

## HOMO INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

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### 0. INTRODUCTION

Arbitrary (indefinite) pronouns introduce generic, unspecified subjects in a clause.

Suñer (1983): parallel between 3rd pl *pro* without an antecedent and PRO without antecedent

➔ *arbitrary pro* (*pro<sub>arb</sub>*).

Suñer (1983) and Jaeggli (1986): in episodic sentences, 3rd pl *pro<sub>arb</sub>* has an existential interpretation:

(1) *pro* Dijeron            en la radio que iba            a llover  
    pro said-3RD PL    at the radio that was-going    to rain  
    'They said on the radio that it was going to rain' [Cabredo-Hofherr 2002:1]

(2) there exists an x: x said on the radio that it was going to rain

Cinque (1988): arbitrary pronouns show a *quasi*-universal reading in generic sentences, and a *quasi*-existential reading in episodic sentences.

'*Quasi*-universal' reading (generic sentences) [Cinque 1988, Chierchia 1995]:

(3) A     stu    poste *pro*    anne fatije    na freche  
    at    this    place 3RD PLPL    work    a lot



‘Man is a wolf to man’

- object:

(5) Tollere hominem ex homine  
take away homo-ACC from homo-ABL  
‘Take away the human nature from the man’  
[Cicero, in Castiglioni & Mariotti 1966]

- indirect object:

(6) Minucius homini respondit  
Minucius homo-DAT replied  
‘Minucius replied to the man’  
[Cicero, in Castiglioni & Mariotti 1966]

*Homo* always triggered 3rd person singular agreement, even when used in the sense of ‘people’.

## 2. ROMANCE HOMO PRONOUNS

### 2.1. ITALIAN

#### 2.1.1. OLD ITALIAN *OMO*

Old Italian *omo* was used as:

- an NP meaning ‘the human being’

(7) ...che ciascheduna cosa la quale l’uomo fa...  
that each thing which omo does  
‘...that each thing that a man does’  
[Boccaccio, Decameron, Giornata prima, Novella prima, 2]

- an indefinite DP

(8) ...com’om che ten lo foco  
like omo that holds the fire  
‘Like a man who has fire in himself’  
[Jacopo da Lentini, Meravigliosamente, stanza VI, v. 29, ~1233-1240]

NB *Omo* could appear in old Italian in both the diphthongal form *uomo* and in the non diphthongal form *omo*.

*The distribution of omo*

Omo could appear:

- in subject position (see 7)
- in object position:

(9) El basilisco serpente uccide om col vedere  
the basilisk snake kills omo with-the sight  
'The basilisk kills people with its sight'  
[Iacopone da Todi, in Battaglia (1981)]

- in indirect object position:

(10)...Ben sembra grave: non sono ad om contata  
well seems serious not am at omo told  
'It seems very serious: I am not told to anybody'  
[Laude Cortonesi XXXV, in  
Battaglia (1981)]

The form *omo* kept the 'human being' reading that Latin HOMO used to have, and developed an impersonal meaning in addition to that.

### 2.1.2. L'UOMO

*L'uomo* in Modern standard Italian has exactly the same meanings that *homo* used to have in Latin. It can be used as:

- a generic NP, meaning the human being:

(11) L'uomo ha grandi capacità  
the man has greatabilities  
'The man has great abilities'

- a person who was already introduced in the discourse:

(12) L'uomo entrò e si sedette accanto a me  
the man entered and sat next to me

'The man came in and sat next to me'

*The distribution of l'uomo*

L'uomo can appear in any DP position. It can appear as a:

- subject (see 12)
- object:

(13) Il buco dell' ozono minaccia l'uomo  
the hole of the ozone threatens the man  
'The ozone hole threatens the man'

- indirect object:

(14) Questa scoperta suggerisce all'uomo dove cercare il  
this discovery suggests to-the man where to-find the

proprio futuro  
own future

'This discovery suggests to the man where to look for his own future'

Italian *l'uomo* is thus the exact syntactic and semantic counterpart of Latin HOMO.

## 2.2. FRENCH

### 2.2.1 *L'HOMME*

French *l'homme* can refer to:

- the human being:

(15) L'homme est un animal social  
the man is an animal social  
'Man is a sociable animal'

- a specific person who has already been introduced in the discourse:

(16) L'homme est entré et (il) s'est assis a coté de moi

the man is entered and SE-is sat at side of me  
'The man came in and sat next to me'

*L'homme*, like Italian *l'uomo* and Latin HOMO can appear in any DP position and doesn't convey a generic-impersonal reading.

### 2.2.2. ON

French *on* bears a generic-impersonal meaning:

- (17) On ne me fera jamais croire cela  
on not me make-FUT never believe that  
'Nobody will ever convince me of that'

*On* can also be used with a 1st person plural meaning (see Kayne 1972, 1975)<sup>1</sup>:

- (18) On a bien mangé dans ce restaurant  
on has well eaten in that restaurant  
'We have eaten well in that restaurant'

*On* is only used as a subject (Grevisse 1986, Le Petit Robert 1993), which makes it different from Latin HOMO, French *l'homme* and Italian *l'uomo*.

## 2.3. CATALAN

### 2.3.1. HOME

Like Italian *l'uomo*

- (19) Un home ho sap  
a man it knows  
'A man knows it'

### 2.3.2. HOM

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<sup>1</sup> The inclusive reading of impersonal pronouns is another well-known fact that interests French *on* as well as Swedish *man* and Italian *si*. See Egerland (2003, 2010) and D'Alessandro (2004, 2007) for this issue.

Catalan *hom* has more or less the same distribution as French *on*, but it no longer used

(20) Hom ho sap  
hom it knows  
'One knows it'

## 2.4. SARDINIAN

### 2.4.1. S'OMINE

Sardinian (s') *omine* has the same use as Latin *homo*, Italian *l'uomo* and French *l'homme*. It can be used with the meaning of:

- 'the human being':

(21) S'omine est omine si fachtet su chi devet fachere  
the omine is omine if does what that must do  
'The man is a man if he does what he has to do'  
[Ditzionariu.com]

- a specific man:

(22) S'omine est intrau e s'è sezziru accanto  
the omine is entered and SE is sat aside  
'The man entered and sat next to me'

### 2.4.2. OMO

*Omo* is always used as a subject (Francesca Biggio, p.c.) and is 3rd person plural:

(23) Omo nanta ki proiri  
omo say-3RD PL that rains  
'They say that it will rain'

*Omo* is 3rd person plural, and as such it is in competition with 3rd plural arbitrary *pro*.

--> *omo* as an arbitrary pronoun is disappearing. (21) is more often uttered as (22):

(24) Naki (=nanta        ki) proiri  
      say-3RD PL        that rains  
      ‘They say that it will rain’

## 2.5. EASTERN ABRUZZESE (EA)

### 2.5.1. *L’OMMENE*

EA *l’ommene* < HOMINE(M) can refer to:

- the ‘human being’:

(25) L’ommene jè        ‘na    cosa    triste  
      the ommene        is        a        thing sad  
      ‘Mankind is a difficult issue’

- a specific man, already introduced in the discourse:

(26) (chil)L’ommene a        ndrate e        s’a        ‘ssittate  
      that-the ommene has        entered and        SE has        sat  
      ‘The man entered and sat down’

### *The distribution of l’ommene*

*L’ommene* can appear:

- in subject position (23)-24
- in object position:

(27) So viste l’ommene        dell’    atra    sere  
      am seen the    man        of-the other evening

'I saw the man whom I met the other evening'

- in indirect object position:

(28) Le                   so ditte a    chill'ommene  
it-ACC                am said to   that   man  
'I said it to that man'

### 2.5.2. *NOME*

*Nome* < UNU(S) HOMO, like Sardinian *omo*, is a 3rd person plural arbitrary pronoun.

(29) A sta case nome magne bbone  
At this house nome eat well  
'They eat well at this place'

(30) A                               nome magnite                   tutta lu journe  
have-3RD SG/PL nome eaten-**PP PL**           all    the day  
'Some people have eaten all the day'

### 3. *NOME*

- Indefinite pronoun
- Arbitrary 3rd plural pronoun
- Only used as a subject:

object: ☒

(31) a. \*So' viste nome  
am seen nome  
'I have seen somebody'

indirect object: ☒

b. \*So' date    nu cunzije a nome  
am given an advice to nome  
'I have given a piece of advice to someone'

### 3.1. *Nome*: a weak pronoun

*Nome* is a weak pronoun (Cardinaletti & Starke 1999)

- *Nome* does not have the same distribution as full DPs:

(32) a. Giuwanne e Marije arrive dumane  
 John and Mary arrive tomorrow

b. Dumane arrive Giuwanne e Marije  
 tomorrow arrive John and Mary  
 ‘John and Mary will arrive tomorrow’

(33)a. Nome arrive dumane  
 nome arrive tomorrow

b. \*Dumane arrive nome  
 tomorrow arrive nome  
 ‘Some people will arrive tomorrow’

- *Nome* appears strictly preverbally with finite verbs (33a)
- In periphrastic tenses, *nome* always appears between the auxiliary and the past participle:

(34) a. A nome arrivite  
 have-3RD SG/PL nome arrived-PP PL

b. \*A ‘rivate nome  
 have-3RD SG/PL arrived-PP PL nome

c. \*Nome a ‘rivate  
 nome have-3RD SG/PL arrived-PP PL  
 ‘Some people have arrived’

- Full DPs cannot occur in the positions where *nome* can occur:

(35) a. \*A Marije e Giuwanne arrivite  
 have-3RD SG/PL Mary and John arrived-PP PL

b. A ‘rivate Marije e Giuwanne  
 have-3RD SG/PL arrived-PP PL Mary and John

c. Marije e Giuwanne a ‘rivate  
 Mary and John have-3RD SG/PL arrived-PP PL

‘Mary and John have arrived’

- *Nome* cannot be dislocated or focused:

(36) Jisse, a Giuwanne, l' a  
they-3RD PL to John him-3RD SG ACC have-3SG/PL  
viste  
seen-PP  
‘It was them who saw John’

(37) \*Nome, a Giuwanne, l' a viste  
nome to John him-3RD SG ACC have-3RDSGACC seen-PP  
‘It was some people who saw John’

(38) A Giuwanne l' a viste  
to John him-3RD SG ACC have-3RD SG/PL seen-PP  
JISSE  
they-3RDPL  
‘It was them who saw John’

(39) \* A Giuwanne l' a viste  
to John him-3RD SG ACC have-3RD SG/PL seen-PP  
NOME  
nome  
‘It was some people who saw John’

- *Nome* cannot occur in isolation:

(40) Chi l' a fatte? Marije /\*Nome  
who it-3SGACC have-3RD SG/PL done-PP SG Mary / nome  
‘Who has done that? Mary/ Somebody’

- *Nome* cannot be coordinated with a full DP:

(41) Gianni/\*nome e Marije a fitte quelle  
John/nome and Mary have done that  
‘John/someone and Mary did that’

NOME IS A WEAK PRONOUN ACCORDING TO CARDINALETTI & STARKE'S  
CLASSIFICATION OF PRONOUNS

4. AN INTERESTING “NEW ENTRY”: ANNE  
[D'Alessandro 2010]

(42) A la Germanije    anne                    magne    li patane  
 at the Germany have-3RD PL eat-3<sup>RD</sup> SG/PL                    the potatoes  
 'In Germany they eat potatoes'

WHAT IS THIS ANNE?

- In EA, 3rd singular and 3rd plural of *have* exhibit the same form: *a*.
- *A* is only used as an auxiliary

(43) Marije a magnate  
 Mary has eaten

(44) Marije e Giuwanne                    a magnite  
 Mary and John                    have eaten

*Anne* is borrowed from Italian *hanno* (3rd pl)

Arbitrary plural *nome* alternates with arbitrary 3rd plural *pro*:

(45) A nome            magnite            / a                    magnite  
 have nome eaten            have            pro eaten  
 'Somebody has eaten'

The sentence with a *pro*, however, can also be interpreted as having a referent:

(46) A magnite alloche  
 have eaten there  
 'They/somebody has eaten there'

In the meantime, *nome* is perceived as archaic by the younger speakers. There is the need to express the arbitrariness of *pro* somehow. *Anne* is therefore borrowed from Italian, to mark plurality:

(47) Anne            magnite  
 have-pl            eaten

*Anne* is however extended to be a plural marker:

(48) Anne fa  
 pl    they-do  
 'They do'

Could *anne* be a pronoun, replacing *nome*?

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