

On the Morpho-Syntax of Romance Vocative Expressions

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1 Introduction

In this talk, I will sketch an analysis that incorporates various properties of and approaches to vocatives, most of them familiar:

- An expression can be a vocative only if it expresses (overtly or silently) 2nd person:

- (1) a. You kids! Sit down!
b. YOU Kids! Sit down! (YOU = silent 2nd person)
c. Hey! You! Sit down!
d. Hey you! Sit down!
e. Hey! You kids! Sit down!
f. Hey! YOU Kids! Sit down!

- I will expand on the idea that this 2nd person feature is encoded in D:

- (2) [DP *hey* [D *you/YOU*[NP [N *kids*]]]]

- Vocatives cannot be arguments (they don't belong to the thematic grid of a predicate; Moro 2003, p. 264). Surprisingly then, definite articles are permitted in vocatives in some Romance languages:

- (3) **The* kids! Sit down! (English)

- (4) **I* bambini!
'The kids!' (Italian)

- (5) a. **La* Maria! (personal articles) (Catalan)
b. **En* Pere!

- (6) Allons *les* copains, cessez! Nous partons!
come on-1PL the pals stop-2PL we leave-1PL
'Come on, pals! We're leaving!' (French; Coene et al. 2019:105)

- (7) Copilule, nu mai striga!
child.the.voc no more shout
'Child, don't shout anymore!' (Romanian; Espinal 2013 citing Hill 2007)

- (8) *Zu ðut'to* (Logudorese Sardinian; Floricic & Molinu 2018)
 the doctor
 'Doctor!'

What I aim to do:

- Quickly review of the various ways vocatives are consistent with 2nd person address.
- Provide an overview of some of the evidence showing that vocatives are not arguments.
- Sketch the structure I propose for the Romance DP, with an eye toward vocatives.
- Discuss some consequences of the proposal, including an account of some recalcitrant facts.
- Offer some concluding remarks.

2 Vocatives are consistent with 2nd person address

⇒ 2nd person pronouns:

- (9) a. *Tú!* (Spanish)
 b. *Usted!*
 'You!'
- (10) a. *Toi!* (French)
 b. *Vous!*
 'You!'
- (11) *Eh vosaltres!* (Catalan; Espinal 2013)
 'Hey you!'

⇒ Bare nouns:

- (12) a. *Chicas!* (Spanish)
 b. *Chica!*
 'Girl(s)!'
- (13) a. *Bambino!* (Italian)
 b. *Bambini!*
 'Kid(s)!'
- (14) a. *Noi!* (Catalan; Espinal 2013)
 b. *Nois!*
 'Boy(s)!'

- (15)a. *Enfants, venez ici! (French; Pierre Pica, p.c.)
 ‘Children, come here!’
 b. ?Enfants de la patrie, venez ici!
 c. Venez ici, enfants de la patrie!
 ‘Come here, children of the homeland!’
 d. Chat, viens ici!
 ‘Cat, come here!’

- (16) a. Enfants du chaos, venez ici! (French; Mélanie Joutteau, p.c.)
 b. Venez ici, enfants du chaos!
 ‘Come here, children of chaos’
 c. Bonjour, chat!
 ‘Hello, cat!’

(17) [DP YOU ... [NP bambini]]

⇒ Proper names:

- (18)a. María! (Spanish)
 b. Sylvie! (French)
 c. Francesca! (Italian)
 d. Joan! (Catalan)

- (19) a. (O) Maria, vieni qui! (Italian; Moro 2003)
 o Maria, PRO come here
 ‘Hey Maria, come here!’
 b. Vieni qui, (o) Maria!
 PRO come here, o Maria
 ‘Come here, (*hey) Maria!’

(20) [DP YOU ... [NP Maria]]

⇒ Titles:

- (21) a. Señora! (Spanish)
 b. Madame! (French)
 c. Zio! (Italian)
 d. Senyor! (Catalan)

(22) [DP YOU ... [XP senyor [X' X [NP N]]]]

3 Vocatives involve non-arguments

⇒ Languages that generally admit (or require) definite articles with proper names bar them in vocative contexts:

(23) a. *la* Maria (Venetian; from Slocum 2016, p. 69)
 b. (**la*) Maria!

(24) a. *el* Pere (Central Catalan)
 b. (**el*) Pere!
 ‘Pere(!)’
 c. *la* Maria
 d. (**la*) Maria!
 ‘Maria(!)’

(25) [DP YOU ... [NP Pere]]

⇒ Catalan personal articles (*en/na* in Balearic Catalan) introduce personal proper names and form arguments with them:

(26) a. *en* Joan, *n’* Andreu (Balearic Catalan)
 ART Joan, ART-Andreu
 b. *na* Maria, *n’* Anna
 ART Maria ART-Anna

⇒ The same is true for Spanish *don/doña*, which is etymologically related (all forms having descended from Latin *dominus*):

(27)a. *Don* Juan ha llegado tarde. (Spanish)
 ‘*Don* Juan arrived late.’
 b. *Doña* María nos está esperando en el despacho.
 doña María us is waiting in the office
 ‘*Doña* María is waiting for us in the office.’

⇒ Addition of the (regular) definite article (*es/sa* in BC; *el/la* in Spanish) renders the Catalan and Spanish examples ungrammatical:

(28) a. (**es*) *en* Pere va arribar ahir. (Balearic Catalan)
 ‘*En* Pere arrived yesterday.’
 b. (**sa*) *na* Maria va arribar ahir.
 ‘*Na* Maria arrived yesterday.’

(29) a. (**el*) *Don* Juan ha llegado tarde. (Spanish)
 b. (**la*) *Doña* María nos está esperando en el despacho.

⇒ Other titles (e.g., *reina* ‘queen’, *señor* ‘mister’, *rey* ‘king’) require overt definite articles to function as arguments:

(30) a. *(El) señor González llegó tarde. (Spanish)
‘Mr. González arrived late.’

b. *(La) reina Leticia tapó a la reina Sofía.
‘Queen Leticia covered Queen Sofia.’

(31) a. *(El) senyor Esteve va sortir. (Catalan)
‘Mr. Esteve left.’

b. *(La) presidenta Forcadell és a la presó.
‘President Forcadell is in prison.’

⇒ When it comes to vocatives, Catalan *en/na* is barred and Spanish *don/doña* is permitted. Why? (I’ll return to this example.)

(32) a. *¡En Pere! (Catalan)
b. Don Luis! (Spanish)

⇒ Aren’t proper names arguments (Longobardi 1994)? Yes (33) and no (35)-(37):

(33) Juan ha llegado tarde. (Spanish)
‘Juan arrived late.’

(34) [_{DP} Juan_i [_{NP} t_i]] argument (N-to-D raising, Longobardi 1994)

(35) a. Me llaman (don) Juan. (Spanish)
‘They call me (*don*) Juan.’

b. Em diuen (*en) Joan. (Catalan)
‘They call me Joan.’

(36) a. Pobre Maria! (Catalan)
b. *Pobre la Maria!

(37) a. Pobre Joan! (Catalan)
b. *Pobre en Joan!

(38) [_{XP} [_{NP} Juan]] non-argument (no N-to-D raising)

4 Evidence for a more articulated DP

⇒ There are several types of evidence, but here I focus on the most relevant one for the discussion of vocatives: several (Romance) languages display two different definite articles.

- Balearic Catalan: *s-* and *l-* definite articles
- Picard (of France): *ch-* and *l-* definite articles

Etymological origins:

- IPSE (emphatic pronoun) > *s-* article
- ECCE (emphatic interjection) > *ch-* article
- ILLE (deictic pronoun) > *l-* article

- Grimalt (2009) and Ledgeway (2012) distinguish the *s-* and *l-* forms in Balearic Catalan.
- Ledgeway (2012) and Vincent (1997) observe that semantic properties of the Latin forms (IPSE vs. ILLE) are reflected in the present-day grammaticalized forms.
- Ledgeway (2012, pp. 97, 103) notes that the Balearic forms with *l-* tend to be used “with intrinsically referential entities,” which lacked definite articles in early Romance.

- (39) a. *Sa* muntanya que veus és molt alta. (Balearic Catalan)
 the.F mountain that see.2PSG is very tall
 ‘The mountain that you see is very tall.’
 b. Anem a *la* muntanya.
 go.1PPL to the.F mountain
 ‘Let’s go to the mountain.’

- (40) a. *chele* école (Boulogne Picard)¹
 ‘the school (building)’
 b. *l’*école
 ‘instruction’

- (41) a. [DP1 *s-* [DP2 *l-* [NP N]]] (Balearic Catalan)
 b. [DP1 *ch-* [DP2 *l-* [NP N]]] (Picard)

- *s-/ch-* articles: common nouns, relative clauses, adjectival modification, PP complements
- *l-* articles: proper names, generic/unique referents

Ortmann’s (2014) Uniqueness Hierarchy provides a semantic mapping for this articulated DP structure. His pragmatic uniqueness (high) and semantic uniqueness (low) “follow a conceptual scale that is conceived according to the narrowness of possible referents” (p. 294) of a noun, the lowest on the scale being the narrowest (e.g., pronouns, proper names, uniques) and the highest corresponding to anaphoric and deictic contexts. The Uniqueness Hierarchy makes 2 predictions:

¹ Example from Haigneré (1901: 264).

a) definite articles are less likely to appear with nouns corresponding to lower points on the scale due to redundancy of uniqueness; b) diachronically, definite articles corresponding to lower points on the scale develop later (if at all) than those corresponding to higher points on the scale.

The scale may also be aligned with cartographic considerations:

(42) CP structure: [CP [C *que*] [CP [C *que*] [VP V]]] (Romance)

(43) DP structure: [DP1 [D1 ...] [DP2 [D2 ...] [NP N]]] (Romance)

5 Consequences of the Proposal

5.1 Catalan *en/na* vs. Spanish *don/doña* revisited

(44) a. *¡En Pere! (Catalan)
 b. ¡Don Luis! (Spanish)

- *en/na* + proper name must raise to DP1, explaining why it cannot appear in vocative expressions.
- *don/doña* + proper name does not have to raise to DP1. If it doesn't, overt or silent YOU can occupy D:

(45) *en* Pere (Catalan)
 [DP1 D1. [DP2 [D2 *en/na*] [NP Pere]]]

(46) *don* Pedro (Spanish)
 [DP1 D1. [DP2 [D2 *don/doña*] [NP Pedro]]]

- I speculate that because *en/na* has further grammaticalized, it has lost the ability to remain in the lower part of the DP. In contrast, the behavior of *don/doña* is intermediate between a personal article (it can also raise to DP1) or a title like *señor/señora*, which doesn't (and additionally appear with a definite article).

5.2 Co-occurrence of D1 and D2

(47) *es* *conco en* Toni (Balearic Catalan)
 the.M uncle ART.M Toni
 'Uncle Toni'

Syntactic structure:

(48) [DP1 [D1 *es*].....CONCO... [DP2 [D2 *en*] [NP *Toni*]]]

s-/ch- and *l-* articles:

- (49) es l'amo, es l'avi (s- + l-) (Balearic Catalan)
 'the master', 'the grandfather'
- (50) ch' l'esprit, ch' l'infant (ch- + l-) (Boulogne Picard)²
 'the spirit', 'the child'
- (51) a. èche l'achuchonaje (ch- + l-) (Amiens Picard)³
 'the concubinage' (practice of keeping a concubine)
 b. èche l'intèrmin
 'the funeral'

5.3 Definite articles in vocative constructions (Balearic Catalan, Sardinian, French)

⇒ In Balearic Catalan, vocatives cannot appear with D1 *s-* articles, but can with D2 *l-* articles:

- (52) a. *S'amo! (Balearic Catalan)
 the-boss
 b. *S'avi!
 the-grandfather
- (53) a. L'amo! (Menorcan Balearic Catalan)
 the-boss
 'Boss!'
 b. L'avi!
 the-grandfather
 'Grandfather!'
- (54) [DP1 [D1 YOU].....[DP2 [D2 l'] [NP avi]]] (Menorcan Balearic Catalan)

⇒ Sardinian displays vocatives with *s-* definite articles. Although an isomorphic system, I generalize from above and take the *s-* forms in vocative contexts to correspond to D2:

- (55) a. un'òmine s'est postu a boghinare: su mastru! (Logudorese Sardinian)⁴
 a.M man is put to yell the.M mister
 'a man started to yell: mister!'
 b. mi donit sa mexina, su dotó!
 me give the.F medicine the.M doctor
 'Give me the medicine, doctor!'
- (56) [DP1 [D1 YOU].....[DP2 [D2 su] [NP dotó]]] (Campidanese Sardinian)

⇒ French, like Sardinian, has an isomorphic article system (only *l-* forms). I take the *l-* articles appearing in French vocatives to correspond to D2:

² Example from Haigneré (1901).

³ Example from Debrie (1983).

⁴ Both examples from Blasco Ferrer (1986, 94).

(57) Venez ici, les enfants! (French)
'Come here, children!'

(58) [DP1 [D1 YOU].....[DP2 [D2 *les*] [NP *enfants*]]] (French)

5.4 Enclitic definite articles in Romanian vocative constructions

⇒ Romanian usually allows either nouns (the default) or adjectives to appear with enclitic definite articles:

(59) a. fata isteată N+article (Romanian; Hill 2014, p. 51)
girl.the smart
b. omul bun
man.the good

(60) a. isteata fată A+article (Romanian; Hill 2014, p. 51)
smart.the girl
b. bunul om
good.the man

- The long-standing analysis in generative work on Romanian is that either the noun, or the adjective, raises to D and adjoins to the article.

⇒ This basic pattern is also followed with special adjectives like 'dear':

(61) a. Profesorul stimat (de toată lumea) (Romanian; Hill 2014, p. 51)
professor.the beloved (by all world)
b. stimatul profesor
beloved.the professor
'the esteemed professor'

⇒ Interestingly, in vocatives the only option is for the noun to host the enclitic definite article; it does not cross over the adjective (Hill 2014, p. 52):⁵

(62) (*Măi) stimate cititorule, publicațiile noastre îți stau la dispoziție.
VOC beloved reader-the-voc publications-the our to.you remain at disposal
'Dear reader, our latest publications are at your disposal'.

- If the enclitic definite article in this example is a D2 article, as we've proposed for the vocative articles of Balearic Catalan, French and Sardinian, the facts above fall into place. The noun raises from N to D2.

[DP1 (*Măi)[D1 YOU] [AdjP stimate [DP2 [D2 cititoru_i-le] [NP t_i]]]]

⁵ Hill (p. 52) takes the prenominal adjective *stimate* above to be merged above DP, assuming that the noun *cititorule* has raised to D (filled with the definite article).

5.5 Adjacency between D2 articles and noun

- (63) a. *sa mateixa llengua* D1 article (Balearic Catalan)
 ‘the same language’
 b. **en propi Pere* D2 personal article
 ‘the same Pere’
 c. **na pròpia Maria* D2 personal article
 ‘the same Maria’
- (64) a. *la même chose* D1 article (French)
 ‘the same thing’
 b. **les charmants enfants, venez ici!* D2 article (Pierre Pica, p.c.)
 ‘lovely kids, come here!’

5.6 Is there a shared interpretation across D2 articles? Maybe.

- (65) *en Pere* (Balearic Catalan)
en (Vladimir) Putin
na (Angela) Merkel
- D2 personal articles: familiarity with the person, even if you’ve never met.
- (66) a. *el cel, la terra, l’hospital, el rei* (Majorcan Balearic Catalan)
 ‘the sky’, ‘the earth’, ‘the hospital’, ‘the king’
 b. *le pape, le lunne, el roi d’Suede* (Boulogne Picard)⁶
 ‘the Pope’, ‘the moon’, ‘the King of Sweden’
- D2 articles with generic/unique referents: shared/familiar knowledge.
- (67) a. *Aux armes, les citoyens!* (French; Mélanie Jouitteau, p.c.)
 b. *Aux armes, citoyens!*
 ‘To arms, citizens!’
- (68) a. *Allons-y *(les) filles!* (French; Johan Rooryck, p.c.)
 b. *Allons-y (*les) filles de Paris!*
 ‘Let’s go, girls (of Paris)!’
- At least for French vocatives, two speakers reported that the presence of the (D2) article (vs. its absence), conveyed a person the speaker knows.⁷

⁶ Examples from Haigneré (1901).

⁷ Coene et al. (2019, p. 105) provides the following set of examples and states that bare *copains* in (ia) are friends of the speaker and *les copains* in (ib) are not necessarily friends of speaker.

(i)a. *Allons copains, cessez! Nous partons!*
 come on-1PL the pals stop-2PL we leave-1PL
 b. *Allons les copains, cessez! Nous partons!*

6 Conclusions

- In preparing this talk I have been mindful about balancing cartographic as well as minimalist concerns. The result is a DP structure that is expanded and ‘enhanced’, but not drastically so. It looks to be compatible with other recent work on ‘split DPs’, especially that of Giusti & Iovino (2014) and Martín and Hinzen (2014), neither of which focuses on vocatives.
- Still to be addressed is the issue of argumenthood. If arguments involve D, an idea going back to Szabolcsi’s (1987) work, how can we reconcile the fact that vocatives are not arguments despite their involving a DP projection (or even more, depending on which analysis is adopted). Crisma (1997) has argued that vocatives may in fact have a D position as part of their structure even though the position is not always lexicalized. She develops the idea (see also discussion in Longobardi 2008) that DPs denote individuals (NPs denote properties), and that only nominal expressions that denote individuals are DPs. So DP status may not in fact be able to distinguish argument from non-argument. Longobardi (2008) furthermore develops the idea that ‘person’ converts properties to individuals, which is compatible with my approach to vocatives (overt or silent 2nd person in D).
- A final item to follow up on is the relationship between vocatives and imperatives (see Zanuttini 2008). Although they don’t match up in any neat way, there are interesting parallels. In (69), a silent 2nd person pronoun is identified with both the vocative, *Maria*, and the imperative’s null subject. This does not seem to apply to the example in (70), which, apart from the vocative (*Maria*), displays a 3rd person verbal form and pronoun. It is tempting to wonder if an elided verb preceding *che* could provide the missing link, which would be consistent with the choice of ‘let’ in the English translation.

(69) *Maria*_i, *pro*_i *compra* *il giornale!* (Italian; D’Alessandro & Oostendorp 2016)
 Maria-VOC *pro*-2.SG *buy*-IMP *the newspaper*
 ‘*Maria*, buy the newspaper!’

(70) *Maria*, *che lui compri il giornale!* (D’Alessandro & Oostendorp 2016)
 Maria-VOC *that he*-3.SG *buy*-3.SG.SUBJ *the newspaper*
 ‘*Maria*, let him buy the newspaper!’

Lyons 1999, p. 153: “...and I suspect that (in terms of the analysis of grammatical categories of functional heads) the vocative is the nominal counterpart of the imperative.”

come on-1PL *the pals* stop-2PL *we* leave-1PL
 ‘Come on, pals! We’re leaving!’

The pattern is described again in Hill (2017, p. 63 citing D’Hulst et al. 2007, same authors as Coene et al. 2019). I don’t know how to reconcile this with the judgments above in the main text.

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