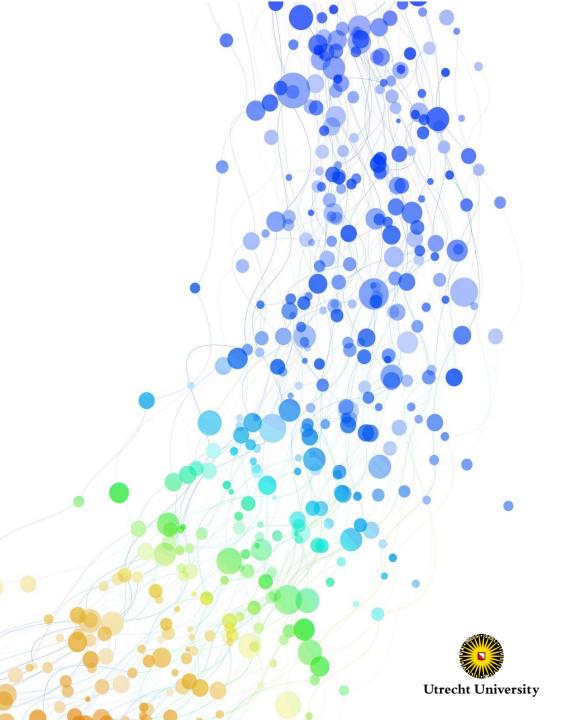
Honorificity, phi-agreement and an inside-view on pronouns and referentiality. The case of Italian *voi* and *lei*

Roberta D'Alessandro

Utrecht University, ILS

Romance Linguistics Circle 14 May 2024



In this talk

- → Honorificity
- → The three different components of honorifics
- → The role of agreement in understanding the internal structure of pronouns
- Some insights on language change in a dynamic syntactic environment



Two kinds of honorifics

Pronominal

Latin: UOS

Spanish: usted

Italian: voi, lei

French: vous

Portuguese: você

DP-honorifics

Spanish: Vuestra Señoria ("your lordship/ladyship")

Italian: Vossignoria (o.f.), Sua Maestà, Sua Santità

("your majesty")

Abruzzese: Signuri' (lordship, with 2SG)

Romanian: Excelența Voastră ("your excellency")

French: Votre honneur ("your honor")

Portuguese: Vossa Excelência ("your excellency")



From DP to pronoun

- → Vossa mercê > → Você PT your grace
- → Vuestra merced > → Usted SP

this will become relevant at the end



Some agreement patterns

Italian Voi, Lei (person, number, gender)

Voi= 2PL (now only restricted to some areas)

Lei= 3sg.F (later addition to the Italian system), ella

Niculescu, Alessandro. 1974. Strutture allocutive pronominali reverenziali in italiano, Firenze, Olschki. Serianni, Luca. 1988. Grammatica italiana. Italiano comune e lingua letteraria. Suoni, forme, costrutti, con la collaborazione di A. Castelvecchi, Torino, UTET, cap. 7°, §§ 84-97.

Molinelli, Piera. 2002. "Lei non sa chi sono io!": potere, solidarietà, rispetto e distanza nella comunicazione, «Linguistica e filologia» 14, pp. 283-302.

Renzi, Lorenzo. 2002. "Tu" e "voi" in italiano antico: da Dante, "Paradiso" (XV e XVI) al corpus elettronico TLIO, in Roma et Romania. Festschrift für Gerhard Ernst zum 65. Geburtstag, hrsg. von S. Heinemann & G. Bernhard & D. Kattenbusch, Tübingen, Niemeyer, pp. 269-285.

Scaglia, Claudia. 2003. Deissi e cortesia in italiano, «Linguistica e filologia» 16, pp. 109-145.



Some agreement patterns

→ Voi

- (1) Voi siete bella/-o [IT] you.2PL.HON are.2PL beautiful.F.SG/M.SG
- (2) Vous etes belle/beaux [FR] you.2PL.HON are.2PL beautiful.f.sg/M.sg



Some agreement patterns

(1) Voi siete bella/-o [IT] you.2pl.ном are.2pl beautiful.<mark>F.SG/M.SG</mark>

GENERALIZATION: THE COPULA AGREES WITH VOI, THE ADJECTIVE

AGREES WITH THE REFERENT

(3) *Voi siete belle/-i

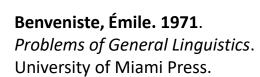
you.2PL are.2PL beautiful. F.PL/M.PL

You.2PL are beautiful

(OK WITH PLURAL REFERENTS)







Benveniste

→ Pronouns do not constitute a unitary class but are of different types depending on the mode of language of which they are the signs. Some belong to the syntax of a language, others are characteristics of what we shall call "instances of discourse", that is, the discreet and always unique acts by which the language is actualized in speech by a speaker

(Benveniste 1971:217)



Il faut voir que la définition ordinaire des pronoms personnels comme contenant les trois termes je, tu, il, y abolit justement la notion de "personne". Celle-ci est propre seulement à je/tu, et fait defaut dans il.

(Benveniste 1966:251)

Benveniste, Émile. 1966. Problèmes De Linguistique Générale 1. Paris: Gallimard.

In sum:

"Person" belongs only to I/you, and is lacking in s/he.'

There is more

The definition can now be stated precisely as: *I* is the individual who utters the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic instance *I*"

(Benveniste 1971: 218)

There is more

It is thus necessary to stress this point: *I* can only be identified by the instance of discourse that contains it and by that alone. [...] the form of *I* has no linguistic existence except in the act of speaking in which it is uttered. There is thus a combined double instance in this process: the instance of *I* as referent and the instance of discourse containing *I* as a referee"

(Benveniste 1971:218)



There is more

What's in an honorific

- → part of discourse
 - → phi-pronoun
- → 3 DIFFERENT THINGS



The three dimensions

(4) a. Hei said that hei would come

b. Hei said "li will come"

same referent
discourse/ bound variable
same phi pronoun

same referent discourse / pragmatics different phi pronoun

Putnam, Michael T. & Arnbjörnsdóttir, Birna. **2015.** Minimizing (interface) domains: The loss of longdistance binding in North American Icelandic, In: Moribund Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Findings, eds Richard Page & Michael T. Putnam. **Brill Academic** Publishers. pp. 203-223 (Empirical Approaches to Linguistic Theory).

C. Hann₁ segir alltaf að mamma hafi verið svo vond He says always that <u>mom</u> had been so mean

við $mig_1 (sig_1)$ Putnam& Arnbjörnsdóttir (2015) to me

'He always says that mom was so mean to him.'

same referent bound variable different phi pronoun



One thing is the referent, one thing is the discourse (binding, role), one thing are the syntactic (phi) features

honorifics

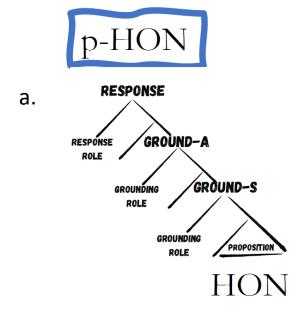
OLD question

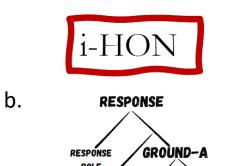
→ We see overt agreement – in a simple Y-model, where the "semantics" is inserted post-syntactically and compositionally, when do we insert the relevant phi-features?

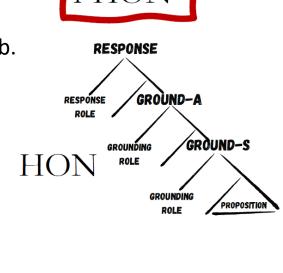


Can account for differences in distribution and context of use

(5)

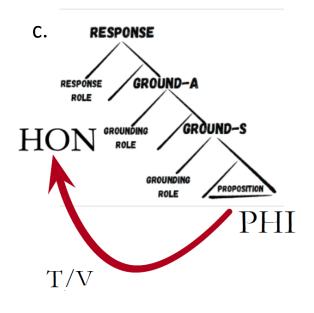






Japanese/Korean



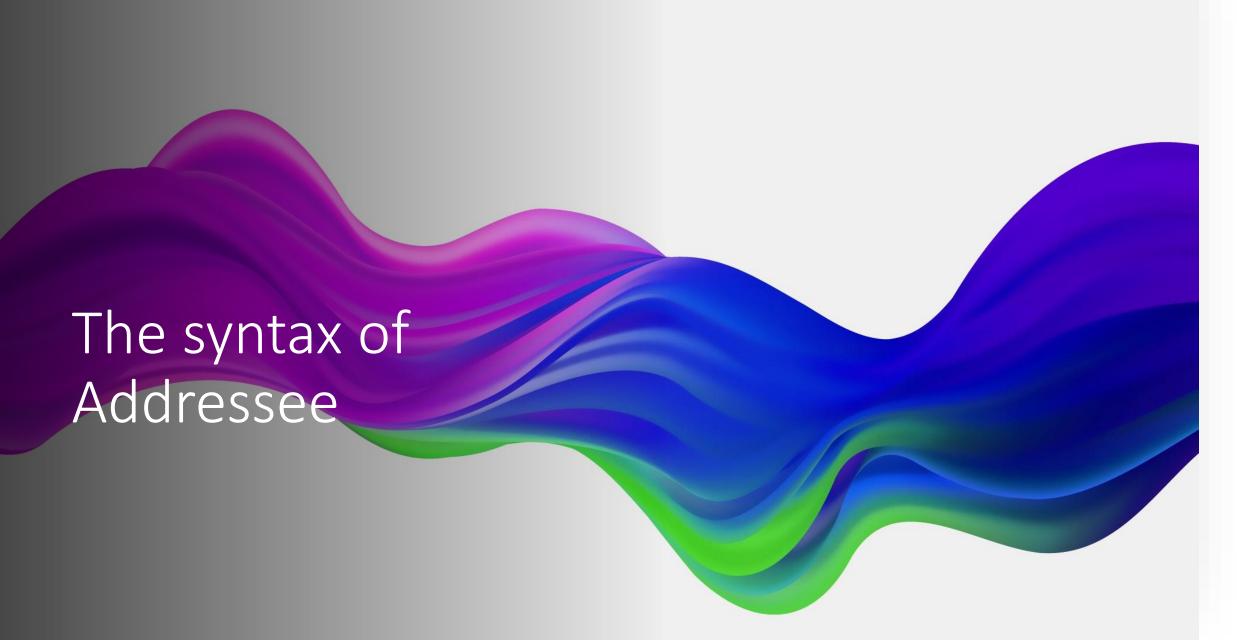


Wilthscho, Martina. 2024. You may enter syntax and save your face in different ways. Paper presented at CHAMP2, Göttingen, 1-2 February.

Wiltschko

Different kinds of honorifics, all having to do with the **Interactional Spine Hypothesis**

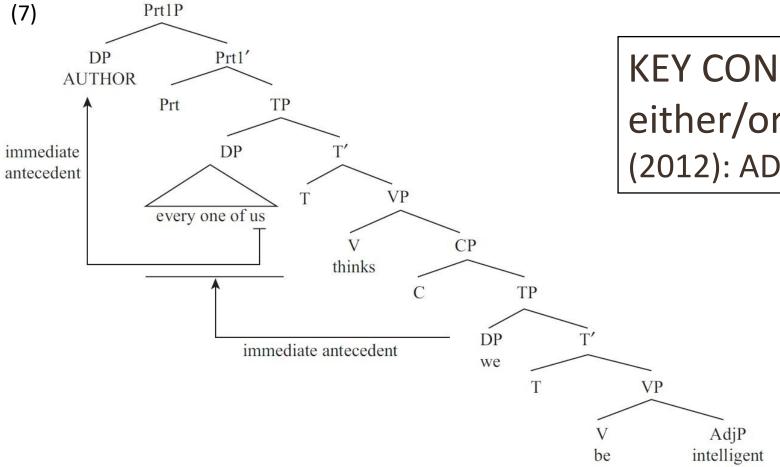




Imposters: Multiple antecedents

Collins, Chris & Paul Postal. **2012.** *Imposters: A Study of* Pronominal Agreement. MIT Press.

(6) [Every one of us], thinks we,/they, are intelligent.



KEY CONCEPT:

either/or, Collins & Postal

(2012): ADDRESSEE head

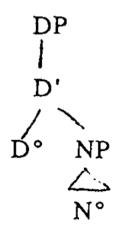


The internal structure of pronouns

Cardinaletti, Anna. 1994. La sintassi dei pronomi. Uno studio comparativo delle lingue germaniche e romanze.
Bologna: Il Mulino.

(8)

a. strong



b. clitic

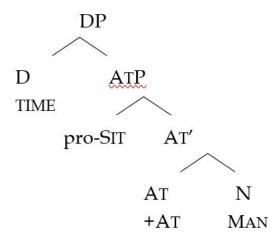


Cardinaletti (1994:4)



Indexical pronouns

(9) a. First person pronoun



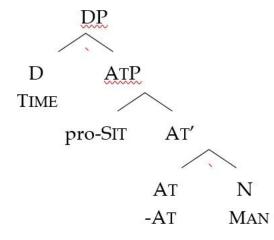
WHERE:

- D is the determiner head, encoding TIME
- pro-SIT is a pronominal situation variable (valued deictically, in the absence of an antecedent)
- AT is a relational head, which maps its complement to its specifier (it states whether its complement is at the location of its specifier –at the utterance location)
- MAN is more or less [+human]

HOW TO READ THIS:

- 1st person denotes a human being who is at the UTTERANCE LOCATION (i.e. at the location OF THE SPEAKER)
- 2nd person: a human being who is not at the UTTERANCE LOCATION (i.e. not at the location of the speaker).

b. Second person pronoun



Gruber, Bettina. 2013. The Spatiotemporal Dimensions of Person: a Morphosyntactic Account of Indexical Pronouns. PhD dissertation, Utrecht University.

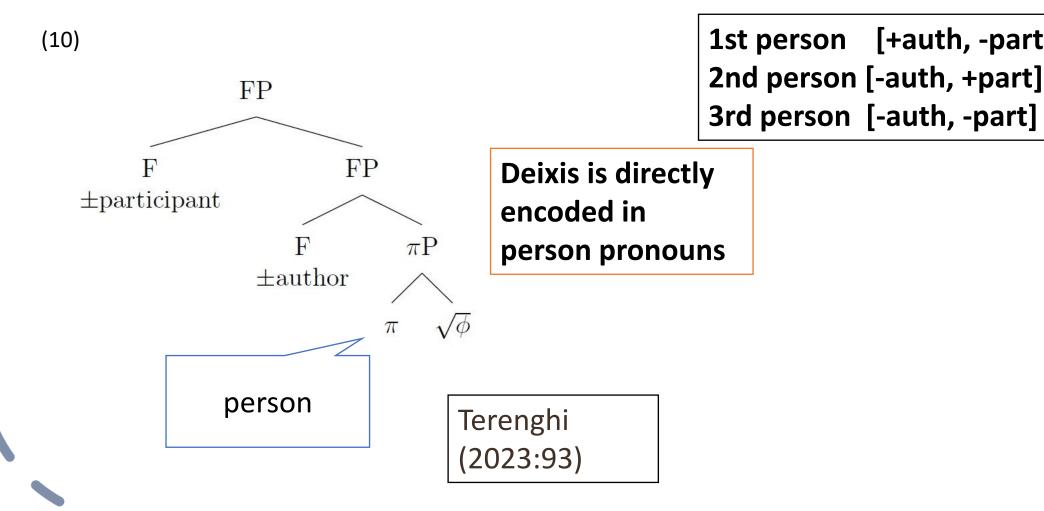
Gruber 2013 (building on Wiltschko): indexical component in pronouns



Internal structure of pronouns

Terenghi, Silvia. 2023. Missing Person: Structure and change in Romance demonstratives. PhD dissertation, Utrecht University.

[+auth, -part]



Utrecht University

*Voi*hon

Utrecht University

(11) bella/-o Voi siete [IT] beautiful.F.SG/M.SG you.2PL.HON are.2PL TP Voi.2PL.F SC BĘ Voi 2PL.F∕M

PP agreement with Voihon

FEMALE REFERENT

```
(12) Vi ho vist-a/-o
```

you.2PL.HON have.1sG seen-F.SG/M.SG

'I have seen Youhon'

MALE REFERENT

(13) Vi ho vist-o/(*-a)

you.2PL.HON have.1sG seen-M.SG

'I have seen Youhon'



PP agreement with 2p

```
(12) Vi ho vist-a/-o you.2pl.ном have.1sg seen-F.sg/м.sg 'I have seen Youном'
```

Syntactic agreement/like for tu, not linked to HON –but also SEM

```
(14) Ti ho vist-a/o
you.2sg.F have.1sg seen-F.sg/M.sg
'I have seen you'
```



PP+ADJ

(15) Vi ho trovat-a/-o simpatic-a/-o you.2PL.HON l.have found. F.SG/M.SG nice-F.SG/M.SG 'l've found You nice'

F > F M> F,M

рр-ғ	adj-F
рр-М	adj-M
рр-М	adj-F
рр-ғ	adj-M

marked feature triggers concord?

 two different behaviors for PP: adjectival and syntactic



The phi features of Voihon

CAN WE SAY THAT VOI IS 2PL.F/M?

- \therefore Agreement with copula/ $V_{FIN} \boxtimes > plural agreement$
- → Agreement with adjective

 ✓ gender concord with referent
- → Agreement with participle ⊗ it is singular, Voi behaves like tu

So: is *Voi* singular or plural? If it is singular, where does the finite V take plural from?



The features of Voi

Phi layer N: PL

P: 2

G: underspecified

Finite verb agreement

• Discourse layer N: SG (addressee)

P: 2

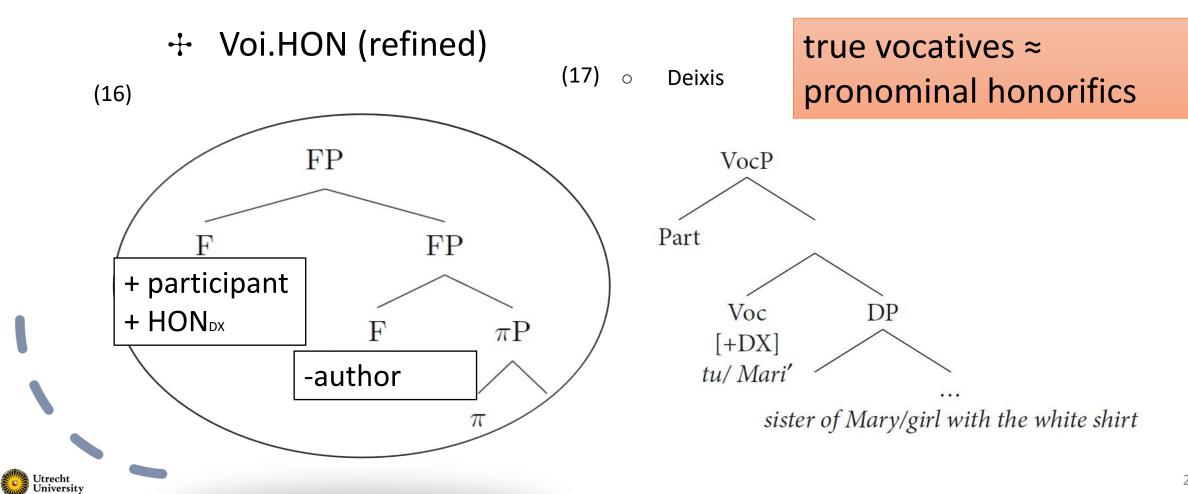
G: referent

participial

and adjectival agreement

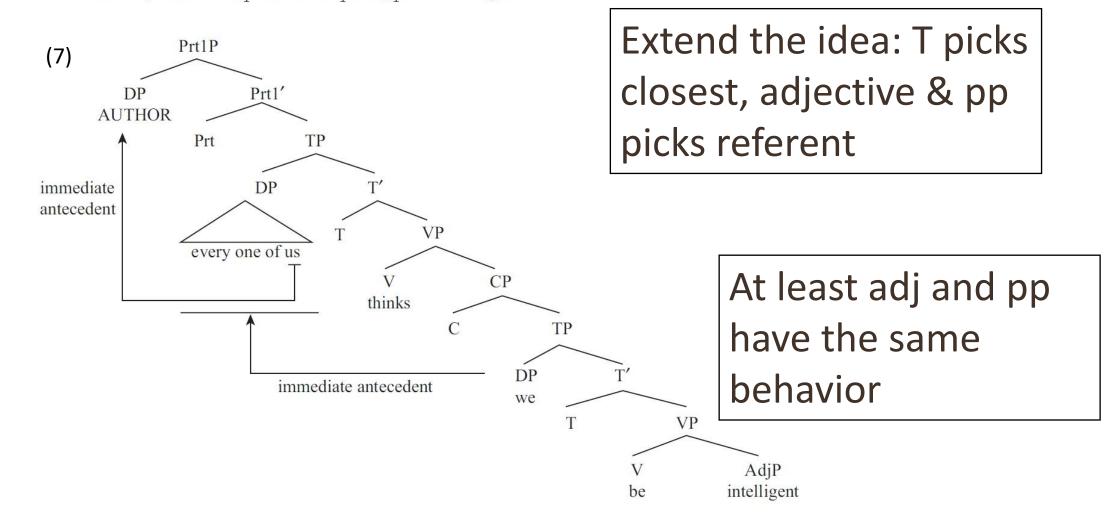


Honorific like vocative



Can we use Imposters?

Utrecht University (6) [Every one of us], thinks we,/they, are intelligent.



Either or/both

- → Not one "antecedent" or the other, but each category targets a different antecedent
- → Why can't we use just deixis?
 - * Hon is not just deixis (we will return to this)



Lei

Lei.3sg.F

(18) Lei è bella/-о [IT] she.3sg.ном 1 is.3sg beautiful.ғ.sg/м.sg 'You.ном are beautiful'

Like Voi?





Lei/pp agreement

```
Lei.3sg.f female referent
                              cambiat-a/(*-o)
(19) La
                    trovo
    you.3sg.hon.acc. find.1sg
                             changed.F.SG/M.SG
    'I find you changed'
MALE REFERENT
(20) La
                             cambiat-o/-a
                    trovo
                             changed-M.SG/F.SG
    you.3sg.hon.acc find.1sg
   'I find you changed'
```

Pp and adjectival agreement

You meet your old (male) boss. He says: I had a very adventurous life after we parted. You reply: "Yes, ..."

```
(21) L'ho trovat-a/(*-o) cambiat-a/-o you.3sg.HON.ACC=I.have found.sg.F changed-sg.F/sg.M 'I find you changed'
```

- (22) *L'ho trovato cambiata
- (23) a. Vi ho trovato cambiata (ok for a woman)
 - b. *Vi ho trovata cambiata (for a man)



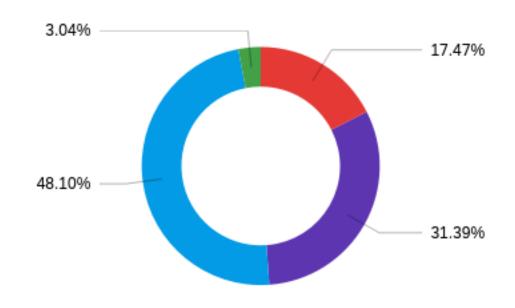
The phi features of *Lei*hon

LEI LIKE VOI

- Agreement with adjective
 ✓ like voi
- → Agreement with participle?
 ⊗ NOT like voi
 - * pp Voi: adjectival with referent (singular), both M and F
 - * pp Lei: syntactic with *lei* (only F.SG) marginally adjectival (M or F)

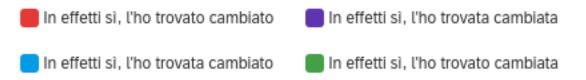


Online questionnaire



Qualtrics

n= 617





Pp and adjectival agreement

You meet your boss. He tells you that his holidays were great. You reply:

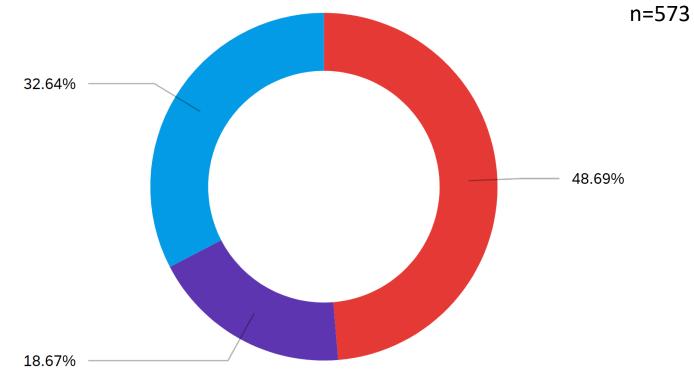
```
(24) L'ho trovat-a/(*-o) molto soddisfatt-a/o you.3sg.HON.ACC=I.have found.sg.F very satisfied-sg.F/sg.M 'I find You very satisfied'
```

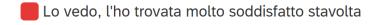
(25) *L'ho trovato soddisfatta

(26) *Vi ho trovata soddisfatta (for a man)



Online questionnaire





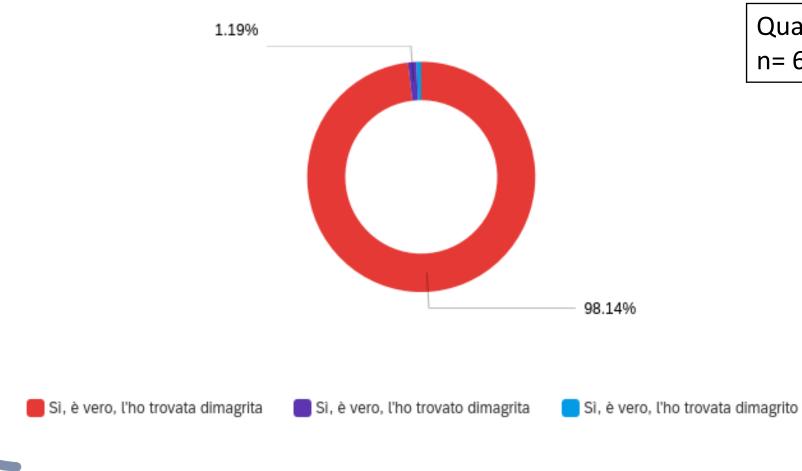


Lo vedo, l'ho trovato molto soddisfatto stavolta



Online questionnaire

Utrecht University



Qualtrics n= 617

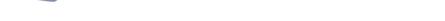
The phi features of *Lei*hon

LEI LIKE VOI?

- ∴ Agreement with adjective Iike Voi (referent)

39

- → Agreement with participle? ⊗
 - * Syntactic (with lei)



Pp and adjectival agreement

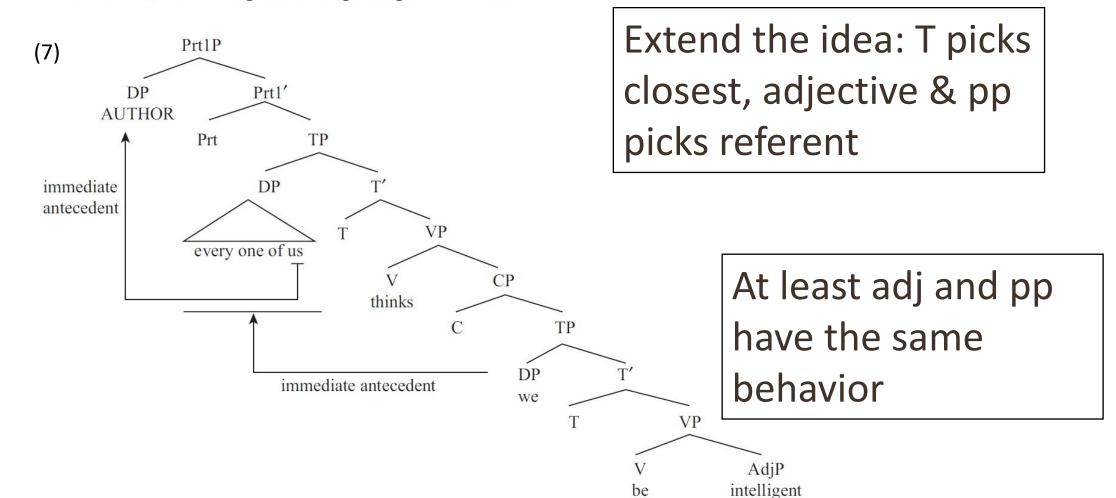
```
(27) L'ho trovat-a simpatic-a/-o you.3sg.HON.ACC=I.have found.1sg nice-F.sg/M.sg
```

I found [sc you ARE nice] ⊗ nice. F you. F but no M agreement on pp found



Recall Voi

(6) [Every one of us], thinks we,/they, are intelligent.





The syntax of pp-adj

⊹La.F.SG.ACC

рр-ғ	adj-F
рр-ғ	adj-м
pp-M	adj-M
рр-М	adj-F

(28) *I found [you (TO BE) nice] ECM

F > F *M> F,M

I [found you.f nice.f] >

I you.F=found.F nice.F CL CLIMBING



Compare:

→ Voi.2PL

Lei.3sg.f.

рр-ғ	adj-F
рр-М	adj-M
рр-М	adj-F
рр-ғ	adj-M

рр-ғ	adj-ғ
рр-ғ	adj-м
pp-M	adj-M
рр-М	adj-F



Syntactic and deictic agreement

+ Voi

Aux/Vfin: syntactic

Adjective: semantic with referent (deictic)

Pp: adjectival with referent (but tu) or syntactic

Aux/Vfin: syntactic

Adjective: syntactic with Lei or semantic with referent

Pp: always syntactic (but some issues with speakers)



The features of Lei

Phi layer N: SG

P: 3

G: F

Finite verb agreement

• Discourse layer N: SG

P:3

G: referent

participial

and adjectival agreement



The features of Voi and Lei

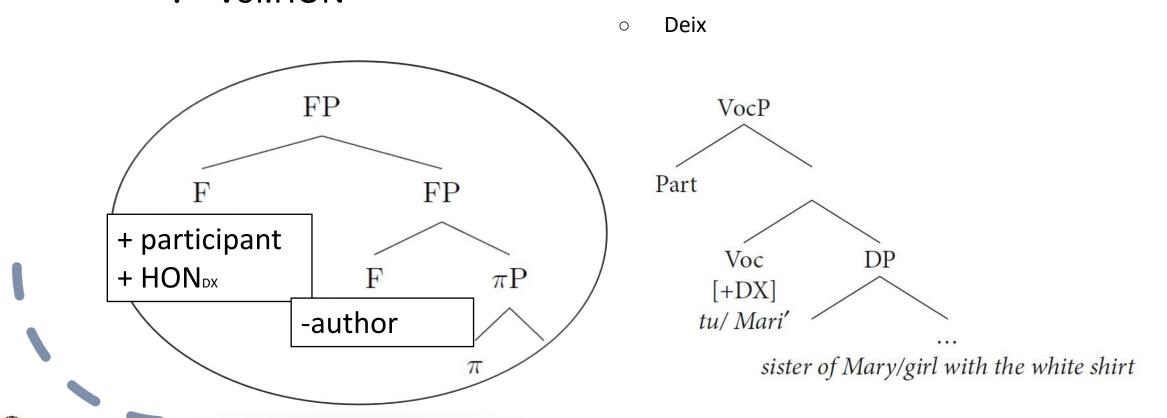
- Leiном [-auth; -part; +SG; F; + HONDX[F/м];]

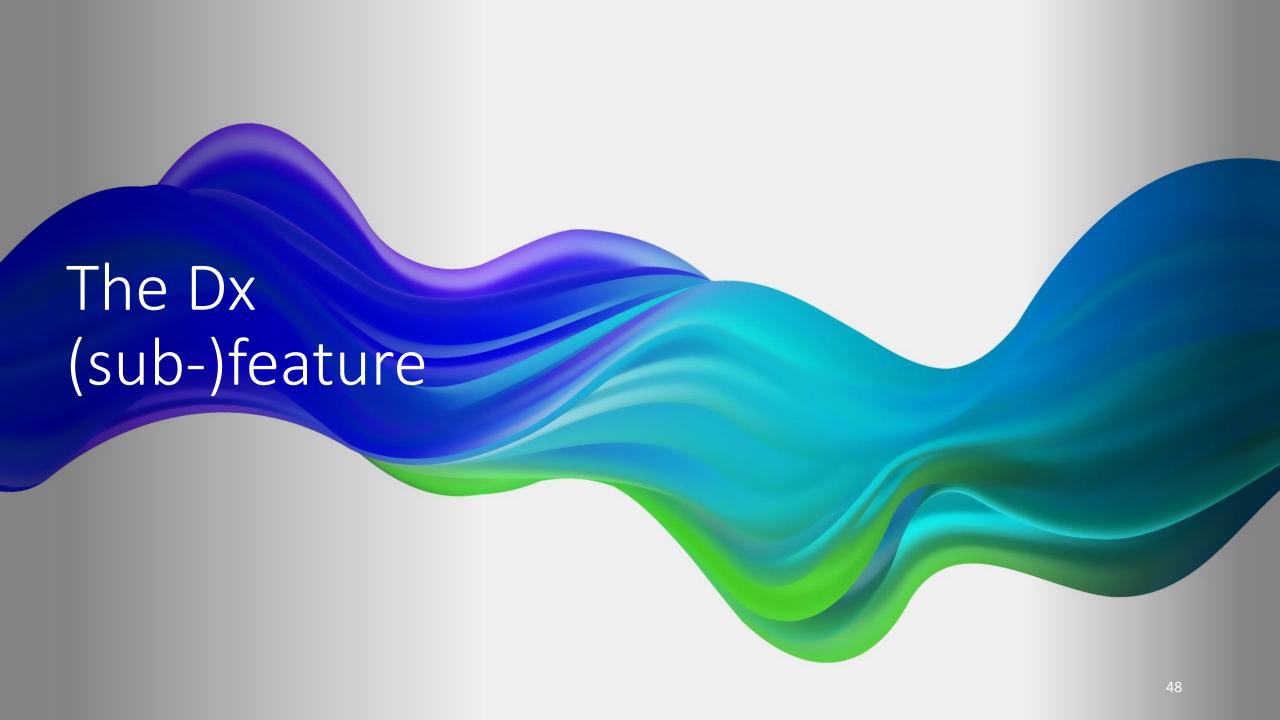


Honorifics like vocatives

→ Voi.HON

Utrecht University





Vocatives

D'Alessandro, Roberta & Marc van Oostendorp. 2016. When imperfections are perfect. Prosody, phifeatures and deixis in Central and Southern Italian vocatives. *Romance languages and Linguistic Theory* 10, 61-81.

Espinal, M. Teresa. 2013. "On the structure of vocatives." In *Vocative!*, edited by Barbara Sonnenhauser and Patrizia Noel Aziz Hanna, 109–132. Berlin: De Gruyter.

- → Dx is one of the features related to discourse/deixis →
 like focus, topics, etc



A division of labour

- PROSODY READS/INTERPRETS INFORMATION-STRUCTURE FEATURES
- MELODY INTERPRETS ϕ AND STRUCTURAL CASE FEATURES

- > Vocative can be realized by means of prosody; Nominative cannot
- > for our purposed: the deictic feature is extra-syntactic



DX

- "left peripheral" /discourse features are directly accessible at the interface by prosody
- → Evidence: prosodic phenomena targeting dx vocatives (but not 'predicative' vocatives)



Vocative by Truncation

(29)

- a. A Mariacarmela Dell'Arcipre', vi' qqua! part Mariacarmela Dell'Arciprete come here
- b. Tu, Mariacarmela Dell'Arcipre', vi' qqua! you, Mariacarmela Dell'Arciprete come here
- c. Tu, surellə də Marijə, vi' qqua! you, sister of Mary come here
- d. A Bia'
 part Bianca
 'Bianca!'-voc

(D'Alessandro & Van Oostendorp 2013:68)

e. Tu nghə la majetta b**biangh**ə! you with the white t-shirt! 'You girl with the white t-shirt'!- voc

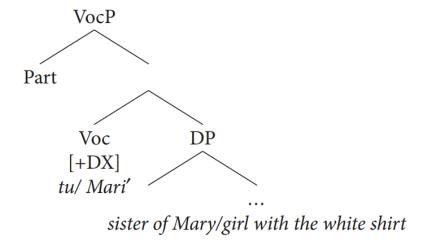
[Abruzzese]



True vocatives

• TRUE vocatives: always deictic. They move on the Voc head (which we have called Addressee) and "check"/get the [+DX] feature by movement. The Voc head may host a vocative particle in its specifier. <u>Tu ('you' is always a true vocative)</u>.

(30)



(D'Alessandro & Van Oostendorp 2013:68)



Fake Vocatives

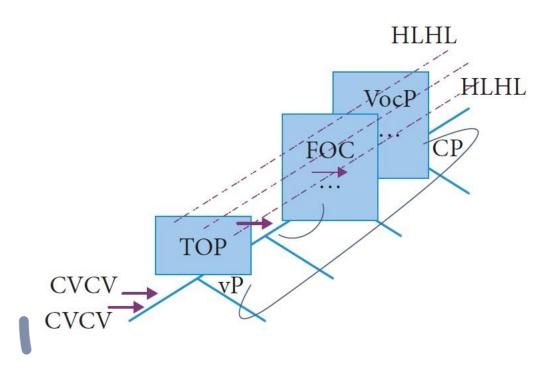
- FAKE vocatives: "predicational". They introduce predicational information about the addressee. Fake vocatives are somewhere in the complement of the Voc and get linked to the Voc head, but don't move onto it because they're XPs.
- [Fake vocatives are parenthetical, they behave like adjuncts]

CLAIM

In Southern Italian dialects TRUE vocatives get truncated, FAKE vocatives don't.



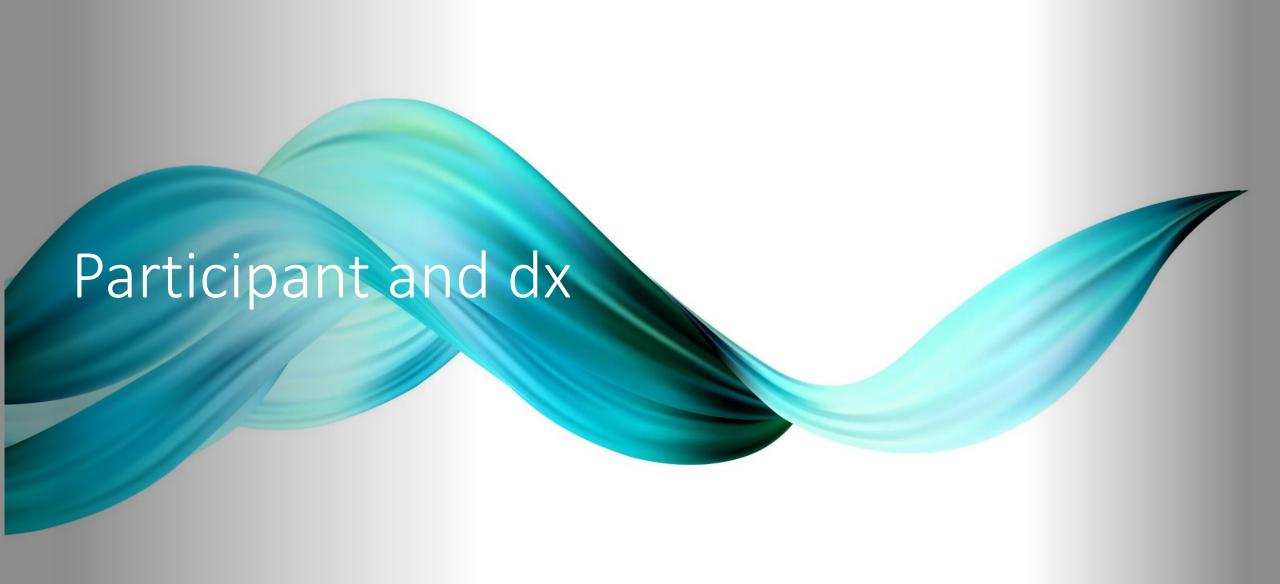
The tree



 Discourse-related/deictic features are on a different "plane", directly accessible to prosody

(D'Alessandro & Van Oostendorp 2013:71)

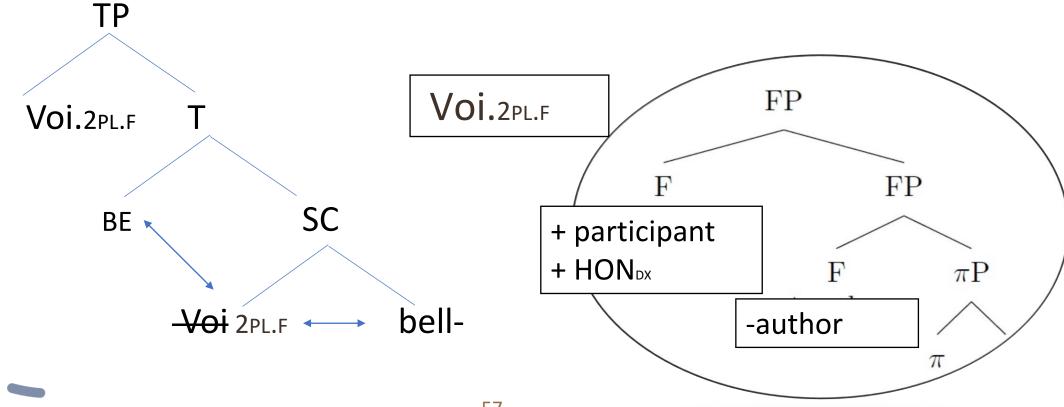
→ Honorifics are pronouns with some "spinal" features and some "other plane" features



Recall: Splitting the pronoun

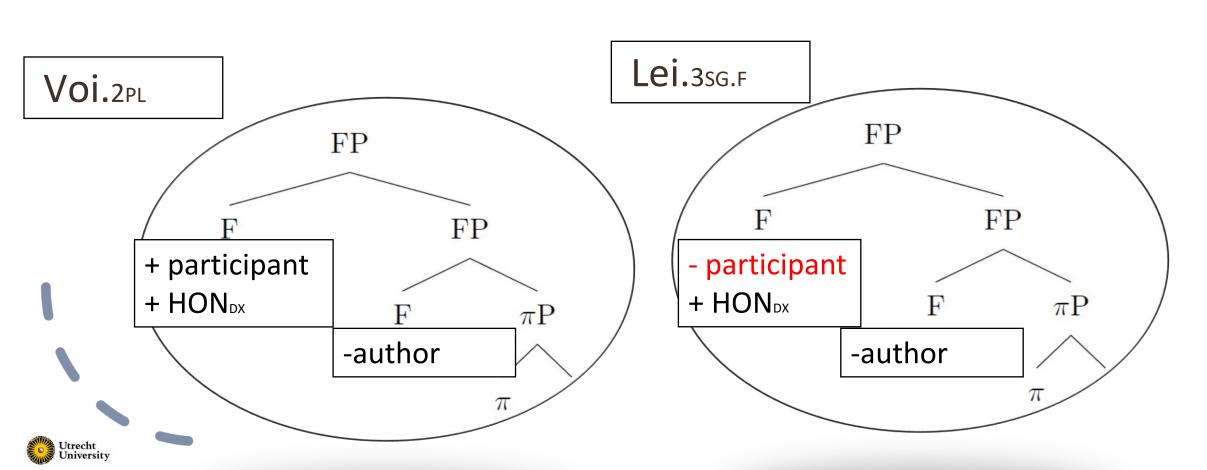
Voi siete bell-

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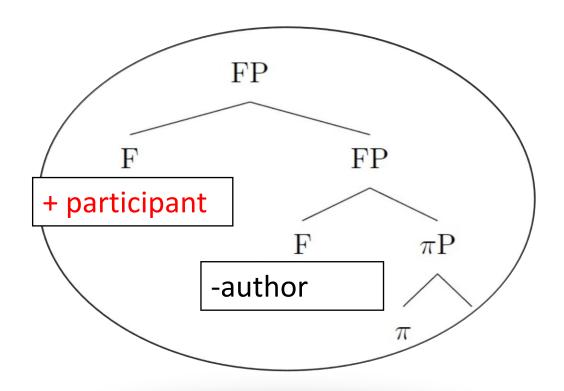


Why part and hon are separate



Are participant and deictic the same?

→ Can't we assume the following structure for Lei?





Deictic 3P pronouns

```
(31) Custù,
                                            cullù
                                                    [Abruzzese]
                           cussù,
   3P.M.+AUTH. -PART
                          3P.M.-AUTH.+PART 3P.M.—AUTH. - PART
    'He (next to me), he (next to you), he (far from both)'
(32) Chistè,
                                           chillè
                    chissè,
    3P.F.+AUTH -PART 3P.F.-AUTH+PART 3P.F. —AUTH.- PART
    'She (next to me), she (next to you), she (far from both)'
(33) Queste/quesse/quelle
```

To conclude

- → Honorifics have several feature layers
- Discourse/deictic features are different from phifeatures
- They agree in different ways
- Dx (edge) is where change penetrates the otherwise stable pronominal system
- → Deictic features and phi features change in very different ways
- → Benveniste had got it all right!





Questions and comments: r.dalessandro@uu.nl

Thanks to: Diego Pescarini, Chris Collins, Dalina Kallulli, Pritha Chandra, Andrew Nevins, the audience of CHAMP1, the audience of the CUHK Ling seminar

Syntactic change

D'Alessandro, Putnam & Terenghi. 2022. On the similarities and differences between diachronic & contact-induced syntactic change. GLOW in Asia 13, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Syntactic change

- → Core arguments aren't
- Pronominal systems are stable, but NOT if the pronouns are honorifics

Change (Terenghi 2023, D'Alessandro, Putnam & Terenghi 2023)



Stability and instability

• Phi layer > stable

• Discourse > unstable



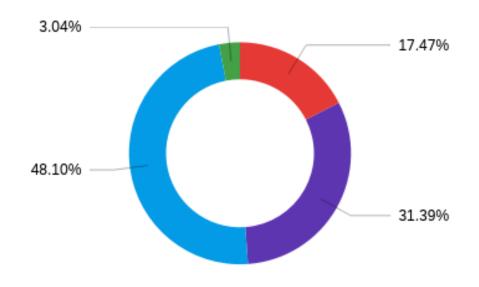
Change

- - * Pure phi features
 - * Interaction with discourse
 - Pure phi: change is predictable, no change in pronominal systems or change according to monotonicity
 - * Discourse: more random





Some variation









Phi-pronoun

• Your sister introduces her new girlfriend to you. Back home, you tell

her:

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