

## Demonstrative systems are not affected by contact: evidence from Italo-Romance

In this paper I discuss deixis encoding in ternary demonstrative systems, whereby I refer to both demonstrative pronouns/adjectives (*this*, *that*) and demonstrative, or locative, adverbs (*here*, *there*) which display three contrastive forms. I show evidence that the encoding of deixis in these forms is not affected by (language-specific) contact, and that the observed changes can be predicted by markedness considerations, just like changes that demonstrative systems undergo in diachrony.

Ternary demonstrative systems display three contrastive forms to define the location of a referent in the external world, arguably in relation to two different deictic centres: the speaker ('me') and the hearer ('you'), as in (1). In what follows, only pronominal and adnominal forms will be discussed, but all remarks equally apply to adverbial forms, unless otherwise indicated.

- (1) *chistu* / (chi)ssu / *chiddu* (Calabrian, L&S16:884)  
 DEM.close to me DEM.close to you DEM.far from me/you

I will refer to these forms as morphologically proximal (*chistu*), medial (*chissu*) and distal (*chiddu*), and to their deixis as speaker-, hearer-, and other-related, respectively. Data discussed in this paper come from Abruzzese ( $n=13$ ), Calabrian ( $n=9$ ), Marchigiano ( $n=1$ ), Molisano ( $n=1$ ), Sardinian ( $n=1$ ; included although not Italo-Romance), Sicilian ( $n=30$ ), and Umbro ( $n=1$ ) varieties spoken in the Americas and in Belgium. More specifically, data have been collected during fieldworks in Argentina (17 *émigré* speakers ('ESs'), 6 heritage speakers ('HSs'; cf. definition in Rothman 2009:156), Brazil (3 ESs), Quebec (11 ESs, 1 HS), Belgium (4 ESs, 1 HS) and the US (9 ESs, 4 HSs). The baseline to assess whether any change has taken place because of contact is, for each variety, its counterpart spoken in Italy as described in the available literature.

Contact varieties are Argentinian Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, English (Quebec and US), French (Quebec and Belgium). An overview of their demonstrative systems follows:

- (2) *este* / *ese* / *aquel* (Argentinian Spanish, fieldwork data)  
 DEM.close to me DEM.close to you DEM.far from me/you
- (3) a. *este* / *ese* (Rioplatense Spanish, A. Saab, *p.c.*)  
 b. *this* / *that* (English)  
 DEM.close to me DEM.far from me  
 c. *ce N-ci* / *ce N-là* (French, L&S16: 890, 894-895)  
 DEM N here.close to me DEM N there.far from me
- (4) a. *esse* / *aquele* (Brazilian Portuguese, J&V15: 318-19)  
 DEM.close to me/you DEM.far from me/you  
 b. *aqui* / *aí* / *lá*  
 here.close to me there.close to you there.far from me/you  
 c. *esse aqui* / *esse aí* / *aquele lá*  
 DEM.close to me DEM.close to you DEM.far from me/you

Argentinian Spanish displays a ternary system (2). Rioplatense Spanish (spoken in Buenos Aires), English, and French (disclaimers: no deictic contrast is encoded in the pronominal/adnominal demonstrative, but contrasts arise in demonstrative-reinforcer constructions; also, the adverbial system encodes person *and* distance contrasts: L&S16:894 and references) display binary systems centred on the speaker (3); Brazilian Portuguese has a binary system based on the participants (4a) that can be modified in combination with the ternary adverbial system (4b), leading to a ternary system (4c).

ESs and HSs were tested to assess whether the deictic oppositions encoded in the demonstrative systems of the contact languages have driven parallel reorganisations in the Italo-Romance varieties. To investigate this, participants were presented with two different tasks: (A) picture description: each description was elicited through a forced choice among different audio stimuli; (B) guided-production, concerning the location of some referents in the actual context. Each domain (speaker-, hearer-, and other-related) was tested overall five times (picture description: adnominal context, pronominal context, demonstrative-reinforcer construction; guided-production: adnominal or pronominal context, adverbial context). No statistical analysis was possible, due to the

small size of the sample, so the following results are just descriptive statistics.

The results show that the speaker-related domain ('DEM close to me') and the other-related one ('DEM far away from me/you') are overly stable. For the former, 243 forms were elicited, 99.59% of which are morphologically proximal. For the latter, 245 forms were elicited, 90.61% of which are morphologically distal. This percentage increases if the results of test (B) only are taken into consideration (99% of morphologically distal forms over 101 elicited forms). No difference among different contact languages has been detected. Instead, the hearer-related domain ('DEM close to you') is rather unstable. Out of 248 elicited forms, (i) 53.63% are morphologically medial forms, thus contrasting with proximal and distal forms to preserve a ternary system (type: (1)); (ii) 27.02% are morphologically proximal forms, ultimately leading to a binary system centred on the participant (type: (4a)); and (iii) 14.52% are morphologically distal forms, ultimately instantiating a binary system centred on the speaker (type: (3b)). Moreover, in 12 cases (4.34%) the participants showed optionality between a proximal and a distal form.

The three different options (i-iii) are independent from the demonstrative systems of the contact languages. Given the data in (2-4), contact-induced change would predict: type (i) to be prevailing in Argentina (2) and, compositionally, in Brazil (4c); type (ii) to be dominant in contact with Brazil (4a); and type (iii) to be most frequent in Buenos Aires, Quebec, Belgium and the US (3). However, type (i) is less common in Argentina (54.28% of medial forms, out of 105 elicited ones; but notice that 29% of these were elicited in Buenos Aires, (3a)) than in the areas predicted to be of type (iii) (Quebec: 55.10%, out of 49 forms; Belgium: 62.5% out of 16 forms; US: 61.67% out of 60 forms); type (ii) is less widespread in Brazil (13.3% of proximal forms in the hearer-related domain out of 15 elicited ones) than in most other areas (Argentina: 29.09% out of 105 forms; Quebec: 34.69% out of 49 forms; US: 23.33% out of 60 forms); type (iii) is quite infrequent in Quebec (10.20% of distal forms in the hearer-related domain out of 49 elicited ones) and in the US (11.57% out of 60 forms), but remarkably less so in Brazil (53.3% out of 15 forms). Instead, the featural reorganisations in (ii-iii) can be compared to those that characterise the diachrony of demonstratives: new encoding for the hearer-related domain (sharing exponent with the speaker-related or with the other-related one) and, as a result, reduction of ternary systems to binary ones (for evidence for both cases, consider data in L&S16), arguably without any contact-related triggers.

The overall instability of the hearer-related domain and, relatedly, of ternary systems in contact (but also in diachrony), can be accounted for assuming that (a) deictic contrasts are encoded via person features and (b) such features are best captured by a featural system as the one put forward by Harbour (2016): two person features (Author, A, and Participant, P), that must each have one value (either + or -) in order to compose with  $\pi$ , the set of discourse-related atoms (speaker, hearer, others) and partition it. Binary systems are derived by the composition of only one person feature with  $\pi$ : ( $\pm A(\pi)$ ) for the speaker-based ones (cf. (3)) and ( $\pm P(\pi)$ ) for the participant-based ones (cf. (4a)); ternary systems, instead, are derived by the composition of [ $\pm$ Author] with  $\pi$ , the result of which is then composed with [ $\pm$ Participant]: ( $\pm P(\pm A(\pi))$ ). Ternary systems can thus be considered as more marked than binary ones, as they require two features, rather than just one, to compose with  $\pi$ . Moreover, within ternary systems, the hearer-related domain is predicted to be more marked, as the values of the features that characterise it are not uniform (-A,+P), in contrast those that derive the speaker-related domain (+A,+P) and for the other-related one (-A,-P). The markedness of the hearer-related domain and, in general, of ternary systems, can explain the patterns we observe both in contact and diachronic data.

**References.** Harbour (2016). *Impossible persons*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. | J&V15 = Jungbluth & Vallentin (2015). Brazilian Portuguese. In Jungbluth & Da Milano (eds.), *Manual of Deixis in Romance Languages*, Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 315-331. | L&S16 = Ledgeway & Smith (2016). Deixis. In Ledgeway & Maiden (eds.), *The Oxford guide to the Romance languages*, Oxford: OUP, 879-896. | Rothman (2009). Understanding the nature and outcomes of early bilingualism: Romance languages as heritage languages. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 13, 155-163.