piovene, el grandò intelektuale Veneto del novesento, ke'l considerava Lissa la ultima granda vitoria de la marina veneta-adriatica. [...]

(E.B.: *Navi de legno co equipaji de fero contro navi de fero co equipaji de legno*. Numero 10)

Ła matina del 20 lujo 1866 ła flota del regno d'italia scomisia a bombardar łe fortificasion deła isola de Lissa par pareciar un sbarco e ciapar queło ke jera considerà un ponto strategico determinante par el controło de el mare Adriatico. Jera pasà manco de un mese dała sconfita patia a Custosa (24 jugno) e el governo talian gaveva asołutamente bixogno de na vitoria ke giustificase ai oci de el resto deła Europa, ła conquista del Veneto. Ła bataja, organisà in tua freta, xe comisiada soa pì granda taliota improvisasion. Ła flota taliana jera granda de numero e fata da un mucio de navi moderne in acciaio e, almanco soła carta, ła jera un mucio pì forte de ła flota asburgica, fata quasi del tuto da imbarcasion de legno, vecie e superae. Ła superiorità ła jera soło teorica. Prima de tuto ła flota taliana jera el risultato deła recente fusion fra queła sarda e queła napoletana, ke no se jera mai veramente amalgamae: in particolare i marinai liguri no i soportava (come ga scritto Costa Carol) el bocon amaro de łe taje imposte dai camoristi napoletan. Ła flota ła jera comandà da el conte Carlo Pellion de Persano, un vecio strafanto pasà ała politica dała marina e torna a sta qua in ocaxion deła guera. Se jera rivà al ponto ke nisuni gaveva na carta de Lissa e el ministro gaveva autorixà a 'ndar a conprarghene una so un negosio de Ancona. E come se tuto sto qua no bastase, a l'inisio del combattimento co ła flota nemiga, el Persano se trasferise dała amiraglia "Re d'italia" a "El Afondatore" senza dirgheło a staltri comandanti, ke cusì i se trova senza de na fonte sicura da dove ciapar i ordini. Da staltra parte ghe jera na flota pì picinina par numaro e par armamenti ma guidada da un amirajo, Wilhem Von Tegetthoff, xovane e bravo. Co eło ghe jera oficiałi ke provegneva da el glorioxo Colegio Marin de Venexia e ke de sołito ciacoava tra lori, oltre ke co el tedesco, doparando el Veneto. Anca se i oficiałi veneti i jera el grupo etnico pì grandò ma no i jera majoransa, el Veneto jera comunque ła "lengua de bordo" soratuto soi raporti co i equipaji ke jera in majoransa fati de Veneti, Istriani e Dalmati. A Lissa ła canoniera Palestro vien fondà colpia da un mucio de colpi mortali, e ła "Re d'italia" coła a pico speronà dała amiraja austriaca "Ferdinand Max". Co sta nave va fondo łe uniformi de gała de el amirajo e 400 omeni, compreso el scrittore Boggio ke doveva portare soła storia łe gesta de Persano. Na lejenda vołe ke ła sparision tra łe onde deła corasata "Re d'italia" ła xe stada compagnada da un tonante urlo de "Viva San Marco!", lancià da l'equipajo dei marinai Veneti deła amiraglia imperiale. Ła sera se ga contà 620 morti fra i taliani e 38 fra i austro-veneti. Guido Piovene ła definirà "l'ultima grande vittoria della marina veneta". Dopo Lissa, Persano el vegnerà procesà e degradà inaugurando cusida keła consuetudine fra amiragli e tribunałi (e sospeti de tradimento) ke 'ndarà a caraterixar ła storia deła marina taliana.

(OnetoG.: *Ła xe stada ła ultima vitoria miłitare del Veneto*. Numero 1)

Looking at how these two articles we can list the orthographic choices made by the authors of the journal:

- Use of intervocalic <ł> for example in *navate* ‘naval’, *Aleansa* ‘alliance’, *politicamente* ‘politically’, *Italia* ‘Italy’, *tricolore* ‘tricolour’, *possibilità* ‘possibility’, *umiliar* ‘to mortify’, *assolutamente* ‘absolutely’, *particolare* ‘particular’, *tengoa* ‘tongue’, *livehi* ‘levels’, *controlo* ‘control’, *solo* ‘only’, *vołe* ‘(he/she) wants’;
- Use of <x> to represent the voiced s between vowels and in the forms of the verb *to be* such as in *xe/xera* ‘was/were’, *ixola* ‘island’, *exèrcito* ‘army’, *invaxo* ‘invaded’, *decixo* ‘decided’, *mexi* ‘months’, *bixogno* ‘need’, *ocaxion* ‘occasion’, *autorixà* ‘authorized’, *xovane* ‘young’, *glorioxo* ‘glorious’, *caraterixar* ‘characterize’; when [z] is placed between a vowel and a consonant (ex. *dismintegar* ‘to forget’) or at the beginning of the word followed by a voiced consonant (ex. *sbarco* ‘landing’) is represented with <s>;
- The voiceless s is represented with <s> and, when it is intervocalic, is never doubled: *conosuda* ‘met’, *scomisià* ‘started’, *Prusia* ‘Prussia’, *armistisio* ‘armistice’, *denominasiòn* ‘designation’, *espresìon* ‘expression’, *tradisiòn* ‘tradition’, *rivolusiòn* ‘revolution’, *nisuni* ‘nobody’, *negosio* ‘shop’, *inisiò* ‘beginning’;
- Use of <j> to represent the palatal semi-vowel such as in *jeografi* ‘geographers’, *jugno* ‘June’, *tajani* ‘Italians’, *asburjico* ‘Habsburg’, *lujo* ‘July’, *Reja* ‘royal’, *equipaji* ‘crew’, *bataja* ‘battle’, *amirajo* ‘admiral’, *majoransa* ‘majority’, *lejenda* ‘legend’;
- Use of <k> to represent the voiced velar plosive as you can see in *antikità* ‘ancient times’, *dikiarà* ‘declared’, *ke* ‘that’, *nautike* ‘nautical’, *keła* ‘that (fem.)’;
- Use of the grapheme <s-c> such as in *s-ciopà* ‘exploded’ to show that the voiceless alveolar fricative represented with <s> and the voiceless palatal affricate expressed with <c> are to be pronounced separately.

5.4 The *Grafia Veneta Riformata* by Paolo Pegoraro

Paolo Pegoraro was born in Charleroi (Belgio) in 1952 to Veneto emigrants. He studies religion and natural sciences and he is also interested in spreading Veneto culture and language. He published several books such as *Veneto: una lingua da salvare* and *El gaŕepin deŕa bàtoŕa axoŕana*²².

The *Grafia Veneta Riformata* (GVR) unifies the way of writing the different Veneto varieties so that every speaker is free to pronounce words according to his or her variety. The GVR is based on the following principles: first of all, in order to have a single Veneto writing, people have to accept a multipurpose system, which lets people write every dialect with the same set of graphemes; secondly, in order to build this type of writing a scientific method is necessary. The GVR is defined by the author as a new and reformed version of the *Grafia Veneta Unitaria* (GVU) proposed by Regional Council. While the GVU adopts graphemes taken from the IPA alphabet, less known among people, and Italian orthography, the GVR uses graphemes which are common in the Latin linguistic area and a phonetic orthography (http://www.venetieventi.it/st_gvr/index.htm).

The alphabet suggested by Pegoraro is the following:

- Open central vowel: <a>
- Voiced bilabial plosive:
- Voiceless palatoalveolar affricate: <c>
- Voiced dental plosive: <d>
- Semi-close front vowel: <é>
- Semi-open front vowel: <è>
- Voiceless labiodental fricative: <f>
- Voiced velar plosive: <g>
- Close front vowel: <i>
- Voiced palatal affricate: <j>

²² Dictionary of Asolo language.

- Voiceless velar plosive: <k>
- Lateral alveolar liquid: <l>
- Relaxed dorso-palatal approximant (evanescent *l*) and silent lateral: <ɫ>
In case of silent *l* the grapheme can be replaced by an apostrophe.
- Bilabial nasal: <m>
- Alveo-dental and velar nasal: <n>
- Semi-open back vowel: <ò>
- Semi-close back vowel: <ó>
- Voiceless bilabial plosive: <p>
- Alveolar trill: <r>
- Voiceless alveolar fricative: <s>
- Voiceless dental plosive: <t>
- Voiced labio-dental fricative: <v>
- Close back vowel: <u>
- Palatal semi-vowel: <y>
- Voiced alveolar fricative: <x>
- Voiceless interdental fricative: <th>
- Voiced interdental fricative: <dh>
- Voiced palatal nasal: <ny>

5.5 Conclusion

In the following table the four alphabets proposed in this chapter are schematized:

	Voiced <i>s</i>	Evanescent <i>l</i>	Voiceless interdental fricative [θ]	Voiced interdental fricative [ð]	Palatal semi- vowel [j]	[s]+ [ʃ]	Use of geminate consonants
Brunelli	<x>	<l/ℓ>	<ç> ²³	<z> ²⁴	<j>	<s-c>	No doubling
<i>Quàtro Ciàcoe</i>	<s/x/z>	<l>	-	-	<j>	<s-c>	Ss Other consonants are not doubled
<i>Raixe Venete</i>	<x/s>	<l>	-	-	<j>	<s-c>	No doubling
<i>Grafia Veneta Riformata</i>	<x>	<l>	<th>	<dh>	<y>	-	-

Fig 5 Set of graphemes used by the authors

Looking at the chart we can notice that the representation of the voiced *s* is rather varied. In two cases out of four the grapheme <x> is used systematically, in other cases the graphemes <x>, <z> and <s> alternate. With regard to the evanescent *l*, in the majority of cases the grapheme <l> is used. Brunelli has proposed also <ℓ> because it is a symbol present on every keyboard and so it makes writing easier. Regarding the representation of dental fricatives, the authors of the two periodicals do not use them, while the other two make two different suggestions. Brunelli has adopted <ç> for the voiceless dental and <z> for the voiced dental; Pegoraro has chosen two digraphs: <th> for the voiceless dental and <dh> for the voiced dental. The palatal semi-vowel is for the majority represented with <j>; only Pegoraro adopts <y>. The representation of the phoneme composed of the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiceless palatal affricate is also uniform: the grapheme proposed is <s-c>. Finally, with regard to geminate consonants, in one case out of four the voiceless alveolar fricative is doubled, for the rest there is no doubling.

²³ More precisely, it represents the voiceless fluctuating phonemes.

²⁴ More precisely, it represents the voiced fluctuating phonemes.

6. The dictionaries by Giovanni Beggio, Silvio Lancerini, Luigi Pianca and Gianni Sparapan

In this chapter I make a comparative analysis of a series of words having specific sounds in different Veneto varieties that is Polesano, Bellunese, Trevigiano, and Vicentino. I use some recently published dictionaries and, as regards Vicentino, I use my competence as native speaker. This comparison will be useful to give a possible explanation for the apparent inconsistency of the orthographic systems adopted by Ruzante, Sanudo, Goldoni, and Boerio as well as the spelling used by the present-day authors.

6.1 The Polesano dictionary by Giovanni Beggio (1995)

Giovanni Beggio in his dictionary of 1995 collects a great number of characteristic words of Polesano, specifying the geographic area of belonging:

- Northern Polesine that is the North-Western part of Rovigo province, from Villa d'Adige-Badia to Lendinara-Villanova del Ghebbo;
- Central Polesine that is the South-Western and central part of Rovigo province, from Castलगuglielmo-San Bellino-Fratta to Rovigo-Caregnano-Crespino;
- Southern Polesine that is the Eastern part of Rovigo province: Adria, its territory and the Po delta.

The phonetic transcription used by Beggio is simplified in order to make the reading of the dictionary easier. The most significant graphemes are:

- <è>: open *e* as the Italian *tèsta*;
- <é>: close *e* as the Italian *mélo*;
- <ò>: open *o* as the Italian *còro*;
- <ó>: close *o* as the Italian *cónca*;
- <č>: voiceless palatal affricate as the Italian *cinque*;
- <g>: voiced velar plosive as the Italian *gamba*;
- <ǰ>: voiced palatal affricate as the Italian *giro*;
- <j>: voiced fricative very similar to the semi-vocalic *i*, which often alternates with <ǰ>;

- <k>: voiceless velar plosive as the Italian *cane*;
- <ñ>: palatal nasal as the Italian *sogno*;
- <s>: voiced fricative as the Italian *sole*;
- <ʃ>: voiced fricative as the Italian *casa*;
- <z>: voiceless alveolar affricate as the Italian *alzare*;
- <ʒ>: voiced alveolar affricate as the Italian *zero*;
- <d>: voiced interdental.

6.2 The Basso Cison Bellunese dictionary by Silvio Lancerini (1993)

The area of Basso Cison Bellunese, also called Western Feltrino, includes Lamon, Sovramonte, Fonzas, and Arsiè. The author maintains that he chose a phonetic and orthographic system as similar as possible to the Italian language in order to make the reading of the dictionary easier for the speakers of this variety. In the first pages of the dictionary the author describes the meaning of the adopted graphemes:

- <c>: it has the same sounds and spelling of Italian. At the end of the word it has a plosive sound and it is represented with <ch> such as in *bósch* ‘wood’, except four words that end with a “soft” *c*: *a fuc* ‘to seize up’, *biròc* ‘cart’, *ciuc* ‘donkey’, *spónc* ‘thorn’;
- <d>: the same sound of the English *th* (the “soft” version) such as in the word *other*. It corresponds to [ð];
- <g>: it expresses both the voiced velar plosive and the voiced palatal affricate;
- <j>: it is a semi-consonant that in several cases is substituted with the “soft” *g* (voiced palatal affricate);
- <s>: it represents both the voiceless alveolar fricative and the voiced alveolar fricative;
- <s’c>: the apostrophe shows that the “soft” *c* (voiced palatal affricate) is preceded by *s* (voiceless alveolar fricative) and that the two sounds are pronounced separately;
- <z>: it is very similar to the English *th* (the “harsh” version) such as in the word *thought*. It corresponds to [θ].

6.3 The Trevigiano dictionary by Luigi Pianca (2011)

Luigi Pianca in his dictionary takes into consideration the area between Piave and Livenza. The adopted graphemes are:

- <zh>: voiceless interdental such as in *zhavata* ‘slipper’;
- <dh>: voiced interdental such as in *dhente* ‘people’;
- <c>: voiceless velar plosive when it is followed by *a, o, u, h* as in *casa* ‘house’, *chilo* ‘kilo’, *córlo* ‘spindle’, *cuor* ‘heart’; voiceless alveolar affricate when it is followed by *i, e* as in *césa* ‘church’, *cèò* ‘little’;
- <g>: voiced velar plosive when it is followed by *a, o, u, h* as in *gat* ‘cat’, *govo* ‘egg’; voiced post-alveolar affricate when it is followed by *i, e* as in *giro* ‘circuit’, *gemo* ‘ball’;
- <s>: voiceless alveolar fricative when it is followed by *a, o, u*; voiced alveolar fricative when it is placed between vowels.

6.4 The dictionary of the dialect spoken between Adige and Canalbianco by Gianni Sparanpan (2009)

For the central Polesano variety the author uses the following graphemes:

- <c>: voiceless velar plosive and voiceless palatal affricate;
- <d̥> or <dh>: voiced interdental;
- <g>: voiced velar plosive and voiced palatal affricate;
- <gn>: palatal nasal;
- <s>: voiceless alveolar fricative;
- <ʃ>: voiced alveolar fricative, it is placed before voiced consonants;
- <ts>: it is used only for some words that are: *tsingagno* ‘gypsy’, *tsigaréta* ‘cigarette’, *tsìgaro* ‘cigar’, *tsìngano* ‘gypsy’, *tsìnganón* ‘gypsy (pej.)’;
- <x>: voiced alveolar fricative, symbol used only at the beginning of the word when it is followed by a vowel, for example in *xéna* ‘armpit’, *xìʃola* ‘jujube’, *xolare* ‘to fly’, *xólo* ‘flight’ and in the forms of the verb *to be*;
- <ʒ>: voiceless alveolar affricate;
- <ʒ̣>: voiced alveolar affricate;

- <ɫ>: it is the intervocalic *l*, which is pronounced as a prosecution of the preceding vowel. It corresponds to the evanescent

6.5 Phonetic variations

In the following tables I present a list of words that have fluctuating phonemes between the different varieties, both at the beginning and inside the word. The variations concern in particular the voiced and voiceless affricate and fricative consonants. This comparative analysis is based on a research made by Michele Brunelli presented in an article that has not yet been published.

6.5.1 Voiceless fluctuating phonemes [s, θ, ts]

At the beginning of the word:

	Beggio [ts]	Lancerini [θ]	Pianca [θ]	Sparapan [ts]	My variety [s]
Ash	<i>Zénare</i>	<i>zéndre</i>	<i>zhendre</i> <i>zhènerè</i>	<i>zénare</i> <i>zèndare</i>	<i>Sénare</i>
Belt	<i>Zintura</i>	<i>zentùra</i>	<i>zhentura</i>	<i>zintura</i> <i>zentura</i>	<i>Sintura</i>
Brain	<i>zarvèlo</i> <i>zervèlo</i>	<i>zarvèl</i>	<i>zharvel</i>	<i>zarvèlo</i>	<i>Servèlo</i>
Circle	<i>Zerčo</i>	<i>zèrcio</i>	-	<i>zércio</i>	<i>Sércio</i>
cimitery	<i>zimitèrio</i> <i>simitèrio</i>	<i>zimitèro</i>	<i>zhimitero</i>	<i>zimitèrio</i> <i>simitèrio</i>	<i>Simitèro</i>
dinner	<i>zena</i> ²⁵	<i>zéna</i>	<i>zhena</i>	<i>zéna</i>	<i>Séna</i>
Five, fifty, five	<i>zinkue,</i> <i>zinkuanta,</i>	<i>zìnque,</i> <i>zinquanta,</i>	<i>zhinque,</i> <i>zhinquanta,</i>	<i>zìnquē,</i> <i>zinqūanta,</i>	<i>sinque,</i> <i>sinquanta,</i>

²⁵ It is also written with the voiceless fricative, but it has another meaning: *sèna* ‘cassia (tree)’ and *séna* ‘scene’.

hundred	<i>zinkuezentō</i>	<i>zinquēzentō</i>	<i>zhinquēzhentō</i>	<i>zinqūezèntō</i>	<i>sinquesentō</i>
Hedge	²⁶	<i>ziésa</i>	<i>zhiésa</i>	-	<i>siésa</i>
Left	<i>Zanka</i>	<i>zànca</i>	<i>zhanca</i>	<i>zanca</i>	<i>sanca</i>
Leg (of animal)	<i>Zata</i>	<i>zata</i>	<i>zhata</i>	<i>zata</i>	<i>sata</i>
Onion	<i>Zéola</i>	<i>zéola</i>	<i>zhéola</i> <i>zhégola</i>	<i>zégola</i>	<i>siola</i>
Print	<i>Zapega</i>	-	<i>zhàpega</i>	-	<i>sàpega</i>
Pumpkin	<i>Zuka</i>	<i>zuca</i>	<i>zhuca</i>	<i>zuca</i>	<i>suca</i>
Slipper	<i>Zavata</i>	<i>zavàta</i>	<i>zhavata</i>	<i>zavata</i>	<i>savata</i>
Summit	<i>Zima</i>	<i>zima</i>	<i>zhima</i>	<i>zima</i>	<i>sima</i>
to be delirious	<i>Žavariare</i>	<i>zavariàr</i>	<i>zhavariar</i>	<i>zavariare</i>	<i>savariare</i>
try	<i>Zerkare</i>	<i>zercàr</i> <i>sajàr</i>	<i>zhercar</i>	<i>zercare</i>	<i>sercare</i>
wax/ appearance	<i>Zéra</i>	<i>zéra</i>	<i>zhera</i>	<i>zièra</i>	<i>siéra</i>

Fig. 6 Voiceless fluctuating phonemes at the beginning of the word

Inside the word:

	Beggio [ts]	Lancerini [θ]	Pianca [θ]	Sparapan [ts]	My variety [s]
Beauty	-	<i>beléza</i>	<i>belezha</i>	<i>beléza</i>	<i>belésa</i>
Curl	<i>rizolarse</i>	<i>rizolarse</i>	-	<i>rizarse</i>	<i>risolarse</i>
Greatness	<i>grandéza</i>	-	<i>grandezha</i>	<i>grandéza</i>	<i>grandésa</i>
Ice	<i>Ġazo</i>	<i>jaz</i>	<i>jazh</i>	<i>giazo</i> <i>Jazo</i>	<i>giaso</i>

²⁶ The term is not present in the dictionary.

Misfortune	-	<i>degràzia</i>	-	<i>deşgrazia</i>	<i>Dezgrasia</i>
Song	<i>kanzón</i>	<i>canzón</i>	-	<i>canzón</i>	<i>cansón</i>
Sweet	<i>dólze</i>	<i>dólz</i>	<i>dolz</i>	<i>dólze</i>	<i>dolse</i>
Vat	<i>tinazo</i>	<i>tinàz</i>	<i>tinàzh</i>	<i>tinazo</i>	<i>tinaso</i>

Fig. 7 Voiceless fluctuating phonemes inside the word

6.5.2 Voiced fluctuating phonemes [z, d, ð, dz]

At the beginning of the word:

	Beggio [ð] and [dz]	Lancerini [ð]	Pianca [ð]	Sparapan [ð] and [dz]	My variety [z] and [d]
Add	<i>dóntare</i> <i>dhóntare</i> <i>ʒóntare</i>	<i>dóntar</i>	<i>dhontar</i>	<i>Đontare</i> <i>žontare</i>	<i>Zontare</i> <i>dontare</i>
son-in-law	<i>ʒènarò</i> <i>ʒèndarò</i>	<i>déndre</i>	-	<i>Đénarò</i> <i>Žénarò</i>	<i>zènero</i>
January	<i>ʒenàro</i> <i>ḡenàro</i>	<i>degnèr,</i> <i>jenàro</i>	<i>dhenàjo</i> <i>dhenarò</i> <i>genàjo</i> <i>genarò</i>	<i>Đenàro</i> <i>Ženàro</i>	<i>zenàro</i>
People	<i>dènte</i> <i>ʒènte</i>	<i>dént, jénte</i>	-	<i>Đente</i> <i>Žente</i>	<i>zénte</i>
Already	<i>ʒà</i>	<i>jà</i>	-	<i>Đà</i> <i>Žà</i>	<i>zà</i>
Yellow	<i>dalo</i> <i>ʒalo</i>	<i>dàl</i>	-	<i>Đalo</i> <i>Žalo</i>	<i>zalo</i> <i>dalo</i>
Knee	<i>dénočo</i>	<i>danójo,</i>	<i>dhenòcio</i>	<i>Đenòcio</i>	<i>zénòčo</i>

	<i>ženòčo</i>	<i>danócio</i>		<i>ženòcio</i>	<i>danočo</i>
Play	<i>dugare</i> ²⁷ <i>žogare</i>	<i>dugàr</i>	<i>dhogar/dhugar</i>	<i>Đugare</i> <i>Žugare</i>	<i>zugare</i>
Player	<i>žogadóre</i>	<i>dugaór</i>	<i>dhogaor</i>	<i>Đugadore</i> <i>žugadore</i>	<i>zugadore</i>
Young	<i>dóveno</i> <i>žóvene</i>	<i>dóven</i>	-	<i>Đóvane</i> <i>Žóvane</i>	<i>zovane</i>
Thursday	<i>žòbia</i> <i>žòba</i> <i>žìòba</i>	<i>dóba</i>	<i>dhióba</i>	<i>Đòbia</i> <i>Žòbia</i>	<i>zòbia</i>
Down	<i>Dó</i> <i>žó</i>	<i>dó</i>	<i>dhò</i>	<i>Đó</i> <i>Žó</i>	<i>zó</i>

Fig.8 Voiced fluctuating phonemes at the beginning the word

Inside the word:

	Beggio [dz] and [ð]	Lancerini [ð]	Pianca [ð]	Sparapan [ð] and [dz]	My variety [z] and [d]
middle	<i>Mèdo</i>	<i>mèd</i>	<i>medho</i>	<i>mèđo</i> <i>mèzo</i>	<i>mèzo</i> <i>mèdo</i>
worse	<i>pèžo</i>	<i>pèdo</i>	<i>pedho</i>	<i>pèžo</i>	<i>pèzo</i> <i>pèdo</i>
cry	<i>piànžare</i>	<i>piànder</i>	<i>piànder</i> <i>piàndher</i>	<i>piàndare</i> <i>piànžare</i>	<i>pianzare</i>

Fig. 9 Voiced fluctuating phonemes inside the word

²⁷ For the noun *gioco* both orthographic variants exist, but the meaning is different: *dugo* ‘owl’ and ‘lazy, asocial person’; *žògo/žugo* ‘play’.

6.5.3 Observations

These phonetic fluctuations do not occur systematically. For example, they are not present in the following words:

- (1) *rafón/ rasón/ rason/ raşón/ razón* ‘reason’
- (2) *visión/ vizión* ‘vision’
- (3) *dièfe/ diése/ dièşe/ diéşe* ‘ten’
- (4) *dis/ dişe/ dize* ‘(he/she) says’
- (5) *kasa/ casa/ caşa/ caza* ‘house’
- (6) *prefón/ presón/ preson/ preşón/ prezón* ‘prison’
- (7) *pafe/ pàse/ pase/ paşe/ paze* ‘peace’
- (8) *piafère/ piàser/ piaşère/ piàzare* ‘to like’
- (9) *Pasión/ pasión/ passion/ pasión/ pasión* ‘passion’
- (10) *Pročesión/ prodissión/ procission/ processión/ procesión* ‘procession’
- (11) *dèso/ adèss/ ‘dess/ dèss/ dèso* ‘now’
- (12) *èsare/ èsser/ èssare/ èsare* ‘to be’
- (13) *lasare/ assàr/ assar/ lassare/ lasare* ‘to leave’
- (14) *ŷbrisión/ sbrissón/ sbrisson/ şbrissón/ zbrisión* ‘bad fall’
- (15) *nàsare/ nàsser/ nasar/ nàssare/ nàsare* ‘to born’
- (16) *kusi/ cossi/ cussi/ cusita* ‘so, in this way’

6.6 Conclusion

Taking into consideration the data gathered from the dictionaries, one can notice that the orthographic systems of Ruzante, Sanudo, Goldoni, and Boerio described in chapter two are not as inconsistent as they appeared initially:

- <x> tends to appear when today there is the voiced alveolar fricative: *xe, diexe, dixè, caxa, mexe, chiexia, spexe, marchexe, suspexi, voxè, prexon, raxon, cuxino, exercito, auxilio, paxe, milanexi, ixola, piaxe, caxo, doxe, exordio, exercitio, exatori, Trevixo, elexé* (but not: **ðe/dze, *dieðe/diedze, *diðe/didze* etc.).
- <s> tends to appear when today there is the voiced alveolar fricative: *dise, amorose, preson, pesa, tasi, pase, piase, casa, defesa, provision, trevisana,*

brusar, persuasion, dismantar, presa, conclusion, cose, crose, ti se', pranso, disordine, presente, disegno, dodese, viso (but not: *diðe/didze, *amoroðe/amorodze, *preðon/predzon, *peða/pedza, *taði/tadzi, *paðe/padze, *piaðe/piadze, *caða/cadza etc.) or the voiceless alveolar fricative: *adesso, cassiti, fosse, cossì, intendesse, messiere, assè, poesse, essere, lassa, sbrisson, capisso, missier, assisterà, cussì, compatissa, fusse, nasser, cosse, messa, duchessa, pessima, dosso, grossi, interessi* (but not: *adeθo/adetso, *caθiti/catsiti, *foθe/fotse, etc.).

- <z> tends to appear when today there are the voiced fluctuating phonemes [z, ð, dz]: *pianze, zò, piezo/pezo, zenchioni, zente, zenaro, zerman, mezo, zenero, zuoba, za, zoveni, dispiaze* or the voiceless fluctuating phonemes [s, θ, ts]: *canzon, bolzon, sbolzonà, tinazo, inanzo, rizola, desgrazia, forze, comenziando, zima, ragazzi, taze, naranze, brazo, zifre, piazza, senza, amazar.*
- <ç> and <c> tend to appear when today there are the voiceless fluctuating phonemes [s, θ, ts]: *çiera, çento, francese, cena, certo, cibo, cerchio, cera.*

Having said that, these are tendencies but there are a restricted group of words that do not fit. For example, the grapheme <x> can represent also the voiceless alveolar fricative such as in *proximo, extremo, expugnare, exponendo, exprimer, extirpar, crucefixo, genuflexo, Veniexia*, or the palatal affricates as in *xelosia, xente, excessi*. The voiced palatal affricate could be also expressed by the grapheme <z> such as in the words *zorno, zentilomeni, zeneral, zentile*. Evidently, these words represent a minority and could be explained with a lack of a common orthographic system taught at school. It is also possible that at that time for some words more than one variant existed.

7. My suggestion for common Veneto spelling

In the previous chapters I have analysed the alphabets proposed by different authors from the sixteenth century until today, in particular to identify the graphemes they used to represent the problematic sounds of Veneto languages: the alveolar fricatives [s] and [z], the interdental fricatives [θ] and [ð], the post-alveolar affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ], the palatal semi-vowel [j] and the different pronunciations of [l]. The aim of the analysis was not simply that of describing the various alphabets, but also and above all that of analysing them critically, pointing out the strengths and the weaknesses. In this chapter, after a short summary of the alphabets, I give two examples of linguistic standardisation that have already been realized: the case of Friulian and Catalan. Then I will describe my proposal of a Veneto spelling. First of all I will describe the principles on which my alphabet is based, then I will list the graphemes giving reasons for the choice I made.

7.1 Summary of previous chapters

The spelling systems proposed by Ruzante, Goldoni, and Boerio described in chapter two have in common the fact that they appear not to be uniform and consistent, because a sound is often represented by two or more graphemes. An example is given by the voiced alveolar fricative, which is expressed with <s>, <z> or <x>. However, after having consulted some dictionaries of present-day Veneto varieties, I proposed a list of words having some fluctuating phonemes. To be more precise, the fluctuations concerned the voiced and voiceless affricate and fricative consonants. This analysis has shown that the spelling systems of the three abovementioned authors were not so much inconsistent as they appeared initially: the authors used certain graphemes for the words containing fluctuating phonemes, and certain graphemes for the other words with “fixed” sounds. With regard to the representation of [l], it is represented with the grapheme <l> in all phonetic contexts, probably because the evanescent pronunciation developed later.

The *Grafia Veneta Unitaria* proposed by the Regional Council of Veneto is based on a more complete and precise set of graphemes compared to the previous ones. It is similar

to the Italian graphic system in order to avoid peculiar and unusual symbols. It developed with the aim to adapt all dialects of Veneto and allows the use of alternative graphemes, more specifically:

- Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate: <c>, <ċ> and <c'>;
- Voiced interdental fricative: <d̥> and <dh>;
- Voiced palatal affricate: <g> and <ġ>;
- Palatal nasal: <n> and <ñ>;
- Voiceless alveolar fricative + voiced palatal affricate: <s-c> and <sc̣>;
- Voiceless interdental fricative: <zh> and <ž>;
- Voiced alveolar fricative: <x> and <s>.

The group of present-day authors taken into consideration in chapter four (Bertoncello, Girelli, Bertacco, Palmieri, Bandini and Isoli) use similar alphabets. To represent the voiceless alveolar fricative the graphemes <s> or <z> are adopted; to a smaller extent also <x> is used, but only for the forms of the verb *to be*. With regard to the lateral [l], <l> is almost always used, except for two authors who represent it with <e> when the pronunciation is evanescent. The palatal semi-vowel is expressed by <j> except for Palmieri who chose <i>. For the voiced interdental fricative the grapheme <ç> was adopted. Mocellin's *Libera Grafia Veneta* is recognizable because it is descriptive: the words are composed of single graphs, digraphs or trigraphs and in order to pronounce them it is necessary to read every sound in sequence. Here are some examples:

- Voiced palatal affricate: <tsj>;
- Voiced palatal affricate: <dzj>;
- Voiceless interdental fricative: <th>;
- Voiced interdental fricative: <dh>;
- Voiceless alveo-dental affricate: <ts>;
- Voiced alveo-dental affricate: <dz>;
- Palatal nasal: <nj>.

Chapter five was instead devoted to data gathered from the Internet. Brunelli in his *Manual*, which is entirely written in Veneto dialect, suggests a fixed set of graphemes

whose pronunciation changes according to the dialectal variety of the speaker. Therefore, a grapheme can correspond to two or more phonemes. Here are some examples:

- <ł> and <ł̣> correspond to the lateral [l] and to the evanescent *l*;
- <j> corresponds to the semi-palatal vowel and to the voiced palatal affricate;
- <ç> corresponds to the voiceless alveolar affricate, to the voiceless interdental fricative and to the voiced alveolar fricative;
- <z> corresponds to the voiced alveolar affricate, to the voiced interdental fricative and to the voiced alveolar fricative.

In the magazine *Quàtro Ciàcoe* and in the journal *Raixè Venete* the authors adopt a similar way of writing. They differ largely in the representation of evanescent *l*, expressed with <ł> in the first case and with <ł̣> in the second one and in the use of geminate consonants, which are absent in the second case. Finally, also Pegoraro's *Grafia Veneta Riformata* is a multipurpose spelling, which uses fixed graphemes with different pronunciations according to the dialectal variety. The digraphs <th> and <dh> are adopted to represent the voiceless and voiced interdental fricative respectively and <y> is used to express the palatal semi-vowel.

Here is the list of problematic phonemes with the respective graphic representations:

Voiceless alveolar fricative [s]:

- <s>
- <ss>
- <ç>

Voiced alveolar fricative [z]:

- <s>
- <z>
- <x>
- <ś>
- <ç>

Voiceless interdental fricative [θ]:

- <ç>

- <zh>
- <ĥ>
- <th>

Voiced interdental fricative [ð]:

- <d>
- <dh>
- <z>

Evanescent *l*:

- <ł>
- <l>
- <ł>
- <e>
- <é>

Voiceless palatal affricate [tʃ]:

- <chi>
- <ch>
- <c>
- <ċ>
- <c'>
- <tsj>

Voiced palatal affricate [dʒ]:

- <gi>
- <g>
- <ġ>
- <dzj>

Palatal semi-vowel [j]:

- <j>
- <i>
- <y>

7.2 Other examples of linguistic standardisation: the case of Friulian and Catalan

7.2.1 Friulian language

Friulian is spoken by about 300,000 people in Friuli Venezia Giulia (in Gorizia, Udine and Pordenone provinces) and in Veneto (in Portogruaro) (<https://www.ethnologue.com/language/fur>). Friulian is recognized as a linguistic minority from the Italian state, which declared it in the law no. 482/1999, and it is taught at school. In addition to this, the Regional Law no. 15 of 22th March 1996²⁸ states that:

Art. 13, paragraph 1: “[...] the Region defines the official spelling of Friulian language and it promotes its use and knowledge”.

Art. 13, paragraph 2: “The spelling codified [...] in the text «The standardised Friulian spelling» by prof. Xavier Lamuela, published in Udine in 1987 [...] is adopted as official spelling of Friulian language with the following modifications:

- a) Replacement of the digraph «*ts*» with the sign «*z*» inside the word and at the beginning of the word;
- b) Replacement of the digraph «*cu+vowel*» with the digraph «*qu+vowels*» in toponyms and historical onomastics”.

(lexviewint.regione.fvg.it/fontinormative/xml/xmllex.aspx?anno=1996&legge=15)

The official spelling of Friulian language published by ARLeF is composed of the following graphemes:

- <*cj*> and <*gj*>: they represent the voiceless and voiced post-palatal consonants respectively²⁹. Ex. *cjan* ‘dog’, *gjat* ‘cat’;
- <*c+i*> and <*ç+ a, e, o, u*>: they represent the voiceless palatal affricate. Ex. *cine* ‘cinema’, *çoc* ‘log’, *çuc* ‘summit’;
- <*z*>: it represents the voiceless dental affricate inside the word or in foreign words such as *lezion* ‘lesson’, *stazion* ‘station’; the voiced palatal affricate in

²⁸ *Norme per la tutela e la promozione della lingua e della cultura friulane e istituzione del servizio per le lingue regionali e minoritarie.*

²⁹ These sounds do not exist in Italian.

words such as *zinar* ‘son-in-law’, *zes* ‘chalk’; the voiced dental affricate in words such as *zoo* ‘zoo’ and *zero* ‘zero’;

- <*s*>: it expresses the voiceless alveolar fricative at the beginning or at the end of the word and before a voiceless consonant such as in *seglot* ‘bucket’, *pas* ‘step’, *paste* ‘pasta’; voiced alveolar fricative between vowels. Ex. *muse* ‘face’;
- <’*s*>: it expresses the voiced alveolar fricative at the beginning of the word such as in *save* ‘toad’;
- <*ss*>: it represents the voiceless alveolar fricative between vowels, for example in *pussibil* ‘possible’;
- <*j*>: it expresses the palatal semi-vowel in words such as *joibe* ‘Thursday’;
- <*gn*>: palatal nasal as in *gnot* ‘night’.

What is more interesting is that Friulian dialects differ in the pronunciation of vowels, since in some varieties long vowels are actually pronounced as diphthongs, as shown in the following table:

	West	Carnia	Central
<i>pê</i> s ‘weight’	[peis]	[peis]	[pe:s]
<i>pî</i> t ‘foot’	[peit]	[pi:t]	[pi:t]
<i>vô</i> s ‘a little’	[vous]	[vous]	[vo:s]
<i>fû</i> k ‘fire’	[fouk]	[fu:k]	[fu:k]

Fig. 10 Friulian long vowels

Although there are several pronunciations, the words containing long vowels are always represented with the same graphemes, that is <*ê*>, <*î*>, <*ô*>, <*û*>. In fact, they are an example of multipurpose graphemes

(http://paoloroseano.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/6/3/43633727/roseano_dialetti_friulano.pdf).

7.2.2 Catalan language

Catalan is spoken by more than 9 million people in Spain (in Catalonia, in Valencia region and in the Balearic Islands), in France (in Rossiglione region), in the Republic of Andorra, and in Italy (in Alghero city). In Spain it is the second official language after Castilian. Catalan is a romance language that developed from Vulgar Latin. The first known written text in Catalan is *Homilies d'Organyà* and traces back to the period between the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. Flourished as the language of the poets, Catalan suffered a rest from 1474, year of the marriage between the king of Aragon and the queen of Castile. Castilian was chosen as the only language of administration and teaching, while Catalan was abolished until the nineteenth century, when it was re-discovered as elite language. In 1918 Pompeu Fabra published *Gramàtica Catalana* and completed the spelling standardisation. Catalan became the official language of the region during the Second Spanish Republic (1932-1939). From 1939 to 1975, during Franco's dictatorship, was again repressed and survived only at home, where people used it secretly. From 1978 it was recognized as co-official language in Spain together with Castilian, its teaching at school is obligatory, there exists Catalan television programmes and radios, and road signs are bilingual. Even though it is an official language, there are a number of variants and sub-variants with their own features. These variants are divided in two groups according to their phonological and morphological features: the western Catalan, which includes the northern and central part of Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and Alghero; the eastern Catalan, which includes the southern and western part of Catalonia, Valencia and eastern Aragon (Wheeler/Yates/Dols 1999).

In Catalan one can again find an example of multipurpose grapheme. The unstressed *o* is pronounced as [o] in Western Catalan (for example *p[o]sar* 'to put') and is pronounced as [u] in Eastern Catalan ('*p[u]sar*'). However, words containing an unstressed *o* are always written with the grapheme <o>, according to Western pronunciation (<http://www.cursdecatala.com> and Fabra 1980, 78).

7.3 My proposal

7.3.1 Aim and features

The ideal solution, as suggested by Brunelli and Pegoraro, would be to have a single spelling for all dialectal varieties of Veneto, which would include multipurpose graphemes corresponding to different phonemes according to the speaker's place of origin³⁰. In order to adopt this kind of spelling it would be necessary to use some diacritic symbols to mark these multipurpose graphemes. One has to take into consideration that in Italian, accents are the only symbols that are put close to the letters; therefore, the introduction of new, peculiar symbols would confuse the speaker, who would not know the correct pronunciation. In order for people to adopt this kind of spelling, it would be necessary to explain all rules in a grammar book so that children could learn them at school. Being taught at school, the dialect and the spelling could be acquired by children and could become commonly used, as happens with the Italian language.

The common spelling I propose in this chapter is based on the following principles:

- Use of some multipurpose graphemes, which have a fixed written form and a changing phonetic realization according to the dialectal variety of the speaker;
- Use of diacritics put close to graphemes;
- When required, use of unusual graphemes in order to achieve an accurate graphic representation of Veneto phonemes, especially of the problematic ones.

7.3.2 Common Veneto spelling

The common Veneto spelling I propose is composed of the following set of graphemes:

- Open central vowel: <a>
Ex. *arcobaleno* 'rainbow', *ava* 'bee'

³⁰ Multipurpose graphemes are also used in some standard languages. An example is given by the German <ch>, which is pronounced as a voiceless velar plosive in Low German, and as a voiceless palatal fricative or as voiceless velar fricative in High German. Some examples are: *i[k]-i[ç]* 'I' and *ma[k]en-ma[x]en* 'to do'. Another example is given by the Spanish <ll>. It represents the following phonemes: [ʎ] in standard Spanish, [j] or [dʒ] in several Spanish dialects; in Uruguay it is also pronounced as [ʒ] or [ʝ].

- Voiced bilabial plosive:
Ex. *bèstia* ‘beast’, *briscola* ‘briscola’
- Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate: <č>
Ex. *s-čopo* ‘shotgun’, *téča* ‘pot’, *mača* ‘spot’
I have chosen this grapheme because in some Eastern European languages such as Slovenian, Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, Slovak and Czech it is used to represent [tʃ]. The graphemes <c>, <ch>, and <chi> have been excluded to separate [tʃ] from the voiceless velar plosive. I do not consider the trigraph <tsj> proposed by Mocellin (2010) an appropriate symbol because in my opinion it is difficult to read and understand.
- Voiceless velar plosive: <c> when it is followed by [a], [o], [u]; <ch> when it is followed by [e], [i]
Ex. *caza* ‘house’, *cuzina* ‘kitchen’, *parché* ‘because’
I have taken into consideration the possibility of using the grapheme <k> in all contexts, but I have opted for the two abovementioned graphemes in parallel to the corresponding voiced velar plosive represented with <g> and <gh>, and also for “visual” reasons: in my opinion, <k> could be taken as an abbreviation.
- Voiced dental plosive: <d>
Ex. *drento* ‘dentro’, *dotor* ‘doctor’, *déo* ‘finger’
- Semi-close front vowel: <é>
Ex. *zénite* ‘people’, *puénta* ‘polenta’
- Semi-open front vowel: <è>
Ex. *cančèò* ‘gate’
- Voiceless labio-dental fricative: <f>
Ex. *fén* ‘hay’, *frèdo* ‘cold’
- Voiced palato-alveolar affricate: <ǰ>
Ex. *ǰaso* ‘ice’, *ǰosa* ‘drop’, *ǰévare* ‘hare’
The diacritic symbol ˇ, called “háček”, “caron” or “pípa”, is placed above certain letters in some Slavic and Baltic languages, as well as in Finnish and Estonian to indicate that such letter is palato-alveolar and not alveolar or to show that is palatalized. For this reason I have chosen the grapheme <ǰ> to represent the sound [dʒ], exactly as the corresponding voiceless[tʃ] represented with <č>.

- Voiced velar plosive: <g> when it is followed by [a], [o], [u]; <gh> when it is followed by [e], [i]
Ex. *gato* ‘cat’, *guera* ‘war’, *gheto* ‘(you) have’, *ghi nè* ‘There is/there are’
- Close front vowel: <i>
Ex. *inbuzà* ‘lost, hidden’, *inbriago* ‘drunk’
- Palatal semi-vowel: <j>
Ex. *ajo* ‘garlic’, *ojo* ‘oil’, *jutare* ‘to help’, *voja* ‘want, desire’
I have excluded the grapheme <i> in order not to confuse it with the vowel. It represents also the voiced palato-alveolar affricate, for example in the Venetian words *tajare* ‘to cut’, *voja* ‘will, desire’, *jera* ‘(it) was’
- Lateral alveolar liquid: <l>
Ex. *folpo* ‘octopus’, *late* ‘milk’, *lumega* ‘snail’
- Relaxed dorso-palatal approximant (evanescent *l*) and silent lateral: <ɭ>
Ex. *zbèsola* ‘chin’, *scola* ‘school’, *cariola* ‘wheelbarrow’
I have excluded the grapheme <ɭ> because it is already used to represent the lateral alveolar. Considering that in Veneto variants without evanescent *l* the consonant is pronounced as a simple lateral alveolar, I have excluded the grapheme <ɭ> in favour of <l>.
- Bilabial nasal: <m>
Ex. *mónega* ‘nun’, *masèa* ‘jaw’, *mòjo* ‘wet’
- Velar and alveo-dental nasal: <n>
Ex. *nona* ‘grandmother’, *nisoło* ‘sheet’
- Palatal nasal: <ɲ>
Ex. *gnénte* ‘nothing’, *gnaro* ‘nest’, *magnare* ‘to eat’
- Semi-open back vowel: <ò>
Ex. *tòco* ‘piece’, *sòto* ‘lame’
- Semi-close back vowel: <ó>
Ex. *póco* ‘a little’, *bón* ‘good’
- Voiceless bilabial plosive: <p>
Ex. *piégora* ‘sheep’, *puénta* ‘polenta’, *pičinin* ‘little’
- Alveolar vibrant: <r>
Ex. *rabuto* ‘sprout’, *rènto* ‘inside’, *radicio* ‘radicchio’

- Voiceless alveolar fricative: <*s*>
Ex. *dèso* ‘now’, *nàsare* ‘to born’, *èsare* ‘to be’
- Voiceless dental plosive: <*t*>
Ex. *tòco* ‘piece’, *tola* ‘table’, *tòčo* ‘sauce’
- Close back vowel: <*u*>
Ex. *uvi* ‘eggs’, *ùa* ‘grapes’
- Voiced labio-dental fricative: <*v*>
Ex. *véndema* ‘grape harvest’, *vin* ‘wine’, *vénto* ‘wind’
- Voiced alveolar fricative: <*z*>
Ex. *razón* ‘reason’, *dieze* ‘ten’, *caza* ‘house’, *viziòn* ‘vision’
- Voiceless fluctuating phonemes [s, θ, ts]: <*ş*>
Ex. *şénare* ‘ash’, *şintura* ‘belt’, *beleşa* ‘beauty’, *tinaşo* ‘tin’
I have taken into consideration to use the digraph <*sh*> but I think it would be confused with the sound [ʃ].
- Voiced fluctuating phonemes [z, d, ð, dz]: <*zh*>
Ex. *zhalo* ‘yellow’, *zhòbia* ‘thursday’, *mèzho* ‘middle’, *pèzho* ‘worse’

The following texts are two receipts of traditional Veneto dishes written with the common spelling I have proposed:

Pasta e fazói

Pa pareçare sto piato, se méte bojare i fazói so un bel poca de acua e sałe. So naltra téça se parèça un soffrito co lardo, şioła, sèdano, ajo, rozmarin e parşimoło pestai fini fini. Se zhonta acua bojénte e se travaza in prèsa i fazói dal so primo bródo de cotura. Se ghe méte sałe e se asa bojare a minèstra un bel tòco. Dopo se zhonta anca a pasta fata in caza co l’ovo. Se tira via dal fógo e se asa intiepidire, cusita nel fratémpo a pasta a se cuzina. Ghe ze chi che ghe méte anca dee strisiete de códega de mas-čo o chi che ghe zhonta un póco de buro cruo e lo monta nel licuido deła minestra.

Puénta

Pa fare a puénta bizogna prima de tuto métar su sol fógo na teça de acua sała e farla bojare. Dopo se zhonta un cuçaro de ojo e a farina zhała, un poco ała volta. Se zmisia co

un cučaro de legno sémpre nel stésò vèrso. Se a puénta a diventa masa dura bizogna zhontarghe un mestoło de acua calda. Più o meno dopo cuaranta minuti, a puénta scomișiarà stacarse dai bordi deła teča. Anca se a saria za bóna da magnare, ze mejo farla cuzinare altri vinti minuti cusita ła vien pi bóna. Cuando che a ze pronta, a se versa so un panaro de legno e a vien servia calda in toła.

My intention was to formulate a spelling that describes Veneto sounds with accuracy, consistency, and completeness. The result is a set of graphemes that can be used by every speaker of Veneto, even though there exists a number of sub-variants with their own phonological features. In my opinion, the solution to this problem is the use of multipurpose graphemes, which are special graphemes with several phonological readings according to the speaker's place of origin. I adopt four multipurpose graphemes: <ł>, which can be read as an alveolar lateral, a relaxed dorso-palatal approximant or a silent lateral; <j>, which represents the palatal semi-vowel or the voiced palate-alveolar affricate; <ş>, which is used to write those words containing the voiceless fluctuating phonemes [s, θ, ts]; <zh> used to write words containing voiced fluctuating phonemes [z, d, ð, dz].

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, after having taken into consideration all suggestions of other authors analysed in the previous chapters, I have presented my suggestion of a common Veneto spelling. It is a multipurpose spelling, composed of graphemes with a fixed written form and a changing pronunciation according to the dialectal variety of the speaker. The graphemes are often matched with some diacritics. Being an innovative kind of spelling, which uses symbols extraneous to the common usage, it should be spread through the school, including Veneto dialect as a subject.

8. Linguistic education and valorisation of dialects

8.1 How to adopt a common spelling

As mentioned in chapter seven, in order to spread a spelling of dialect so that it can be learned and adopted, it is necessary, after having written dictionaries and grammars, to educate people. In particular, in my opinion the dialect should be a subject in elementary schools besides Italian language and foreign languages such as English. Speaking of this, some debates and suggestions have developed over the years in Italy, especially from the Unification period, and are summarized later on.

Before Unification, both illiterates and learned people used dialect to communicate. Learned people used also *volgare fiorentino* in written texts, a vulgar tongue of Firenze which was used orally by a restricted group of nobles and clerics. Teachers in schools belonged to religious orders and taught only Latin. Thanks to the Casati law in 1859 (http://www.sintesidialettica.it/pedagogia/documenti/legge_casati.pdf), elementary school became obligatory and free for everyone, and Italian language began to be taught. For the first time, dialects acted as an intermediary language to understand Italian. The policy adopted in those years was anti-dialectal, because dialect was considered to be something to set apart in favour of a more learned language. Only some linguists such as Graziadio Isaia Ascoli opposed this idea, and thought that bilingualism was a value that had to be cultivated. Over the years some dialectal research developed through the writing of dialectal vocabularies and the collection of sayings and stories. During Fascism, school programs written from 1922 to 1924 by Giuseppe Lombardo Radice, who was employed by the then Education Minister Giovanni Gentile, allowed the use of dialect as a means to teach Italian. These programs received much criticism, and in a short time the policy became again anti-dialectal and purist in order to cultivate and to increase in value the national language. Until the 1950s dialects continued to constitute an obstacle to the teaching of Italian. With the beginning of 1960s the creation of GISCEL (*Gruppo di Intervento e di Studio nel Campo dell'Educazione Linguistica*) marked a turning point. Although teachers continued to focus on written language, on the correct use of language and on the correct pronunciation, linguistic education proposed by GISCEL embraced all

languages. From 1990s the number of pupils who had a good command of Italian was much higher; the first project for valorisation of dialect at school became popular. In the early 2000s the political party of Lega Nord suggested that certain dialects should become subjects taught in schools. This project was discussed seriously because it included only three dialects: Veneto, Lombardo and Piemontese. The draft bill seemed not to have pedagogic aims but political purposes. The objections were based on the idea that dialects cannot be taught because they do not have literature, they are not standardised in a grammar, they do not have common spelling, they continue to change and are too many, not to mention that there are no teachers with a proper education to teach dialects (Lunati/Lahni/Garcia 2015).

Personally, I do not agree with this claim. First of all, dialectal literature exists and it is also various: poems, stories, nursery rhymes, and plays have been written. To have some real examples, you only have to think of the Veneto authors mentioned in the previous chapters of this thesis. Secondly, it is true that dialects are always changing, but the same is true for Italian and all other standard languages, since change is an intrinsic feature of all languages of the world. It is also true that there are a great number of dialects; even if only by a little, they differ also between two neighbouring villages of the same province, for the pronunciation or for the use of some words. However, on reflection, also Italian is not written and spoken in exactly the same way in all regions of Italy. You have to take into consideration that every speaker is influenced by their regional variety and even if unintentionally they “personalize” their Italian. For this reason I think that it is more correct to speak of “regional Italians” instead of “standard Italian language”. The difference is that for Italian language a common regulation exists and it is codified in grammars and dictionaries and taught at school, while dialects, besides the fact that they are not a subject, are mostly oral languages. As I have explained in the previous chapters, both dialectal grammars and dictionaries have been written over the years, and some alphabets have been suggested, but they are disjointed proposals and they do not have a common line. They should be standardized with the help of central political authorities. Locally, the Veneto Region promotes several initiatives and activities for dialect valorisation also through the promulgation of regional laws. In the regional law no. 8 of 13th April 2008³¹

³¹ *Tutela, valorizzazione e promozione del patrimonio linguistico e culturale veneto.*

(<http://www.regione.veneto.it/web/cultura/lingua-e-cultura-veneta>) the fields of action of these initiatives are listed:

- Scientific research into the original linguistic heritage of Veneto in collaboration with Veneto universities, with qualified institutes, and with public and private cultural centres;
- Study grants and annual prizes for degree thesis that relate to the history, culture and historic and linguistic heritage of Veneto;
- Journalistic information and broadcasting of dialectal programmes;
- Training and refresher courses about history, culture and language of Veneto for teachers and students;
- Competitions in schools about the original linguistic heritage of Veneto;
- Annual prizes for work written in Veneto language;
- Edition and spread of books about Veneto;
- Research on local toponymy;
- Establishing of a special committee of experts for the creation of Veneto spelling.

In the same law the Festival of Veneto People was established. It takes place every year on 25th March, which is the symbolic date of the foundation of Venice, with the aim of “encouraging knowledge of the history of Veneto, increasing in value the original linguistic heritage, explaining the values of culture, customs, and public spirit, as well as of spreading the regional statute and symbols”.

The regional law no. 22 of 8th November 2010³² (<http://www.regione.veneto.it/web/cultura/manifestazioni-storiche-e-palii>) promotes the organisation of local, historical festivals as expression of the cultural heritage of the community.

The regional law no. 22 of 14th January 2003³³ (<http://www.regione.veneto.it/web/cultura/identita-veneta>) concerns initiatives of research, spread and valorisation of the cultural and linguistic heritage on which Veneto identity is based, for example meetings, workshops, research, publication, and events.

³² *Interventi per la valorizzazione delle manifestazioni storiche e palii.*

³³ *Iniziativa di promozione e valorizzazione dell'identità veneta.*

In spite of the help of the Region, the route to take so that dialect becomes a subject taught at school is long and difficult, because it should become an issue of national interest. From my point of view, we could start organising extracurricular projects addressed to pupils of elementary schools, such as the one I present below.

A draft project: “Study of culture, tradition, and language of Veneto”.

The aims are:

- Have general knowledge of the main historical facts of Veneto, its customs, traditions and literature;
- Study the history of Veneto language;
- Know all varieties of Veneto dialect and their main features;
- Investigate the phonological, morphological, and syntactic features of one’s own dialect;
- Read and understand texts written in Veneto dialect;
- Analyse the spelling of dialect;
- Write texts in Veneto dialect.

Time and place: weekly meetings in the rooms of the school in extracurricular time during the whole school year. The teachers will collaborate with an expert.

Methodology:

- Frontal lessons;
- Collection of material in Veneto dialect: poems, nursery rhymes, stories, diaries etc.;
- Interviews with native speakers;
- Reading aloud done by pupils;
- Transcription, translation and writing exercises.

Contents:

History of Veneto:

- Old Veneto settlements, Roman period and Germanic invasions;

- Rise and fall of the Republic of Venice;
- Habsburg rule and foundation of the Italian Reign;
- First and second world war and emigration period;
- Birth of the Italian Republic;
- Economic growth.

Veneto language:

- Origin: vulgar Latin;
- Classification of Veneto dialects;
- Phonological, morphological and syntactic features of Veneto dialects;
- Current condition, dialect preservation and regional laws;
- Veneto dialect in the world.

Veneto literature:

- Evidence in vernacular language;
- Veronese School of 1200;
- Franco-Veneto literature of 1300;
- Ruzante's work;
- Goldoni's plays;
- Present-day poets and writers

Check:

- Written and oral tests to verify if students have acquired knowledge;
- Observation of the pronunciation and writing;
- Observation of the interest and participation of pupils;
- Final questionnaire to investigate pupil's satisfaction.

In some Italian schools similar projects have been realized over the last years. For example, during the 2001/2002 school year in a high school in Enna the project "Study of Sicilian dialect and an in-depth analysis of the related linguistic, historical and cultural facts" was realized. The plan of the project was the study of the historical facts occurred in Sicily, the study of the linguistics of Sicilian dialect and of dialectal literature through frontal lessons, interviews to native speakers, transcription and translation exercises, guided tours around the region and film watching

(spazioinwind.libero.it/.../PROGETTO%20valorizzazione%20dialetto%20siciliano.do). In the 2009/2010 school year some teachers of the elementary school in Albisola Superiore (Savona) carried out the project “Dialect at school”. The aim was the rediscovery and valorisation of dialect and local tradition through the collection of nursery rhymes, proverbs, sayings, crafts, receipt and songs, with the help of the pupils’ relatives. The plan of the project was the gathering of material, the analysis (reading, translation, analysis of language and spelling) and the creation of an almanac (http://www3.indire.it/ipertesti_lt/html/content/index.php?id_cs=2805&id_pag=5413).

8.2 Conclusion

After a general outline of the history of linguistic education in Italy, I have presented the regional laws and the initiatives promoted by Veneto Region for the valorisation of dialect. In spite of the support of the Region, in order to have the common spelling spread and adopted, the help of central political authorities is crucial, but it is still a slow and difficult process. Thanks to the support of Veneto Region and relying on the collaboration of teachers, it should be possible to organise some projects at school, using extracurricular hours in the afternoon, in order to educate students to the knowledge and valorisation of Veneto culture and language. Some projects have already been organised. I provided two examples: the project “Study of Sicilian dialect and an in-depth analysis of the related linguistic, historical and cultural facts” undertaken in Enna in 2001/2002 and the project “Dialect at school” organised in Savona in 2009/2010.

Conclusion

Veneto dialect is mainly spoken at home and in informal situations. It is recognized as a language by Veneto Region, but not by the Italian state, which does not include it even among linguistic minorities. It is not taught at school and a common Veneto spelling does not exist, since it has not yet been codified. However, a great number of books have been written and published: dictionaries and grammar books as well as books of poems and stories. Every author decides how to represent the dialect in writing; therefore there are many different proposals for spelling.

There is not only one variety of Veneto dialect. Every town or village has its own variety, which differs from the variety spoken in neighboring town or village, even if only by a little. However, some linguists have identified five main varieties according to the geographic areas of the region: Venetian or Eastern Veneto, Paduan-Vicentino-Polesano or Central Veneto, Veronese or Western Veneto, Trevigiano-Feltrino-Bellunese or Northern Veneto, and the Ladin dialects.

Analysing the phonemes of Veneto dialects, I noticed that the most problematic sounds to transcribe are five: the alveolar fricatives [s] and [z], the interdental fricatives [θ] and [ð] and the different pronunciations of [l]. Before presenting my proposal of spelling, I studied how some ancient and present-day authors have written their works in dialect.

The spelling proposed by Ruzante, Sanudo, Goldoni and Boerio is apparently not homogeneous, since they use different graphemes to express one phoneme. An example is given by the voiced alveolar fricative, which is represented by <s>, <z> or <x>, apparently without a regular and logical rule.

The spelling proposed by the Regional Council of Veneto is much more complete and precise and aims at being adopted by all speakers of Veneto. However, it includes a great number of alternative graphemes with diacritic symbols; therefore, it turned out to be demanding to use for people who are not accustomed to this kind of symbols.

Also present-day poets and writers tend to use different graphemes to represent one phoneme, especially regarding the fricatives. More precise is the *Universal Veneto Spelling* proposed by Alessandro Mocellin, even if he suggested using many digraphs and trigraphs whose pronunciation has to occur in sequence. Even if he does not use many diacritic symbols, in my opinion it is not an intuitive system, even for a native speaker.

Examining four recently published dictionaries of some varieties of central and northern Veneto, a list of words containing voiceless and voiced fluctuating phonemes can be created. This has allowed observing that both old and contemporary authors tended to use the graphemes <z> and <ç> to represent these fluctuating phonemes, while they use the graphemes <x> and <s> to express the alveolar fricatives. These observations have been crucial for the elaboration of my Veneto spelling. I chose to use a set of multipurpose graphemes, similar to that proposed by Brunelli, since it allows accounting for all pronunciation differences of Veneto, maintaining a fixed written form.

I propose to adopt four multipurpose graphemes: <ł>, which can be read as an alveolar lateral, a relaxed dorso-palatal approximant or a silent lateral; <j>, which represents the palatal semi-vowel or the voiced palate-alveolar affricate; <ş>, which is used to write those words containing the voiceless fluctuating phonemes [s, θ, ts]; <zh> used to write words containing voiced fluctuating phonemes [z, d, ð, dz].

In my opinion, in order that people adopt a common spelling, not only should it be codified in dictionaries and grammar books, but also it should be taught at school. For this purpose the regional laws for dialect valorisation are not enough; this should become an issue of national interest so that we could gain the help of central political authorities. However, I think that something could be done also locally. For example, we could start organising extracurricular projects addressed to pupils of elementary schools, so that they could start gaining some knowledge about culture, tradition and language of Veneto.

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“Non pensare che una missione, una strada, una decisione sia troppo grande per te. Per quanto lungo possa essere un viaggio, se credi che sia quello giusto, intraprendilo.”

(Siba Shakib)