

HONORIFICS AND
AGREEMENT.
THE VIEW FROM
ROMANCE

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IN THIS TALK

- ✦ Honorificity and gender
- ✦ Encoding the addressee in the syntactic spine
- ✦ Some insights on language change

Languages: Romance/Italian

TWO KINDS OF HONORIFICS

Pronominal

Latin: UOS

Spanish: usted

Italian: voi, lei

French: vous

Portuguese: você

DP-honorifics

Spanish: Vuestra Señoría

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

Romanian: Excelența Voastră

French: Votre honneur

Portuguese: Vossa Excelência

FROM DP TO PRONOUN

✦ Vossa mercê > ✦ Você PT
✦ Vuestra merced > ✦ Usted SP

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)

SOME AGREEMENT PATTERNS

✦ Voi

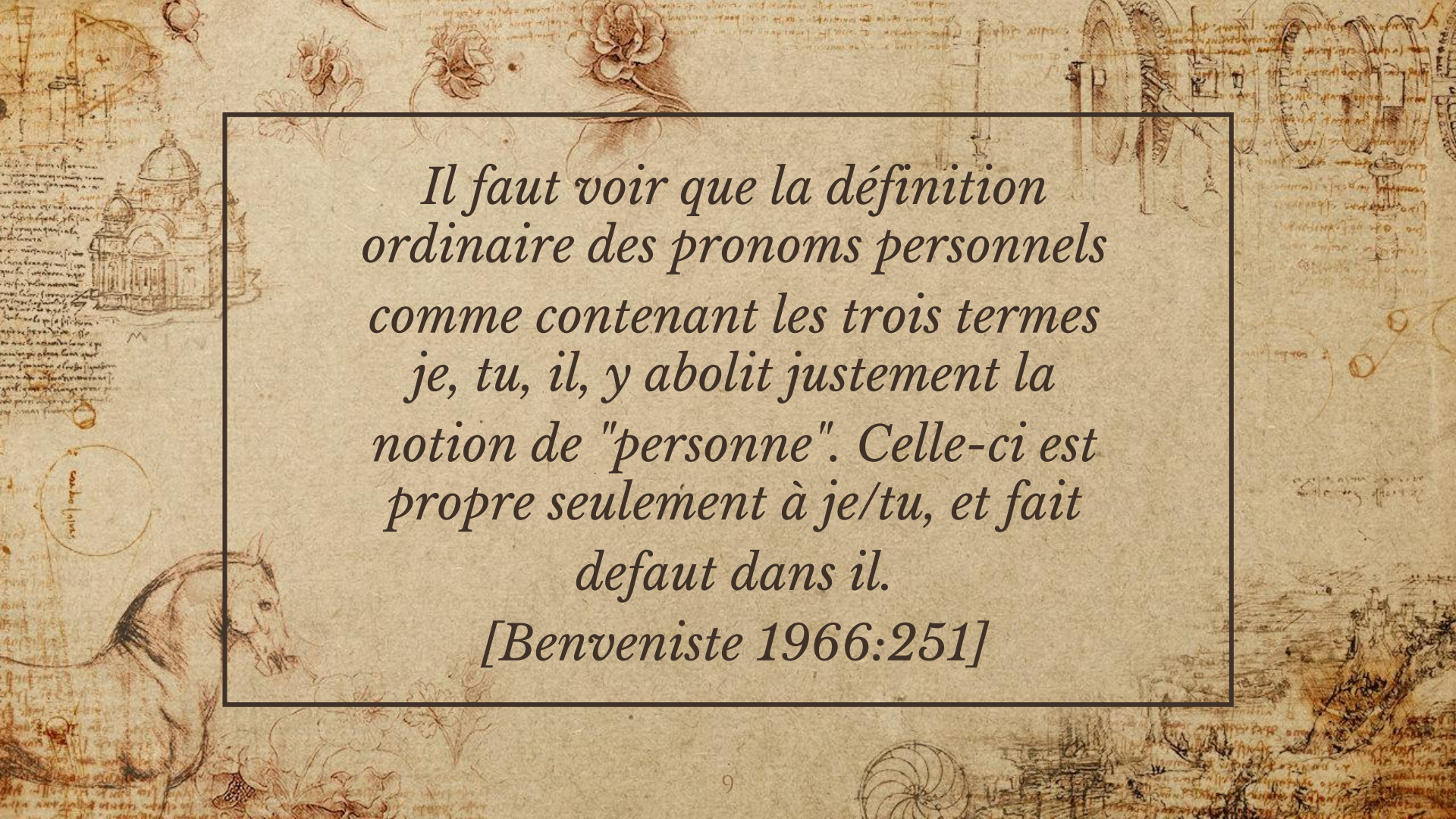
1. Voi siete bella/-o [IT]
you.2PL.HON are.2PL beautiful.F.SG/M.SG

2. Vous êtes belle/beaux
you.2PL.HON are.2PL beautiful.F.SG/M.SG

BENVENISTE

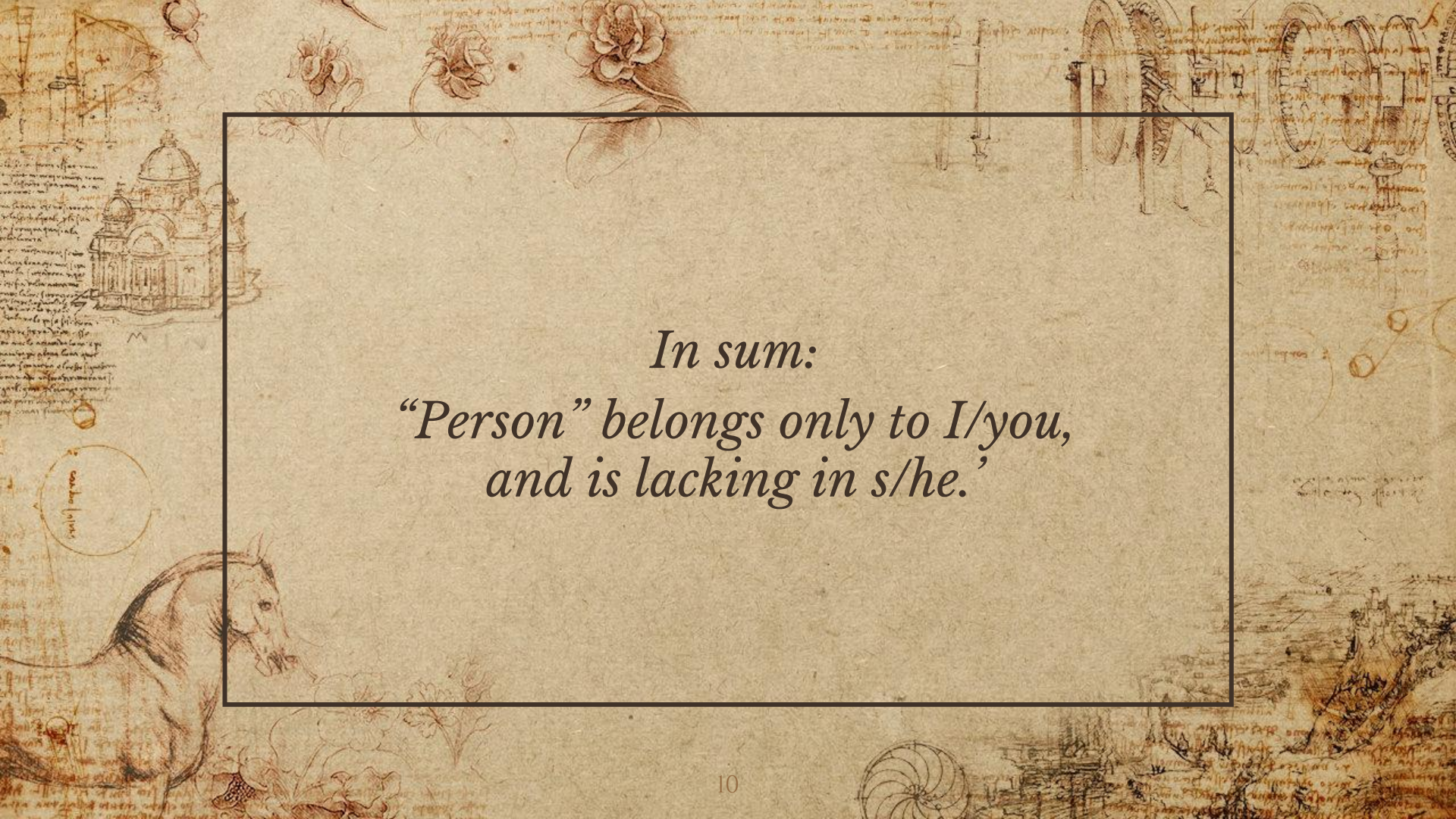
✦ Pronouns do not constitute a unitary class but are of different types depending on the mode of language of which they are the signs. **Some belong to the syntax of a language, others are characteristics of what we shall call “instances of discourse”**, that is, the discreet and always unique acts by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

(Benveniste 1971:217)

The background is a detailed reproduction of a historical manuscript page, likely from a technical or scientific notebook. It features various sketches and drawings in brown ink on aged, yellowish paper. In the upper left, there are sketches of mechanical gears and a building with a dome. In the lower left, a horse is sketched in profile. The right side of the page is filled with dense, handwritten text in a cursive script, interspersed with smaller diagrams and sketches. The overall aesthetic is that of a historical scientific or technical document.

*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]



*In sum:
“Person” belongs only to I/you,
and is lacking in s/he.’*

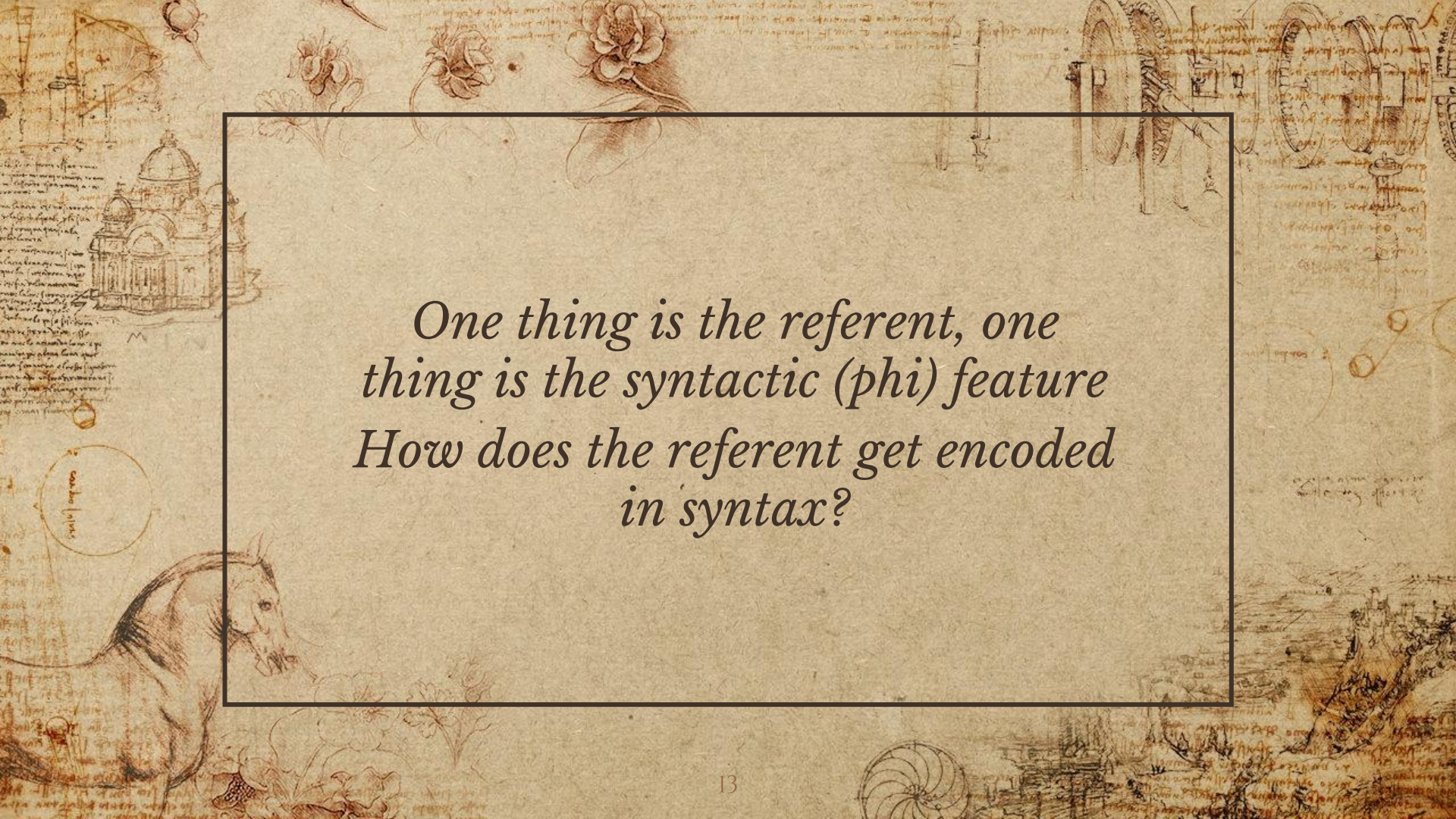
THERE IS MORE

✦ 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

✦ 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)



*One thing is the referent, one
thing is the syntactic (ϕ) feature
How does the referent get encoded
in syntax?*

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?
- ✦ ALREADY PRESENT > not so fast

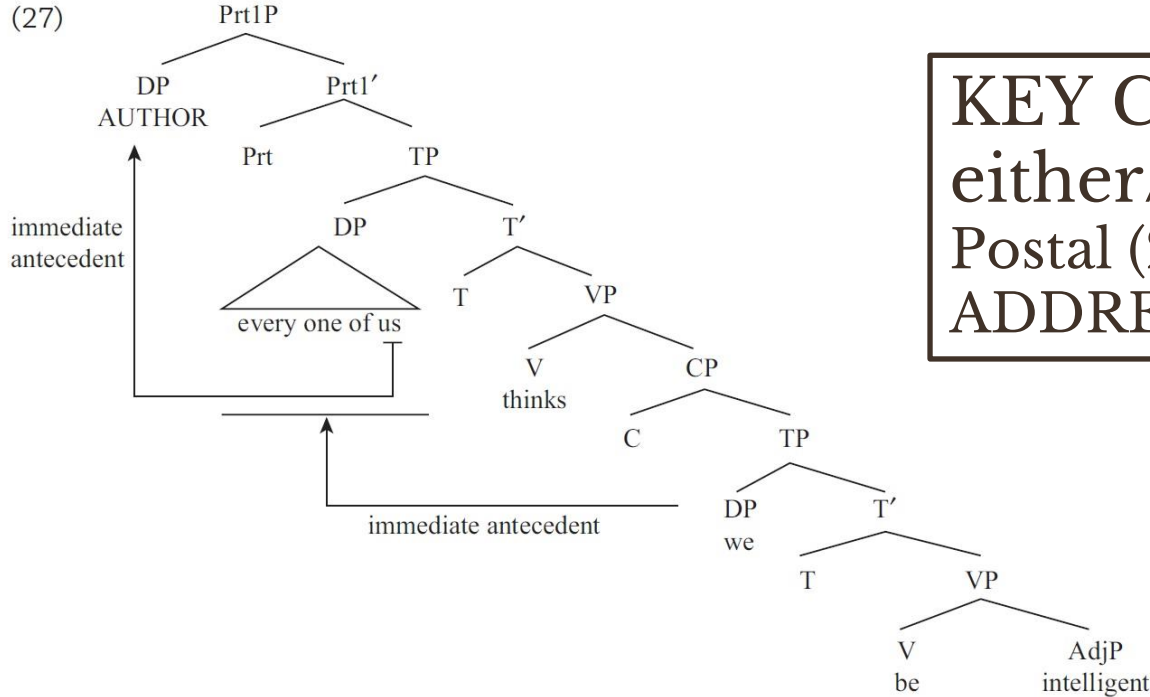


THE SYNTAX OF ADDRESSEE

IMPOSTERS: MULTIPLE ANTECEDENTS

(26) [Every one of us]₁ thinks we₁/they₁ are intelligent.

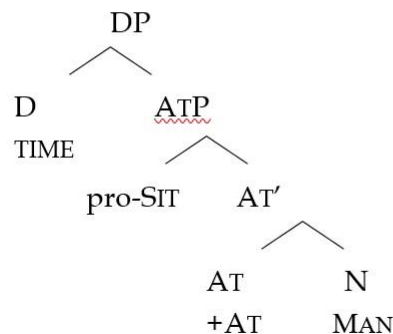
(27)



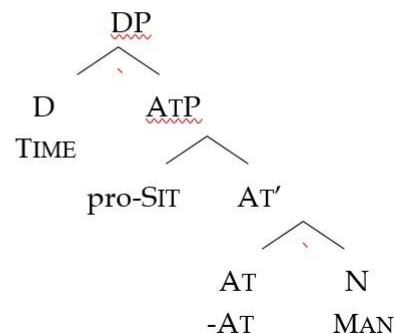
KEY CONCEPT:
either/or, Collins & Postal (2012):
ADDRESSEE head

INDEXICAL PRONOUNS

a. First person pronoun



b. Second person pronoun



WHERE:

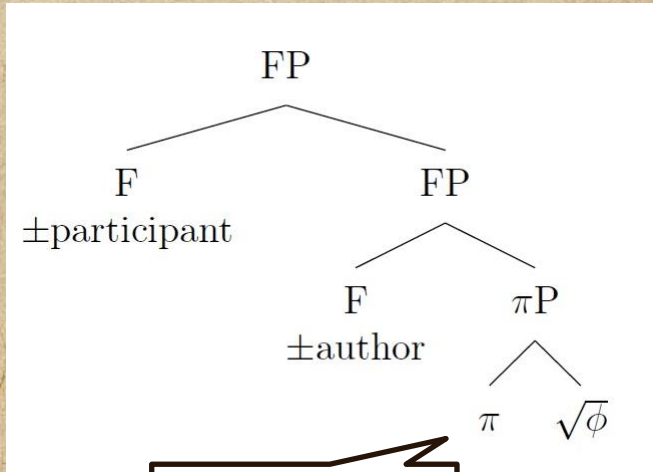
- D is the determiner head, encoding TIME
- pro-SIT is a pronominal situation variable (valued deictically, in the absence of an antecedent)
- AT is a relational head, which maps its complement to its specifier (it states whether its complement is at the location of its specifier –at the utterance location)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

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

PERSON HEADS IN THE LEFT PERIPHERY



person

Deixis is directly encoded in person pronouns

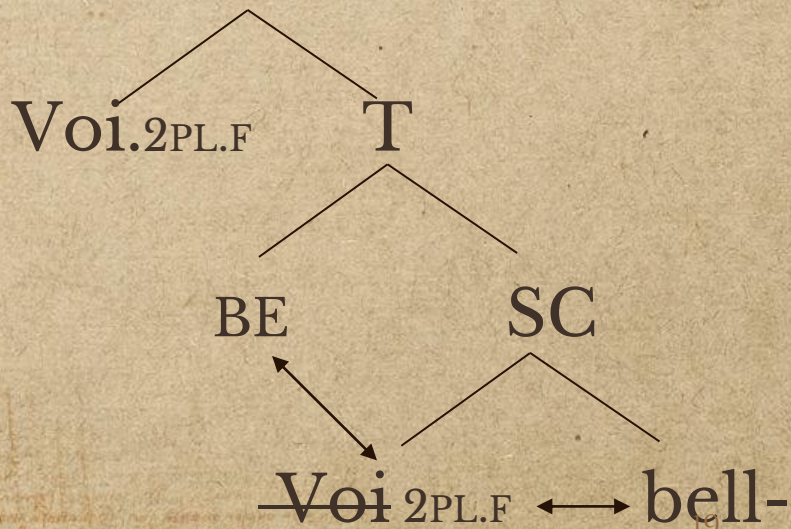
- 1st person [+auth, -part]
- 2nd person [-auth, +part]
- 3rd person [-auth, -part]

Terenghi (2023:93)

Voi siete
you.2PL.HON are.2PL

VOI

bella/-o [IT]
beautiful.F.SG/M.SG



PP AGREEMENT WITH VOI

FEMALE REFERENT

4. Vi hanno vist-a/-o
you.2PL.HON have.3PL seen-**F.SG/M.SG**

MALE REFERENT

5. Vi hanno vist-o/(*-a)
you.2PL.HON have.3PL seen-**M.SG**

PP AGREEMENT WITH 2P

FEMALE REFERENT

4. Vi hanno vist-a/o
you.2PL.HON.F have.3PL seen-**F.SG/M.SG**

6. Ti hanno vist-a/o
you.2SG.F have.3PL seen-**F.SG/M.SG**

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

PP+ADJ

✦ Vi ho trovat-a/-o simpatic-a/-o
you.2PL I.have found. **F.SG/M.SG** nice-**F.SG/M.SG**

pp-F	adj-F
pp-M	adj-M
pp-M	adj-F
pp-F	adj-M

THE PHI FEATURES OF HON VOI

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

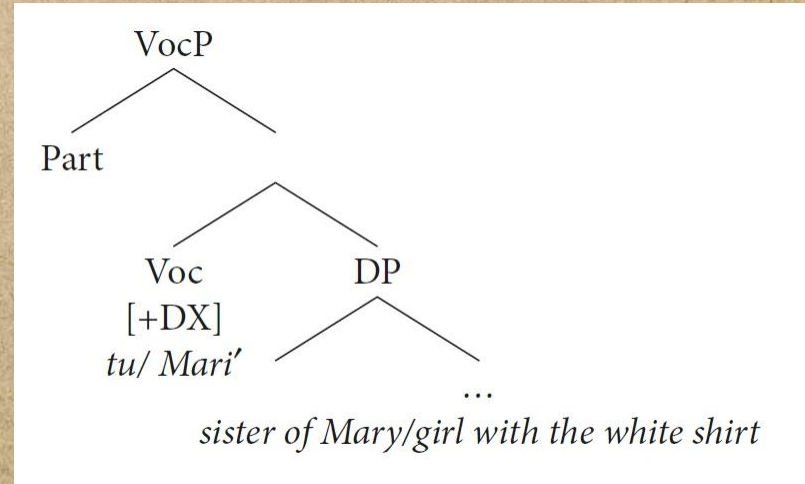
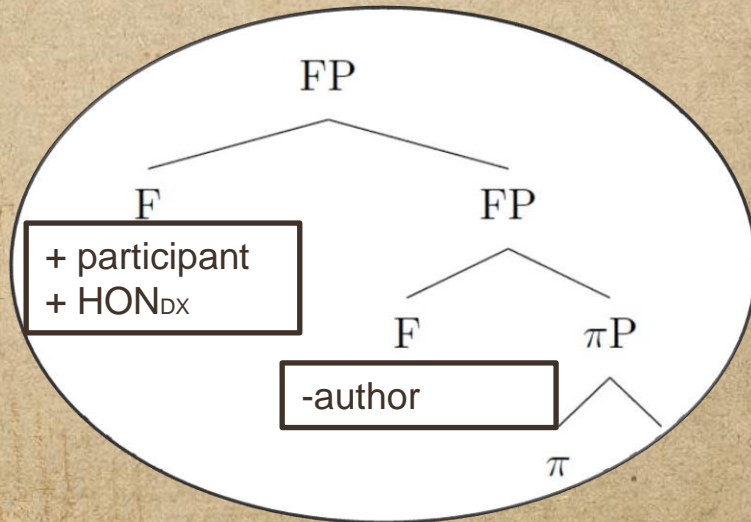
- ✦ Agreement with aux > plural agreement
- ✦ Agreement with adjective gender concord with referent
- ✦ Agreement with participle it is singular, *Voi* behaves like *tu*

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

HONORIFIC LIKE VOCATIVE

✦ Voi.HON (refined)

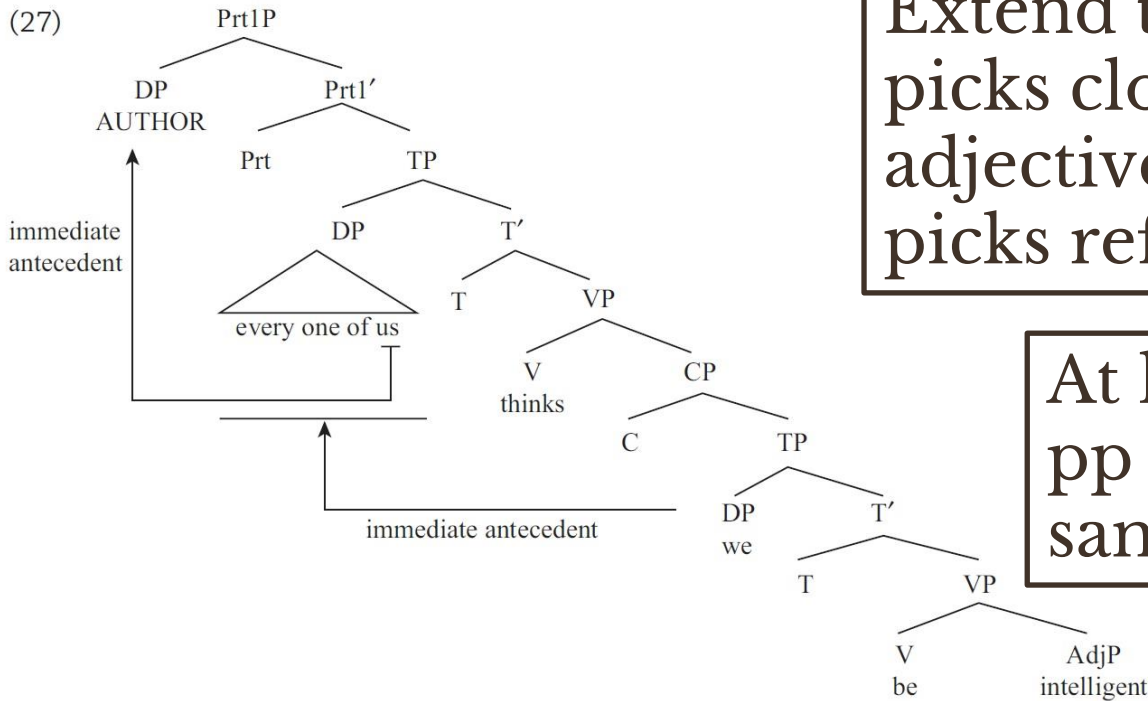
- Deix



CAN WE USE IMPOSTERS?

(26) [Every one of us]₁ thinks we₁/they₁ are intelligent.

(27)



Extend the idea: T picks closest, adjective & pp picks referent

At least adj and pp have the same behavior

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

7. Lei è bella/-o [IT]
you.3SG.HON is.3SG beautiful.F.SG/M.SG

Like Voi?

LEI/PP AGREEMENT

Lei.3SG.F FEMALE REFERENT

8. La trovo cambiat-a/(*-o)
you.3SG.HON find.1SG changed.F.SG/M.SG
‘I find you changed’

MALE REFERENT

9. La trovo cambiat-o/-a
you.3SG.HON find.1SG changed-M.SG/F.SG

THE PHI FEATURES OF HON LEI

LEI LIKE VOI

- ✦ Agreement with aux like *Voi*
- ✦ Agreement with adjective like *voi*
- ✦ Agreement with participle? NOT like *voi*

PP AND ADJECTIVAL AGREEMENT

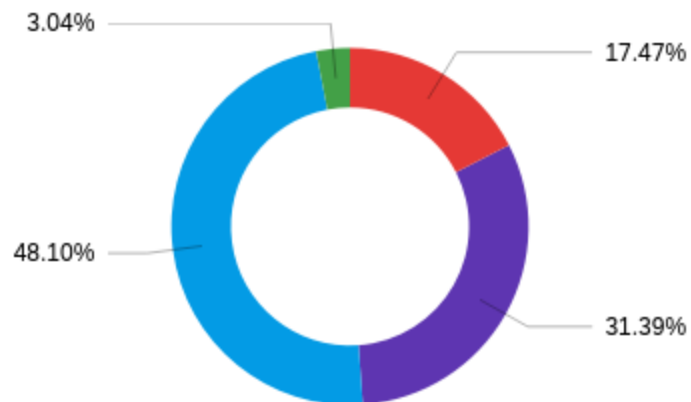
You meet your old (male) boss. He says: I had a very adventurous life after we parted. You reply: “Yes, ...”

10. L'ho trovat-a/(*-o) cambiat-a/-o
you.3SG.HON=I.HAVE found.SG.F changed-SG.F/SG.M
'I find you changed'

11. *L'ho trovato cambiata

12. *Vi ho trovata cambiata (for a man)

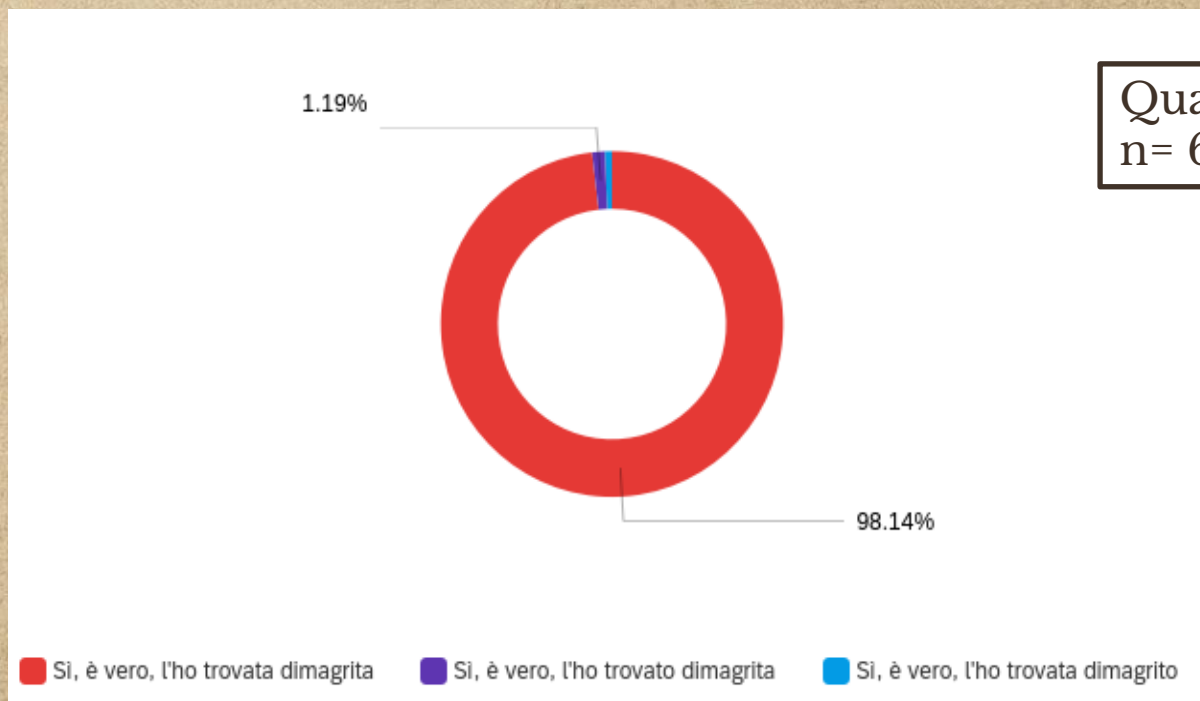
ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE



Qualtrics
n= 617

- In effetti sì, l'ho trovato cambiato
- In effetti sì, l'ho trovata cambiata
- In effetti sì, l'ho trovata cambiata
- In effetti sì, l'ho trovato cambiato

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE



Qualtrics
n= 617

THE PHI FEATURES OF HON LEI

LEI LIKE VOI?

- ✦ Agreement with aux like Voi
- ✦ Agreement with adjective like Voi (referent)
- ✦ Agreement with participle?
 - ✦ Either syntactic or semantic (but gender-reversed)

PP AND ADJECTIVAL AGREEMENT

✦ L'ho trovat-a simpatic-a/-o
you.3SG.HON=I.HAVE found.1SG nice-F.SG/M.SG

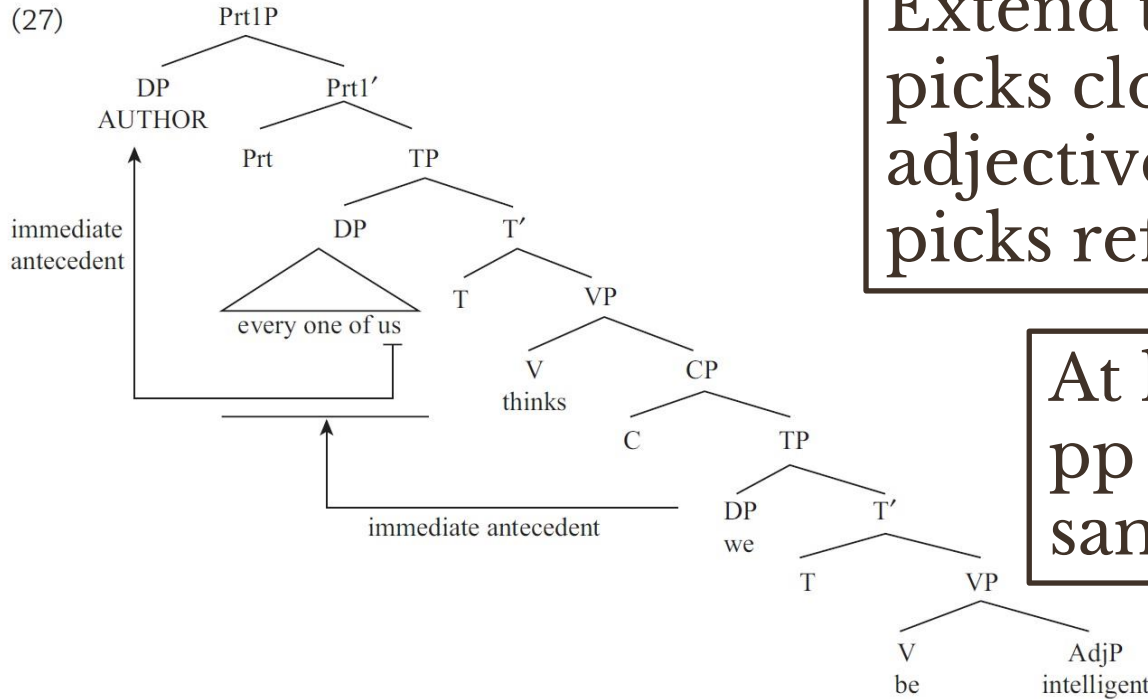
I found [_{sc} you ARE nice] ⊗ nice.F you.F
but no M agreement on pp found

> ECM

RECALL VOI

(26) [Every one of us]₁ thinks we₁/they₁ are intelligent.

(27)



Extend the idea: T picks closest, adjective & pp picks referent

At least adj and pp have the same behavior

THE SYNTAX OF PP-ADJ

✦ La.F.SG.ACC

pp-F	adj-F
pp-F	adj-M
pp-M	adj-M
pp-M	adj-F

*I found (that) [**you** (ARE) nice]
ECM

I [found you.F nice.F] >

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

CLIMBING

COMPARE:

✦ Voi.2PL

Lei.3SG.F.

pp-F	adj-F
pp-M	adj-M
pp-M	adj-F
pp-F	adj-M

pp-F	adj-F
pp-F	adj-M
pp-M	adj-M
pp-M	adj-F

SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC AGREEMENT

✦ Voi

Aux: syntactic

Adjective: semantic with referent (deictic)

Pp: syntactic (tu) or semantic (HON) > **SHIFT**

✦ Lei

Aux: syntactic

Adjective: syntactic with lei or semantic with referent

Pp: always syntactic

THE FEATURES OF VOI AND LEI

- ✦ VOI_{PRON} [-auth; +part; PL]
- ✦ VOI_{HON} [-auth; +part; +HON_{DX} [F/F] OR [M/M]]
- ✦ lei_{PRON} [-auth; -part; SG; F]
- ✦ Lei_{HON} [-auth; -part; +SG; F; + HON_{DX}[F/M];]

SYNTACTIC AND DEICTIC AGREEMENT

✦ Voi

Aux: [P,N] = 2.PL

Adjective:[+HON_{DX}]

Pp: [+HON_{DX}] or F/M

✦ Lei

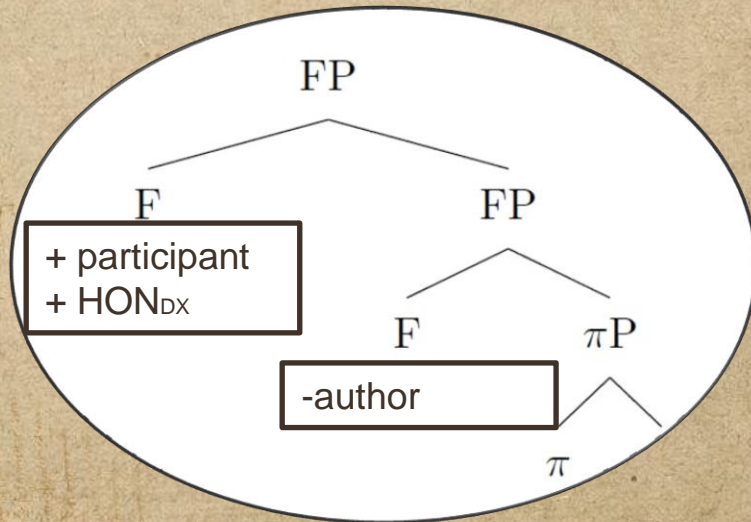
Aux: [P,N]=3SG

Adjective:[+HON_{DX}] **or F**

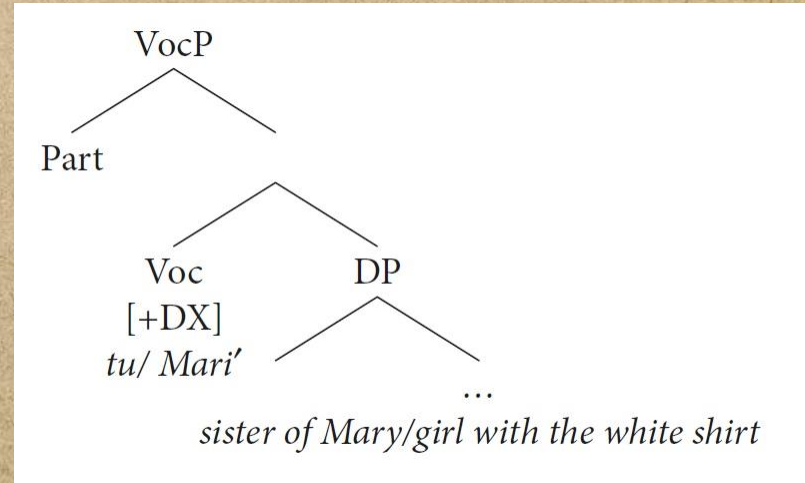
Pp: **F**

HONORIFICS LIKE VOCATIVES

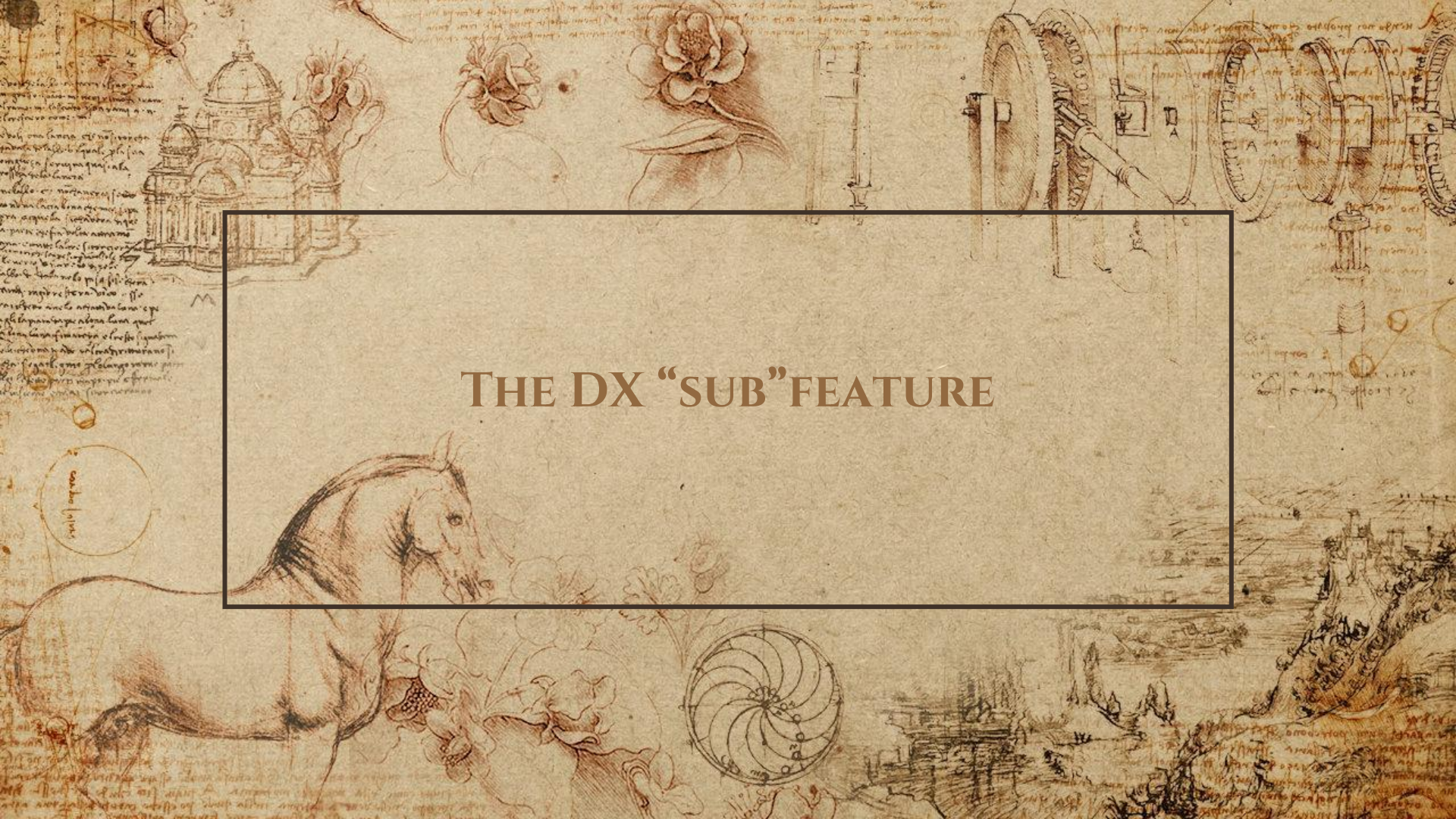
✦ Voi.HON



○ Deix



THE DX "SUB" FEATURE



VOCATIVES

- ✦ (true) vocatives: pronominal, and on a vocative head with +dx feature (D'Alessandro & Van Oostendorp (2014), Espinal (2012))
- ✦ Dx is one of the features related to discourse/deixis → like focus, topics, etc

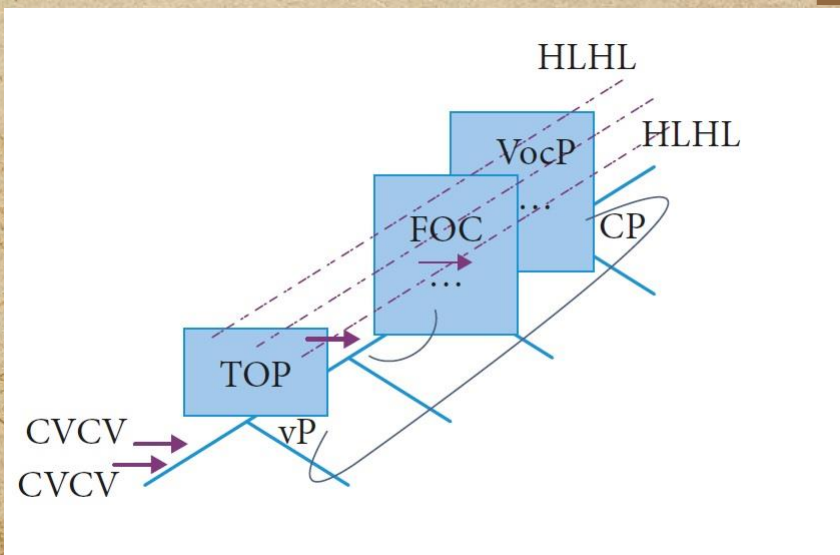
DX

- ✦ “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

- 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
- e. Tu nghə la majetta **bbianghə!** [Abruzzese]
you with the white t-shirt!
'You girl with the white t-shirt!'- voc

THE TREE



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

SYNTACTIC CHANGE

- ✦ Interface phenomena are more prone to 'random' change and optionality
- ✦ Core arguments aren't
- ✦ Pronominal systems are stable, but NOT if the pronouns are honorifics

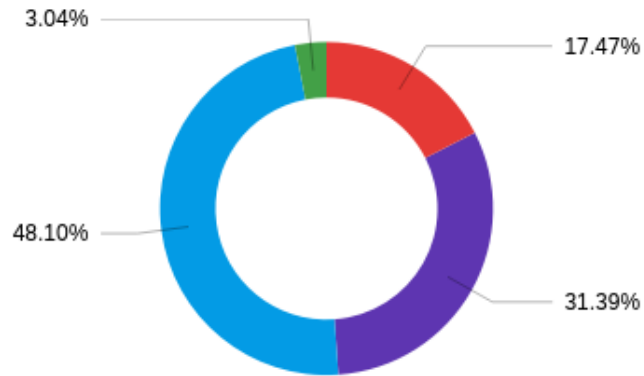
Change (Terenghi 2023, D'Alessandro, Putnam & Terenghi 2023, D'Alessandro 2023)

CHANGE

✦ Two kinds

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

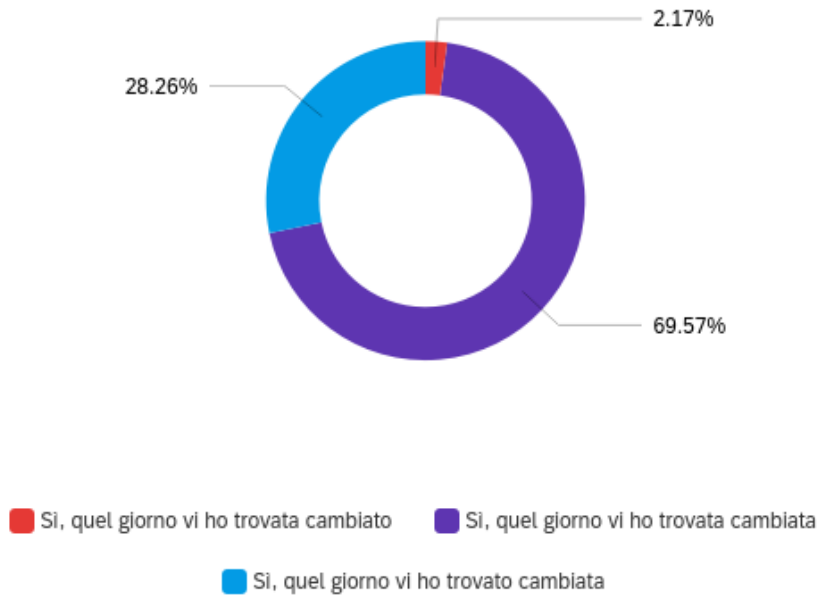
SOME VARIATION



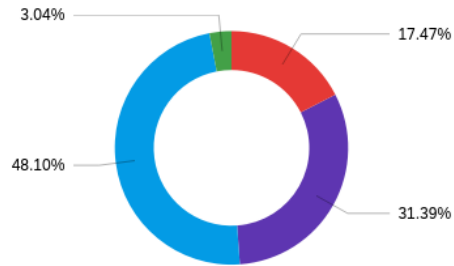
- In effetti si, l'ho trovato cambiato
- In effetti si, l'ho trovata cambiata
- In effetti si, l'ho trovata cambiata
- In effetti si, l'ho trovato cambiato

Lei

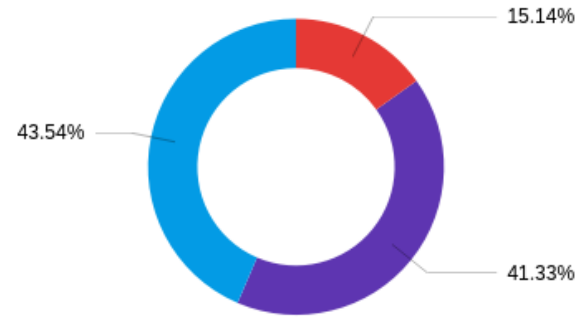
Voi



VARIATION



- In effetti sì, l'ho trovato cambiato
- In effetti sì, l'ho trovata cambiata
- In effetti sì, l'ho trovata cambiato
- In effetti sì, l'ho trovato cambiata



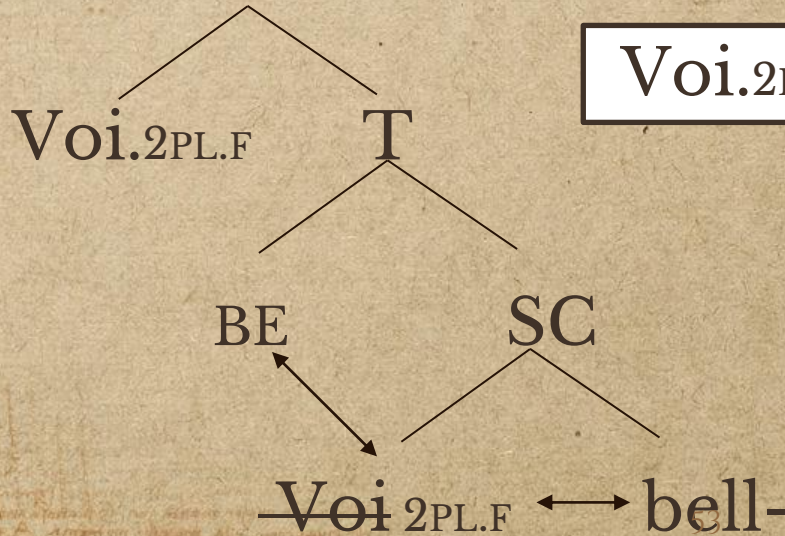
- Sua Santità, deve mangiare di più. L'ho trovato molto dimagrito stavolta
- Sua Santità, deve mangiare di più. L'ho trovata molto dimagrita stavolta
- Sua Santità, deve mangiare di più. L'ho trovata molto dimagrito stavolta

PARTICIPANT AND DX

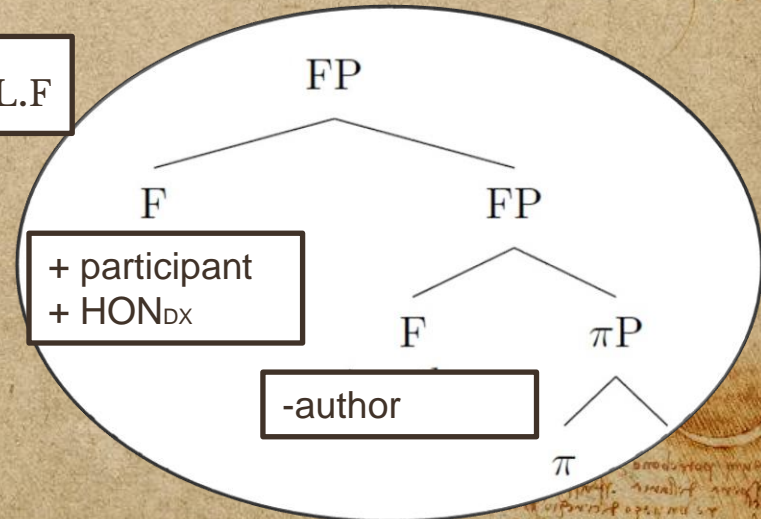


RECALL: SPLITTING THE PRONOUN

Vi ho trovata cambiata

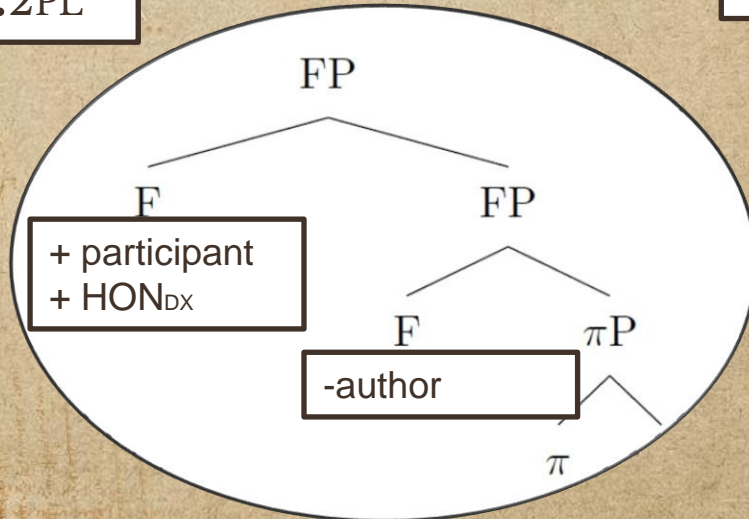


Voi.2PL.F

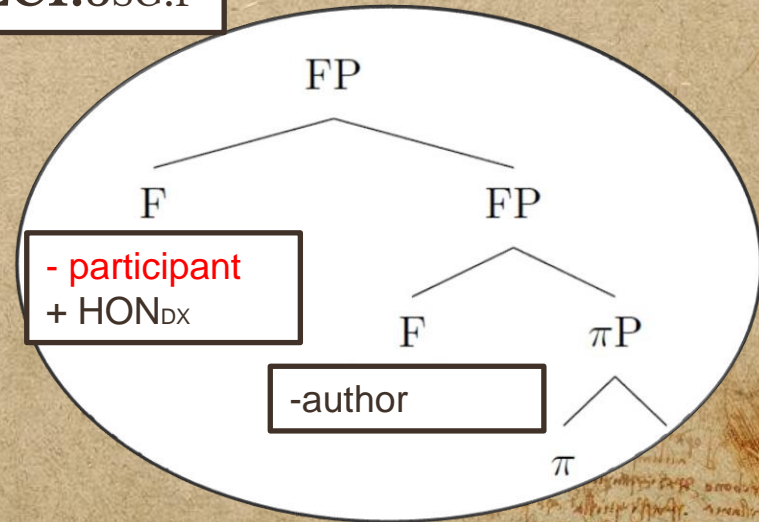


WHY PART AND HON ARE SEPARATE

Voi.2PL

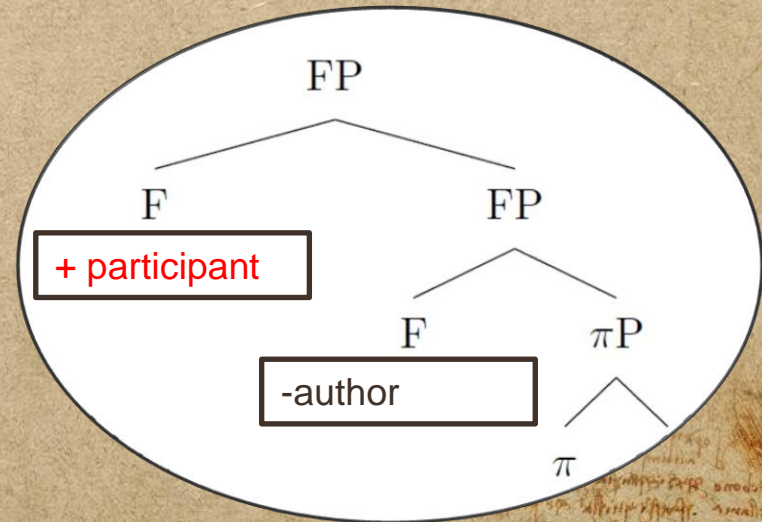


Lei.3SG.F



ARE PARTICIPANT AND DEICTIC THE SAME?

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



DEICTIC 3P PRONOUNS

13. Custù, cussù, cullù **[Abruzzese]**

3P.M.+AUTH. -PART 3P.M.-AUTH.+PART 3P.M. -AUTH. - PART

‘He (next to me), he (next to you), he (far from both)’

14. Chistè, chissè, chillè


3P.F.+AUTH -PART 3P.F.-AUTH+PART 3P.F. -AUTH.- PART

‘She (next to me), she (next to you), she (far from both)’

15. Queste/quesse/quelle

TO CONCLUDE

- ✦ The HON feature is a separate feature
- ✦ It impacts the agreement patterns
- ✦ It is related to gender (in Romance)
- ✦ It is not a purely deictic feature
- ✦ Dx is where change penetrates the otherwise stable pronominal system
- ✦ Benveniste had got it all right!



THANKS
questions and references:
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