
THE OXFORD
HANDBOOK OF
the Italian Language
edited by
ADAM NOEL LEDGEWAY
MARTIN MAIDEN


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Contents

List of figures

List of abbreviations

List of contributors

Part I The making of Italian

1. Defining Italian
Adam Noel Ledgeway
Martin Maiden

2. Tuscan, Florentine, and Italian: External history
Paolo D'Achille
Domenico Proietti

3. The history of Italian: The roles of literature and economics
Claudio Marazzini

4. The *questione della lingua* in the Renaissance
Brian Richardson

5. The *questione della lingua*: Nineteenth and twentieth centuries
Nigel Vincent

6. Grammaticography
Alvise Andreose

7. Women in the history of the Italian language
Helena Sanson

Part II Historical linguistics

8. Historical phonology
Lori Repetti
Jordan Kodner

9. Historical morphology
Martin Maiden

10. Historical syntax
Adam Noel Ledgeway

11. Address systems and their history
Lorenzo Renzi

12. Archaism and innovation
Nigel Vincent

Part III Structures of Italian

13. Orthography and writing
Pietro Maturi

14. Phonetics
Antonio Romano

15. Phonology
Laura Vanelli

16. Inflexional morphology
Franck Floricic

17. Derivational morphology and compounding

Maria Grossmann
Anna M. Thornton

18. Evaluative morphology
M. Silvia Micheli

19. The nominal group
Luigi Andriani
Giuseppina Silvestri

20. The verbal group
Adam Noel Ledgeway

21. The clause
Eva-Maria Remberger

22. Pragmatics
Sandra Paoli
Jacqueline Visconti

23. Information structure
Delia Bentley
Silvio Cruschina

24. Semantics
Chiara Gianollo

25. The lexicon: Onomasiology and semasiology
Luca Lorenzetti

Part IV Sociolinguistics

26. Standardization
Massimo Cerruti

27. Multilingualism
Gabriele Iannàccaro
Vittorio Dell'Aquila

Simone Ciccolone

28. Diamesic variation and registers
Anna-Maria De Cesare

29. Diastratic variation
Mari D'Agostino

30. Gender and language
Francesca M. Dovetto

Part V Italian outside of Italy

31. Italian in Switzerland
Laura Baranzini

32. Italian in the Mediterranean area
Daniele Baglioni

33. Italian around the world
Raffaella Bombi

Part VI Italian in contact

34. Italian in contact: The Middle Ages
Lorenzo Tomasin

35. Italian in contact: The modern period
Alessandro Carlucci

36. Italian and immigrant languages
Francesco Goglia

37. Popular Italian and its history
Maurizio Dardano
Emanuele Ventura

38. Northern regional Italian
Diego Pescarini

39. Central regional Italian
Tania Paciaroni

40. Southern regional Italian
Francesco Avolio

41. Regional Italian of Sardinia
Lucia Molinu
Simone Pisano

References

Index

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List of Figures

Edited by

Adam Noel Ledgeway

Martin Maiden

8.1 The vowel system of Latin. 154

8.2 Modern vowels and diphthongs. 155

8.3 Development of stressed vowels from Latin to Italian. 155

8.4 Development of unstressed vowels. 160

11.1 Speech act model. 238

13.1 Correspondence between vocalic sounds in stressed syllables and letters. 284

13.2 Correspondence between sounds and letters for approximants and close vowels. 285

13.3 Correspondence between sounds and letters for velar stops. 286

13.4 Correspondence between sounds and letters for palatal affricates. 287

13.5 From letters to sounds: the phonological values of the letters C and G. 287

13.6 Correspondence between the letter S and the sounds it can represent. 289

13.7 Correspondence between the letter Z and the sounds it can represent. 289

13.8 Correspondence between the sequences SC/SCI/SCH and the sounds they can represent. 290

13.9 Correspondence between the groups GL/GLI and the

sounds they can represent. 291

14.1 The vowel sounds of Italian. 303

14.2 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to bilabial articulations realized for /p/ and /b/ in the /a_a/ context. 305

14.3 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to labio-dental articulations realized for /f/ and /v/ in the /a_a/ context. 306

14.4 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to alveodental (laminal-alveolar + apico-dental with lower tip) articulations realized for /ʦ/ and /ʣ/ in the /a_a/ context. 307

14.5 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to apico-alveodental articulations realized for /t/ and /d/ in the /a_a/ context. 307

14.6 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to lamino-alveolar articulations realized for /s/ and /z/ in the /a_a/ context. 308

14.7 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to lamino-alveolar (lateral) articulations realized for /l/ and /r/ in the /a_a/ context. Both contoids are voiced in this case. 308

14.8 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to (post)alveolar articulations realized for /ʃ/, ʧ/, and /ʤ/ in the /a_a/ context. 309

14.9 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to palatal (lateral) articulations realized for /ʎ/ in the /a_a/ context. 310

14.10 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to articulations realized in the velar place for /k/ and /g/ in the /a_a/ context. 310

14.11 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to nasal articulations realized in the bilabial, alveodental, and palatal place for /m/, /n/, and /ɲ/ in the /a_a/ context.

Note the velum lowering and the activation of the nasal cavities resonance (left) with consequent additive formants and acoustic coupling effects between cavities (right). 311

14.12 Orograms with rough indications corresponding to articulatory settings realizing: (a) the typical dynamic of a nasal contoid (alveolar in this case) and (b) two phases (closure and release) of a plosive contoid (voiceless alveodental in this case). 312

14.13 Orograms with rough indications corresponding to articulatory settings realizing: (a) the typical dynamic of a fricative contoid and (b) two phases (closure and noisy release) of an affricate contoid (voiceless alveodental in both cases). 312

14.14 Orograms with rough indications corresponding to articulatory settings realizing: (a) a lateral contoid (alveolar) and (b) the (apico-alveolar) trill. 312

14.15 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms with rough indications corresponding to the articulatory settings in which the approximant manner is realized for the palatal and the labial-velar contoid. 313

14.17 Waveforms, spectrograms, and graphic curves of acoustic variables for stress distinctions in words such as *càpito–capìto–capitò* (left to right). 320

14.18 Waveforms, spectrograms, and graphic curves of acoustic variables for stress distinctions in words such as *neonato* (left) and *neonatologia* (right). 321

14.20 'Gianni ha preso il giornale' ('Gianni has taken the newspaper') by a professional speaker: declarative assertive (D, left) and yes/no question (I, right). 324

14.21 Prototypical diagrams (based on sentences produced by two speakers, in neutral Italian) for the two intonation modes illustrated in Figure 14.20. 325

14.22 Focus effect on pitch curve and timing on the three sentences 'Gianni ha preso il giornale' ('Gianni has taken

the newspaper') with narrow focus moving from the syntactic subject to the object (left to right). 329

23.1 Pitch contour of the utterance with Mirative FF (cf. 50): ***Alle Maldive*** *sono andati in viaggio di nozze!* 'They went to the Maldives on honeymoon!' 545

23.2 Pitch contour of the utterance with Corrective FF: *Alle Maldive sono andati in viaggio di nozze (, non alle Isole Vergini)*. 'They went to the Maldives on honeymoon (, not to the Virgin Islands).' 545

26.1 Clusters of neo-standard features and literary standard features in students' speech. 608

26.2 Lexical variation between and within neo-standard Italian and literary standard Italian. 610

28.1 Medial language variation and examples of Italian varieties/realizations. 639

28.2 Mixed modes of medial communication (reported speech in newspaper articles). 641

28.3 Degree of conceptualization of three electronic text genres. 647

31.1 Varieties of Italian in Switzerland. 680

31.2 Language areas of Switzerland. Main languages. 685

31.3 Hierarchical reinterpretation of Petralli's (1990) taxonomy. 702

36.1 Chinese electronics shop. 787

36.2 Notice in L2 Italian. 788

38.1 The linguistic repertoire of Italians. 809

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List of Abbreviations

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Adam Noel Ledgeway
Martin Maiden

For bibliographical abbreviations, see References.
* (i) unattested (or reconstructed) form or usage (ii) recursive category

** non-existent or ungrammatical form or usage

**(X) ungrammatical if X is absent

(**X) ungrammatical if X is present

(?)? (very) marginal or substandard form or usage

% acceptability subject to variation across speakers or regions

(i) pragmatically infelicitous (ii) word boundary

absolute initial position

Ø null or covert form

> becomes, yields

< comes from, derives from

ˈ primary word stress

ˌ secondary word stress

= cliticized to

~ (i) alternates with (ii) syncretic with

ː long/lengthened

. syllable boundary

/ information boundary

// utterance boundary

+/ interruption

σ syllable

~~**xyz**~~ strikethrough: base and intermediate positions of displaced elements

1 / 2 / 3 first / second / third person

A subject of a transitive clause

ABL ablative

Abr. Abruzzese (dialect group of Abruzzo, upper south-eastern Italy)

abstr. abstract

ACC accusative

AcI accusative and infinitive construction

ADDR addressee

A(dj)(P) adjective (phrase)

Adv(P) adverb(ial) (phrase)

AGr. Ancient Greek

AgrOP object agreement phrase

Ar. Arabic

Asp(P) aspect(ual) (phrase)

AT aboutness topic

ATR advanced tongue root

AUG augmentative

Aux auxiliary

Bal. Balearic (Catalan)

BC before Christ

BCE before the common era

Bol. Bolognese (eastern Emilian dialect of city of Bologna, north-eastern Italy)

BrPt. Brazilian Portuguese

Byz. Byzantine

C (i) central (ii) consonant

c. circa

-c. -century

C-domain complementizer domain

Cal. Calabrian

Cat. Catalan

ch. chapter

CHF Swiss franc(s)

Cic. Cicero

Inv. *De Inventione*

Leg. Man. *Pro Lege Manilia*

Circum. Circumstantial constituent

Cl clitic

CLat. Classical Latin

ClLD clitic left-dislocation

Cmp. Campanian (dialect group of Campania, upper south-western Italy)

Comp complementizer (position)

COND conditional

contr. contrastive

Cos. Cosentino (northern Calabrian dialect of city of Cosenza, extreme south-west of Italy)

C(P) complementizer (phrase)

CRIt. central regional Italian

Crt. Croatian

D doctor

D declarative

D-Mod direct modification

DAT dative

Dec. *The Decameron*

DEF definite(ness)

Dem demonstrative

DER derivational

DIM diminutive

DO direct object

DOM differential object marking (or marker)

D(P) determiner (phrase)

DVE *De vulgari eloquentia*

E eastern

ECM exceptional case marking

Eng. English

Ep. epistemic mood

EPP extended projection principle (a syntactic requirement that every clause shall have a subject)

EuPt. European Portuguese

Eval. evaluative mood

ET event time

F feminine

f. and following page

f_o fundamental frequency

Fin(P) finiteness (phrase)

Flo. Florentine

F_n formant values

Foc(P) focus (phrase)

Fr. French

FrameP Frame phrase

Frl. Friulian (dialect group of Friuli, north-eastern Italy)

FUT future

G glide

GEN (i) gender feature (ii) genitive

GER gerund

Ger. German

Gr. Greek

Grm. Germanic

GT given topic

H high functions and contexts (of language use)

H- high phrasal accent

H* high pitch accent

H*+L / H+*L falling complex pitch accent (stressed syllable aligned with high / low pitch accent)

H% high boundary tone

Hab. habitual

HAS Higher Adverb Space

HT hanging topic

I yes/no-question

I-Mod indirect modification

IMP imperative

IND indicative

INDEF indefinite

iNeg interpretable negative feature

INF infinitive

Inf. *L'Inferno*

I(nfl)(P) inflexion(al phrase)

INT interrogative marker

IO indirect object

IPA International Phonetic Alphabet

IPFV imperfect(ive (aspect))

IRR irrealis modality

It. Italian

L low functions and contexts (of language use)

L- low phrasal accent

L* low pitch accent

L*+H / L+*H falling complex pitch accent (stressed syllable aligned with low / high pitch accent)

L% low boundary tone

L1/L2 first/second language

LAS Lower Adverb Space

Lat. Latin

Laz. Laziale (dialect group of Lazio, central western Italy)

LD left-dislocation

Lec. Leccese (southern Salentino dialect of Lecce, extreme south-east of Italy)

lit. literally

Lmb. Lombard (dialect group of Lombardy, central northern Italy)

$\mathbf{L_n}$ acoustic loci

LOC locative

LP left periphery

M masculine

M intermediate functions and contexts (of language use)

MD modified

Mil. Milanese

Mlt. Maltese

mod modern

Mod modality

MR modifier

N neuter gender

n. (foot)note

N north(ern)

Nap. Neapolitan

NCI negative concord item

NEG negator

Neg(P) negation (phrase)

NOM nominative

Nov. *Il Novellino*

N(P) noun (phrase)

NPI negative polarity item

NRIt. northern regional Italian

Num numeral

O (i) object (ii) old

OBL oblique case (form)

Occ. Occitan

P patient

p. page

PA pitch accent

Pad. Paduan (southern Venetan dialect of city of Padua, north-eastern Italy)

Par. *Il Paradiso*

PART partitive

p.c. personal communication

Pdm. Piedmontese (dialect group of Piedmont, north-western Italy)

PFV perfect(ive (aspect))

PL plural

PLPF pluperfect

POL polite

POSS possessive (form)

P(P) preposition(al phrase)

PRO pronoun

PRS present tense

PRT preterite

Prv. Provençal Occitan (Occitan dialects spoken in Provence, south-eastern France)

PST past

Pt. Portuguese

PTC particle

PTCP participle

Purg. *Il Purgatorio*

Q quantifier

RA research assistant

REFL reflexive

reg. regional

REL relative / relativizer

RF *rafforzamento* (or *raddoppiamento*) *fonosintattico* 'phonosyntactic strengthening (or doubling)'

Rmg. Romagnol (dialect group of Romagna region, north-eastern Italy)

Ro. Romanian

Rom. Roman(esco)

RRC reduced relative clause

RT reference time

S (i) south(ern) (ii) subject

s.v. sub voce

S_A intransitive (ACTOR/AGENT) subject of an unergative clause

SAE Standard Average European

SBJV subjunctive

SceneP scene phrase

SCL subject clitic

SG singular

Sic. Sicilian

S_O intransitive (THEME/UNDERGOER) subject of an unaccusative clause

Sp speaker

Sp. Spanish

Spec specifier position

Srd. Sardinian

SRIt. southern regional Italian

sT semitones

ST speech time

st. standard

SUPERL superlative

SV subject-verb order

SVO subject-verb-object order

T tense

TAM tense, aspect, and mood

Top(P) topic (phrase)

trans. transitive

Trk. Turkish

Tsc. Tuscan

Tur. Turinese (central Piedmontese dialect of city of Turin, north-western Italy)

uNeg uninterpretable negative feature

v little v, light verb

V vowel

v. verse

V1 verb-initial clause / word order

V2 verb-second syntax / word order

V3 verb-third clause / word order

V4 verb-fourth clause / word order

Ven. Venetan

Ver. Veronese (Venetan dialect of city of Verona, north-eastern Italy)

Vnt. Venetian

voc vocative

VOS verb-object-subject order

VOT voice onset time

V(P) verb (phrase)

VS verb-subject order

VSO verb-subject-object order

W west(ern)

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Part I

THE MAKING OF ITALIAN

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Chapter 1

Defining Italian

Adam Noel Ledgeway

Martin Maiden

1.1 Introduction

This book is about 'Italian'. But what, exactly, is that? In this chapter we seek some answers to this fundamental yet surprisingly problematic question. We explore what it is that differentiates Italian from other languages. More specifically: 'How is Italian distinct from the so-called Italian dialects?' and 'How is Italian distinct from other European languages and particularly from its sister Romance languages?'.

1.2 What is Italian?

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'Italian' as:[1] 'Of or pertaining to Italy or its people; native to or produced in Italy' and 'As the designation of the modern language of Italy [. . .] Hence of words, etc.: Belonging to this language. Of books, etc.: Composed or written in this language'. It also states that, as a noun, 'Italian' can mean 'A native of Italy' or 'The Italian language'. There is, then, a geographical sense of the word 'Italian', denoting something pertaining to the territory of Italy, and a linguistic one designating a particular language. The *Oxford English Dictionary* does not further define 'the Italian language' and in any case one might feel that it needs no definition. After all, there unquestionably *is* a thing called 'the Italian language' (*la lingua italiana*). This is demonstrated by the fact that it is today the official language of the Republic of Italy and the Republic of San Marino, the sole official language in the Swiss canton of Ticino and one of the official languages (with German and Romansh) of the canton of Grigioni. It is shown by the fact that 'Italian' is a subject taught in schools and universities and that the language is abundantly described, and prescribed, in grammars and dictionaries all of which (at least today) substantially concur on what is (and is not) 'Italian'. The problem is that the geographical and linguistic senses are different, and that the further back one goes in time, the less 'Italian' in the geographical sense what we now identify as the Italian language becomes. This language is 'Italian', indeed, in the sense that it originates *somewhere in Italy*, but that 'somewhere' is just one region, namely Tuscany, and indeed one town within that region, namely Florence.

A twenty-first-century visitor to Italy will not notice much of a problem. If she asks Italians, anywhere from the Alps to Sicily, *Parlate italiano?* 'Do you speak Italian?', she can be pretty confident that the question will be perfectly well *understood* and she can be almost equally certain that the answer will be *Sì* 'Yes', even if her interlocutors may qualify it surprisingly often by saying that they speak it imperfectly. Yet if she were somehow able to travel back a thousand years, the same question might well be met with puzzlement and indeed incomprehension. It is a fair bet that the word *italiano* did not even exist in the vernacular speech of the people of Italy at the time.[2] In fact, it shows a classic characteristic of what are nowadays called *parole dotte* or 'learnèd words' (see §8.5)—that is, words, usually taken from classical Latin or Greek, that have been deliberately introduced into the language by intellectuals, mainly from the Renaissance onwards, and which have consequently failed to undergo the sound changes characteristic of continuous transmission from generation to generation of speakers. We would expect not *italiano* [itaˈljaːno] (and *Italia* [iˈtaːlja]) but something like ***itagliano* [itaˈʎaːno] (and ***Itaglia* [iˈtaʎːa]), just as Lat. FILIA(M) 'daughter' gives *figlia* [ˈfiʎːa]. Yet the fundamental problem would not have been one of pronunciation but of recognition of a concept. *Italia* existed as a geographical notion (although its definition vacillates over time: cf. Muljačić 1988:289), but not as a

unified geographical area characterized by a common, distinctive language. In short, there was as yet no such thing as 'Italian'.[3]

Since the end of the Roman Empire, the Italian peninsula, in addition to its obvious geographical divisions, had been fragmented politically, culturally, and above all linguistically. In fact, in the absence for the best part of two millennia of any centripetal Italian government or cultural institutions, the conditions were perfect for the emergence, persistence, and divergence of local linguistic variation. The Latin once spoken not only across Italy but across the Empire had dissolved into numerous, locally different[4] Romance vernaculars, or 'dialects'. Over small distances these were usually very similar and mutually intelligible, but over greater ones they could be profoundly different in lexicon, phonology, morphology, and syntax.[5] The difference between geographically very distant Italian dialects (say Venetian and Neapolitan) is equal to or greater than that between, say, the modern Spanish language and the modern Italian language, and tales of incomprehension in modern times between speakers of more remotely distant Italian dialects abound (see, e.g., Pellegrini 1970b:222f.; Lepschy 1990:63).

The term 'Italian dialects' is itself at bottom a geographical expression: it simply denotes the Romance vernaculars *of Italy* (conventionally excluding Friulian and Ladin in the north-east, and Sardinian in Sardinia), but the label notoriously belies a lack of distinctive, unifying characteristics. Some distinctive linguistic properties of the Italian dialects are not common to all of them while others may be shared by other Romance varieties spoken outside Italy and are therefore not distinctive of Italian dialects (see further §1.4.1). South of a line which roughly follows the Apennines between Carrara in the west and Fano in the east (conventionally known as the 'La Spezia-Rimini Line': von Wartburg 1950), and therefore includes Tuscany, there is a degree of distinctive linguistic unity, such as the existence of an opposition between short and long consonants: see further Savoia (1997), and for detailed descriptions of the major Italian dialect areas, Benincà, Parry, and Pescarini (2016); Ledgeway (2016a; 2016c); and Loporcaro and Paciaroni (2016). From the perspective of grammatical and phonological structure,[6] there is really no distinction between 'a dialect' and 'a language'. What is normally meant by 'a dialect' in Romance linguistics is the characteristic speech of the natives of a particular locality, as contrasted with that of the natives of other localities, in the circumstances where all these varieties are 'cognate' (in our case, all descended from a common linguistic ancestor, namely Latin). The term 'language' is usually applied to those Romance dialects which, for various historical reasons, have come to be recognized as having political and/or cultural prestige, are treated as superordinate, within some territory (often a nation-state), to other related speech varieties, constitute models for those seeking to speak or write 'correctly', and, usually, are set down in prescriptive grammars and dictionaries (see further Andreose and Renzi 2013:302–307; Pountain 2016).

Paradoxical as it may at first sound, the Italian language is itself, historically, an Italian dialect. This statement certainly needs qualification,[7] but there is a fundamental sense in which it is true. The core of the grammatical and phonological system, and the lexicon, of the modern Italian language is a dialect of Tuscany, and more specifically of Florence. Equally paradoxically, the things that are called 'Italian dialects' are not dialects 'of Italian' in the strictly linguistic sense. They are 'Italian' in so far as they are 'of Italy', but their relation to Florentine, from which the Italian language has emerged, is that they are its 'sisters'.[8] Moreover there are good reasons, as we shall see, why even Florentine itself cannot be directly identified with Italian.

If our traveller were to have visited Florence a thousand years ago she would have noticed nothing special about its dialect. It would have been just another local variant, another 'face in the crowd', in the vast multitude of Romance vernaculars of Italy, no more or less distinguished or important—and no more or less 'Italian'—than, say, the speech of Bologna, or Rome, or Naples, or Palermo, or indeed of some utterly obscure village. It should be added that the rise of municipal centres of power, during the later Middle Ages, tended to confer prestige on the speech of the relevant towns, which speakers in their respective spheres of influence sought to imitate, thereby actually accentuating the linguistic differences across the peninsula.[9] In fact, well into the thirteenth century, Bolognese or Sicilian or Umbrian (in religious poetry, such as Iacopone da Todi and St Francis of Assisi), or Lombard (in didactic poetry, e.g., Bonvesin de la Riva, Barsegapé) enjoyed a cultural prestige as literary languages which Florentine would only acquire in the future.[10] In any case, the Florentines of a thousand years ago would have been just as puzzled by the question of whether they spoke *italiano* as anybody else in Italy.[11] So when did Italian begin?

This deceptively simple question is practically unanswerable. First because, as we have seen, the Italo-Romance vernacular which is the direct ancestor of Italian is considerably older than the name 'Italian', so that a by no means absurd answer might be to say that 'Italian' only began when somebody decided to call it 'Italian'. To our knowledge, the first person to have used the term *lingua italiana* was Leonardo da

Vinci in the late fifteenth century (Muljačić 1988:289) and even then the label 'Italian' struggled to become established for the language. Still at the beginning of the seventeenth century the compilers of the Crusca dictionary (see §4.3.3.2) do not actually give the language whose lexicon is described in it a name, 'Italian' or any other (cf. Tomasin 2019c:160f.; also Alfieri 2016a:105).

Another way of tackling at least part of the question might be to ask when people stopped speaking Latin, and started speaking, if not immediately 'Italian', at least 'Tuscan dialect'. A far from flippant answer would be that they didn't. There is probably unbroken continuity between the Latin of the Roman Empire spoken in Tuscany and the language of Tuscans of a thousand, and two thousand, years later, despite the profound changes which the spoken Latin of the area underwent over the centuries. We might legitimately say that Tuscan and then Italian are simply 'Tuscan Latin'.[12] Yet clearly Italian and Latin are different languages.

Throughout the first millennium writing, for whatever purpose, was in a language that was, in its essential characteristics, still the Latin of the Roman Empire. The spoken language spontaneously used by the mass of an—overwhelmingly illiterate—populace continued to undergo radical and unchecked phonological and grammatical changes over the centuries, also diverging increasingly from place to place, whereas the physical permanence of the written word made the language of writing, still Latin, increasingly remote from speech. There is a fierce debate in Romance linguistics, into which we will not enter here,[13] about what first caused speakers of Romance vernaculars to perceive Latin as a 'different language' from their own. We may be certain that the differences would, over time, have become increasingly conspicuous if Latin texts were read out loud or if literate people—who were of course also native speakers of Romance vernaculars—attempted to *speak* the language in which they wrote. So if we want to identify at least the earliest evidence that Italian, or its ancestor, had 'begun', we should look for evidence that speakers were consciously distinguishing it from Latin. This evidence comes precisely from writing, at the point where there emerge texts clearly written in the vernacular and set in deliberate opposition to texts written in Latin. What, in this sense, are the earliest unambiguously Italian texts?

In 1960 Italians celebrated the 'thousandth anniversary of the Italian language'.[14] The millennial event commemorated was the insertion of a phrase into the body of a lengthy legal text drawn up in notarial Latin, and written in Capua (Campania) in 960. This phrase, then repeated a further three times in the text, was an apparently verbatim report, in the vernacular,[15] of four witnesses' depositions, and it reads as follows: *Sao ko kelle terre, per kelle fini ke ki kontene, trenta anni le possette parte S(an)c(ti) Benedicti*, literally 'I know (i.e., I acknowledge) that those lands, within those boundaries that are contained here [on the map], for thirty years the part [i.e., the monastery] of St Benedict has owned them'.[16] The same practice of reporting depositions using the vernacular recurs in three similar texts dated 963, one from Sessa Aurunca and two from Teano (Campania), containing very similar formulae: thereafter witnesses' depositions continue to be reported in such documents but, as before 960, they are reported in Latin. The *Placito capuano* has been hailed, indeed, as the *atto di nascita della lingua italiana* ('birth certificate of the Italian language').[17]

Now it is perfectly true to say that the *Placito capuano* is 'Italian' if we understand 'Italian' in the fundamentally geographical sense, as meaning 'of Italy' (see also §3.1). Yet it no more registers the birth of Italian than it registers the birth of any other Italo-Romance variety, such as Neapolitan or Bolognese. Rather, it is the first surviving unambiguously vernacular text from Italy. That the writer perceives it as being in a different language from Latin is evident from that fact that it is set in deliberate contraposition to the remainder of the text which is in Latin—albeit in a Latin itself permeated by vernacular phonological and lexical influences. Various other 'early Italian' texts appear from different parts of Italy,[18] and in other Italo-Romance vernaculars in the following centuries, but the question we want to answer here is 'When did the first text written in a language which can be considered an ancestor of modern Italian appear?'. For this we have to wait for well over a century after the *Placito capuano*. The depositions of the *Placito*, and of the three others *placiti* that follow it, are definitely Italo-Romance and not Latin, but they are also definitely not in 'Italian'. Among other things foreign to Tuscan and hence to Italian are the complementizer *ko* (< Lat. QUOD), equivalent to Tsc. *che* 'that', which belongs to a system of complementation characteristic of southern Italy but not of Tuscany (cf. Ledgeway and Maiden 2022b:41–45); the form *contene*, typically for a southern dialect, lacks the general diphthongization of *[ɛ] in stressed open syllables regularly found in Tsc. *contiene*; the words *kelle* 'those' and *ki* 'here', corresponding to Tsc. *quelle* and *qui*, show delabialization of Romance *[kw] before the front vowel of the demonstrative characteristic of many southern but not of most Tuscan dialects, including Florentine (Rohlfs 2021a:221). The three later *placiti* from Sessa and Teano, linguistically extremely similar to the Capuan document, contain further distinctly non-Tuscan forms such as the second person singular and plural indirect object forms *tebe* and *bobe* (< Lat. TIBI and UOBIS;

cf. Loporcaro 2008), complete with the phonological phenomenon of 'betacism'—the change of *[v] > [b]—widespread in southern Italy but found at best sporadically in Tuscany (cf. Rohlfs 2021a:227–229). It in no way detracts from the significance of the *Placito capuano* not just in Italian linguistic history but in Italian history *tout court* to insist that it is not the 'birth certificate' of the Italian language. Rather, it —and other 'old Italian' texts—is the first confirmation that the vernacular and Latin were recognized as distinct,[19] and that the vernacular could be used in writing. The first texts in anything that could be recognized as a direct ancestor of modern Italian date from a time when writing in the vernacular was demonstrably already a well-established practice in many parts of the Italian peninsula.[20] We shall look briefly at a selection of them here, focusing on those linguistic features which are distinctive of Italian as opposed to other Italo-Romance dialects (see also §3.1).

The first Italo-Romance text that has come down to us *from Tuscany* is what is called the *Postilla amiatina* of 1087 (cf. also §34.2) in which the writer, a notary from the area of Monte Amiata in southern Tuscany, adds a brief note at the bottom of a legal document of donation to an abbey, making a derogatory remark about one of the donors' wisdom in making the donation; the precise interpretation is, however, debated.[21] The text of the formal donation is, of course, in Latin, but the *Postilla* is in a mixture of Latin and the vernacular. The *Postilla* is less than twenty words long:

Ista cartula est de Caputcoctu

Ille adiuvet de iure Bottu

Qui mal consilu li mise in corpu

The unambiguously vernacular element of this text is thin: masculine singular nominal forms in *-u* instead of Lat. *-us* or *-um* (e.g., *Caputcoctu* 'baked head'—a nickname, *consiliu* 'counsel', *corpu* 'body'); the indirect object clitic pronoun *li* 'to him' (modIt. *gli*); the third person singular preterite ending *-e* in *mise* 'put.PST.PFV.3SG' (Lat. MISIT); possessive constructions expressed by the preposition *de* 'of' (*de Caputcoctu* 'of *Caputcoctu*') rather than inflexionally. These are widespread features of Romance vernaculars of Italy (and beyond), but not specifically of Tuscan. Preservation of unstressed final *[u] is a characteristic of some central Italian dialects (cf. Loporcaro and Paciaroni 2016:230–232), and indeed of the relevant area of Tuscany (Rohlfs 2021a:185), but it is not directly attested elsewhere in Tuscany, where we find instead -o (cf. It. *cotto*, *consiglio*, *corpo*). Otherwise, the first Tuscan texts that we have date from around the turn of the thirteenth century.

From 1185 we have the *Testimonianze di Travale* (Travale is in the modern province of Grosseto in southern Tuscany). In this document a judge records the testimonies of six individuals concerning the disputed ownership of some properties. The text is mainly in notarial Latin, although it contains one or two forms in the vernacular. Most significantly it quotes in the vernacular declarations reported, hearsay, by two of the witnesses: one 'Henrigulus' says *Io de presi pane e vino p(er) li maccioni a Travale* 'I took from there bread and wine for the masons at Travale', and one 'Pogkino' reports that another person, doing guard duty, had complained of his treatment, saying *Guaita, guaita male, non mangiai ma mezo pane* '[*Guaita guaita*] badly, I only ate half a loaf',[22] and that that person *non tornò mai a far guaita* 'never returned to do guard duty'. These are certainly the earliest representations of direct speech in the vernacular from Tuscany,[23] and they remain almost entirely intelligible to anyone who knows modern Italian. The interpretation of the phrase *Guaita guaita male* is much debated (see, e.g., Maconi and Volpi 2022:93). *Guaita*, in any case, is a word of Frankish origin meaning 'guard, sentinel', although it is possible that at least the second *guaita* is the imperative of a verb *guaitare* 'stand guard, watch out', which survives in the (rare) modern Italian verb *guatare* 'stare, look hard at'.[24] This text provides the first attestation of the verb *mangiare* 'eat', of Gallo-Romance origin, which supplanted the now obsolete *manicare* (still recorded as typical of Florence in Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*) from *mandu'kare 'chomp, chew'. The *de* of *de presi* means 'from there', and originates in Lat. INDE 'thence', whence also It. *ne*. The expression *non mangiai ma* literally 'I didn't eat but' = 'I only ate' involves a structure attested in other early Italian texts, even though it does not survive today. The name *Pogkino* (probably to be read [po'gino]) is apparently a diminutive from *pogo* 'little', showing a characteristically western Tuscan voicing of intervocalic /k/ (cf. modIt. *poco*).[25] Vernacular and typically Tuscan forms also appear in the Latin body of the text. We find the characteristically Tuscan development of Latin intervocalic RI,[26] via *[rj], to [j] in the reflex of the agentive suffix -ARIUS as *-aio*, alternating with plural *-ari* (< Lat. nominative plural -ARI; see also §9.4.3) in the personal name *Nappaio* (probably meaning 'tassel-maker') and its plural *li Nappari* and *Napparii*; we also find *la curte di Travale* with Tuscan *di* 'of' (with Tuscan raising of pretonic [e]; see below) for *de*.[27]

The first really substantial Tuscan text to have come down to us dates from the early twelfth century, or possibly from the very late eleventh century, and is from Pisa.[28] Generally known as the *Conto navale pisano*, it is part of a list of the expenses incurred in fitting out a naval squadron (see also §3.1).[29] This document is not literary, or philosophical, or religious, or scientific, or juridical.[30] It is an entirely practical, mundane account of items paid for. Yet it is also not 'marginal': many early texts are added in the margin of, or at the foot of, or inserted into, longer texts in Latin. This text is free-standing and was clearly conceived directly in the vernacular, without any apparent reference to Latin models. It is a direct reflexion of the burgeoning commercial and military power of the Tuscan city states (in this case, Pisa) and it bespeaks a complex and sophisticated tradition of book-keeping and probably also of legal accountability. The style is highly formulaic, not to say telegraphic, and surely quite unlike natural speech. For example, it contains almost no verbs,[31] most entries minimally comprising an amount expended and the item paid for, often with the payee also specified. Some examples are: *In corbella dr. ii.* 'For ribbings 2 denari.'; *A lo ispornaio sol. XXXX.* 'To the spur-maker 40 soldi.'; *Inn aguti ispannali dr xii.* 'On one-span-long nails 12 denari.'; *Aductura di remora dr iiii.* 'Provision of oars 4 denari.'. It is rich in vernacular technical maritime vocabulary.[32] The precise, assured, and unhesitating expression of the commercial and financial concepts it deals with shows that it belongs to a long-established practice of producing such documents (cf. Manni 1994b), whose antecedents are lost to us.

The 'Tuscanness' of the *Conto navale* is most apparent in its phonology. There is the characteristically Tuscan (cf. §1.4.2.1, §8.3.3; Rohlfs 2021a:400f.) development of Latin VriV- > *rj > -j-: e.g., MANUARIA > *mannaia* 'hand axe', -ARIUS (agentive suffix) > *-aio* (e.g., *ispornaio* 'builder of spurs for galleys', *restaiolo* 'rope maker', with *-olo*). There is raising of pretonic *[e] to [i], as in *de > *di* 'of' (cf. §8.2.4). There is diphthongization of historical [ɛ] in stressed open syllables (cf. §8.2.2): e.g., *matieia* 'timbers' from Lat. MATERIA. The text gives no examples of [ɔ] in stressed open syllables except for *restaiolo* which probably shows the monophthongization of the original diphthong after a palatal which later becomes general in Florentine as well (cf. Maiden 2016a:218f.). There is prosthesis of a vowel ([i]) before word-initial /sC/, as in *ispornaio* 'spur-maker' (cf. modIt. *spronaio*), *iscaricatura* 'unloading' for *scaricatura* (cf. §8.4; also Rohlfs 2021a:255f. for its incidence in old Tuscan). There are examples of the Tuscan (and especially western Tuscan) tendency to voice single intervocalic consonants and especially velars (§8.3.4), we have *aguti* 'nails' (lit. 'sharps') (cf. It. *acuti* but also modern *ago* 'needle' < Lat. ACUM). The development of post-consonantal *[tj] to [ʧ] after [k] or [p], as seen in our text in the word *conciatura* 'fixing' (modIt. *conciare* < *kompˈtjare, or *cacciare* 'hunt, chase' < *kapˈtjare), characterizes Tuscany, against a more widespread Italo-Romance tendency for *[tj] to emerge as [ʦ] (cf. Rohlfs 2021a:412f.).

Morphologically, the text displays (cf. note 60 in Chapter 9) the old Tuscan alternation between singular in *-aio* and plural in *-ari*: thus singular *ispornaio* 'spur-maker [for galleys]' but plural *polamari* 'divers [who detach and bring up the mooring cables]' (also *denari* 'money'). While in modern Italian plurals in *-a* are rare and those in *-ora* are extinct (cf. §9.4.5 and note 68 in Chapter 9), we find in the *Conto navale* plurals such as *corbella* 'ribbings placed on the keel', *remora* 'oars' (presumably singulars *corbello*, *remo* although these are not attested in the text).

The so-called *Annotazione* (or *Declaratoria*) *pistoiese*, made in Pistoia between 1187 and 1208, is a note,[33] written mainly in the vernacular, at the bottom of a will regarding the circumstances of an agreement made in the presence of the church authorities between the testator and persons to whom usurious payments were to be returned on his death:[34]

> Gradalone sì fue na(n)ti Bon(us), ke e(ste) aguale ep(iscopu)s de Pisto(r)ia, (e) na(n)ti l'arcip(re)ite Buoso, sì si c(on)cioe c(on) tuti q(ues)sti omini, (e) na(n)ti l'arcip(re)ite, ke este vescovo, (e) na(n)ti Buoso.
>
> Gradalone went before Bono, who is presently bishop of Pistoia, and before archpriest Buoso, and agreed with all these men, and before the archpriest, who is the bishop, and before Buoso.

It shows a typically Tuscan distribution of the diphthongization of the stressed low mid vowel *[ɔ], limited to open syllables but tending not to occur in proparoxytones (see, e.g., Maiden 2016a:212): thus the personal name *Buoso*, but *omini* 'men'.[35] Forms such as *fue* 'was' (modern *fu*), *concioe* 'settled' (modern *conciò*) show paragoge of [e] on words that otherwise end in stressed final vowels, frequently found in Tuscan (including modern Florentine: cf. §1.4.3.1 and Rohlfs 2021a:467f.) but not continued in Italian. The Tuscan tendency to voice intervocalic voiceless consonants is also apparent in the word *aguale* < Lat. AEQUALEM (cf. It. *uguale* 'equal', but in our text meaning 'now, at this time'); in the word *vescovo* 'bishop' (which occurs alongside the Lat. *ep*(iscop)*us*) we see the development of intervocalic [p] to [v] which probably reflects (cf. §8.3.4) a borrowing into Tuscan from northern Italo-Romance varieties. For the typically Tuscan development of post-consonantal *[tj] to [ʧ] seen in our text in *concioe* 'he settled', see our discussion of *conciatura* above.

The *Decime di Arlotto*, dated by Castellani (2009:804–808) to the first decade of the thirteenth century, are also from the area of Pistoia. They appear at the end of the draft of a letter in Latin and are a list, largely in the vernacular and the work of two different hands,[36] of tithes (*decime*) and rents due. There are occasional examples in Italian of original word-initial [k] becoming voiced, as in *gomito* 'elbow' < CUBITUM, *gonfiare* 'inflate, swell' < CONFLARE; this tendency is also more extensively observable in the old dialects of Lucca and Pisa and to this day in some, particularly western, Tuscan dialects (cf. Rohlfs 2021a:198). In our text the word *callina* for *gallina* 'hen' and the name *Kerardino* for *Gherardino* seem to be hypercorrect spellings, presupposing this tendency. The nouns *staio* 'bushel' < SEXTARIUM and *dinaio* 'penny' < DENARIUM reflect the regular Tuscan treatment of Latin intervocalic -RI-. The first vowel of the latter shows Tuscan raising of pretonic [e] to [i] (also *nipote* 'grandson' < NEPOTEM and the personal name *Finochio* lit. 'fennel' < *feˈnɔklu < FAENICULUM). We see typical Tuscan diphthongization of [ɛ] and [ɔ] in stressed open syllables in *tiene* 'holds', *suoi* 'his$_{MPL}$', and *kifuori* for *ghifuori*,[37] but also monophthongization of [wɔ] after a palatal: e.g., *filioli* 'sons' (It. *figlioli* for older *figliuoli*).

The *Breve di Montieri*, dated 1219, is a draft of the rules of association for the formation of a commercial partnership between men of Montieri in south-western Tuscany. It constitutes possibly the earliest surviving legal statute directly composed in an Italo-Romance vernacular,[38] yet it was still intended for rendering into Latin. It is also a reminder that Florentine was by no means the only Tuscan variety in use for commercial and legal purposes, for the text has certain features typical of the Sienese linguistic area, rather than Florence. Dialects of this area change unstressed [er] to [ar], thus we have *lettare* 'letters', *essare* 'to be', *movaranno* 'they will move', *spendare* 'to spend' (cf. Flo./It. *lettere*, *essere*, *m*(*u*)*overanno*, *spendere*). Typical of the area is the change of [kw] > [k] in demonstrative (e.g., *kelli* but also *quelli* 'those', *ki* 'here' vs It. *quelli*, *qui*). The text generally lacks anaphonesis (see §8.2.2), as in *allongare* 'lengthen', *camarlengo* 'chamberlain' (cf. Flo./It. *allungare*, *camerlingo*), but also *consillio* 'counsel' (Flo./It. *consiglio*), possibly orthographically influenced by Lat. CONSILIUM. More generally Tuscan and also Italian are: the change of intervocalic -RI- > *[rj] > [j] (e.g., *notaio* 'notary', *genaio* 'January', *dinaio* 'money' but plural *dinari*); diphthongization of *[ɛ] and *[ɔ] in stressed open syllables (e.g., *viene* 'it comes', *inkiedare* 'enquire', but *ve*[*c*]*chi* 'old', *inkesta* 'enquiry'); monophthongization of original [wɔ] after a palatal (e.g., *Filioli* 'sons', cf. It. *figlioli* but older *figliuoli*);[39] raising of pretonic [e] (e.g., *dinaio* 'money', *misura* 'measure'). This text contains what may be the first attestation of the form *ellino*, plural of the third-person masculine pronoun *elli* 'he', also found in old Florentine and in written Italian (*egli*, *eglino*) until the nineteenth century (cf. §9.3.2).

The earliest surviving text in the Tuscan variety that is the most direct ancestor of modern Italian, namely Florentine, is the *Frammenti di un libro di conti di banchieri fiorentini* ('fragments of a Florentine bankers' account book'), dated 1211.[40] This is perhaps the strongest contender for the title of 'earliest Italian text'. Given this possible claim to fame, we give here the first four of its 118 paragraphs (following the transcription of Castellani 1982a).

1] MCCxi

Aldobra(n)dino Petri (e) Buonessegnia Falkoni no dio(no) dare katuno i(n) tuto lib. lii p(er) livre diciotto d'i(m)p(eriali) mezani, a rrascio(ne) di tre(n)ta (e) ci(n)que m(eno) terza, ke de(m)mo loro tredici dì a(n)zi k. luglio; (e) dio(no) pagare <per | —gigugnio> tredici dì a(n)zi k. luglio; se più sta(n)no, a iii d. lib. il mese qua(n)to fosse nostra volo(n)tade. Tt. Alb(er)to Baldovini (e) Quitieri Alb(er)ti di Porte del Duomo.

2] It. Die dare Buonessegnia s. xii. p(er) u· massamutino.

3] Buonessegnia Falkoni ci à dato lib. xl.: rekò Iakopo a termine. It die avire lib. iiii (e) s. ii: leva(m)mo di rascio(ne) Buonessegnie ove dovea avire p(er) ser Kalkagnio vi dì anzi k. luglio.

4] It. Diè lib. iii m(eno) d. xii p(er) <li pa(n)ni> p(er) Tornaq(ui)ci, ke i pagò nei pa(n)ni suoi. It. <die> ci dì Buoni(n)ko(n)tro da pPoppio s. xl. Di ssua mano tre dì a(n)zi k. luglio. It ci dì Aldobra(n)dino lib. iii m(eno) d. xii: rekò Gia(n)nozo.

Translation

1] 1211

Aldobrandino di Pietro and Buonessegna di Falcone must each give us in total 52 pounds for 18 pounds of *imperiali mezani*, at the rate of 32 less a third, which we gave them 13 days before 1st July; and they must give for <for mid-June> 13 days before 1st July; if they delay any longer, at 3 *denari* per pound per month for as long as we might wish. Witnesses Alberto Baldovini (and) Guitieri Alberti of Porte del Duomo.

2] Item. Buonessegna owes 12 *soldi* for one *massamutino* [a Spanish gold coin].

3] Buonessegna di Falcone has given us 40 pounds: Iacopo bought it on the due date. Item he is owed 4 pounds and 2 soldi: we took it from Buonessegna's account where he had a debt to ser Calcagno 6 days before 1st July.

4] Item. He gave 3 pounds less 12 *denari* for <the cloth> for Tornaquici, who he paid for it in his own cloth. Item. Buonincontro da Poppio gave us 40 *soldi* by his own hand three days before 1st July. Item. Aldobrandino gave us 3 pounds less 12 *denari*: Giannozzo brought it.

This document shows an assurance in the terminology of book-keeping, in the formulaic concision of the statement of amounts received, from whom, and on what date, that indicates that it follows long-established models of which no trace happens to have survived. Moreover the text has no Latin model. If anything is worth calling the 'birth certificate of the Italian language', it is this, although in reality it is simply the first written confirmation of the existence of the Florentine vernacular. For a detailed linguistic analysis of the entire text we refer to Castellani (1980:104–140) or Maconi and Volpi (2022:108–113).[41] Here we will seek to highlight just a few features of it which are characteristically Tuscan (and Florentine) and are continued in modern Italian.

The *libro di conti* has all of the Tuscan features we have already identified in other texts. Diphthongization of historically underlying *[ɛ] and *[ɔ] is restricted to stressed open syllables:[42] *nuovi* 'new' but *nostro* 'our', *Porte del Duomo* lit. 'doors ([ˈpɔrte]) of the Duomo', *diede* (and the shortened form *die'*) 'he gave' but *veckio* 'old'. Unlike later Florentine and modern standard Italian (cf. Rohlfs 2021a:135) the diphthong written *uo* still survives after palatals, e.g., *kasciaiuolo* 'cheesemaker'. We also see the characteristic closure of the diphthong to [u] before vowels other than [i] (Rohlfs 2021a:138f.), in the third-person possessives sua_{FSG} but $suoi_{MPL}$ (cf. It. suo_{MSG} sua_{FSG} $suoi_{MPL}$ sue_{FPL}). It also shows some of the exceptions to diphthongization in stressed open syllables still characteristic of Italian, as in *nove* 'nine' or the personal name *del Pekora* (cf. modern *pecora* 'sheep'). We find the typically Tuscan raising of pretonic [e] to [i] (which also applies to prepositions and clitic pronouns): *di* 'of' *intrante* (modern *entrante* 'incoming'), masculine singular definite article *il* from earlier *el*.[43] There are various examples of prosthesis of the vowel [i] before words beginning with [s] + consonant: e.g., *ispeziale* 'chemist, druggist', *iskritta* 'written' (cf. modern *speziale*, *scritta*). The change intervocalic -RI- or -RE- > Romance *[rj] > [j] is particularly noticeable in reflexes of the agentive suffix -ARIUS: for example, the personal names *Teckiaio* literally 'tiler', *Fornaio* 'baker', *galigaio* 'bootmaker', *pezzaio* 'seller of pieces of leather to make shoe soles'. We see the raising of unstressed [a] to [e] before [r]—a phenomenon particularly apparent in the future tense of first conjugation verbs, e.g., *parlare* 'to speak' but *parlerò* 'I will speak' (cf. Rohlfs 2021a:175). We get a glimpse of raising of unstressed [ar] to [er] in the personal name *Baro(ne) degli Aquerelli*, derived from *acqua* 'water' (cf. modIt. *acquerello* 'watercolour'). We see anaphonesis (cf. §8.2.2), whereby, in certain phonological environments, we find the high vowels [i] and [u] instead of otherwise expected [e] and [o], in the proper name *Ko(n)siglo* (cf. modern *consiglio* 'counsel'). The name *Teckiaio* (for *tegghiaio* 'tiler') is derived from *tegghia* 'tile' < *ˈtegla < Lat. TEGULAM. The more usual development of intervocalic *[gl] in Tuscan (and more widely) is [ʎː] (cf. modern *teglia*), but *-gghi-*, probably pronounced [ɟː], is a parallel development specific to an area of eastern Tuscany that probably at one time included part of the province of Florence (cf. Rohlfs 2021a:353f.).

It will be noticed that the spelling of the text is in some respects different from that of modern Italian (although usual for the area and period). Thus, the sound [k] is usually spelled *k*, *rafforzamento fonosintattico* (e.g., *a rrascio(ne)* 'at (the) rate') is usually represented in the spelling, [ɲ(ː)] is rendered as *gni* or sometimes *ngn*. All of this can be illustrated from the personal names *Falkoni* (cf. modIt. *falconi* 'falcons'), *Buoni(n)kontro da (p)Poppio*, *Kalkagnio* (cf. modern *calcagno* 'heel'). The spelling *-sci-* between vowels, which today can only indicate a long voiceless consonant [ʃː], can also indicate in our text short voiceless [ʃ], as seen in the word *kasciuolo* 'cheesemaker' derived from [ˈkaːʃo] 'cheese' < *ˈkasjo < CASEUM, and short voiced [ʒ] *rascione* ([raˈʒoːne]). In the modern dialect of Florence these words are still pronounced [ˈkaːʃo] and [raˈʒoːne], but the later spelling of these sounds as *ci* and *gi* (*cacio*, *ragione*) captures the fact that the consonants are short, but conceals the fact that they are fricatives, a factor which has given rise to the modern standard Italian pronunciations ([ˈkaːʧo] and [raˈʤoːne]): see Rohlfs (2021a:403–406), Maiden (1995a:50f.), note 58 below.

Modern Italian stands out from most other Italo-Romance dialects (but see Rohlfs 2021b:159) in that it uses *ci* (originally a locative form 'here', from Lat. ECCE HIC), rather than a regular reflex of Lat. NOS 'us' (or dative NOBIS), as the first person plural clitic pronoun corresponding to *noi* 'we'. In this text we find, side by side, both the older *no* and the innovative *ci*, often side by side. There is also a variant of *no*, namely *ne*, apparently used when the pronoun is enclitic to the verb. This is apparent in the text given

above: *Aldobra(n)dino Petri (e) Buonessegnia Falkoni* ***no*** *dio(no) dare katuno i(n) tuto lib. lii* 'Aldobrandino Petri and Buonessegnia Falkoni must each give us in total 52 pounds' but later *Buonessegnia Falkoni* ***ci*** *à dato lib. Xl* 'Buonessegnia Falkoni has given us 40 pounds'; also, later in the text, *Buonaccorso Ma(n)freduci da sSa(n) Martino del Ve[s]ckovo* ***no*** *die dar lib. Xl I s. xi p(er) Domeniko da sSa(n) Fire(n)zo* [. . .] *(e) de****ne*** *pagare i(n) kl. sete(m)bre* 'Buonaccorso Manfreduci of San Martino del Vescovo owes us 40 pounds and 11 soldi for Domenico of San Firenzo [. . .]; and he must pay us on the first of September'.

It will be noticed that these earliest manifestations of Tuscan and of Florentine are overwhelmingly of a practical, commercial, or legal nature. While it is an *idée reçue* that the Italian language owes its prestige and its acceptance as a linguistic model for imitation to the excellence of its literature in the fourteenth century, a point to which we return later, the 'earliest composition in Italian that can fairly be described as literary' (Migliorini and Griffith 1984:70) is the *Ritmo laurenziano* a verse composition of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, not from Florence but from western Tuscany (the area of Volterra) composed by a Tuscan minstrel who eulogizes the bishop of Iesi, from whom he had received the gift of a horse. The text, once again, lacks autonomy and is 'marginal', occupying the space at the end of a martyrological text in Latin.[44] It is certainly not the harbinger of the glorious literary tradition whose finest flower was Dante and which gave so much impetus to the rise of Florentine as a prestigious form of the vernacular accepted and imitated throughout Italy. In fact, literary prestige is only part of the story of how Florentine became the language of Italy—Italian.

1.3 How Italian became different from Florentine

Florentine became 'Italian' because it earned acceptance as a prestigious linguistic model over much of the territory of Italy (and beyond). In the process, it underwent a radical deviation. The Florentine of Florence was, primarily, a *spoken* Italo-Romance dialect which, like many others was, additionally but only secondarily, used in writing. That spoken language continued to change in the normal way, from generation to generation, until the present day. The Florentine that became 'Italian' was primarily and fundamentally a *written* language which *could* be spoken but was not spoken by the overwhelming majority of the people of Italy. It became known far beyond its native city through the medium of writing. This fact had three major consequences: (i) Florentine could be used outside Tuscany only by those who could read,[45] so never more than by a small minority of the population comprising primarily, but not exclusively, the highly educated; (ii) the fact of being a written language conferred on it a fixity and relative immutability which spontaneous speech could not have; (iii) it had orthography not phonology: it was immune to sound change. The long-term consequences of these facts were profound. Florentine as spoken in Florence continued to undergo regular linguistic change in all aspects of its structure while the written language could not, or did not, undergo the same changes, especially in phonology. On the other hand, as we see in Chapter 12, the written language became exposed to influences, especially in the lexicon, which did not affect the dialects. This, largely written, language was to remain for centuries remote and relatively inaccessible to the majority of the inhabitants of Italy (although this point should not be exaggerated, as we see below). As time went by it became so even for Florentines. The acceptance in the sixteenth century (see §4.3.2) of the arguments of a Venetian (Pietro Bembo) that the literary Florentine of some two hundred years earlier should be the basis of the Italian language—and indeed that remoteness from everyday popular speech was actually a desideratum of elevated literary language—meant that Italian became deracinated and to some extent alien, even in its native city. Italian is a language which, for centuries, lost its native speakers. It was not until after the Unification of Italy in 1861 that the diffusion of Italian was actively promoted as a spoken language among the masses through the education system and subsequently reinforced by a series of socio-historical and economic developments (including two world wars, conscription, northern industrialization and concomitant internal migration, mass media, and social mobility) which produced the necessary conditions for Italians from different areas gradually to adopt a common spoken language. Consequently, over the last 150 years dialects have increasingly given way, to varying degrees in different areas, to Italian as a spoken language, albeit heavily marked regional varieties of Italian transparently related to the local dialects in many respects (Sobrero 1988; Cardinaletti and Munaro 2009; see also Chapters 38–41).

It is generally accepted that acceptance of the pre-eminence of Florentine in Italy was due to the flowering of Florentine culture, and particularly to the literary prestige earned by the writings of the so-called *Tre Corone* ('Three Crowns'): Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. At first, literature in Florentine represented just one of several literary vernacular traditions which had emerged in different parts of Italy (Migliorini and Griffith 1984:78–116). However, by the fifteenth century a Florentine-based, supra-regional, written language was emerging as the literary language of Italy (see §3.3 for a description of the circumstances) and by the sixteenth it was accepted as the normal language of literary and official public documents. As a consequence, other dialects became subordinate in status to the Florentine-based written language. This was fundamentally based on the language of the *Tre Corone*, which became the object of direct imitations and a reference point for the establishment of the linguistic norm (see §3.5, §6.3). That the dissemination and acceptance of Florentine as the written language is principally due to its prestige as a literary language differentiates Italian from other major Romance languages, such as French, Spanish, or Portuguese, which owe their diffusion and acceptance in large part to their association with the political power of the state. Florentine becomes the language of Italy, becomes 'Italian', in the absence of an Italian state. Indeed, the acceptance of Italian as the language of writing in the Italian peninsula plays a major role in promoting and reinforcing the very concept of a unified Italian state.

It would be a serious mistake, however, to imagine that diffusion of what we may now call Italian occurred only at the stratospheric level of intellectual discourse, utterly remote from the lives of everyday folk. For another major driver of the language's dissemination was writing itself. Writing was also, indeed mainly, needed for practical, and sometimes mundane, purposes such as banking,[46] book-keeping, commercial contracts, legal depositions, and any kind of long-distance communication (e.g., between merchants and their agents in other cities or countries, but also between any people separated by distance but needing to maintain contact). This meant that ordinary people had incentives to learn to write and, since Italian was the language of writing, they had to learn Italian, however imperfectly, in order to do so. To take one example from among many,[47] thus it is that in the mid-seventeenth century we can find a (presumably) humble farm labourer, in the relative remoteness of the Lombard Alps,[48] recording—in a language which clearly aspires to an Italian linguistic model—a delivery of manure:[49]

> et adi 22 lulio del deto ano o men[a]to un car di fen dala gera del sisarela menat a lugan et adi 27 lulio del det ano o menat un car degrasa menata da lugan a viganel
>
> adi 14 november 1650 facio memoria dun car de fen che go venduto sul prat.

The following English translation stays close to the rather disconnected structure of the original:

> and on day 22 of July of the said year I drove a cartload of hay from Gera del Sisarela driven to Lugano and on day 27 of July of the said year I drove a cartload of manure driven from Lugano to Viganello on day 14 of November 1650 I make a record of a cartload of hay that I sold on the meadow.

As our sample shows, the text has various features characteristic of northern Italo-Romance dialects (see §1.4.2.1), such as: lack of a distinction between short and long consonants (*deto* = It. *detto* 'said'; *ano* = It. *anno* 'year'); deletion of unstressed final vowels other than [a] (*car* = It. *carro* 'cart(load)', *fen* = It. *fieno* 'hay', *menat* = It. *menato* 'led, driven', *lugan* = It. *Lugano*, *det* = It. *detto* 'said', *viganel* = It. Viganello, *prat* = It. prato 'meadow'); depalatalization of original palatal fricatives ([*de*]*grasa* 'manure' = OIt. *grascia* 'abundance, richness'); the auxiliary *go* = It. *ho* 'I have' (cf. Paoli 2019); the use of *grasa* in the sense 'manure' (cf. *AIS* map 1177). It may be significant (cf. Bianconi 1991:128) that the text overall, while it clearly shows generically northern features, presents very few easily identifiable linguistic features specific to the area in which it was written, almost as if the writer were seeking to transcend in writing the idiosyncrasies of local speech. It is certain, in any case, that he is aspiring to an Italian linguistic model. This is apparent in words with preservation of final unstressed *-o* (*lulio*, *deto*, *ano*, *men*[*a*]*to*, *lulio*, *facio*, *venduto*), in the preservation of intervocalic [t] where the local dialect would systematically have voiced and possibly then deleted it (*menato*, *menata*, *venduto*, and possibly *prat*, cf. modern dialect forms such as ven˙dy, pra in *AIS* maps 1145, 1415); *lulio* = It. *luglio*, often spelled *lulio* at the time, rather than the local lyi (cf. *AIS* map 322); the distinctively Tuscan *di* 'of' (cf. with the pretonic raising of [e] described in §8.2.4) rather than the local *de* used elsewhere in the text; *facio* = It. *faccio* 'I do, make' rather than an expected local form, possibly fak); *memoria*, which has the phonological characteristics of a learnèd word (cf. §8.5) and is certainly not a possible local development of Lat. MEMORIA.

The extent to which ordinary people became able to read and write, especially but not exclusively in cities, should not be underestimated (cf. Marazzini 1994:247f.). Among the drivers of literacy emerging by the end of the sixteenth century were schools organized by the Church, and lay teachers of

(predominantly male) artisans and merchants for whom writing was an essential tool. Reading and writing meant reading and writing in Italian, even if the application of what was learned by artisans, merchants, and even labourers commonly resulted in a kind of hybrid language into which local dialectal features usually percolated. It should be added, though, that writing was not the only medium by which the people of Italy became exposed to Florentine/Italian: they might also *hear* it—although with what level of comprehension it is hard to be sure—for example, in preaching or also in public recitations of literary works (cf. Marazzini 1994:69; Carlucci 2020). There emerged, in any case, a generalized acceptance, at all levels of society and probably even among the great majority of the population that remained illiterate, of the special status of Italian particularly as the language of writing, and as inherently superordinate to their native dialect. It is in this sense that the Italo-Romance dialects, even Florentine itself, might be said to have become 'dialects of Italian'.

Another fundamental respect in which Italian became different from Florentine and from all other Italo-Romance dialects is that it is acquired by non-native speakers as a second language, not only within Italy, as we have seen, but outside it. Most Italo-Romance dialects are acquired natively, so to speak 'from the cradle', and remain rooted in, and confined to, a particular locality or region.[50] These dialects are not objects of study and imitation (except by specialist linguists). It is true that the commercial and maritime power of Pisa, Genoa, and Venice favoured the diffusion of Italo-Romance vernaculars outside Italy (cf. §32.6), notably so in the case of Venice and Venetian in the eastern Mediterranean from the beginning of the thirteenth century and for some four centuries, but in the longer term it may be argued that this Italo-Romance presence in the Mediterranean favoured the later spread of the more prestigious, superordinate Italian (see §32.3, §32.6) as an 'international language' in the Mediterranean area, and particularly in the Ottoman Empire, from the mid-fifteenth to the nineteenth century.[51] Whereas it is well known that in much of Europe Italian was learned as a foreign language principally for its literary and cultural prestige, in the Ottoman Empire it was also learned as a language of commerce, diplomacy, and even slave ransoms (see Cremona 1996; 1997; 1998; 2000; 2002; 2003) and widely used not only in writing but also as a means of communication between non-native speakers (see §32.3). Italian had become, then, a truly international language, and not merely in the literary and cultural spheres.

We turn next to a deeper analysis of the linguistic substance of the differences between Italian, Tuscan, and the dialects.

1.4 Italian, Tuscan, and the dialects

1.4.1 Introduction

We have seen that from a historical perspective the basis of Italian can legitimately be said to be (medieval) Florentine, but that modern Italian cannot be equated *tout court* with the modern Florentine vernacular, inasmuch as Florentine and other Tuscan dialects underwent numerous changes following the codification of the literary language in the sixteenth century (Andreose and Renzi 2013:302–307). This is immediately obvious from even the most cursory comparison of the Tuscan (Florentine) and modern Italian realizations of the utterance in (1) which highlight some significant differences in all areas of the grammar. These and others will be explored in detail in §1.4.2, suffice it here to note: (i) phonology: the fricativization of the voiceless intervocalic stops /k/ and /p/ > [h] and [ɸ] (cf. *Luca*, *(fai) poi* It. [ˈluːka], [ˈpɔj] vs Tsc. [ˈluːha], [ˈɸɔj]) and the intervocalic palato-alveolar affricate /ʤ/ > [ʃ] (cf. *(la) Cecilia*, It. [ʧeˈʧiːlja] vs Tsc. [la ʃeˈʃiːlja]); (ii) morphology: the distinct Tuscan form *vo* in place of standard *vado* 'I go'; (iii) syntax: the co-occurrence of a system of subject clitics with the finite verb (cf. Tsc. *tu fai* vs It. *fai*) and the obligatory use of the definite article with female first names (cf. *(la) Cecilia*); and (iv) lexis: distinct lexical forms for the indefinite interrogative WHAT (cf. It. *che* vs Tsc. *icché*) and the conservative Tuscan use of *poi* with the meaning 'after' (< POS(T) 'after'), replaced by the historical compound DE 'from' + POS(T) 'after' > *dopo* in Italian where *poi* has come to mean 'then, next'.

1 a Che fai dopo, Luca? – Vado a cena con Cecilia. (It.)
[ke 'f:aj 'do:po 'lu:ka 'va:do a 'ʧ:e:na koɲ ʧe'ʧi:lja]
what do.2SG after Luca go.1SG to dinner with Cecilia

b Icché tu fai poi, Luca? – Vo a cena con la Cecilia. (Tsc.)
[i'k:e t:u 'f:aj 'ɸɔj 'lu:ha 'vɔ a 'ʧ:e:na ho l:a ʃe'ʃi:lja]
what SCL.2SG do.2SG after Luca go.1SG to dinner with the Cecilia

'What are you doing afterwards, Luca?—I'm going for dinner with Cecilia.'

There is an unmistakable gap today between Italian and the modern spoken varieties of Tuscany (cf. Giacomelli 1975), although this is often vehemently denied by Tuscans themselves who unquestioningly regard their region as the *culla della lingua*, the birthplace (literally 'cradle') of the Italian language. At best, many Tuscans will grudgingly refer to their own local varieties as *vernacoli* 'vernaculars', rather than *dialetti* 'dialects'. Given this often difficult diachronic and especially synchronic association of Italian with Tuscan on the one hand and the relationship between these and the dialects proper on the other, in what follows we consider and exemplify some of the principal similarities between Italian and Tuscan and how these differ from the dialects of other regions, before turning to some of the key areas in which Italian and Tuscan diverge quite considerably, rendering any simple identification of Italian with Tuscan problematic from a modern synchronic perspective.

1.4.2 Italian and Tuscan vs the rest

Geographically and linguistically Tuscan dialects are neither northern (cf. Benincà, Parry, and Pescarini 2016), central (cf. Loporcaro and Paciaroni 2016), nor southern (cf. Ledgeway 2016c) Italo-Romance varieties. Rather, they represent a distinct linguistic group generally considered, following Ascoli (1882), to be structurally more conservative than other Italo-Romance dialects and traditionally divided into four main subareas (Pellegrini 1977; Giannelli 1988:601, 604; Ledgeway 2016a:206–208; Savoia 2023:20–24):[52] central (Florentine), western (Elbano-Livornese-Pisan-Lucchese-Pistoiese), eastern (Aretino-Chianaiolo), and southern (Senese-Grossetano). However, the claim that Tuscan, and by implication also Italian, represents the most conservative form of Italo-Romance (Agostiniani and Giannelli 1990)—cf. Devoto and Giacomelli's (1972:64f.) bold assertion that the Latin of Tuscany was the least affected by processes of linguistic contamination, singling out in particular Florence for its 'purity'—is not at all obvious. In particular, it rests on the highly dubious assumption that the vernacular language in use in ancient Etruria and then Tuscany has barely changed over the course of some two thousand years, somehow exceptionally escaping the natural and inevitable processes of language change and variation that indisputably affect all languages across time and space. Exemplary in this respect is Devoto's quantitative classification of the dialects of Italy (Devoto 1970) summarized in Table 1.1 where, on the basis of a highly selective sample of exclusively phonetic features, he measures and compares eleven of the major dialect areas in terms of their degree of phonological development to demonstrate that Florentine (and by implication Italian) displays the highest degree of linguistic stability of all dialects of Italy (1.0 = greatest stability and 0.0 = least stability).[53]

Table 1.1 Linguistic distance between Latin and the dialects of Italy (Devoto 1970)

Features Linguistic areas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Florence	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Salento	0.5	0.0	0.0.	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.(
Sardinia	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.(
Veneto	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.(
Lazio/Umbria/Marche	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.
Sicily/S.Calabria	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.
Tyrrhenian South	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.
Friuli	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.(
Adriatic South	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.
Gallo-Italic East	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.(
Gallo-Italic West	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.(

Devoto's conclusions and methodology, as well as his analysis of some individual phenomena (e.g., his interpretation of anaphonesis as a conservative feature; cf. Calamai 2018:52f.), simply do not stand up to scrutiny, inasmuch as a different set of features from those cherry-picked for his study, including those from areas of the grammar other than phonology, would be able to highlight numerous cases of structural innovation that single out Tuscan, and at the same time Italian, as anything but stable and conservative (cf. Muljačić 1967; Pellegrini 1970b; Cortelazzo 1988:450f.).

Rather, we must recognize that, on a par with the other dialects of Italy, Tuscan and, in turn, Italian have undergone a number of often significant changes in all areas of the grammar in the passage from Latin to Romance. Consequently, what is at issue is not so much the linguistic distance between Latin on the one hand and Tuscan and Italian on the other, but the degree of linguistic distance between Tuscan and Italian and, in particular, to what extent Tuscan and Italian may be considered one and the same. Today Tuscan speech, at least in educated circles, continues to enjoy a high degree of prestige, giving rise to the stereotypical ideas that Tuscan usage represents *il vero italiano* ('true Italian') and that non-Tuscans should periodically spend some time in Florence to *risciacquare i panni in Arno* (lit. 'rinse their clothes in the river Arno'), a metaphorical expression coined by Manzoni in 1827 to allude to the healing linguistic powers of the city's river (namely, 'Sulle rive di questo Arno nelle cui acque risciacquai i miei cenci' ['On the banks of this river Arno in whose waters I washed my clothes']). That said, the increasing prestige of the north and, in particular, the linguistic models of such cities as Milan have very much come to usurp Tuscan in this role in recent decades, with northern usage today increasingly serving as a standard point of reference and example of correct usage. The fact remains, however, that Italian enjoys a shared ancestry with Tuscan which is uniquely responsible for shaping some of the most characteristic phonological (§1.4.2.1) and morphological (§1.4.2.2) structures of the national language, whatever trends and prestige models the language finds itself subject to today.

Strikingly, though, there are no features of syntax that uniquely identify Tuscan and Italian in contrast to the other dialects of Italy. While most, if not all, dialects of Italy present some quite spectacular syntactic features of microvariation that set them apart from most other dialects (cf. Rohlfs 2021c; Manzini and Savoia 2005)—including but not limited to wh-*in situ* and wh-doubling (Munaro 1999; Manzini and Savoia 2011), discontinuous and post-verbal negation strategies (Zanuttini 1997; Parry 2013; Garzonio and Poletto 2018; Ledgeway and Schifano 2023), generalized enclisis of object pronouns (Tortora 2002), distribution of personal, impersonal, and expletive subjects (Pescarini 2018; 2022), existentials (Bentley, Ciconte, and Cruschina 2015), person-, tense-, and mood-based patterns of perfective auxiliary selection (Loporcaro 2007; Ledgeway 2019a), variation in active participle agreement (Loporcaro 1998; D'Alessandro and Roberts 2010), differential object marking (Andriani 2023; Ledgeway 2023a; 2023b), marking of focus and topic (Cruschina 2012a), the syntactic features shared by Tuscan and Italian are without exception present to varying degrees in all other dialects. Even relatively rare and marked features such as the expression of the future-in-the-past with the analytic form rather than the simple form (2a; cf. Maiden 1996a; Ferraresi and Goldbach 2010:1330f.; see also discussion in §10.1, §12.4) or omission of the irrealis complementizer (3a; cf. Scorretti 1994; Giorgi and Pianesi 1997; 2004; Poletto 2001) are found in some of the dialects (2b, 3b; Rohlfs 2021c:58, 199f.; Ledgeway 2009b:458f.; 2013; 2015a). Moreover, in the latter case the parallelism between Tuscan and Italian is only apparent: whereas in modern Italian complementizer deletion is limited to the irrealis uses of *che* 'that' (4a–b), in Tuscan varieties both irrealis (5a) and realis (5b) uses of the complementizer may undergo deletion (Cocchi and Poletto 2002; Isolani 2024).

2 a Disse che oggi l' avrebbe portato. (Tsc.-It.)

b Dicette ca ogge l' avarria purtato. (Nap., Ledgeway 2009b:458)
say.PST.PFV.3SG that today it= have.COND.3SG bring.PTCP
'She said that today she would bring it / have brought it.'

3 a Voglio (che) la finisca. (Tsc.-It.)

b A voi (ch') t' la finésc. (Bol., *AIS* 1653)
SCL.1SG= want.1SG that SCL.2SG= it.SG= finish.SBJV
'I want you to stop this.'

4 a Credo (che) abbia già parlato con te. (It.)
believe.1SG that have.SBJV.3SG already speak.PTCP with you.SG
'I think that he has already spoken with you.'

b Mi dispiace **(che) non ha portato nulla. (It.)
me= displease.3SG that NEG have.IND.3SG bring.PTCP nothing
'I'm sorry that he hasn't brought anything.'

5 a Credo (che) abbia già parlato con te. (Flo., Cocchi and Poletto 2002:60)

b Mi dispiace (che) un ha portato nulla. (Flo., Isolani 2024:2)

It is this intermediate position of Tuscan, a sort of linguistic lowest common denominator, which no doubt explains, at least in part, why Florentine was readily adopted across all regions of Italy as the national language.

The case of lexis, by contrast, is quite different. As we shall see in §1.4.2.4, originally the lexis of the literary language was generally equated with Tuscan usage, even where Tuscan was the 'odd one out' within the wider Italian panorama. Thus, whereas in the past the written language promoted typical Tuscan forms such as *gota* 'cheek', *acquaio* 'sink', *giubba* 'jacket', *balocco* 'toy', *appigionare* 'to rent', and *raccattare* 'to pick up', their absence from all other regions has led to their replacement in the standard language, both written and spoken, with the supra-regional terms *guancia*, *lavello*, *giacca*, *giocattolo*, *affittare*, and *raccogliere*, respectively.[54] The result is that today, even though many of these Tuscan terms are of good pedigree and are known to all Italians through their reading of some of the great works of Italian literature, there has been a notable de-Tuscanization of the basic lexis, relegating many traditional everyday terms to regionalisms and widening in the process the linguistic gulf between Italian and Tuscan.

1.4.2.1 Phonology

Beginning with phonology, Tuscan dialects share to the exclusion of nearly all other Italo-Romance varieties (with the exception of some northern Umbrian dialects) the distinctive development intervocalic -RI-/-RE- > *-[rj]- > -[j]-, e.g., AREAM 'threshing floor' > Tsc.-It. ***ai**a*, where other dialects preserve the vibrant (cf. Pdm./Lmb. ˈɛ(j)ra, Ven. ˈaːra, Abr. ˈaːrə, Cmp. ˈaːrjə, Cal./Sic. ˈaːrja). This explains why traditional reflexes of the agentive suffix -ARIUS display *-aio* in Italian, e.g., NOTARIUM > *notaio* 'notary', CALCEOLARIUM > *calzolaio* 'cobbler', whereas recent lexical loans and new coinings from other regions (especially Rome) show *-aro*, e.g., *tassinaro* 'taxi-driver' (cf. *tassì* 'taxi'), *palazzinaro* 'unscrupulous property developer' (cf. *palazzo* '(apartment) building'), *metallaro* 'heavy metal fan' (cf. *(heavy) metal* 'heavy metal music'), *panchinaro* 'mediocre sportsperson typically relegated to the reserve bench' (cf. *panchina* 'bench'), *internettaro* 'someone who spends most of their time surfing on the internet' (cf. *internet*).

Another distinguishing feature, though not universally found across all Tuscan varieties but present at least in Florentine, is the raising, so-called anaphonesis (Castellani 1952), of the high-mid vowels before nasal+velar or palatal sonorants, e.g., ŬNG(U)LAM 'nail' (> *ˈoŋgja) > Tsc.-It. *unghia*, FAMĬLIAM 'family' (>*faˈmeːλːa) > Tsc.-It. *famiglia*, whereas in the dialects of other regions the high-mid vowels are generally retained (cf. Pdm./Lmb/Ven. ˈoɲʤa, Abr./Cmp. ˈoɲɲə; Lmb. faˈmɛː(j)a, Ven. faˈmɛːja/faˈmɛːʤa, Abr. faˈmejːa, Cmp. faˈm(ː)eʎːa). Also notable at the phonological level is the apparent absence of metaphony in Tuscan, and hence also in Italian, whereas in all other regions of Italy, with the exception of some dialects of the extreme south where the synchronic outcomes of the tonic vowel system obscure its effects, original final high vowels -[i] (northern Italy) and -[u] and -[i] (central-southern Italy) triggered metaphonetic raising and/or fronting of the mid vowels and, to a lesser extent, of [a] (Maiden 1991). Thus, in contrast to Tuscan-Italian which systematically shows [a] and [wɔ] in the nominal and adjectival paradigms of reflexes of Latin CAMPUS 'field' (6a) and BŎNUS 'good' (7a), respectively, the Piedmontese dialect of Varallo Sesia contrasts [a] and [ɛ] in the singular and plural outcomes of the former (6b) and northern Calabrese [ɔ] and [uə] in the feminine and masculine cells of the latter (7b).

6 *ˈkampʊ ‘field’, *ˈkampi ‘fields’
a Tsc-It.: campo, campi

b Varallo: ˈkamp, ˈkɛmp

7 *ˈbɔːna/*ˈbɔːne ‘good.FSG/PL’, *ˈbɔːnʊ/*ˈbɔːni ‘good.MSG/PL’
a Tsc-It.: buona/buone, buono/buoni

b NCal.: ˈbɔːna/ˈbɔːnɛ, ˈbːuənu/ˈbːuəni

Equally distinctive of Tuscan (as well as some other central dialects) and Italian is their retention of the five unstressed vowels /i e a o u/ (cf. §8.2.4, §15.2.2), which in other regions of Italy are drastically reduced, though to a lesser extent in word-final position. In much (though not all) of northern Italy there is an extensive tendency to delete unstressed vowels with the exception of word-final -[a], whereas in southern Italy we find either large-scale neutralization of vowel oppositions with generalization of schwa (upper south) or mergers of all front (> [i]) and back (> [u]) vowels (extreme south). Consequently, where Tuscan-Italian has *ospedale/-i* ‘hospital/-s’ (< HOSPITALEM/-ES), Bolognese has zb ˈdɛl, Neapolitan ʃpəˈtaːlə, and Sicilian spiˈtaːli. Also relevant here is the distinctive Florentine treatment of pretonic -[a]- which exceptionally raises to -[e]- before [r], e.g., *canterà* ‘s/he will sing’ (< CANTARE ‘sing.INF’ + HABET ‘have.3SG’), but which elsewhere is either lost (e.g., Tur. kaŋˈtra) or more frequently retained (e.g., Bol. kãtaˈra, Nap. kandaˈrːa).

Other features of Tuscan, and hence standard Italian, but which are shared more generally with the dialects of central Italy, involve a series of phonemic oppositions. The first of these concerns the mid vowels which in Tuscan Italian are contrastive in tonic syllables, giving rise to minimal pairs such as *p*[e]*sca* ‘fishing’ vs *p*[ɛ]*sca* ‘peach’ and *b*[o]*tte* ‘barrel’ vs *b*[ɔ]*tte* ‘blows, punches’. Many other dialects, by contrast, treat them as allophones, as happens in many northern dialects where, when not subject to diphthongization, the open and close variants occur respectively in closed and open syllables, e.g., DĬCTU(M) ‘said’ > *ˈdetːʊ > Mil. ˈdɛt, SĒRA(M) ‘evening’ > *ˈsɛjra > Mil. ˈseːra. In the extreme south, on the other hand, only the open variant is found, e.g., Cos. *s*[ɛ]*tte* ‘seven’ (< SĔPTE(M)), *s*[ɛ]*ra* ‘evening’. Another opposition involves the phonemic voicing contrast (albeit with a low functional load) found with the intervocalic alveolar sibilants /s/~/z/, e.g., *casa* [ˈkaːsa] ‘house’ vs *caso* [ˈkaːzo] ‘case’. In northern and southern Italy, by contrast, [z] and [s] alone are found in intervocalic position, respectively,[55] a distribution transferred into the regional varieties of Italian of these same areas where this voicing contrast constitutes one of the clearest indicators of geographical origin in modern-day Italy, e.g., NIt. [ˈkaːza], [ˈkaːzo] vs SIt. [ˈkaːsa], [ˈkaːso]. A not too dissimilar behaviour is found with the alveolar affricates /ʦ/~/ʣ/, both represented as *z* in orthography, which in Tuscan-Italian display a phonemic opposition, again characterized by a low functional load, in both word-initial position, e.g., *zia* [ˈʦiːa] ‘aunt’ vs *zero* [ˈʣɛːro] ‘zero’, and word-internally, e.g., *razza* [ˈraʦːa] ‘race, breed’ vs *razza* /ˈraʣːa/ ‘ray(fish)’. Dialects of other regions, by contrast, do not show any such phonemic contrast, with the result that they are generally distributed along lexical lines. For example, in northern Italy where they have generally undergone de-affrication, we find in Milanese the voiceless fricative in word-initial position in [s]*üpa* ‘supe’ (< ʦ) but its voiced variant in both word-initial and word-internal position in [z]*an*[z]*ara* ‘mosquito’ (< ʣ).

Finally, we should also mention *rafforzamento* (or *raddoppiamento*) *fonosintattico* (RF) ‘phonosyntactic strengthening (or doubling)’ (cf. §8.4.2, §14.6.2, §15.2.1.2.4), a fortition process which, although absent from the dialects of northern Italy, is found in those of central-southern Italy and Sardinia.[56] As such, it might at first sight seem an unlikely example of a feature that distinguishes Tuscan and Italian to the exclusion of all other varieties. However, the distribution and nature of RF in Tuscan and Italian prove quite different from those that characterize its use in central-southern and Sardinian dialects. In the latter RF involves an initial-consonant lengthening process which originates as an external sandhi assimilation triggered by a small and lexically closed class of words that historically ended in a final consonant (e.g., PLUS > Cos. *cchiù* ‘more’, PER-QUID > Cos. *picchì* ‘why; because’, AD > Cos. *a* ‘to, at’). While superficial phonological adjacency might be expected to prove sufficient for RF to apply, it has been known since at least D’Ovidio (1874:179) that outside Tuscany and central Italy more generally the process is constrained by structural conditions (for an overview and relevant bibliography, see Ledgeway 2021a). Consequently, in (8a) *cchiù* triggers initial lengthening of *granne* since its forms a constituent with the following adjective it modifies. In (8b), by contrast, post-adjectival *cchiù* continues to modify, and hence form an immediate constituent with, the adjective *granne*, but not the following prepositional complementizer (DE > *di*) *’i* introducing the standard of comparison. Therefore, *cchiù* fails to trigger RF and the standard of comparison does not undergo fortition.

8 a cchiù + [g]ranne > cchiù [g:]ranne (Cos.)
more tall more tall
'taller'

b granne cchiù [i] / **[d:i] mìa (Cos.)
tall more of of me
'taller than me'

In Tuscan and Italian RF also involves a small, closed class of lexical triggers (e.g., PLUS > *più* 'more' in 9a) but, given the often oxytonic nature of such triggers (cf. *perché* 'why; because', *così* 'thus', *né* 'neither, nor', etc.), RF was subsequently reinterpreted as a property triggered by all words with syllable-final stress irrespective of whether they ended historically in a consonant (cf. Loporcaro 1988; 1997b). Consequently, both inherited oxytones such as FINI(UIT) > *finì* 's/he finished' (9b) and more recent acquisitions such as *caffè* 'coffee' (9c) and (Fr. *clou* 'nail; climax' >) *clou* [ˈklu] 'climax, high point' (9d) systematically qualify as RF triggers. Synchronically, Tuscan-based RF can therefore be interpreted as a compensatory lengthening process that makes up the weight of word-final stressed syllables where vowels are intrinsically short. Accordingly, unlike in central-southern Italy and Sardinia, RF in Tuscan and Italian proves entirely insensitive to syntactic structure, as shown by examples such as (9e) where, although the oxytonic RF trigger *DNA* [diˈɛnneˈa] 'DNA' and the preposition *per* 'for' do not form a constituent, RF still applies since the relevant phonological requirement (viz. simple surface adjacency) is met.

9 a più [g:]rande (Tsc-It.)
more big

b Finì [s:]ubito. (Tsc-It.)
finish.PST.PFV.3SG at.once
'S/he finished at once.'

c caffè [k:]olombiano (Tsc-It.)
coffee Colombian
'Colombian coffee'

d il clou [d:]ella serata (Tsc-It.)
the climax of.the evening
'the highlight of the evening'

e la possibilità di conservare il DNA [p:]er 15 anni (Tsc-It.)
the possibility of keep.INF the DNA for fifteen years
'the possibility of preserving your DNA for fifteen years'

In conclusion, Italian and Tuscan-related varieties today predominantly display an entirely regular prosodically determined RF, whereas in central-southern Italy and Sardinia RF is a lexically determined idiosyncratic property of a small class of words whose distribution proves highly sensitive to syntactic structure. Thus, although all varieties outside of northern Italy are routinely claimed to display RF, the finer details reveal two distinct phenomena that cannot straightforwardly be unified under a single label.

1.4.2.2 Morphology

At the morphological level the distinctive features of Tuscan and Italian in relation to the other Romance varieties of Italy are not numerous. Perhaps the most notable of these is the generalization of the first person plural ending *-iamo* in the present indicative, an apparent continuation of the Latin first person plural subjunctive ending -EAMUS (Meszler and Samu 2007), to all three conjugations where, through an opposition in the thematic vowel, other dialects operate either a ternary (e.g., Assisi) or binary (e.g., Sicilian) formal distinction (cf. Table 1.2).

Table 1.2 First person plural of the present indicative in Italo-Romance

	wash	see	leave
Tuscan-Italian	*laviamo* 'we wash'	*vediamo* 'we see'	*partiamo* 'we leave'
Assisi	*lavamo*	*vedemo*	*partimo*

	wash	see	leave
Sicilian	*lavamu*	*vidimu*	*partimu*

Although this feature places Tuscan and Italian together opposing them to the other dialects of Italy, from a synchronic perspective, as we shall see in §1.4.3.3, this shared innovation is no longer as robust today. In particular, Tuscan dialects systematically replace the traditional first person plural verb forms still in use in Italian with the periphrasis (*noi* 'we' +) *e* 'SCL' *si* 'one' + third person singular verb, e.g., It. *viaggiamo* vs Tsc. *(noi) e si viaggia* 'we travel'.

Other salient features of verb inflexion include the first person singular of the past imperfective where Tuscan and, in turn, Italian have replaced original etymological *-a* (cf. CANTABA(M) 'I was singing') with *-o* by analogy with the present indicative (cf. *cant-o* 'sing-1SG'), e.g., *cantava* > *cantavo*. Other dialects, by contrast, generally retain original *-a*, e.g., Bol. kãˈtaːva, Abr. kanˈdaːvə, Lec. kanˈtaːva. The peculiar formation of the conditional in Tuscan and in Italian is also of note since it descends from an original periphrasis consisting of the infinitive followed by forms of the preterite of *avere* 'have', e.g., CANTARE 'sing.INF' + HABUIT 'have.PST.PFV.3SG' > *canterebbe* 's/he would sing', a form also occasionally found, especially in earlier times, in the north and in Abruzzo (Rohlfs 2021b:342f.). Outside Tuscany, however, the conditional is more commonly formed from the infinitive followed by a reduced form of the imperfect indicative of *avere*, e.g., CANTARE + HABEBAT 'have.PST.IPFV.3SG' > Lmb. kantaˈriːa, Cmp. kandaˈrːiːa.

Within the nominal domain we can also mention the alternation found in the masculine singular forms of the definite and indefinite articles. In pre-consonantal position ILLU(M) 'that (one)' and UNU(M) 'one' present two distinct reflexes in modern Tuscan and Italian, *lo* and *uno* before non-tautosyllabic consonantal clusters (e.g., *lo/uno specchio* 'the/a mirror') and *il/un* in all other cases (e.g., *il/un gatto* 'the/a cat'),[57] although their distribution in old Italian was altogether different (Vanelli 2010:1421–1426). All other modern dialects, by contrast, generalize a single form to all preconsonantal positions (Rohlfs 2021b:104f., 106f.), e.g., Tur. lə/un speʧ/gat, Bol. al/un spɛʧ/gaːt, Nap. o/nu ʃˈpɛkːjə/ˈɣatːə, Sic. lu/nu jatːu/sˈpɛkːju.

The final difference between Italian and Tuscan in contrast to the dialects to be discussed here is the distribution of the so-called partitive article. With the exception of early Tuscan and most modern Piedmontese dialects which employ the simple preposition DE 'of' (Rohlfs 2021b:117f.), the partitive is formed from a combination of the preposition DE 'of' and the definite article. In northern dialects the partitive generally proves obligatory, occurring with all singular non-count nouns (10a) and all plural countable nouns (10b), whereas in the dialects of the south it is simply absent (but cf. Ledgeway 2009b:189–191), with singular non-count nouns (11a) and plural countable nouns (11b) generally occurring without an overt determiner (although overt quantifiers such as *due* lit. 'two', *certo* 'certain' are available).

10 a A la matin a beiv sempre ed lait. (Tur.)
at the morning SCL drink.1SG always of milk
'I always drink (some) milk in the morning.' (§2.3.6, https://piemunteis.it/wp-content/uploads/02_L_articolo.pdf)

b Ai è cascà zò del pred. (Bol.)
SCL be.3SG fall.PTCP down of.the.FPL stone.SG~PL
'Some stones fell down.' (Coronedi Berti 1874:vii)

11 a Ce sta caso se ne vulite. (Nap.)
LOC= be.3SG cheese if of.it= want.PL
'There's (some) cheese if you want some.' (Ledgeway 2009b:191)

b Iddru ancora vò ssordi! (Cos.)
he again want.3SG monies
'He's after money again!'

Italian and Tuscan, by contrast, are typically presented as representing a compromise between the north and the south in that partitives are frequently described as optional in both (12a–b).

12 a C' è (del) formaggio se ne volete. (Tsc.-It.)
LOC= be.3SG of.the.MSG cheese.M if of.it= want.PL

b Gli è cascate / Sono cadute (delle) pietre. (Tsc./It.)
SCL be.3SG fall.PTCP be.3PL fall.PTCP of.the.FPL stones.F

While cases such as (12a–b) suggest that the distribution of the partitive is subject to genuine optionality, it is clear from an examination of other contexts that the absence vs presence of the partitive article correlates with a significant semantic difference which is otherwise neutralized in the dialects of northern and southern Italy. As highlighted by Maiden and Robustelli (2007:76–78), the use of the partitive focuses on the entities denoted by the noun (13a), whereas its absence places the focus on the concept expressed by the noun (13b). Consequently, the first example refers to an actual act of telling lies, whereas the second can be paraphrased as 'He's a liar'.

13 a Dice delle bugie. (Tsc.-It.)
say.3SG of.the.FPL lies
'He's telling lies.' (Maiden and Robustelli 2007:76)

b Dice bugie. (Tsc.-It.)
say.3SG lies.
'He lies.' (Maiden and Robustelli 2007:76)

We now turn to consider the linguistic differences between Tuscan and Italian in the areas of phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis which undermine any simplistic identification of Italian with current Tuscan usage.

1.4.3 Italian vs Tuscan

1.4.3.1 Phonology

Without doubt, one of the most striking and salient phonological differences between many varieties of Tuscan and Italian is so-called *gorgia toscana* (lit. 'Tuscan throat'). Whereas in Italian voiceless stops generally remain unaltered in intervocalic position, in Tuscan varieties such as Florentine they systematically undergo spirantization and sometimes even deletion (Table 1.3), giving rise to major perceptual differences.

Table 1.3 Treatment of intervocalic voiceless stops in Italian and Tuscany

	##____	V____V	##____	V____V	##____	V____V
Italian	[p]*ala* 'spade'	*la* [p]*ala* 'the spade'	[t]*assa* 'tax'	*la* [t]*assa* 'the tax'	[k]*asa* 'house'	*la* [k]*asa* 'the house'
Florentine	[p]*ala*	*la* [ɸ]*ala*	[t]*assa*	*la* [θ]*assa*	[k]*asa*	*la* [h]*asa*/[Ø]*asa*

Another significant difference involves the distribution of the palato-alveolars. In Italian the affricates are distinguished by a voicing contrast, e.g., *man*[ʧ]*a* 'tip' vs *man*[ʤ]*a* 's/he eats', but not the fricative /ʃ/, whose voiced counterpart is limited to a handful of French loans (*gara*[ʒ]*e* 'garage'). In Tuscan (and in some parts of neighbouring central regions), by contrast, [ʒ] constitutes the regular intervocalic allophone of /ʤ/, e.g., Tsc. *Gigio* ['ʤiːʒo] 'Luigi.DIM' (cf. It. ['ʤiːʤo]), in the same way that its voiceless counterpart [ʃ] represents the intervocalic allophone of /ʧ/, e.g., Tsc. *cece* ['ʧeːʃe] 'chickpea' (cf. It. ['ʧeːʧe]), an outcome also found in large areas of central-southern Italy such as Rome, Naples, and Palermo.[58] In this respect Tuscan therefore distances itself quite considerably from Italian, displaying fricative allophonic variants of the palato-alveolar affricates which are either unique to this area or are shared by more southerly regions of Italy but which are clearly not part of the standard language.

Also of note is the treatment of word-internal -LU- and -RU- (> *-lv-, *-rv-) before a vowel which in the standard language generally remain unchanged, e.g., SALUIA(M) > It. *salvia* 'sage (herb)', MALUA(M) > It. *malva* 'mallow', CORUU(M) > It. *corvo* 'crow', NERUU(M) > It. *nervo* 'nerve'. However, in most Tuscan varieties the fricative is realized in such clusters as the voiced bilabial stop /b/ in accordance with a tendency shared with many Venetan, Romagnolo, Calabrian, and Sicilian dialects (Devoto and Giacomelli 1972:66; Rohlfs 2021a:373–375), hence Tuscan forms such as *salbia*, *malba*, *corbo*, and *nerbo*.[59] This tendency is also sporadically attested in Italian, witness ILUA > *Elba* '(Island of) Elba', SERUARE > *serbare* 'to keep, harbour, put aside' (but cf. SERUIRE > *servire* 'to serve').

The most notable difference between Tuscan and Italian in terms of vowels concerns the distribution of the diphthong [wɔ]. While Italian retains this diphthongal outcome of original tonic [ɔ] in open syllables (cf. Maiden 2016f:649–652), in most Tuscan varieties the diphthong underwent monophthongization between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As a consequence, there is no longer correspondence in the outcomes of such forms as NŎUU(M) 'new' > *ˈnɔvʊ and SŎNA(T) 'play.3SG' > *ˈsɔna which today contrast in Italian and Tuscan, namely, It. *n*[wɔ]*vo*, *s*[wɔ]*na* vs Tsc. *n*[ɔ]*vo*, *s*[ɔ]*na*.

Another major difference between Tuscan and Italian is manifested in the treatment of oxytones. While word-final stress proves well-formed and relatively frequent in Italian, Tuscans show a marked preference for paroxytonic stress often leading them to 'repair' oxytonic sequences with a paragogic *-e*, e.g., It. *vedrò* [veˈdrɔ] 'I will see' vs Tsc. *vedròe* [veˈdrɔːe], It. *sì* [ˈsi] 'yes' vs Tsc. *sìe* [ˈsiːe].

If we cast the net wider, we can also find throughout Tuscany, just as happens in all other regions, numerous other phonological features of a more limited distribution which affect only certain subareas of Tuscany, and not necessarily Florence, but which further highlight the frequent gulf between the standard language and Tuscan usage more generally. Among these we can recall here: (i) palatalization of preconsonantal /l/ in western and central-northern Tuscany and Amiata, e.g., It. *a***l***to* > C-NTsc. [ˈaitːo] 'tall', or, less frequently today, rhotacization in western Tuscany, e.g., WTsc. [ˈarto]; (ii) affrication (particularly frequent in the provinces of Pisa and Lucca) of the sibilant [s] in post-consonantal position in line with a tendency found across many regions of central-southern Italy, e.g., It. *bor*[s]*a* 'bag' vs Tsc. *bor*[ʦ]*a*, *pol*[s]*o* 'wrist' vs Tsc. *pol*[ʦ]*o*; (iii) loss of the labial segment in the cluster -[kw]-, particularly frequent in the province of Siena, e.g., It. *quello* [ˈkwelːo] 'that' vs Tsc. [ˈkelːo]; (iv) loss in southern Tuscany (and most of neighbouring Lazio) of the standard short/long phonemic contrast in the alveolar trill, e.g., It. *ca*[r]*o*/*ca*[rː]*o* 'dear/cart' vs STsc. *ca*[r]o 'dear/cart'; (v) raising of tonic /a/ in open syllables in south-eastern Tuscany, e.g., It. *s*[a]*le* 'salt' vs S-ETsc. *s*[ɛ]*le*; (vi) assimilation of -MB-/-ND- in southern Tuscany, e.g., It. *gamba* 'leg', *quando* 'when' vs STsc. *gamma*, *quanno*, but with frequent historical examples of hypercorrection throughout the region which suggest that such assimilations were once more widespread (Rohlfs 2021a:334f.), e.g., Tsc. *sémbola* 'bran' (cf. It. *semola*), *gómbito* 'elbow' (cf. It. *gomito*), *céndare* 'ash' (cf. It. *cenere*), *colonda* 'column' (cf. It. *colonna*).

1.4.3.2 Morphology

In the area of morphology, especially the inflexional paradigms of the noun and verb, the differences between Italian and Tuscan are numerous. Beginning with nominal morphology, the simple pre-consonantal forms of the masculine definite article in Florentine (and northern Tuscan more generally) present some minor morphophonological deviations from Italian. Whereas in the plural Italian presents the form *i* (< ILLI), e.g., It. *i gatti* 'the cats', *i giornali* 'the newspapers', *i ponti* 'the bridges', Florentine oscillates between *i* and *e*, e.g., NTsc. *i/e gatti*, *i/e giornali*, *i/e ponti*. In the singular Florentine appears to parallel the standard language in that both employ *il* (cf. §1.4.2.2), e.g., Tsc.-It. *il gatto* 'the cat', *il giornale* 'the newspaper', *il ponte* 'the bridge', but they differ significantly in their realization: in northern Tuscany the final lateral of the underlying form is systematically involved in a process of external sandhi assimilation (and hence often spelled *i'*), giving rise to a synchronic case of *rafforzamento fonosinatttico* (cf. §1.4.2.1, §16.6.2, §15.2.1.2.4),[60] e.g., It. [il ˈgatːo / ʤorˈnaːle / ˈponte] vs NTsc. [i ˈgːatːo / ʤːorˈnaːle / ˈpːonte].[61]

In the medieval literary language feminine nouns and adjectives descended from the Latin third declension very frequently displayed an invariant form in *-e* for both the singular (< -E(M)) and plural (< -E(S)),[62] e.g., *la torre* 'the tower' (*Trist. Ricc.* 4.2) vs *molte torre* 'many towers' (*Trist. Ricc.* 200.10), whereas modern Italian operates an inflexional distinction between singular *la torre* and plural *molte torri*. Most Tuscan varieties, however, have generalized this formal ambiguity that was once just a tendency in earlier stages of the language, hence forms such as *le noce* 'the walnuts' (cf. It. *le noci*), *le croce speciale* 'the special crosses' (cf. It. *le croci speciali*).

Possessives also show some notable differences with respect to the standard language. First, the third person plural form *loro* (< ILLORUM) of the standard language is not popular in Tuscan, which continues the Latin third-person SUUS, e.g., *A casa nostra sono arrivati con i su' amici* 'They've turned up at our house with their friends' (cf. It. *con i loro amici*). Together with the first and second persons singular, the possessives also display a formal binary contrast between an invariable proclitic paradigm and an agreeing post-nominal paradigm, though with gender distinctions neutralized in the plural. This contrasts with Italian where there is a single paradigm for both pre- and post-nominal positions with

maximal agreement for both gender and number. These facts are summarized in Table 1.4 with some relevant contrasting examples in (14).

Table 1.4 Italian and Tuscan possessive paradigms

	Italian				Tuscan		
	pre- and post-nominal				pre-nominal	post-nominal	
	MSG	MPL	FSG	FPL		MSG	FSG, PL
1SG	*mio*	*miei*	*mia*	*mie*	*mi'*	*mio*	*mia*
2SG	*tuo*	*tuoi*	*tua*	*tue*	*tu'*	*tuo*	*tua*
3(SG)	*suo*	*suoi*	*sua*	*sue*	*su'*	*suo*	*sua*

14 a mio zio / mia zia vs mi' zio / zia (It. vs Tsc.)
my.MSG uncle.M my.FSG aunt.F my= uncle.M aunt.F
'my uncle / aunt'

b i fratelli tuoi / le sorelle tue vs i fratelli /
the.MPL brothers.M your.MPL the.FPL sisters.F your.FPL the.MPL brothers.M
le sorelle tua (It. vs Tsc.)
the.FPL sisters.F your.PL
'your brothers / sisters'

c il (su') amico (suo) (Tsc.)
the.MSG 3.POSS= friend.MSG 3.POSS.MSG
'he/her/their friend'

Turning to the distribution of clitic object pronouns, as in spoken Italian the traditional weak third person plural dative *loro* (*scrissi loro* 'write.PST.PFV.1SG them.DAT (= I wrote to them)') is also replaced in Tuscan by the original masculine singular clitic *gli* (*gli scrissi* '3.DAT= write.PST.PFV.1SG'), often realized as *(g)ni* in uneducated usage. On a par with other regions of Italy, in all but the most careful registers this usage is also extended to the feminine singular in Tuscan, where *gli* (> *(g)ni*) occurs instead of the *le* of the standard language thereby neutralizing all gender and number distinctions, e.g., It. *le scrissi* 'her.DAT= write.PST.- PFV.1SG' vs Tsc. *gli scrissi* 'I wrote to her (/to him/to them)'.

In verb morphology, one notable feature of spontaneous Tuscan usage already hinted at in §1.4.2.2 is the replacement of the first person plural morphological forms with the third person singular in conjunction with the indefinite clitic pronoun *si* 'one', in turn, preceded by the subject clitic *e* (see §1.4.3.3) and optionally the first person plural tonic pronoun *noi* 'we' (cf. Savoia 2023:93f.), e.g., Tsc. *(noi) e si mangiava in furia* for standard Italian *(noi) mangiavamo in fretta* 'we were eating quickly'. A notable exception is the verb *essere* 'be' where in the present indicative the traditional first person plural form *semo* remains current.

Even more conspicuous are the differences in the formation of the present indicative and subjunctive.[93] In the standard language alternations in theme vowels distinguish between verbs of the first conjugation on the one hand and those of the other conjugations on the other, with a reversal of theme vowels serving to mark the distinction between indicative and subjunctive. Consequently, Italian displays a binary formal distinction in the indicative between *canta* 's/he sings' and *cantano* 'they sing' (< *cantare*) vs *vende/serve* 's/he sells/serves' and *vendono/servono* 'they sell/serve' (< *vendere/finire*), and in the subjunctive between *canti* 'sing.SBJV.SG' and *cantino* vs *venda/finisca* 'sell/finish.SBJV.SG' and *vendano/finiscano*. In Florentine, by contrast, the theme vowel of the first conjugation has generalized to all conjugations in the third person plural of the present indicative (viz. *cantano/vendano/finiscano*), and by the same token the reversal in the theme vowel from *-a(-)* to *-i(-)* in the singular and third person plural of the subjunctive is extended from the first conjugation to the other conjugations (viz. *canti/vendi/finischi*, *cantino/vendino/finischino*). As a result, the relevant paradigms of the non-first conjugations are strikingly different from those of the standard language (cf. Table 1.5): (i) third person plural forms which in Italian can only be interpreted as subjunctives may be indicatives in Florentine;

and (ii) the singular and third person plural of the subjunctive display forms absent from the standard language.

Table 1.5 Comparison of the present indicative/subjunctive paradigms in Italian and Florentine

	Italian			Florentine		
	cantare 'sing'	*vendere* 'sell'	*partire* 'leave'	*cantare* 'sing'	*vendere* 'sell'	*partire* 'leave'
1SG	*canto/-i*	*vendo/-a*	*parto/-a*	*canto/-i*	*vendo/-i*	*parto/-i*
2SG	*canti*	*vendi/-a*	*parti/-a*	*canti*	*vendi*	*parti*
3SG	*canta/-i*	*vende/-a*	*parte/-a*	*canta/-i*	*vende/-i*	*parte/-i*
1PL	*cantiamo*	*vendiamo*	*partiamo*	*e si canta/-i*	*e si vende/-i*	*e si parte/-i*
2PL	*cantate/-iate*	*vendete/-iate*	*partite/-iate*	*cantate/-iate*	*vendete/-iate*	*partite/-iate*
3PL	*cantano/-ino*	*vendono/-ano*	*partono/-ano*	*cantano/-ino*	*vendano/-ino*	*partano/-ino*

With the exception of the preterite, in Italian the final formant in the third person singular of all paradigms (e.g., *-a*, *-à*, *-ebbe*, *-i*, *-e*) can be analysed synchronically as the singular third person marker (rather than, say, the thematic vowel with zero person/number marker in the present), such that there is a transparent relationship with the plural bearing the plural markers *-no* (with RF in the future) or *-ro*, e.g., *canta* 'sing.PRS.IND.3SG' + *-no* '3PL' ⇒ *cantano* 'sing.PRS.IND.3PL', *cantava* 'sing.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG' + *-no* '3PL' ⇒ *cantavano* 'sing.PST.IPFV.3PL', *canterà* 'sing.FUT.3SG' + *-no* '3PL' ⇒ *canteranno* 'sing.FUT.3PL', *canterebbe* 'sing.COND.3SG' + *-ro* '3PL' ⇒ *canterebbero* 'sing.COND.3PL', *canti* 'sing.PRS.SBJV.3SG' + *-no* '3PL' ⇒ *cantino* 'sing.PRS.SBJV.3PL', *cantasse* 'sing.PST.SBJV.3SG' + *-ro* '3PL' ⇒ *cantassero* 'sing.PST.SBJV.3PL'. In old Italian this pattern also extends naturally to the preterite where the third person plural was frequently transparently forged from adjunction of *-no* to the third singular (undergoing RF in regular verbs on account of the oxytonic stress of the third person singular), e.g., *cantò* 'sing.PST.PFV.3SG' + *-no* '3PL' ⇒ *cantonno* 'sing.PST.PFV.3PL', *disse* 'say.PST.PFV.3SG' + *-no* '3PL' ⇒ *dìsseno* 'say.PST.PFV.3PL'. While these forms have fallen out of use in the standard language, they still prove extremely popular today in Florentine giving rise once again to some quite significant differences between the two, as summarized in Table 1.6 (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:310, 313, 318, 320).

Table 1.6 Formation of the 3pl preterite in Italian and Florentine

	Italian			Florentine		
	cantare'sing'	*vendere* 'sell'	*partire* 'leave'	*cantare* 'sing'	*vendere* 'sell'	*partire* 'leave'
3SG	*cantò*	*vendé*	*partì*	*cantò*	*vendé*	*partì*
3PL	*cantarono*	*venderono*	*partirono*	*cantònno*	*vendénno*	*partìnno*
	avere 'have'	*scrivere* 'write'	*venire* 'come'	*avere* 'have'	*scrivere* 'write'	*venire* 'come'
3SG	*ebbe*	*scrisse*	*venne*	*ebbe*	*scrisse*	*venne*
3PL	*ebbero*	*scrissero*	*vennero*	*èbbeno*	*scrìsseno*	*vénneno*

Also noteworthy is the presence in Tuscan of so-called short past participles— alongside regular full forms—in verbs mainly of the first conjugation, e.g., Tsc. *porto/portato* 'carried', *tocco/toccato* 'touched', *arrivo/arrivato* 'arrived', and more rarely in verbs of other conjugations. Morphologically, these short forms prove exceptional insofar as they lack any overt marking of perfectivity and simply show a single final number/gender formative: Tsc. *cerca-t-o* 'seek-PFV-MSG' vs *cerc-o* 'seek-MSG' (cf. homophonous *cerc-o* 'seek-PRS.- IND.1SG'). These forms regularly display both punctual-dynamic (15a) and resultative-stative readings (15b).

15 a I' ero torna. (Tsc.)
I be.PST.IPFV.1SG return.PTCP.FSG
'I had returned.' (Rohlfs 2021b:376)

b Nun son quattrini butti via. (Tsc.)
NEG be.3PL money throw.PTCP.MPL away
'It's not wasted money.' (Rohlfs 2021b:376)

While these forms and uses are found to some extent also in the early stages of the literary language (Rohlfs 2021b:376), they prove much more restricted today in Italian. Unlike in modern Tuscan varieties where such forms represent a productive class, the short participles found in the standard (literary) language form a small, lexically closed class, e.g., It. *avvezzo/avvezzato* 'accustomed', *chino/chinato* 'bowed', *logoro/logorato* 'worn out', *lesso/lessato* 'boiled', *colmo/colmato* 'filled', *gonfio/gonfiato* 'swollen', *scalzo/scalzato* 'barefoot(ed)', *tronco/troncato* 'truncated', but not forms such as ***compro* 'bought' (cf. *comprato*), ***pago* 'paid' (cf. *pagato*), ***casco* 'fallen' (cf. *cascato*), ***incontro* 'met' (cf. *incontrato*) which, however, are all attested in Tuscan. A further difference is that where short and long participial variants co-exist in the standard (literary) language, they do not occur in free variation as happens in Tuscan, but are in complementary distribution. In particular, the short forms are specialized in marking the resultative-state interpretation, whereas the longer forms are employed with the punctual-dynamic interpretation, as demonstrated by the minimal pairs in (16)–(17).

16 a Si è guastata / caricata la macchina. (It.)
REFL= be.3SG break.PTCP.FSG load.PTCP.FSG the.FSG car.F
'The car has broken down/been loaded.'

b È guasta / carica la macchina. (It.)
be.3SG break.PTCP.FSG break.PTCP.FSG the.FSG car.F
'The car is broken/laden.'

17 a Abbiamo stancato / svegliato la nonna. (It.)
have.1PL tire.PTCP.MSG wake.PTCP.MSG the.FSG grandma.F
'We have tired out/woken up grandma.'

b La nonna è stanca / sveglia. (It.)
the.FSG grandma.F be.3SG tire.PTCP.FSG wake.PTCP.FSG
'Grandma is tired/awake.'

In the area of derivational morphology, differences are on the whole minimal, but include the occasional uses of the generally pejorative evaluative suffix *-accio* (cf. It. *caratteraccio* 'nasty character/nature') with a positive value. One particularly infamous example is Roberto Benigni's reference on national television during the Festival of Sanremo in 1980 to the then pope Karol Józef Wojtyła (John Paul II) as *Wojtyl**accio**ne*, where the *-accio* suffix is further modified by the augmentative *-(o)ne* (cf. also §18.3.1). To the vast majority of Italians, the use of the suffix could only be interpreted with pejorative value (e.g., the really horrid Wojtyła), rather than with its intended meaning as an affectionate term of endearment, viz. the really sweet Wojtyła. Significantly more conspicuous in number are the apparently random but very frequent uses of the erstwhile unstressed diminutive suffix *-olo* (-ULU(M); Rohlfs 2021a:405f.), not entirely unknown to Italian and Romance more generally (cf. UETUS 'old' + -ULU(M) > *ˈvɛt(ʊ)lʊ > It. *vecchio* 'old', AURIS 'ear' + -ULA(M) > *oˈrɛk(ʊ)la > It. *orecchia*), e.g., *conìgliolo* 'rabbit' (cf. It. *coniglio*), *mùtolo* 'mute, silent' (cf. It. *muto*), *ràgnolo* 'spider' (cf. It. *ragno*), *sèggiola* 'chair' (cf. It. *sedia*), *formìcola* 'ant' (cf. It. *formica*), *gócciola* 'drop' (cf. It. *goccia*).

1.4.3.3 Syntax

As with morphology, the differences between Tuscan and Italian in the area of syntax are not insignificant and in some cases involve, once again, features which were present in earlier stages of the

literary language which have been retained in Tuscan but since lost in Italian.

We begin with the deictic distinctions of the demonstrative and spatial adverb systems. Today the standard language presents a binary demonstrative system *questo* 'this' vs *quello* 'that' minimally marking a [±speaker] distinction (18a–b), such that explicit reference to the addressee is not formalized and may be marked by either term (18c). By contrast, the local varieties of Tuscany, together with formal registers of (mainly bureaucratic) Italian, may also overtly mark reference to the deictic sphere of addressee through the addressee-oriented term *codesto* (/*cotesto*) (18d).[64]

18 a Quanto mi piacciono queste / #quelle scarpe (che porto)! (It.)
how.much me= please.3PL these those shoes that wear.1SG
'How I like these shoes of mine (that I am wearing)!'

b Quanto mi piacciono quelle / #queste scarpe della vicina! (It.)
how.much me= please.3PL those these shoes of.the neighbour
'How I like those shoes the neighbour is wearing!'

c Quanto mi piacciono queste / quelle scarpe (che porti)! (It.)
how.much me= please.3PL these those shoes that wear.2SG
'How I like these/those shoes of yours (you're wearing)!'

d Quanto mi garbano queste / codeste scarpe (che porti)! (Tsc.)
how.much me= please.3PL these those shoes that wear.2SG
'How I like these/those shoes of yours (you're wearing)!'

As illustrated in detail in Ledgeway (2004; 2015b; 2020a) and Ledgeway and Smith (2016), the fundamental deictic contrast in Tuscan therefore involves a binary opposition between *questo* [–3 person] and *quello* [+3 person], inasmuch as the unmarked addressee-oriented demonstrative is *questo*. The competing *codesto* form, by contrast, constitutes a marked variant restricted to contexts (e.g., ambiguity, contrast) where particular attention has to be drawn to the addressee alone, hence its relatively low frequency in both speech and writing (cf. Fornaciari 1881:74; Brodin 1970:75; Ledgeway 2004:68f.). Consequently, the formal and organizational differences of the modern Italian and Tuscan demonstrative systems are quite considerable (cf. Table 1.7): not only does Tuscan present a third term today absent from all but the most formal registers of the standard language, but the similarity between the *questo/quello* dyad is only apparent with each of the terms encoding distinct featural oppositions in the two varieties (viz. [±speaker] vs [±3 person]).

Table 1.7 Italian and Tuscan demonstrative systems

	discourse participants		non-discourse participants
	speaker	addressee	
Italian	*questo*		*quello*
Tuscan	*questo*		*quello*
		(*codesto*)	

Although modern Italian displays a binary demonstrative system, the same cannot be said of the organization of the spatio-personal adverbs which present a ternary system based partly on person and partly on distance distinctions. The basic person-oriented distinction contrasts a location within the speaker's deictic domain marked by *qui/qua* 'here' and those that fall outside marked by *lì/là* 'there' (19a). At the same time, these pairs can be further distinguished in terms of a punctual vs non-punctual opposition (Vanelli 1981; 2001b:70f.; Benedetti and Ricca 2002:21), with forms in *-ì* and those in *-à* indicating precisely defined and generic locations, respectively (19b). This fundamental person-based distinction is, however, blended with a further distance-based distinction in the case of the *lì/là* dyad (Benedetti and Ricca 2002:21, 26f.): *lì* represents a medial term referencing a location closer to the speaker's deictic domain—possibly, but not necessarily, including that of the addressee (termed the 'reference area' in Benedetti and Ricca 2002: 22f.)—than that singled out by *là* (19c).

19 a Dorme qui / qua? —No, dorme lì/là. (It.)
sleep.3SG here no sleep.3SG there
'Does s/he sleep here?—No, s/he sleeps there.'

b proprio qui/ **qua (It.)
precisely here here
'right here'

c Mettiamoci lì; anzi, forse è meglio là. (It.)
put.IMP.1PL=us there rather perhaps be.3SG better there
'Let's sit down there; or perhaps it's better over there.' (Benedetti and Ricca 2022:26)

Tuscan varieties, by contrast, display a four-way split in the distribution of the spatial adverbs (Benedetti and Ricca 2002:27–29; cf. also Stavinschi 2009:52f.) combining a strict person-based distinction in the first two terms (Benedetti and Ricca 2002: 28n3), viz. *qui / qua* [+speaker] vs *costì / costà* [+addressee] characterized, in turn, by the usual punctual/non-punctual distinction (20), with a distance-based distinction identical to that found in Italian with the *lì / là* dyad (cf. 19c). In particular, *lì* constitutes once again the medial term referencing a location closer to the speaker's deictic domain—possibly, but not necessarily, including that of the addressee—than that picked out by the more remote *là* (Benedetti and Ricca 2002:21, 26f.).

20 Ma Mario è costà o è ancora da Angelo? Ieri m'
but Mario be.3SG there or be.3SG still at Angelo yesterday me=
aveva promesso che sarebbe passato qui dopo cena. (Tsc.)
have.PST.IPFV.3SG promise.PTCP that be.COND.3SG pass.PTCP here after dinner
'Is Mario there (at your place) or is he still at Angelo's? Yesterday he had promised me that he would come around here (to my place) after dinner.'

As summarized in Table 1.8, the formal and distributional differences in the Italian and Tuscan systems are once again quite considerable and certainly not to be underestimated (cf. Ledgeway 2015b; 2019b).

Table 1.8 Italian and Tuscan spatial adverb systems

	discourse participants		non-discourse participants
	speaker	addressee	
Italian	*qui /qua*	*lì*	*là*
Tuscan	*qui / qua*	*costì / costà*	*lì* *là*

Turning now to the D-system (articles and pronominals), here too there are some major structural differences which place Tuscan varieties on a par with northern Italian dialects and/or regional varieties of Italian rather than with Italian. For instance, Tuscan varieties, together with most northern varieties, employ the definite article with female first names, but not masculine first names (21a), whereas in Italian (and southern regional varieties) the article is invariably excluded in the same contexts (21b).

21 a **(La) Patrizia e (**il) Carlo si sono lasciati. (Tsc./NIt.)

b (**La) Patrizia e (**il) Carlo si sono lasciati. ((S)It.)
the Patrizia and the Carlo REFL= be.3PL leave.PTCP.MPL
'Patrizia and Carlo have split up.'

Pronominals also show some notable divergences. In Italian, clitic forms are limited to the object function, with the exception of 2SG *tu* 'you', which in Tuscan and northern regional varieties of Italian behaves to all intents and purposes as a subject clitic in that it is excluded from root contexts, where it is replaced by the erstwhile tonic object pronoun *te* (22a), appearing only and obligatorily in subjunctive clauses (22b) where singular person marking is completely/partially neutralized in the present/imperfect subjunctive (cf. Table 1.5).

22 a Vieni anche tu / te? ((S)It. / Tsc./NIt.)
come.2SG also you.NOM you.OBL
'Are you coming as well?'

b Si aspettano che tu ti lavi subito. ((Tsc./S/N)It.)
REFL= wait.3PL that you.NOM you= wash.SBJV at.once
'They expect you to wash immediately.'

The paradigm of subject clitics is, however, much richer in Florentine and other northern Tuscan varieties which, on a par with northern Italian dialects (Pescarini 2016:745–748; Poletto and Tortora 2016), present a (partial) series of subject clitics found in both root and embedded contexts (Brandi and Cordin 1981; 1989). This can be clearly appreciated in Table 1.9 where we contrast the present indicative paradigm of the verb *dormire* 'sleep' in Italian with its counterparts in Florentine and the more northerly Tuscan dialect of Carrara where we see that the subject clitics of these latter Tuscan varieties find no parallel whatsoever in Italian.

Table 1.9 Present indicative paradigm of the verb sleep in Italian, Florentine, and Carrarese

	Italian	Florentine	Carrarese
1SG	*dormo*	*(e) dormo*	a ˈdɔrmi
2SG	*dormi*	*tu dormi*	tə ˈdɔrmə
3M/FSG	*dorme*	*e/la dorme*	i/al ˈdɔrmə
1PL	*dormiamo*	*e si dorme*	a durˈmiŋ
2PL	*dormite*	*vu dormite*	durˈmitə
3M/FPL	*dormono*	*e/le dormano*	i/al ˈdɔrmənə

Although Italian does not have subject clitics, it does present in the third person a series of weak subject pronouns which are not found in Tuscan (Cardinaletti and Starke 1999; Cardinaletti 2021), especially as some of the relevant forms are those which precisely developed into subject clitics in northern Tuscany (cf. It. *egli* 'he' vs Tsc. *e* [+C]/*'gli* [+V] 'SCL.MSG', It. *ella* 'she' vs *la* [+C]/*l'* [+V] 'SCL.FSG'). Consequently, in addition to null (viz. pro) and tonic subject forms (*lui/lei* 'he, him/she, her'), Italian also presents a restricted set of third-person weak pronouns *egli/ella* (M/FSG), *esso/essa* (M/FSG), and *essi/esse* (M/FPL), the latter *ess-* forms typically reserved for inanimate reference. Today these forms are generally limited to very formal and/or written styles which, unlike their tonic counterparts, only occur in pre-verbal position (23a) and, like clitics, are incompatible with modification (23b) and coordination (23c), and cannot occur in isolation (23d).

23 a Lui / egli parlò vs Parlò lui/ **egli. (It.)
he he speak.PST.PFV.3SG speak.PST.PFV.3SG he he
'He spoke / It was him who spoke.'

b Solo lui/ **egli parlò. (It.)
only he he speak.PST.PFV.3SG
'Only he spoke.'

c Lui / **Egli e Maria parlarono. (It.)
he he and Maria speak.PST.PFV.3PL
'He and Maria spoke.'

d Chi parlò? –Lui/ **Egli.
Who speak.PST.PFV.3SG he he
'Who spoke? – Him.'

In contrast to Italian, in Tuscan third-person subject-verb agreement is sensitive to syntactic configuration (Brandi and Cordin 1989), a pattern also often found in earlier stages of the literary

language (Rohlfs 2021c:20; cf. also §10.3.3). Whereas canonical pre-verbal subjects routinely control verb agreement, including an agreeing pre-verbal subject clitic in many Tuscan varieties (24a), default third-person singular agreement together with a non-agreeing pre-verbal subject clitic systematically obtains whenever the subject is post-verbal (24b) or moved to a left-peripheral focus position (24c). In Italian, by contrast, full agreement obtains in all cases (24a'–c'). This also explains why in Tuscan, unlike in Italian, the verb in passive *si* constructions fails to show agreement with the post-verbal UNDERGOER argument (25).

24 a Delle ragazze le hanno telefonato. (Flo.)

a' Delle ragazze hanno telefonato. (It.)
some girls SCL.3FPL= have.3PL phone.PTCP
'Some girls have been phoning.'

b Gli ha telefonato delle ragazze. (Flo.)
SCL.3= have.3SG phone.PTCP some girls

b' Hanno telefonato delle ragazze. (It.)
have.3PL phone.PTCP some girls
'Some girls have phoned here.'

c Quante ragazze gli ha telefonato? (Flo.)
how.many girls SCL.3= have.3SG phone.PTCP

c' Quante ragazze hanno telefonato? (It.)
how.many girls have.3PL phone.PTCP
'How many girls have phoned?'

25 Si prepara /preparano i dolci di Pasqua il giorno prima. (Tsc./It.)
REFL= prepare.3SG prepare.3PL the.MPL cakes of Easter the day before
'Easter cakes are prepared the day before.'

Past participle agreement with a preceding direct object clitic also shows some variation. In the standard, agreement is only obligatory in the third person (26a), and optional, though increasingly less frequent, in the other persons (26b). In Florentine, by contrast, agreement is systematic with all clitics (26c).

26 a La direttrice, l' hanno chiamat-a/**-o. (It.)
the.FSG manager.F her= have.3PL call.PTCP-FSG/-MSG
'As for the manager, they've rung her.'

b Ci hanno chiamat-o/-i/-e. (It.)
us= have.3PL call.PTCP-MSG/-MPL/-FPL

c C' hanno chiamat-i/-e. (Flo.)
us= have.3PL call.PTCP-MPL/-FPL
'They've rung us.'

We turn finally to subordination. In Italian infinitival subject and adjunct clauses are generally only possible when the implied subject is understood to be coreferential with an argument of the main clause (27a), but are excluded in cases of switch reference where the non-finite nature of the infinitival verb is traditionally claimed to be unable to license an independent subject (27b). In such cases a finite subjunctive clause must be used (27c). This is not however the case in Tuscan which, on a par with most dialects of Italy (Ledgeway 1998; 2000:ch. 4; 2023c; Mensching 2000), displays the so-called personal infinitive which licenses its own independent subject in post-verbal position (28a–b; Cresti 1994).

27 a Anna$_i$ entrò senza Ø$_i$ vedere i suoi genitori. (It.)
Anna enter.PST.PFV.3SG without see.INF the her parents
'Anna went in without seeing her parents.'

b** Anna$_i$ entrò senza vederla$_i$ i suoi genitori. (It.)
Anna enter.PST.PFV.3SG without see.INF=her the her parents

c Anna entrò senza che la vedessero i suoi genitori. (It.)
Anna enter.PST.PFV.3SG without that her= see.PST.SBJV.3PL the her parents
'Anna went in without her parents seeing her.'

28 a Li garbava più esse la donna civile pe tenè bottega. (Tsc.)
3.DAT= please.PST.IPFV.3SG more be.INF the lady polite for keep.INF shop
'He preferred that the polite lady should run the shop.'

b Pe un marcì i' grano, si pigliava un copertone. (Tsc.)
for NEG rot.INF the wheat REFL= take.PST.IPFV.3SG a blanket.AUG
'So that the wheat wouldn't rot, we would cover it with a large blanket'

1.4.3.4 Lexis

We turn finally to lexis. As already briefly noted in §1.4.1, although the vast majority of the lexical stock of Italian is shared with Tuscan on account of its Florentine roots (e.g., *campo* 'field', *vaso* 'vase', *piano* 'slowly', *vestire* 'to dress', *spingere* 'to push', *insieme* 'together'), there has been a notable de-Tuscanization of the lexis since at least the start of the twentieth century. This is the point when Italian progressively began to transition from the status of a predominantly literary and hence archaicizing written language, restricted to an educated élite, to a spoken language increasingly acquired and used by the masses alongside and in place of the traditional dialects. This adoption of Italian as a spoken language required Italians to find equivalents for everyday and often basic concepts where the archaicizing literary language either provided implausible solutions or none at all. A case in point is the term for LADLE for which the literary language did not provide an obvious answer, with Italians from different regions opting for Italianizations of the local dialect term, e.g., *mestolo* in Milan, *ramaiolo / romaiolo* in Florence, *cucchiaione* in Rome, and *coppino* throughout the south. Consequently, in most cases these gaps were, at least initially, filled by adaptations from the local dialects, giving rise to a truly spectacular number of geosynonyms which are still largely in use today (Rüegg 1956; cf. also §2.8, §25.3.5.8). For example, where Tuscans traditionally use such terms as *cocomero* 'watermelon', *grembio* 'apron', *cannella* 'tap', *ciuco* 'donkey', *accomodare* 'to fix, repair', *raccattare* 'to pick up', and *fare forca* 'to play truant', Italians from northern Italy use such terms as *anguria*, *scossale/bigarolo/traversa*, *rubinetto*, *asino*, *riparare*, *raccogliere*, and *bruciare/bucare/bigiare/tagliare/fare fughino*, and southern Italians such forms as *mel(l)one d'acqua* (lit. 'melon of water'), *paran(n)anza/mantile/mantesino/falari*, *fontana* (lit. 'fountain'), *ciuccio*, *aggiustare/acconciare*, *alzare*, and *fare filone/segare*. In other cases, however, Tuscan usage aligns with that of northern Italy, e.g., *susina* 'plum' (cf. (S)It. *prugna*), *brioche* 'croissant' (cf. (S)It. *cornetto*, as well as SrdIt. *pastina* which elsewhere means 'small pasta'), *cercare* 'to look for' (cf. SIt. *trovare*, which in the standard language only means 'to find'), *berretto* 'beret, cap' (cf. SIt. *coppola*), *testa* 'head' (cf. (S)It. *capo*), *giardino (pubblico)* 'park' (cf. SIt. *villa*, also 'detached house, villa' in standard Italian), and sometimes with southern usage, e.g., *forno* 'bakery' (lit. 'oven'; cf. (N)It. *panetteria*), *cacio* 'cheese' (cf. (N)It. *formaggio*), *spigola* 'sea bass' (cf. (N)It. *branzino*),[65] *soffitta* 'loft, attic' (cf. (N)It. *solaio*).

Where a standard term has emerged, or is beginning to emerge, among such geosynonyms, Italian by and large goes with northern usage in accordance with the general prestige associated with northern linguistic habits (cf. *mestolo* 'ladle' discussed above). Hence among the terms reviewed above, the standard form—or the nearest equivalent of a standard form—is usually the northern variant, irrespective of whether it aligns or not with Tuscan usage, e.g., *anguria*, *rubinetto*, *asino*, *riparare*, *raccogliere*, *cercare*, *berretto*, *testa*, *giardino (pubblico)*, *panetteria*, *formaggio*, *branzino*. As a consequence, distinctive Tuscan forms are today relegated to the status of mere regionalisms. In some cases these are widely known throughout Italy, as often happens with regionalisms from other parts of Italy (cf. Mil. *pirla* 'stupid', Vnt. *calle* 'street, alley', Laz. *abbiocco* 'tiredness', Nap. *scugnizzo* 'street urchin, rascal', Sic. *intrallazzo* 'money racket'), and therefore associated with typical Tuscan speech, making them prime targets for jocular imitation too, e.g., *babbo* 'dad' (cf. It. *papà*), *bischero* 'stupid, silly' (cf. It. *stupido*, *scemo*), *infreddatura* 'cold' (cf. It. *raffreddore*), *ganzo* 'funny; lover' (cf. It.

divertente; *amante*), *piccino* 'small' (cf. It. *piccolo*), *chetarsi* 'to shut up, fall silent' (cf. It. *stare zitto*), *garbare* 'to please' (cf. It. *piacere*), *Maremma!* 'Damn it!' (cf. It. *Accidenti!*). In many cases today such Tuscanisms often have the status of archaicisms outside of Tuscany, with which most Italians come into contact only through their reading of particular literary works promoted through the state education system, e.g., *cencio* 'rag, (dish)cloth, tea towel' (cf. modIt. *strofinaccio*), *rena* 'sand' (cf. modIt. *sabbia*), *guazza* 'dew' (cf. modIt. *rugiada*), *mota* 'mud' (cf. modIt. *fango*), *gota* 'cheek' (cf. modIt. *guancia*), *partire* 'to divide, share' (cf. modIt. *(con)dividere*), *granata* 'broom' (cf. It. *scopa*), *balocco* 'toy' (cf. modIt. *giocattolo*).

In other cases, by contrast, the relevant forms are unknown outside Tuscany or central Italy and are not part of even the passive knowledge of most Italians, e.g., *petonciano/-a* 'aubergine' (cf. It. *melanzana*), *il toni* '(the) tracksuit' (cf. It. *tuta (sportiva)*), *gli scantillì* '(the) wellington boots' (cf. It. *stivali di gomma*), *il tocco* '1 o'clock' (cf. It. *l'una*), *sguillare* 'to slip' (cf. It. *scivolare*), *bubare* 'to mutter, whine' (cf. It. *mormorare*, *brontolare*), *accicciarsi* 'to hurt oneself' (cf. It. *farsi male*).

Alongside these geosynonyms, another significant area of lexical variation comes from geohomonyms (cf. also §25.3.5.8) which involve lexemes that are found in standard Italian, but which are used with distinct meanings in different parts of Italy. In the examples of geosynonyms above we have already observed some cases, including the southern uses of *alzare* and *trovare* with the meaning of 'to pick up' and 'to look for' but which in standard Italian mean 'to raise, get up' and 'to find', respectively, and the northern use of *bruciare*, *bucare*, or *tagliare* in the sense of 'to play truant' which in standard Italian mean 'to burn', 'to pierce, puncture', and 'to cut', respectively. Tuscan too offers many similar cases where the meaning of a given term in current Tuscan usage deviates considerably from that established in the standard language (cf. *poi* in 1 above). Among many such cases we can recall here *zenzer(in)o* 'chilli pepper' (vs It. 'ginger', cf. *peperoncino* 'chilli'), *anno* 'last year' (vs It. 'year', cf. *lo scorso anno* lit. '(the) last year'), *anello* 'thimble' (vs It. 'ring', cf. *ditale* 'thimble'), *sciocco* 'unsalted' (vs It. 'stupid', cf. *insipido/senza sale* 'unsalted/without salt'), *corteccia* 'crust, rind' (vs It. 'bark (of tree)', cf. *crosta/buccia* 'crust/rind'), *appalto* 'tobacconist's' (vs It. 'contract', cf. *tabacchino/tabaccheria/tabaccaio* 'tobacconist's'), *albero* 'poplar' (vs It. 'tree', cf. *pioppo* 'poplar'), *riscontro* 'draught' (vs It. 'comparison, confirmation', cf. *corrente (d'aria)* 'draught'), *arrivare* 'to take, pass' (vs It. 'to arrive', cf. *prendere/passare* 'to take, pass'), *desinare* 'to have lunch' (vs It. 'to have dinner', cf. *pranzare* 'to have lunch').

1.4.4 Conclusion

The preceding discussion has shown that despite some unmistakable shared lexical, and above all, phonological and morphological features due to the Florentine roots of the national language, the differences between Italian and Tuscan today are quite considerable at all levels of analysis. Consequently, Tuscan usage cannot be equated *tout court* with standard Italian. Rather, Tuscan vernacular usage is just as diatopically marked as the informal use of Italian in all other regions of Italy. As a spoken language, Italian today displays remarkable elasticity and polymorphism at all levels of analysis, as the original model of the literary language has adapted to the many diverse local phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical habits of the individual regions. It is therefore perfectly natural, and should come as no surprise, to learn that the use of Italian in Tuscany, as in all other regions of Italy, is diatopically marked. Indeed, as Crocco's (2017) article 'Everyone has an accent' reminds us, authentic spoken Italian always betrays the provenance of the speaker, albeit to different degrees in accordance with various sociolinguistic variables, but not just in terms of phonology and accent but also in terms of syntax, lexis, and, to a lesser extent, morphology.

1.5 Italian vs other languages

We turn finally to the question of whether, from a typological and comparative perspective, the distinctive linguistic features of Italian can in any sense be considered peculiar or exceptional to this language. This question can be answered on at least two levels: at the macroscopic level in terms of a wider typological comparison with other language families from Indo-European and beyond, and also at

a more microscopic level in relation to other (Italo-)Romance languages and varieties. We begin with the former perspective before considering Italian and its position among the Romance languages.

1.5.1 Italian as an exemplar of Standard Average European

Since Whorf's (1941) seminal insight that many of the core languages of Europe belonging to the Romance, Germanic, Balto-Slavic, and, to a lesser extent, Finno-Ugric families are significantly more similar to one another structurally than languages in general tend to be, it has been proposed that these languages form a single linguistic area, a so-called Standard Average European (SAE) *Sprachbund*. This captures the fact that the three branches of Indo-European—Romance, Germanic, and Balto-Slavic—that represent the core languages of this area are in many ways *peculiar* or indeed even 'exotic' (cf. Dahl 1990; Haspelmath 2001:1492), although they do not form a recognized genealogical grouping of Indo-European, and the relevant distinguishing features are not retentions from proto-Indo-European but, rather, appear to be shared innovations produced by historical and continuing language contact (Haspelmath 1998; 2001:1056f.). This idea has been further developed by Van der Auwera (1998b:824f.; cf. also 2011:297) who proposes a *Charlemagne Sprachbund* to refer to a group of languages spoken in western Europe, with French, German, and Dutch at its core, that sit at the centre of the SAE linguistic area. On this view, the remarkable structural similarities observed among these languages cannot be ascribed simply to genetic relatedness or to chance, but must be due to convergence through language contact as languages spoken in the central area that fell under the rule of Charlemagne (cf. also Drinka 2017:ch. 7).

Rather than constituting a discrete concept, SAE is usually treated as a scalar notion since not all features are consistently found across all languages. Haspelmath (2001:1493), for instance, distinguishes a 'nucleus' (cf. Van der Auwera's *Charlemagne Sprachbund*) made up of West Germanic (German, Dutch) and Gallo-Romance (French, Occitan, northern Italo-Romance) surrounded by a 'core' made up of the other Romance languages (including Italian), English, insular Scandinavian, Slavic, and Baltic, whereas the non-Indo-European languages Hungarian and Balto-Finnic are relegated to the 'periphery'. By contrast, other Indo-European languages and families (Celtic, Armenian, and Indo-Iranian) are not considered to be part of the SAE *Sprachbund*. These conclusions are standardly arrived at through a comparison of a number of core morphosyntactic features, so-called Europeanisms (or 'euroversals'), across the languages of Europe (cf. Dahl 1990; Haspelmath 1998; 2001; Van der Auwera 2011).[66] The twelve core features identified by Haspelmath (2001:1493–1501) are presented in Table 1.10 with a comparison of their distribution in German and French, part of the SAE nucleus, and in Italian, part of the SAE wider core.

Table 1.10 Core morphosyntactic features of SAE compared across German, French, and Italian

	German	French	Italian
Definite and indefinite articles	+	+	+
Post-nominal relative clauses with inflecting relative pronouns	+	+	+
HAVE-perfect	+	+	+
Nominative experiencers	+	+	+
Participial passives	+	+	+
Anticausative prominence	+	+	+
Dative external possessors	+	+	+
Negative pronouns and lack of verbal negation	+	+	+
Particles in comparative constructions	+	+	+

	German	French	Italian
Relative-based equative constructions	+	+	+
Subject person affixes as strict agreement markers	+	+	–
Intensifier-reflexive differentiation	+	+	+

Although some of the features presented in Table 1.10 (e.g., i, iii, vi–vii, ix–xii) prove relatively straightforward, others require some further qualification, especially for Italian. For instance, while feature (ii) correctly identifies Italian as a language with post-nominal relative clauses and a distinct class of inflecting relative pronouns (29a), this broad-brush generalization conceals the fact that such pronouns are extremely rare in all but the most formal, and typically written, registers of the language, and indeed are considered by some a learnèd construction (cf. also Haspelmath 2001:1507), an argument also valid for French and the other Romance languages more generally (cf. Ramat and Ricca 2016:52). The unmarked relative construction in Italian, at least for subject and object relatives, employs the finite complementizer *che* 'that' (29b), a possibility also acknowledged by Haspelmath (2001:1494f.), and in relaxed spoken registers involves all types of antecedent in the so-called weak relative construction with resumptive pronoun (29c; cf. Fiorentino 1999; Stark 2016:1038–1040).

29 Me l' ha detto una signora,
me= it= have.3SG say.PTCP a lady

a ...la quale ho conosciuto ieri. (formal It.)
the.FSG which.SG have.1SG know.PTCP yesterday

b ...che ho conosciuto ieri. (It.)
that have.1SG know.PTCP yesterday

c ...che l' ho conosciuta ieri. (colloquial It.)
that her= have.1SG know.PTCP.FSG yesterday

'I was told it by a lady who I met yesterday.'

The risk of distorting linguistic reality in this way is not limited to relatives but also affects features (iv) and (v). While it is indeed true that Italian displays both nominative marked EXPERIENCERS (30a) and participial passives (31a), these do not constitute by any stretch of the imagination the unmarked or default option in Italian. Following the seminal work of Belletti and Rizzi (1988), psych-predicates in Italian, as in most Romance varieties with the notable exception of French, prototypically realize EXPERIENCERS as accusatives (30b) or datives (30c). By the same token, participial passives, while relatively frequent in formal and especially written registers, are otherwise typically avoided—again French patterns with Italian in this respect (Ledgeway 2021b)—and replaced by active structures such as clitic left-dislocation (31b) or the reflexive passive *si* construction (31c).

30 a Egli teme molto l' idea.
he.NOM fear.3SG much the idea

'He greatly fears the idea.'

b Lo preoccupa / incuriosisce / affascina molto l' idea.
him.ACC= worry.3SG intrigue.3SG fascinate.3SG much the idea

'He's very worried/intrigued/fascinated by the idea.'

c Gli piace / importa / interessa molto l' idea.
him.ACC= please.3SG matter.3SG interest.3SG much the idea

'He very much likes/is bothered by/is interested in the idea.'

31 a La tavola è stata apparecchiata per la festa da suo zio.
the table be.3SG be.PTCP prepare.PTCP for the party by her uncle

b La tavola, l' ha apparecchiata per la festa suo zio.
the table it= have.3SG prepare.PTCP for the party her uncle

c Si è apparecchiata la tavola per la festa.
REFL= be.3SG prepare.PTCP the table for the party

'The table was laid for the celebration (by her uncle).'

The risk then in the case of features (ii), (iv), and (v) is to present a picture of Italian which, though technically correct at some level of analysis, conflates, and underplays the significance of, different registers, styles, and sociolinguistic uses of the language at the expense of accuracy and consistency. In short, the representation in Table 1.10 combines prominent features of the relevant languages, in some cases even explicitly labelled as such (cf. feature vi), with others which are undoubtedly less prominent and at best only marginally present in the language alongside the default option. A similar problem arises in relation to feature (viii): while the modern language fails to display so-called strict concord in that the preposing of a negative polarity item does not license a pre-verbal *non* (32a), this was not the case in earlier stages of the language (32b; Rohlfs 2021c:278; Zanuttini 2010:574; Rati 2020:267f.; cf. also §10.1). This raises the question of whether the features of SAE are to be established and assessed uniquely against the modern (standard) varieties and, if so, how earlier stages of the language, which may also show innovative features, are to be treated. On this question Haspelmath (2001:1506f.) speculates that the majority of the features of SAE must have arisen under contact during the transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages (cf. Ramat and Ricca 2016:52), although we see in this particular case that the relevant feature, a reversal in the negative concord parameter, emerged later in the history of Italian. Conversely, French, which, together with German, is taken to be a key exemplar of SAE, is considered by Haspelmath (2001:1498) to present the relevant feature, although the standard language displays strict negative concord (33a). The decision to treat French as a regular exponent of SAE in relation to (viii) is based on the questionable assumption that *ne* can be discarded. Indeed, in the colloquial spoken language pre-verbal *ne* is frequently omitted (33b), but this produces an inconsistent mixing of registers and lects in our understanding of French in Table 1.10 (cf. also Van der Auwera 2011:301–303): feature (ii), for example, relates to the use of inflecting relative pronouns such as *lequel* (cf. It. *il quale*) in higher register written French (cf. also participial passives), whereas feature (viii) excludes that very same register, making reference instead to colloquial spoken varieties of French.

32 a Mai (**non) la batterò. (modIt.)

b mai non la batterò (OIt., *Dec.* III.8.55)
never NEG her= beat.FUT.1SG
'never will I beat her.'

33 a Personne **(ne) fume. (Fr.)
b Personne fume. (colloquial Fr.)
nobody NEG smoke.3SG
'Nobody is smoking.'

In short, if the picture sketched in Table 1.10 is genuinely indicative of a case of areal convergence, then some of the feature values cannot be taken at simple face value but, rather, require a more nuanced and fluid interpretation to take account of often not insignificant diachronic, diatopic, diamesic, and diastratic variation. With that proviso in mind, we tentatively conclude that, with the exception of pro-drop (feature xi.), Italian arguably comes very close to a textbook example of SAE. Indeed, not only does it present eleven of Haspelmath's twelve core features, but it also displays thirteen out of fourteen further features characteristic of European languages but which are also found elsewhere (Haspelmath 2001:1501–1504): (residual) synthetic marking of the comparative (cf. *maggiore* 'bigger'), A and-B coordination (cf. *A e/o B* 'A and/or B'), comitative-instrumental syncretism (cf. *con Anna/un martello* 'with Anna/a hammer'), suppletive second ordinal (cf. *secondo* 'second' vs *due* 'two'), SVO word order (cf. *Il cuoco prepara la salsa* 'The chef prepares the sauce'), a single 'converb', the so-called gerund (cf. *Il cuoco sta preparando la salsa* 'The chef is preparing the sauce'), specialized negative coordinator (cf. *né* 'nor'), a vast range of 'phasal' (viz. aspectual) adverbs (cf. *già* 'already', *ancora* 'still', *sempre* 'always', *non . . . più* 'no longer'; Van der Auwera 1998b; 2011:292–299), evidence of aoristic drift (cf. (N)It. *È morto due secoli fa* vs (C-S)It. *Morì due secoli fa* 'He died two centuries ago'), and the absence of a series of features which are otherwise common in the languages of other areas of the world including an alienable/inalienable opposition in adnominal possession (cf. *la sua testa/teoria* lit. 'the her head/theory'),[67] an inclusive/exclusive opposition in first person plural pronouns (cf. *noi* 'we' vs *io e te* 'I and you'), reduplicating constructions,[68] and topic/focus particles. In sum, from a cross-linguistic perspective there does not appear to be anything particularly special or exotic about Italian. Rather, Italian turns out to be a run-of-the-mill European variety, at least in terms of the overarching macro properties standardly employed in the definition of SAE.

1.5.2 Italian among the Romance languages

1.5.2.1 Introduction

While Italian might not particularly stand out among the languages of Europe, at a more local level it does arguably present a number of features that serve to single it out among the Romance family (cf. Bossong 2016:67). Admittedly, Italian lacks the numerous typological and structural exoticisms that so spectacularly characterize the dialects of Italy and make them such a fruitful area of study, but as a core exponent of the Italo-Romance sub-branch it may be argued to exemplify a distinctive structural 'type' among the standard Romance languages at all levels of analysis. Furthermore, we cannot underestimate the significant role that Italian evidence has played, and continues to play, in shaping and refining our understanding of the development of Romance and in testing and modelling theories of linguistic structure, variation, and change (cf. Ledgeway and Maiden 2022b).

1.5.2.2 Phonology

We begin our discussion with phonology. As a language whose origins lie below the La Spezia–Rimini isogloss (see §1.2), Italian is unique among the Romance languages in preserving Latin consonantal length distinctions (cf. *rupe* 'rock' vs *ruppe* 's/he broke'), a feature which otherwise proves extremely rare in Europe (but cf. Finnish, Swiss German). This does not only involve the retention of inherited length distinctions (34a) but also the historical creation of new long consonants variously arising as a result of a following syllable-initial approximant (34b) and intra-word (34c) or inter-word (34d) assimilations.

34 a UACCA(M) 'cow' > It. *vacca* vs Cat./Pt./Sp. *vaca*, Fr. *vaca* > *vache*, Ro. *vacă*

b (H)ABUI ['ab-wi] 'have.PST.PFV.1SG' > It. *ebbi*, (H)ABEA(M) ['ab-ja] 'have.PRS.SBJV.1SG' > It. *abbia*

c NOCTE(M) 'night' > It. *notte* (cf. Cat. *nit*, Fr. *nuit* [nɥi], Pt. *noite*, Ro. *noapte*, Sp. *noche*)

d ECCU-SIC 'so' + TENERU(M) 'tender' [ek:ʊ'sik 'tɛnerʊ] > It. *così tenero* [ko'si 't:ɛnero]

In short, Italian exemplifies an unmistakable tendency towards fortition in stark contrast to the largely leniting tendencies of the other Romance languages (cf. FORMICA(M) 'ant' > Cat./Pt. *formiga*, Fr. *fourmi* (k > g > ɣ > Ø), Sp. *hormiga* vs It. *formica*), albeit with the partial exception of Romanian which preserves voiceless intervocalic obstruents (cf. *furnică*) but displays degemination (cf. *vacă*).

1.5.2.3 Morphology

Italian also stands out among its sister languages in relation to a series of morphological features. In the nominal domain, Italian shares with Romanian the vocalization of the original (accusative) plural marker -s > -[i̯], which gives rise to vocalic plurals in Italian (Maiden 1996b; 2000a; 2016d:698–700), e.g., CASAS 'huts > houses' > *ˈkasai̯ > *cas-e*, CANES 'dogs' > *ˈkanei̯ > *cani*, a feature shared with Romanian in the former case (cf. *case*), although, at least today, asyllabic *-i* is usually [ʲ] (cf. *câini* [ˈkiɨ̯nʲ]). Elsewhere in Romance final -s is retained (cf. Cat. *cases*, FLORES 'flowers' > *flors*, Pt./Sp. *casas*, *flores*), though not in modern French where it is today merely orthographic except in cases of *liaison*, e.g., PORTAS 'gates' > 'doors' > Fr. *portes* [pɔʁt], *fleurs* [flœʁ]. There thus emerges a significant typological difference between the sigmatic plurals of the western Romance languages and the vocalic plurals of Italian and Romanian. The former show the frequent cross-linguistic pattern of plural formation derived through adjunction of a plural formant to an unmarked singular base, e.g., Cat. *casa/flor* [ˈkazə/ˈflɔ] 'house/flower' + *-s* 'PL' ⇒ *cases/flors* [ˈkazəs/ˈflɔs]. In Italian and partly in Romanian (for the characteristics of Romanian plural formation, see, e.g., Maiden 2016d; Maiden et al. 2021:37–53) both singular and plural are marked forms expressed by an alternation in the desinence appearing on a common lexical root, e.g., It. *cas-/fior* [ˈkas-/ˈfjor-] + *-a/-e* (SG), *-e/-i* (PL) ⇒ *casa/fiore* [ˈkasa/ˈfjore], *case/fiori* [ˈkase/ˈfjori]. Consequently, whereas in most Romance languages there is a transparent and predictable formal relationship between the singular and the plural, in Italian (and partly also in Romanian) number is primarily marked through an alternation of the vocalic desinence on the nominal/adjectival root. Furthermore, in the masculine this regularly produces morphophonological alternations in the root between a velar-final singular and a palatal-final plural in proparoxytones, e.g., *cattolico/-ci* [kaˈtːɔliko/-ʧi] 'Catholic/-s', *astrologo/-gi* [asˈtrɔlogo/-ʤi] 'astrologer/-s' (cf. Sp. *cátolico(s)*, *astrólogo(s)*), but not in paroxytones where the velar is generally maintained, e.g., *cuoco/-chi* [ˈkwɔko/-ki] 'cook/-s', *largo/-ghi* [ˈlargo/-gi] 'wide.SG/PL' (cf. §9.4.3).

Traces of the Latin neuter plural -A, e.g., OUA 'eggs' (NPL) > It. *uova* (FPL), persist in all Romance languages (cf. OUA > Sp. *hueva* 'roe' (FSG)). However, only in Daco-Romance and Italo-Romance, and therefore Italian, is it a plural marker, reanalysed as a marker of feminine gender because of the ending's formal identity to originally first declension feminine singular -A(M), e.g., FILIA(M) 'daughter'. Although remaining restricted to inanimates, in these varieties *-a* (/> *-e*) also expanded analogically beyond originally neuter nouns (for detailed discussion, see Maiden 2016d:700f.), e.g., It. *mura* 'city walls' (cf. Lat. MURI (MPL)). The fact that it has feminine gender entrains a typologically unusual effect, known as *genus alternans* or 'alternating gender': the opposition of gender becomes also one of number, so that feminine plurals stand in opposition to masculine singulars (cf. *uovo* 'egg', *muro* 'wall'). In contrast to Romanian where reflexes of -A came to occupy significant portions of the lexicon, in modern Italian the historical remnants of feminine plural -A persist in a couple of dozen items, usually but not always alongside morphologically 'regular' masculine plurals, e.g., MSG *braccio* 'arm' vs FPL *braccia*, MPL *bracci*, MSG *corno* 'horn' vs FPL *corna*, MPL *corni*, MSG *dito* 'finger' vs FPL *dita*, MPL *diti*, but also MSG *uovo* 'egg', *strido* 'shriek', *miglio* 'mile' vs FPL *uova*, *strida*, *miglia* (see Acquaviva 2008:126f.; Thornton 2013:424–426).[69] Where there is also a 'regular', masculine, plural available, the feminine in *-a* tends to denote the 'pair' or 'set' (for example, of body parts), while the masculine plural in *-i* expresses other 'figurative' or 'non-set' senses (see Thornton 2013). However this may be, it is clear that sporadic survival of *genus alternans* plurals in Italian complicates the analysis of noun morphology in ways unmatched in other Romance languages such as Romanian where *genus alternans* remains strong and productive. Their existence in Italian also introduces semantic oppositions such as collective plurals which are not formally marked in the other Romance languages. For further discussion, see §9.4.5.

The pronouns also show some morphological peculiarities. The most striking of these is the existence of a class of 'weak' pronouns in specific third person forms. As already noted in §1.4.2.2, alongside clitic *gli* (35a) and tonic *loro* (35b) the third person plural indirect object can also be marked, especially in higher registers, by the weak pronoun *loro* (35c). The latter constitutes in some sense a morphosyntactic compromise between the latter two forms coupled with some properties of its own (cf. Cardinaletti 1991): unlike clitics it is bisyllabic and never occurs in pre-verbal position but unlike tonic pronouns it cannot be stressed, whilst at the same time sharing with clitics the property of not being able to occur in the surface argument positions occupied by lexical NPs. Rather, weak *loro* displays the peculiar behaviour of having to occur after at least one verb (whether finite or non-finite).

35 a Gli volle spiegare il problema.
3.DAT= want.PST.PFV.3SG explain.INF the problem

b Volle spiegare a loro il problema.
want.PST.PFV.3SG explain to them the problem

c (**Loro) Volle (loro) spiegare (loro) il problema.
them.DAT want.PST.PFV.3SG them.DAT explain.INF them.DAT the problem
'He wanted to explain to them the problem.'

Similarly, we saw in §1.4.2.3 that in subject function Italian once again shows, in higher registers at least, a ternary split in the third-person pronouns between a null pronoun (viz. *pro*), a weak pronoun, e.g., *egli* 'he', and a tonic pronoun, e.g., *lui* 'he' (cf. 23a–d). Significantly, there is nothing comparable to these three-way splits in the pronominal systems of the other Romance languages. In object function the other languages show a binary split between clitic and tonic pronouns (e.g., Ro. *îi* 'to him/her=' vs *lui/ei* 'to him/her'), and in subject function a binary split between a clitic and tonic series (e.g., Fr. *il* '(=)he(=)' vs *lui* 'he') or between a phonologically null and tonic series (e.g., EuPt. Ø vs *ele* 'he').

The morphology of the Italian verb is also of particular note since, in contrast to most other Romance languages, it has retained—and indeed extended in some cases—a remarkable amount of allomorphy in the preterite (and related forms sharing the *perfectum* stem) which has been either drastically reduced or eliminated in the other standard Romance languages over the centuries (for detailed discussion, see Maiden 2018a:44–48). For example, excluding compounds, modern Spanish counts in the preterite just seventeen 'strong' (or rhizotonic) stems, e.g., *andar* (*anduv-*) 'walk', *caber* (*cup-*) 'fit', *dar* (*di-*) 'give', *decir* (*dij-*) 'say', *-ducir* (*-duj-*) 'lead', *estar* (*estuv-*) 'be', *hacer* (*hiz-*) 'do, make', *haber* (*hub-*) 'have', *poder* (*pud-*) 'can', *ser/ir* (*fu-*) 'be/go', *poner* (*pus-*) 'put', *querer* (*quis-*) 'want; love', *saber* (*sup-*) 'know', *tener* (*tuv-*) 'have, possess', *traer* (*traj-*) 'bring', *venir* (*vin-*) 'come', *ver* (*vi-*) 'see', having lost and regularized most of the original inherited strong perfective stems, e.g., OSp. 3SG *conquise* 'conquered', *coxo* 'cooked', *destruxo* 'destroyed', *fuxo* 'fled', *mise* 'put, inserted', *priso* 'took, arrested', *riso* 'laughed' (cf. modSp. *conquistó*, *coció*, *destruyó*, *huyó*, *metí*, *prendió*, *rió*). Similar distributions are found in the other Romance languages. By contrast, Italian boasts to this day a large number of strong perfect stems that show no signs of diminishing, despite a small number of cases of alternation between

inherited strong and innovative weak forms (e.g., 3SG *perse* vs *perdé/perdette* ‘lost’, participle *perso* vs *perduto*). Thus, not only does Italian share most of the irregular preterite forms of modern Spanish (e.g., *died-* (/*dett-*), *diss-*, *-duss-*, *stett-*, *fec-*, *ebb-*, *f-*, *pos-*, *sepp-*, *tenn-*, *-trass-*, *venn-*, *vid-*), and most of those attested in old Spanish (e.g., *coss-*, *distruss-*, *scriss-*, *mis-* (/*mess-*), *pres-*, *ris-*), but it also presents numerous other cases in that most verbs of the second conjugation have strong preterites, e.g., *bere* ‘drink’: *bevv-*, *chiudere* ‘close’: *chius-*, *conoscere* ‘know’: *conobb-*, *correre* ‘run’: *cors-*, *crescere* ‘grow’: *crebb-*, *difendere* ‘defend’: *difes-*, *fingere* ‘feign’: *fins-*, *friggere* ‘fry’: *friss-*, *giungere* ‘reach, arrive’: *giuns-*, *leggere* ‘read’: *less-*, *mordere* ‘bite’: *mors-*, *nascere* ‘be born’: *nacqu-*, *piacere* ‘please’: *piacqu-*, *piangere* ‘cry’: *pians-*, *perdere* ‘lose’: *pers-*, *proteggere* ‘protect’: *protess-*, *reggere* ‘bear, support’: *ress-*, *rimanere* ‘remain, stay’: *rimas-*, *rompere* ‘break’: *rupp-*, *spendere* ‘spend’: *spes-*, *spingere* ‘push’: *spins-*, *tendere* ‘tighten, extend’: *tes-*, *togliere* ‘remove’: *tols-*, *ungere* ‘grease, oil’: *uns-*, *volere* ‘want’: *voll-*.

Italian strong preterites also exhibit another unusual feature, unparalleled in the strong preterites of other standard Romance languages, in that they alternate with the weak arrhizotonic stem in specific persons of the paradigm (Maiden 2000c; 2018b). In particular, the strong perfective stem (e.g., *diss-* < DICERE ‘say’) is restricted to the first and third persons singular and the third person plural, e.g., *dissi* (1SG), *disse* (3SG), *dissero* (3PL), with the regular, weak stem (cf. *dic-* [dɪʧ]) occurring in all remaining persons, e.g., *dicesti* (2SG), *dicemmo* (1PL), and *diceste* (2PL). The other Romance languages, by contrast, retain the strong perfective stem throughout the paradigm of the preterite,[70] e.g., Cat. *diguí*, *digueres*, *digué*, *diguérem*, *diguéreu*, *digueren*; Fr. *dis*, *dis*, *dit*, *dîmes*, *dîtes*, *dirent*; Pt. *disse*, *dissestes*, *disse*, *dissemos*, *dissestes*, *disseram*; Ro. *zisei*, *ziseşi*, *zise*, *ziserăm*, *ziserăţi*, *ziseră*; Sp. *dije*, *dijiste*, *dijo*, *dijimos*, *dijisteis*, *dijeron*. Morphomic distributions of the strong and weak preterite stems represent one of the hallmarks of Italian verb morphology.

As already observed in §1.4.2.2, the morphological form of the Italian conditional not only stands out among most, though not, all of the dialects of Italy but also in relation to the other standard Romance languages. With the exception of modern Romanian which has a periphrastic conditional, e.g., *ar cânta* ‘AUX.COND.3SG sing.INF (= s/he would sing)’, the other Romance languages present a synthetic conditional originally built on a deontic periphrasis consisting of the infinitive followed by the past imperfective of HABERE ‘have’, e.g., CANTARE ‘sing.INF’ + HABEBAT ‘have.PST.IPFV.3SG’ > Cat./Pt. *cantaria*, Fr. *chanterait*, Sp. *cantaría* ‘s/he would sing’. Quite exceptionally, however, Italian displays a unique variant of this synthetic form of the conditional that historically incorporates a weakened form of the preterite of HABERE, e.g., CANTARE ‘sing.INF’ + HABUIT ‘have.PST.PFV.3SG’ > It. *canterebbe*.

1.5.2.4 Syntax

The form of the Italian conditional also highlights a distinctive feature of the syntax of Italian that was briefly noted above in §1.4.1 (cf. 2a–b). In particular, modern Italian marks a formal distinction between the conditional in its core modal (viz. irrealis) functions and its uses as a future-in-the-past (cf. Maiden 1996a). In the former case Italian (36a), in line with the other standard Romance languages (36b), employs the simple synthetic form of the conditional. However, in the latter future-in-the-past function Italian employs the ostensibly perfective analytic form of the conditional (37a), whereas all other Romance varieties continue to use the simple synthetic form (37b).[71] As a result, Italian is unique among the Romance languages in neutralizing the modal-temporal distinction between the present and past counterfactual interpretations canonically associated with the synthetic and analytic forms of the conditional in its future-in-the-past functions in the other Romance languages (38a–b).

36 a Pagherei la cena se avessi abbastanza soldi. (It.)

b Je payerais le dîner si j'avais assez d' argent. (Fr.)
I pay.COND.1SG the dinner if I have.PST.SBJV./IPFV.1SG enough of money

'I'd pay for the dinner if I had enough money.'

37 a Ha detto che avrebbe pagato / **pagherebbe la cena. (It.)
have.3SG say.PTCP that have.COND.3SG pay.PTCP pay.COND.3SG the dinner

b Il a dit qu' il payerait le dîner. (Fr.)
he have.3SG say.PTCP that he pay.COND.3SG the dinner

'He said that he would pay for the dinner.'

38 a Hai promesso che mi avresti chiamato. (It.)
have.2SG promise.PTCP that me= have.COND.2SG call.PTCP

b Tu as promis que tu m' appellerais/ m' aurais
you have.2SG promise.PTCP that you me= call.COND.2SG me= have.COND.2SG
appelé. (Fr.)
call.PTCP

'You promised me that you would call / have called me.'

Remaining with syntax, another feature briefly noted in §1.4.2.3 which distinguishes Italian from the other Romance languages is the obligatory use of the second person singular subject pronoun *tu* 'you' in subjunctive clauses (cf. 22b). On one level, as already noted, this observation appears to receive a functional explanation in that the singular persons of the present subjunctive (39a; cf. Table 1.5) and the first two singular persons of the past subjunctive (39b) are formally homophonous. The use of the subject pronoun therefore apparently allows the discourse participants to distinguish the default first/third person singular (present) or first person singular (past) interpretation from the marked second person singular reading.

39 a Insistono perché venga / tu venga subito.
insist.3PL for.that come.SBJV.SG.1/**2/3 you.SG come.SBJV.SG at.once

'They insist that I/(s)he/you come at once.'

b Insistettero perché venissi / tu venissi subito.
insist.PST.PFV.3PL for.that come.SBJV.PST.1SG/**2SG you.SG come.SBJV.PST.SG at.once

'They insisted that I/you should come at once.'

As tempting as this functionalist view might appear, it is immediately weakened by the observation that other Romance languages that show similar cases of homophony in the subjunctive paradigms show no such restrictions on the interpretation of homophonous verb forms. For example, Catalan, on a par with Portuguese and Spanish, displays homophony in the first and third persons singular of the present subjunctive (both marked by final inflexional *-i*), yet utterances such as (40a) are genuinely ambiguous and do not, for example, favour or force a first-person reading over the third person or vice versa. Romanian also provides a useful point of comparison: although in regular verbs the subjunctive is only formally marked, albeit syncretically, in the third person, in the analytic past perfective paradigm of the subjunctive all six persons are referenced by an undifferentiated form of BE, viz. *fi*. Once again we might *a priori* expect the prominence of, say, the speaker or both discourse participants to correlate with the non-use of the subject pronoun, but no such patterns are apparently detected and all readings are equally licensed (40b), (extra-)pragmatic factors permitting.

40 a Recomanen que llegeixi el llibre. (Cat.)
recommend.3PL that read.SBJV.1/3SG the book

'They recommend that I/(s)he read the book.'

b Bunicii mei nu cred să fi făcut așa ceva. (Ro.)
grandparents.DEF my NEG believe.3PL that.IRR be do.PTCP thus something

'My grandparents don't believe that I/you/(s)he/we/they did something like that.'

Indeed, the exquisitely syntactic nature of the obligatory use of the Italian second person singular subject pronoun witnessed in (39a–b) is indisputably confirmed by examples such as (41) where the embedded verb *pentirsi* 'to repent' is an inherently reflexive predicate. As such, the identity of the subject is already unambiguously referenced by the obligatory presence of the second person singular reflexive clitic *ti*, yet the subject pronoun *tu* still proves obligatory (see Cardinaletti 1997:51f.; 2004:126–128).[72]

41 Vogliono che **(tu) ti penta.
want.3PL that you.SG you.SG= repent.SBJV.2SG
'They want you to repent.'

The marking of indefinite or generic human reference also displays some particular characteristics in Italian which are not replicated in the other Romance languages. This can be readily seen in the agreement patterns found with the indefinite or generic clitic pronoun *si* 'one', homophonous with the third-person reflexive clitic. As a pronoun with arbitrary human reference meaning 'people', hence semantically plural, it licenses plural agreement on all accompanying predicates and modifiers, but not the finite verb which surfaces in the third person singular. Since masculine is traditionally the default gender in Italian, referring not only exclusively to males but also inclusively to males and females, agreement in conjunction with *si* is generally masculine plural (42a), but in the appropriate context (e.g., among an exclusively female group) feminine plural agreement is also possible (42b). This contrasts with similar indefinite and generic constructions in the other Romance languages such as Spanish (43a–b) where singular agreement systematically obtains.

42 a Perché risulta più difficile dormire quando si è stanchi? (It.)
why be.3SG more difficult sleep.INF when one be.3SG tired.MPL
'Why is it more difficult to sleep when you're tired?'

b Un altro modo sicuro per sapere se si è incinte … (It.)
an other way sure for know.INF if one be.3SG pregnant.FPL
'A fool-proof way to find out if you're pregnant …'

43 a ¿Por qué cuesta más dormir cuando se está cansado(**s)? (Sp.)
why be.3SG more difficult sleep.INF when one be.3SG tired.MSG(PL)

b Otra forma fiable de saber si se está embarazada(**s) … (Sp.)
other way reliable of know.INF if one be.3SG pregnant.FSG(PL)

It is thanks to such plural agreement that Italian is also able to formally distinguish between the active and stative-resultative readings of unergative participles in minimal pairs such as (44): on a par with the passive, verbs in conjunction with indefinite/generic *si* select the perfective auxiliary *essere* 'be' (cf. §20.2.1) but the active participle shows default masculine singular agreement (44a), whereas when interpreted as a stative-resultative predicate in conjunction with copular *essere* 'be' the participle exhibits plural agreement (44b). In such cases agreement therefore serves to distinguish between the verbal and adjectival uses of the participle and the corresponding auxiliary and copular uses of the verb *essere* 'be'.

44 a Solo quando si è capito conviene parlare.
only when one be.3SG understand.PTCP.MSG be.advisable.3SG speak.INF
'Only when one has understood is it advisable to speak.'

b Solo quando si è capiti conviene parlare.
only when one be.3SG understand.PTCP.MPL be.advisable.3SG speak.INF
'One when one is understood is it advisable to speak.'

Such plural agreement is not only licensed by *si* but is found in all other contexts where an indefinite, generic subject or object is present. Indeed, it is precisely because of such agreement on accompanying predicates or modifiers that we can tell that the structure contains an implied, viz. null, argument. Consequently, in (45a) the plural agreement on the adjective *imparziali* references the implicit generic plural subject (here indicated as $Ø_{PL}$) of the infinitive *essere* introduced by the impersonal verb *bisogna*. Similarly, in (45b) the plural agreement on the adjectival predicative complement *speciali* identifies an implicit generic plural object selected by the causative verb *fa*.

45 a Bisogna [$Ø_{PL}$ essere imparziali(/**-e)].
be.necessary.3SG be.INF impartial.PL(/SG)
'You have to be impartial.'

b Il bilinguismo $Ø_{PL}$ fa sentire speciali(/**-e).
the bilingualism make.3SG feel.INF special.PL(/SG)
'Being bilingual makes you feel special.'

Uniquely within the standard Romance panorama, Italian allows us to glimpse the existence in the pronominal paradigm of a null indefinite/generic pronoun (pro_{Arb}/PRO_{Arb} in Rizzi's 1986 analysis). As a result, Italian cannot be considered just a null subject language (cf. feature xi in Table 1.10), but must also be considered, albeit to a more limited extent, a null object language. In the same indefinite

contexts, the other standard Romance languages show default masculine singular agreement on all predicates and modifiers (46a) and in the case of generic objects the pronoun has to be overtly realized (46b).

46 a Il faut [Ø être impartial(/**-aux)]. (Fr.)
it be.necessary.3SG be.INF impartial.MSG(/PL)

b Le bilinguisme **(vous) fait vous sentir spécial(/**-aux). (Fr.)
the bilingualism you= make.3SG you= feel.INF special.SG(/PL)

A final feature of Italian syntax which deserves some mention for its exceptional behaviour within the wider Romance context, and not least because it is so often neglected in most descriptions and studies of Italian, is the distribution of differential object marking. Traditionally, it has been claimed that Romance languages split into two groups: those that lack DOM such as Italian (47a) together with French (47b), and those like Spanish (47c) and Romanian (47d) that display DOM.

47 a Ho baciato (**a) Gianni. (It.)

b J' ai embrassé (**à) Jean. (Fr.)

c He besado **(a) Juan. (Sp.)

d L- am pupat **(pe) Ion. (Ro.)
I him= have.1SG kiss.PTCP DOM John
'I've kissed John.'

Although there is some truth to this statement, at least historically inasmuch as there is very little evidence for DOM in the history of Italian, since the second half of the twentieth century standard Italian, including northern and Tuscan regional varieties, has begun to show a restricted form of it.[73] Unlike in Spanish and Romanian, for example, DOM in Italian is restricted to the first and second persons (48a–d vs 48e–g), hence to pronouns, and is subject to the further condition that they be topicalized within the left periphery (49a vs 49b), with a stronger preference for the use of DOM with singular rather than plural pronouns (48a–b vs 48c–d). As the question marks in some of the examples in (48)–(49) demonstrate, the (full) grammaticality of these examples is still subject to variation among (central and northern) speakers of Italian.

48 a A me, non mi hanno invitato.
DOM me NEG me= have.3PL invite.PTCP
'As for me, they didn't invite me/I wasn't invited.' (Benincà 2001b:149)

b A te, non ti vogliamo.
DOM you.SG NEG you.SG= want.1PL
'As for you, we don't want you.' (Benincà 2001b:149)

c ?A noi, non ci vogliono.
DOM us NEG us= want.3PL
'As for us, they don't want us/We're not wanted.' (Benincà 2001b:149)

d ?A voi, vi ho visto a Roma.
DOM you.PL you.PL= have.1SG see.PTCP at Rome
'As for you, I saw you in Rome.' (Benincà 2001b:149)

e ??A lui, l' hanno chiamato ieri.
DOM him him= have.3PL call.PTCP yesterday
'As for him, they called him/He was called yesterday.' (Benincà 2001b:149)

f ??A loro, li ha invitati Carlo.
DOM them them= have.3SG invite.PTCP Carlo
'As for them, Carlo invited them/They were invited by Carlo.' (Benincà 2001b:149)

g ??A Giorgio, non lo vuole più nessuno.
DOM Giorgio NEG him= want.3SG more nobody
'As for Giorgio, nobody wants him any more.' (Benincà 2001b:149)

49 a ?A me mi pagano.
DOM me mi= pay.3PL

b Pagano (*a) me.
pay.3PL DOM me
'They pay me.' (Ferrazzi 2017:50, 52)

Furthermore, as the example in (50) shows, another restriction on DOM in modern Italian, which again can be interpreted as a stage in its diachronic extension, is the requirement that fronted first and second person pronouns be topicalized, not (correctively) focused (Benincà 1988b:156; Iemmolo 2010:255n9); Ferrazzi 2017:10f.).[74]

50 (*A) TE assumeranno (non Maria).
DOM you.SG hire.FUT.3PL not Maria
'They will hire YOU (, not Maria).' (Belletti 2018:450)

In many respects, the distribution of DOM in Italian is therefore reminiscent of the distribution of DOM in the early stages of those core DOM Romance languages such as Spanish and Romanian, as well as (southern) Italo-Romance dialects, where DOM was also originally restricted to left-dislocated first and second person pronouns.[75] For example, one of the first documented uses of DOM in the Latin of the Ibero-Romance area, dating from 1016, also involves a left dislocation (51), albeit with a third person pronominal.

51 ad illa una matabit (Iberian Lat.)
DOM the one kill.PST.PFV.3SG
'he killed just her/one (of them)' (Diez 1844, III:91n).

The incipient use of DOM in Italian thus mirrors closely what we observe in early Romance varieties which have since developed more liberal uses of DOM. Modern Italian can therefore serve as a valuable indirect window to probe particular aspects of the diachronic development of DOM only partially available to us through the texts of earlier periods, where native speakers are not available to provide crucial grammaticality judgements and fill in the missing empirical pieces of the structural puzzle.

1.5.2.5 Lexis

We finally turn briefly to lexis. It comes as no surprise to note that the central lexis of Italian is not particularly exceptional or special from a pan-Romance perspective since the standard Romance languages have inherited the core of their lexicon—interpreted here to mean high- frequency everyday vocabulary (cf. Stefenelli 2011:569)—from Latin and naturally share therefore many lexical features and structures. For example, all the standard Romance languages show direct reflexes of PANE(M) 'bread' (It. *pane*, Cat. *pa*, Fr. *pain*, Pt. *pão*, Ro. *pâine*, Sp. *pan*), MARE 'sea' (It./Ro. *mare*, Cat./Pt./Sp. *mar*, Fr. *mer*), CAPRA(M) 'goat' (It. *capra*, Cat./Pt./Sp. *cabra*, Fr. *chèvre*, Ro. *capră*), TRISTE(M) 'sad' (It./Pt./Sp. *triste*, Cat./Ro. *trist*), BONU(M) 'good' (It. *buono*, Cat. *bo*, Fr. *bon*, Pt. *bom*, Ro. *bun*, Sp. *bueno*), UICINU(M) 'near, neighbour(ing)' (It. *vicino*, Cat. *veí*, Fr. *voisin*, Pt. *vizinho*, Ro. *vecin*, Sp. *vecino*), SCRIBERE 'to write' (It. *scrivere*, Cat. *escriure*, Fr. *écrire*, Pt. *escrever*, Ro. *scrie*, Sp. *escribir*), UIDERE 'to see' (It. *vedere*, Cat. *veure*, Fr. *voir*, Pt./Sp. *ver*, Ro. *vedea*), TRES 'three' (It. *tre*, Cat./Sp. *tres*, Pt. *três*, Ro. *trei*), TO(T)TU(M) 'all' (It. *tutto*, Cat. *tot*, Pt./Sp. *todo*, Ro. *tot*), DOMINICU(M)/-A(M) 'Sunday' (It. *domenica*, Cat. *diumenge*, Fr. *dimanche*, Pt./Sp. *domingo*, Ro. *duminică*), IN (It. *in*, Cat./Fr./Pt./Sp. *en*, Ro. *în*). Of course, as with other Romance languages, that does not exclude the possibility that in some cases Italian may be the 'odd-one-out' as the sole standard Romance language to retain a particular lexeme, e.g., OMNIS 'each' > It. *ogni* (cf. Gr. *katá-* (+ UNU(M) 'one') 'each (+ one)' > Cat. *cadascú*, Fr. *chaque*, Pt./Sp. *cada* (cf. also It. *ciascuno*); Ro. *fiecare* < *fie* 'be.SBJV' + *care* 'which'), FLUME(N) 'flood, stream > river' > It. *fiume* (cf. RIUU(M) 'stream, brook' > Cat. *riu*, Pt. *rio*, Ro. *râu*, Sp. *río*; FLUUIU(M) 'river' > Fr. *fleuve*), FORSIT 'perhaps' > It. *forse* (cf. Cat./Fr. *potser/peut-être* lit. 'can.be'; Pt./Sp. *talvez/tal vez* lit. 'such.time'; Ro. *poate* lit. 'can.3SG'), or conversely to have replaced a common Romance lexeme with a new term, e.g., QUID 'what?' > Cat. *què*, Fr. *que/quoi*, Pt. *que*, Ro. *ce*, Sp. *qué* vs It. *(che) cosa?* lit. '(what) thing?'; DE '(down) from; of' > Cat./Fr./Pt./Sp. *de*, DE+ILLAC/IN > *de la/din* 'from' vs It. DE+AB > *da* 'from' (cf. *di* 'of'). Naturally, these differences do not only involve the retention and loss of individual lexemes, but often involve semantic changes. For instance, Lat. SALIRE 'to jump, leap' continues unchanged in Ro. *sări*, but acquires the meaning of 'to go out, leave' in Ibero-Romance, e.g., N/OCat. *sallir*, Pt. *sair*, Sp. *salir*, whereas solely in Italian it develops the meaning of 'to go up, ascend'. There are also cases where Italian makes distinctions that are neutralized or simply not available in the other standard Romance languages. For example, basic nuances of gradation within the semantic area associated with the colour BLUE are not prototypically differentiated in most Romance languages where the concept is conveyed by a single lexeme, e.g., Cat. *blau*, Fr. *bleu*, Pt./Sp. *azul*, Ro. *albastru*. Italian, on the other hand, makes a systematic lexical distinction between *azzurro* 'light blue' and *blu* 'dark blue' that cannot be interchanged.

It hardly needs saying, but none of these lexical differences are in any sense peculiar to Italian or exceptional from a pan-Romance perspective. However, what does genuinely single out Italian in

contrast to all the other standard Romance languages is the spectacular elasticity and tolerance of its lexicon which, as we have seen in §1.4.3.4, accommodates and admits a remarkably large number of geosynonyms and geohomonyms. Such flexibility and variation in the lexicon is simply unknown in the other standard languages where individual concepts, apart from some limited register-related differences (e.g., colloquial, literary, formal, archaic) common to all codified languages, predominantly find a single equivalent across the whole speech community. Admittedly, there are some cases where the other standard languages do present some limited variation between competing regional variants, e.g., SFr. *péguer* vs (N-C)Fr. *coller/poisser* 'to be sticky', NEuPt. *bica* vs SEu/BrPt *cafezinho* 'espresso coffee', Andalusian Sp. *ganchón* vs Sp. *mimado* 'spoilt', but these are the exception, not the norm.[76] In most cases of this type, the standard languages typically promote one variant over the other(s), treating the latter as substandard or regional deviations from the prescriptive norm, e.g., Muntenian Ro. *ciușcă* 'chilli', *ginere* 'bridegroom' (cf. st.Ro. = 'son-in-law'), *peșchir* 'towel', *dârmon* 'sieve' vs st.Ro. *ardei iute*, *mire*, *prosop*, *ciur*; BalCat. *fraula* 'strawberry', *al·lot* 'boy', *cercar* 'to search for', *granera* 'broom' vs st.Cat. *maduixa*, *noi*, *buscar*, *escombra*; Brussels Fr. *gourme* 'spot, acne', Normand Fr. *horsain* 'foreigner', SFr. *merlu* 'hake', Vosgian Fr. *brimbelle* 'blueberry' vs st.Fr. *bouton*, *étranger*, *colin*, *myrtille*. Italian, on the other hand, is much more liberal. It readily tolerates and accommodates in the standard truly exceptionally high levels of lexical variation in relation to some of the most basic and banal concepts, even though there is a growing tendency for the standard language to align with 'cool' and generally more prestigious northern variants when a choice, as often happens in writing, has to be made (§1.4.2). For example, while it would be inconceivable in the other Romance languages that there is no single established term for such everyday concepts as 'the day before yesterday', 'coat hanger', 'melon', 'now', and many others (cf. Pt. *anteontem*, *cabide*, *melancia*, *agora*, . . .), in Italian such variation is far from exceptional (cf. Table 1.11).

Table 1.11 Some examples of Italian geosynonyms

	north	centre	south
'the day before yesterday'	*avantieri*	*ieri l'altro*	*l'altro ieri*
'coat hanger'	*ometto*	*gruccia*	*stampella*
'melon'	*melone*	*popone*	*me(l)lone (di pane)*
'now'	*adesso*	*ora*	*mo*[1]
'to peel'	*pelare*	*sbucciare*	*mondare*
'bowl, dish'	*scodella*	*ciotola*	*tazza*
'to rent'	*affittare*	*appigionare*	*locare* (also legal term)
'lock'	*serratura*	*toppa*	*chiavatura*
'to paint'	*imbiancare*	*pitturare*	*pittare*
'dish cloth, tea towel'	*strofinaccio*	*cencio*	*mappina*
'shoe laces'	*stringhe*	*aghetti*	*lacc(etti)i*
'to rub'	*fregare*	*stropicciare*	*strofinare*
	north	centre-south	
'stone'	*sasso*	*pietra*	
'spot, pimple'	*brufolo*	*foruncolo* (Rome: *pedicello*)	

	north	centre	south
'wedding ring'	*vera*	*fede*	
'mortadella'	*bologna*	*mortadella*	
	north-centre		south
'godfather/-mother'	*padrino/madrina*		*compare/comare*
'to go to bed'	*andare a letto*		*coricarsi*
'to not manage, not feel like'	*non sentirsela, non farcela*		*non fidarsi*
'afternoon nap'	*siesta*		*controra*

[1] Although not accepted by the standard, *mo* (< MODO 'now, presently') represents the unmarked and most frequent term employed in normal, relaxed usage in southern Italy (though not in Sicily where *ora* is preferred).

A particularly interesting source of geosynonymy, not found elsewhere in standard Romance, but which appears to be growing in Italian is the increasing acceptance and admission of so-called syntagmatic verbs (Poletto 2009; Cordin 2011), in many ways similar to the 'phrasal verbs' of Germanic. These are periphrastic locutions combining an existing verbal lexical base with a locative (adverbial) preposition which, in line with the underlying dialects, are particularly frequent in northern Italy (cf. §38.4.1), although they are also gaining ground elsewhere.[77] Consequently, in many cases geosynonymic pairs have arisen that contrast a traditional synthetic verbal lexeme with a typically northern syntagmatic verbal locution, e.g., *salire/scendere* 'to ascend/descend' vs *andare su/giù* 'to go up/down', *entrare/uscire* 'to enter/exit' vs *andare dentro/fuori* 'to go in(side)/out(side)'. While a number of these have lost any particular association with northern Italian usage, e.g., *fare fuori* lit. 'to make outside (= kill; polish off, finish)' (cf. *uccidere* 'to kill', *finire* 'to finish', *mangiarsi* 'to eat up'), *tirare fuori* lit. 'to pull out (= take out, remove)' (cf. *estrarre* 'to extract', *togliere* 'to remove'), *andare/scappare via* 'to go/escape away' (although southern speakers typically prefer reflexive *andarsene/scapparsene*), others tend to be markers of northern usage generally dispreferred by Italians from other parts of Italy, e.g., *mandare giù* lit. 'to send down (= swallow; put up with)' vs *inghiottire/sopportare* 'to swallow/put up with', *buttare giù* lit. 'to throw down (= immerse pasta in boiling water)' vs (S)It. *calare* 'to lower', *tirare su* lit. 'to pull up (= bring up, raise (child))' vs (S)It. *crescere/educare* 'to grow/bring up', *portare su/giù* 'to bring/carry up/down' vs SIt. *salire/scendere* 'to ascend/descend', *portare dentro/fuori* 'to bring in/out' vs SIt. *entrare/uscire* 'to enter/exit'. In many cases these syntagmatic verbs have developed non-compositional figurative readings (cf. also *fare fuori*, *mandare giù* above) and in such cases are typically restricted to northern Italian where they are very common in everyday usage, e.g., NIt. *dire su* lit. 'to say on (= tell off)' vs It. *sgridare* 'to reprimand', NIt. *chiamarsi fuori* lit. 'to call oneself out (= quit)' vs It. *ritirarsi/rinunciare* 'to withdraw/renounce', NIt. *dare addosso* lit. 'to give on (= attack)' vs It. *aggredire* 'attack'. From a typological perspective, the growing presence of these syntagmatic predicates in (northern) Italian also requires us to reconsider the position of Italian in terms of Talmy's (1985; 1991; 2000) classic typological distinction between verb-framed and satellite-framed languages. According to that dichotomy, received knowledge tells us that Romance languages are verb-framed languages, e.g., Fr. *sortir/entrer* 'to exit/enter', *monter/descendre* 'to ascend/descend', *partir/s'en aller* 'to leave', but the (changing) evidence of Italian forces us to acknowledge that uniquely among the Romance languages it is undergoing a partial shift towards the satellite-framed type, hence alongside verb-framed *uscire/entrare*, *salire/scendere*, and *andarsene*, we also regularly find the satellite-framed formations *andare fuori/dentro/su/giù/via* 'to go in/out/up/down/away'.

Turning finally to geohomonyms, here too the other Romance languages offer only very occasional examples which tend to be distributed along national lines, e.g., Fr. *linge*: 'laundry' (France) vs 'towel' (Switzerland), Pt. *banheiro*: 'lifeguard' (Portugal) vs 'bathroom' (Brazil), Sp. *coger*: 'to take, grab' (Spain) vs 'to fuck' (Latin America). However, Italian offers once again a spectacular range of examples across the regions that unwittingly can often lead to serious, not to mention hilarious,[78] misunderstandings. Here a handful of examples will suffice to make the point. While dictionaries correctly report that *posteggiatore* in Italian refers to a 'car park attendant', an interpretation adhered

to by the vast majority of Italians, in Rome it typically denotes a 'market stall holder' and in Naples is used to refer to a 'busker'. In standard Italian *cacciare* primarily means 'to hunt, chase'. While this meaning is equally found in southern Italy and Sardinia, the term is polysemous in these same areas where it also means 'to remove, take out/off' (cf. st.It. *togliere*, *tirare fuori*) and 'to vomit' (cf. st.It. *vomitare*), respectively. Remaining in Sardinia, here the standard term for 'dad' is *babbo* as in Tuscan from which it was originally borrowed, but the lexeme is also found in the regional Italian of Sicily but with the quite different meaning of 'stupid, silly'. Other examples of this type include *piazzola*, *balcone*, and *(la) canadese* which in the standard mean respectively 'lay-by; pitch', 'balcony', and '(the) Canadian woman', but which in Bologna, Veneto, and Sardinia also mean 'market', 'window', and 'tracksuit', respectively.

Another area fraught with misunderstandings across the peninsula and the islands are the various interpretations associated with the principal denominations for the various divisions of the day, the variability of which is often linked to differences in the times at which meals were traditionally taken in different regions.[79] Table 1.12 gives some examples of (traditional) usage reported for Tuscany, Salento, and Sardinia in comparison with what might be thought of as the standard where it can be observed that correspondences—here necessarily approximative—only partially overlap.[80]

Table 1.12 Some denominations for the division of the day

<table>
<tr><th>time</th><th>standard Italian</th><th>Tuscany</th><th>Salento</th><th>Sardinian</th></tr>
<tr><td>sunrise–</td><td>mattina</td><td>mattina</td><td>mattina</td><td>mattina</td></tr>
<tr><td>12.00</td><td>mezzogiorno</td><td rowspan="2">meriggio</td><td>meriggio</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>13.00</td><td rowspan="2">pomeriggio</td><td rowspan="2">pomeriggio</td><td rowspan="2">sera</td></tr>
<tr><td>14.00–</td><td>pomeriggio</td></tr>
<tr><td>18.00–nightfall</td><td>sera</td><td rowspan="2">sera</td><td>vespro</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>evening</td><td>sera(/notte)</td><td>sera</td><td>notte</td></tr>
</table>

In summary, examples like these of widespread geosynonyms and geohomonyms highlight how standardization in Italian has not reached the levels observed in the other standard Romance languages: linguistic unification across the peninsula and the islands has undeniably come a long way over the last 150 years or so, but quite exceptionally within the Romance panorama Italian, especially in its oral manifestations, continues to resist regional levelling of lexical (not to mention phonological and morphosyntactic) variants in favour of an all-embracing and inclusive model of Italian that enables individuals to maintain to varying degrees their regional linguistic identity.

1.6 Conclusion

We have sought in the foregoing to identify and define the thing which this book is about. Italian is at root an Italian dialect, just one of the numerous different Italo-Romance dialects of the Middle Ages. Yet for centuries it became remote from the native languages of all Italians, while also becoming accepted by Italians as a prestigious linguistic model and one which eventually, after political Unification, came to be understood and used by the general population. It also transcended its dialectal origin by becoming an internationally accepted language, equivalent in status to other major European languages, while at the same time, despite its structural similarities to its sister Romance languages, becoming more distinctive than might at first appear.

TEXTUAL SOURCES

Dec. = Branca, V. (ed.) (1992). Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*. Turin: Einaudi.

Trist. Ricc. = Parodi, E.G. (ed.) (1896). *Il Tristano Riccardiano*. Bologna: Romagnoli dall'Acqua.

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[1] Similar definitions can be found for the adjective and noun *italiano* in Italian dictionaries. See, for example, the *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, s.v. With reference to the language, however, it is defined as 'Che si parla e scrive in Italia, e *la lingua italiana*, foggiata sostanzialmente sul dialetto fiorentino, è, fra le lingue neolatine, la più affine alla lingua madre' ('Which is spoken and written in Italy, and *the Italian language*, forged substantially from the Florentine dialect, is, among the neo-Latin languages, that closest to the mother tongue'). The phrase 'che si parla e scrive in Italia' in principle includes any speech variety native to Italy, but also excludes Italian varieties spoken natively outside of Italy. The implication that Italian is the 'neo-Latin' (i.e., Romance) language closest to its 'mother', Latin, is problematic, but it is not one we can explore here (however cf. discussion in §1.4.2). It may be true of some aspects of phonology (e.g., the retention of long consonants) but it is not obviously true that Italian, or any other Romance language, is 'closest to Latin' in any absolute sense. Romanian, for example, does not preserve long consonants but it is the only modern Romance language to retain a (vestigial) inflexional case system from Latin.

[2] The first word, too, might also have presented different degrees of difficulty according to region, for reasons of local phonological and morphological variation.

[3] At least for the great mass of the population. Dante (*DVE* I. xix. 1) famously sought an ideal form of the vernacular that might be of 'all of Italy', but this was precisely an ideal of which he was in search. It would be a mistake to think that the abstract notion of 'Italy', and of a language common to all Italy and distinct from languages outside Italy, was *completely* absent in the Middle Ages (cf. Varvaro 2004:114f.).

[4] The term 'Romance' (< Lat. *romanice* 'in the Roman fashion') is conventionally applied to all the speech varieties descended from Latin that emerged, distinct from Latin, in the Middle Ages. In Italian, a term generally used to describe the spontaneous everyday speech of the ordinary people is *volgare*. The cognate form in English is *vulgar* (< Latin UULGARIS 'of the people' < UULGUS 'folk'), but the pejorative connotations acquired by this term in English make it unsuitable to designate the Romance speech-varieties. We use instead *vernacular* (defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as: 'Of a language or dialect: That is naturally spoken by the people of a particular country or district; native, indigenous. Usually applied to the native speech of a populace, in contrast to another or others acquired for commercial, social, or educative purposes; now frequently employed with reference to that of the working classes or the peasantry').

[5] For syntax see, however, Vincent (2010). Also Tomasin (2019c:156–158).

[6] It is possible to take a 'non-structural' or 'external' perspective and say that an 'Italian dialect' is any speech variety by whose speakers the standard Italian language is regarded as a 'guiding', prestigious, linguistic model to which their own native speech is somehow subordinate (cf. Pellegrini 1975:56f.; Muljačić 1989). But this rules out things that from an internal, structural perspective unambiguously are 'Italo-Romance' such as Corsican, for whose speakers French is the prestigious variety (see also note 52). On the other hand it would tend to include such things as the Greek or Albanian varieties spoken for centuries in southern Italy, whose speakers accept and learn 'Italian' as the 'guiding' variety.

[7] Once Florentine acquires cultural, commercial, and political prestige from the fourteenth century, and is used and imitated by those who are not its native speakers (notably intellectuals) it becomes exposed to multiple influences which are not paralleled in the dialect of Florence (such as, for example, the introduction of *parole dotte* as described above), and the dialect of Florence also develops in ways not paralleled in what we have come to know as 'Italian'. See also Ledgeway (2016a:206–208).

[8] Thus, the title of the monumental, and fundamentally important, *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti*, 'Historical Grammar of the Italian Language and of its Dialects' (Rohlfs 1966; 1968; 1969). For discussion of the implications of the phrase *dei suoi dialetti* see Maiden (2021:xvi–xviii).

[9] On this point see also Muljačić (1997a:397).

[10] The rise of municipal centres of power, during the late Middle Ages, tended to confer prestige on the speech of the relevant towns, which speakers throughout the respective spheres of influence sought to imitate, thereby actually accentuating the linguistic differences between rival areas of political and cultural influence.

[11] Apart from Rome, where the indigenous dialect was replaced by Tuscan during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Ernst 1970; Trifone 2008:35–59), the dialects are still spoken by just over half population (Jones, Parry, and Williams 2016:615), with even higher rates of usage in such regions as Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Basilicata, Calabria, and Sicily where dialect is typically spoken by over 70% of the local populations (ISTAT 2017:5f.). It is hard to know exactly what proportion of the population of Italy would have been able actively to speak or write Italian at the time of the political Unification of Italy. Since Italian had become principally a written language (see below), only the functionally literate were likely to be able to acquire a full command of it. On the other hand, any native speaker of an Italo-Romance dialect, but particularly speakers of Tuscan or other central Italian dialects, might have been able, with some effort, to understand some Italian, so that a measure of passive knowledge may have been possible even for the illiterate. Estimates of the numbers of those able to speak Italian at the time of Unification vary between 2.5% of the population for De Mauro (1963), through 9.52% (or about 2.25 million) for Castellani (1982b)—but see also De Mauro (1997:43)—to 12% for Serianni (1990:18n6) (cf. also Bruni 2013:158f.). The overwhelming majority of all Italians were only able to speak their local dialect, a situation that had allegedly not changed greatly by 1951 when 63.5 per

cent of all Italians still only spoke dialect. It should also be borne in mind that a small proportion of Italians used speech varieties that were not Italo-Romance and that their numbers increased with border changes after the First World War; De Mauro (1963) estimated them at 2.1 per cent of Italians in 1921. These were the Romance varieties Friulian, Ladin, Occitan, and Francoprovençal; German dialects spoken in Val Canale (Udine), parts of Trentino, and the Val de Gressoney (Aosta); Slovenian spoken around Gorizia, Val di Resia, and the upper Torre and Natisone valleys, and around Trieste; Greek in clusters of villages in Salento to the south of Lecce and the Aspromonte area of southern Calabria; Albanian scattered in villages across Abruzzo, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, and Sicily; Serbo-Croat (in three villages in Molise). In Alghero in Sardinia a variety of Catalan was spoken. These speech communities all survive to this day.

[12] The Romance languages are sometimes described, indeed, as 'neo-Latin' languages, as witness the title of Tagliavini (1969) *Le origini delle lingue neolatine*. See also note 1.

[13] See, e.g., Wright (1982; 2016); Varvaro (2013b); Banniard (2013).

[14] The date rather neatly coincided with the hundredth anniversary of Italian Unification. See, e.g., Terracini (1961).

[15] In reality, the depositions of the *Placiti* are extremely formulaic and replicate Latin models. They are certainly not a record of spontaneously produced utterances. For further linguistic analysis see Ledgeway (2011c; 2012b).

[16] The phrase *parte Sancti Benedicti* contains a Latin inflected genitive. The construction comprising a head noun plus a complement in an inflected genitive (rather than the typical Romance type marking possession by means of a preposition—e.g., It. *la parte di San Benedetto*) is widespread in the early texts of a judicial or commercial kind, including the earliest Tuscan texts, as we shall see. The noun + noun syntagm may also be the source of modern structures such as *Piazza San Marco* 'Saint Mark's Square' (rather than *di San Marco* 'of Saint Mark').

[17] E.g., Maconi and Volpi (2022:39). A case might be made that the earliest Italo-Romance text is the *Commodilla Inscription*—a graffito on a wall in the catacomb of Commodilla in Rome, datable to the first half of the ninth century, and apparently an instruction to priests not to say the secret parts of the mass out loud: *Non dicere ille secrita a b^{b}oce*. See also Maconi and Volpi (2022:160–165).

[18] For descriptions of the early vernacular texts from Italy see, for example, Castellani (1976); Migliorini and Griffith (1984:56–76); Marazzini (1994:119–172); Tesi 2001:5–38; Barbato (2016b); Maconi and Volpi (2022).

[19] There are legitimate arguments for taking 'old Italian' in a more generic sense, as a 'diasystem made up of the sum of the various local Italian systems', see §34.1 (also Tomasin 2019c:161). Barbato (2016b:9) explicitly equates 'Italian' with 'Italo-Romance', in addressing the question of when people began to speak Italian. For us the problem with calling old Italo-Romance 'old Italian' is that it implies that modern Italo-Romance is 'modern Italian' which, even for in the case of Tuscan, it is not.

[20] For thirteenth-century Tuscan texts, see particularly Castellani (1982a).

[21] See, e.g., Maconi and Volpi (2022:76–80). They propose this particular reading of the text and interpret it as: 'This charter is Caputcoctu's. May he rightly help Botto, who put bad advice in his body.' See §34.2 for a different reading.

[22] The exact meaning of the first part is problematic.

[23] To what extent this is a record of a spontaneous utterance is much harder to say.

[24] A related term is modern *agguato* 'ambush'.

[25] A notable orthographic feature of this text is the use of the graphy *gk* to indicate [g] before a front vowel. The graphy which has prevailed in Italian is *gh*.

[26] Its original geographical extent appears to have been rather wider than Tuscany. See Carlucci (2020:31).

[27] But also, later, *la curte de Travale*.

[28] So-called 'earliest texts' are always provisional (cf. Barbato 2016b:20), and one can never rule out that an even earlier one may some day come to light. The *Conto navale*, for example, was found by serendipity (see, e.g., Marazzini 1994:170).

[29] Estimates of the date vary between 1080 and 1142. See Maconi and Volpi (2022:82).

[30] For a review of suggestions about the legal purpose of the document see Maconi and Volpi (2022:82).

[31] The sole syntactically complex structure in the text involves a causative structure (cf. §21.3.3.2): *Anrigo fece dare alo restaiolo sol. xx*. Literally, 'Anrigo caused 20 *soldi* to be given to the rope-maker'.

[32] For a detailed survey of the specialist maritime lexicon of the text, and also of the productivity of word-formation processes by suffixation of *-ura*, see Maconi and Volpi (2022:87–90).

[33] The precise dating is problematic: see Maconi and Volpi (2022:95).

[34] Transcription and translation broadly follow Maconi and Volpi (2022:95).

[35] Maconi and Volpi (2022:96f.) consider this a 'Latinism' (cf. also Maiden 2016a:217f. à propos of the widespread WTsc. singular *omo* 'man'). Elsewhere, as in Florentine and hence in modern Italian, the diphthong spreads into the plural *uomini* 'men'. The same might be said about the third person singular present indicative form of the verb BE in this text, *este* (but modIt. *è*), which is quite probably a genuine

vernacular form, rather than a 'Latinism' as has been claimed. It survives in various Italo-Romance varieties (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:271; also Ro. *este*, Srd. *este*).

[36] The text also contains a number of Latin expressions, including the genitive structure + proper name. *Filio Kerardini* 'son of Gherardino', *filio Don(n)ine* 'son of Donna', *casa Benuci* 'house of Benuci'.

[37] *Ghifuori* is a technical legal term of Germanic origin, which appears in medieval Latin as GAFORIUM. See Maconi and Volpi (2022:101).

[38] See Maconi and Volpi (2022:120f.) for remarks on the contributions of this text to the vernacular juridical lexicon.

[39] The text lacks the diphthong in *omo* 'man', *omini* 'men', and *bona* 'good.FSG'. According to Maiden (2016a), forms such as these may display earlier phonological constraints on the spread of the diphthong, rather than being 'Latinisms' (cf. Maconi and Volpi 2022:119—but also 2022:96f.).

[40] It is also the first example of a bankers' accounting register in Europe.

[41] See also §3.1 regarding the development of a vernacular financial lexicon.

[42] The text contains a large number of personal names beginning with *Buon-* or *Buona-* (*Buonessegnia*, *Buoni*(*n*)*ko*(*n*)*tro*, *Buonone*). While these are unstressed as part of a name, they clearly originate in the stressed forms *buono buona* 'good'.

[43] The distribution of this form is different in old Tuscan, however, since it occurs after a word ending in a vowel, whereas elsewhere we have *lo*.

[44] For its Tuscan linguistic features, see Maconi and Volpi (2022:206–213).

[45] We say 'used', not 'understood', very deliberately. Just how well non-Tuscan Italo-Romance speakers could understand, say, the works of Dante read out loud remains a matter of considerable conjecture (cf. Maiden 2002), as does the degree of mutual intelligibility across Italo-Romance dialects in the Middle Ages generally. For a very useful examination of this problem, see Carlucci (2020). It is clear that as late as the early twentieth century passive understanding of Italian could be a formidable problem for the most uneducated Italians (see, e.g., Trifone 2016:148).

[46] See §3.2.

[47] See also Trifone (2016:151–156).

[48] Lugano was then part of the Duchy of Milan and is today not in Italy but in the Swiss canton of Ticino.

[49] See Bianconi (1991:127–129) for more extensive presentation and description of this text.

[50] This claim requires some qualification in that, as we have said, relatively prestigious, particularly urban, dialects could become the object of imitation by speakers of different dialects from surrounding areas. Cf. Muljačić (1997a:397).

[51] For the reasons for the decline of Italian as a commercial and diplomatic language in the Mediterranean in the nineteenth century, see §32.6. At the same time, of course, Italian was becoming the language of the emergent Italian political state.

[52] In addition to Tuscany proper, Tuscan-based dialects are also spoken in Corsica and northern Sardinia (Sassari/Gallura) following Pisan domination of Corsica and northern Sardinian during the Middle Ages. Even when control of these areas passed to Genoa between 1284 and 1768, Tuscan remained the official language of administration and continued as the language of culture in Corsica well into the mid-nineteenth century long after the island had passed into French hands.

[53] Key to features: 1. Development of penta- or heptavocalic vowel system; 2. Anaphonesis; 3. Spontaneous diphthongization; 4. Falling diphthongization of close vowels; 5. Presence of schwa; 6. Loss of atonic vowels; 7. Metaphony; 8. Palatalization / Assimilation of velars before front vowels and in the consonantal clusters KL, GL, PL, BL, FL; 9. Lenition of intervocalic obstruents; 10. Aspiration, retracted tongue root, retroflexization, nasalization, and labialization; 11. Assimilation and dissimilation; 12. Assimilation of the consonantal cluster -ND-, -MB-.

[54] In some cases, however, the Tuscan term, although the odd-one-out from a wider Italo-Romance perspective, continues unrivalled in the standard language (Devoto and Giacomelli 1972:69f.), e.g., *maiale* 'pig', *topo* 'mouse'.

[55] However, in the north intervocalic /s/ is found when it continues an original long sibilant and/or it follows a glide, e.g., CAUSA(M) > Lmb. *co*[s]*a* 'thing', BRIXIA > Lmb. *Bre*[s]*a* 'Brescia'.

[56] Cf. Rohlfs (2021a:235–238); Loporcaro (1988; 1997b); Vincent (1988); Maiden (1995a:72–76); Fanciullo (1997); Sampson (2016:675–676).

[57] The exception here is western Tuscan where the masculine singular form of the article presents the single form *lo* in all pre-consonantal environments, e.g., *lo gatto/specchio*.

[58] In intervocalic position there is, however, no neutralization in the phonemic and allophonic realizations of the voiceless fricative in Tuscan since the former is invariably long in such contexts, e.g., Tsc. *la scena* [la ˈʃːɛːna] 'the stage, scene' vs *la cena* [la ˈʃeːna] (cf. It. [la ˈʃːɛːna] vs [la ˈʧeːna]). Thus in contrast to the standard, Tuscan shows a phonemic contrast between /ʃ/ and /ʃː/ in intervocalic position, e.g., Tsc. *pece* [ˈpeːʃe] 'pitch, tar' vs *pesce* [ˈpeʃːe] 'fish'.

[59] The form *nerbo* is also found in Italian, but is today obsolescent, not to say obsolete, in the meaning of 'nerve'. It continues, especially in more formal registers, in the extended meanings of 'whip, lash' and 'backbone, core' (cf. Eng. 'nerve centre').

[60] This could *a priori* be argued to be a matter of phonology rather than morphology depending on just how transparent or opaque RF is in this context among modern speakers. If speakers perceive the underlying form of the article to be *il*, the matter is best analysed as a transparent synchronic phonological assimilation triggered by the final lateral, but if speakers perceive the article to be *i'* [+RF] with an empty consonantal coda, as reflected in its common spelling, then the matter is arguably more a question of morphology. One piece of evidence in support of the latter analysis comes from the observation that in some Tuscan varieties (e.g., Lucchese) RF has also been analogically extended to the masculine plural article *i*, a reanalysis presumably enabled by the formal identity of the surface forms of the masculine singular and plural definite articles (viz., *i'*/*i* [i]).

[61] This explains the characteristic form of the indefinite-interrogative pronoun *icché* 'what' in Tuscan (cf. 1b) which historically incorporates a form of the masculine singular definite article, namely, *il* 'the' + *che* 'what' > *icché* (cf. Pt. *o que* 'what').

[62] While *-e* represents the regular outcome of the Latin singular ending in < -E(M), in the plural we expect *-i* as in the modern language, namely, -ES > *-eį > -i. The plural form in *-e* is therefore probably to be interpreted as a case of analogical extension from the accompanying feminine plural determiner which also typically ends in *-e* (cf. *le* 'the', *queste* 'these', *alcune* 'some', etc.) and from nouns and adjectives of the first declension with regular plural in *-e* (viz. -AS > *-aį > -e; Maiden 1996b).

[63] Also of note are the typical Tuscan forms of the first person singular *fo* 'I do, make' (cf. It. *faccio*) and *vo* 'I go' (cf. It. *vado*), forged analogically on regular forms such as *do* 'I give' and *sto* 'I stand, be', which are also undoubtedly the analogical source of *so* 'I know' (cf. Lat. SAPIO), a form, however, fully integrated in the standard language. Cf. also Tsc. *pole* 's/he can' by analogy with Tsc. *vole* 's/he wants' (cf. It. *può* and *vuole*).

[64] It should be noted though that its use today in bureaucratic, e.g., legal and administrative, registers does not necessarily coincide with its usage in native Tuscan grammars. Rather, it frequently functions as nothing more than a lexical marker of high register where *questo* or *quello* would be more appropriate.

[65] In many parts of Tuscany *spigola* is replaced with the term *ragno*, which in the standard language means 'spider' (but cf. Tsc. *ràgnolo* 'spider').

[66] As noted by Haspelmath (2001:1493), apart from reasonably large vowel inventories (typically five vowels or more) and frequent consonant clusters (with no requirement for CV syllables), European languages are in most respects rather 'unremarkable' from a phonological perspective, hence the focus in the literature on morphosyntax.

[67] This is, however, only partly true in that Italian treats a subclass of inalienable nouns, namely (singular/unmodified) kinship terms, differently from all alienable nouns: while the latter require the definite article, e.g., *la sua teoria* lit. 'the her theory', the former occur without it, e.g., (**la*) *sua sorella* lit. '(the) her sister'.

[68] There are, however, numerous reduplicating constructions attested for Italian (and Romance more generally). For discussion see Thornton (2023).

[69] This is also another area where Italian and Tuscan diverge morphologically (cf. §1.4.2.2) in that Tuscan usage preserves a larger number of *-a* plurals than the standard language, though not with some exceptions (Rohlfs 2021b:37).

[70] Beyond standard Romance, a similar pattern is attested in western Asturian and eastern Galician. See Maiden (2018b:238–244).

[71] Romanian is the exception here because it employs a different sequence of tense rule in indirect speech.

[72] That is not to say that examples without the pronoun are not found, witness the example in (i) with the inherently reflexive verb *arrendersi* 'to surrender' heard in the Italian version of the film *Il fuggitivo* ('The Fugitive').

i	È	meglio	che	ti	arrenda.
	be.3SG	better	that	you.SG=	surrender.SBJV
	'You'd better give yourself up.'				

[73] See Nocentini (1985); Benincà (1986); Berretta (1989; 1990a; 1990b; 1991b); Benincà et al. (2001); Sornicola (2002); Iemmolo (2010:§3.1); Lombardi Vallauri and Suzuki (2013); Ferrazzi (2017); Ledgeway (2023a).

[74] See, however, Berretta (1989:22f.) and Lombardi Vallauri and Suzuki (2013:16–18) for some counterexamples.

[75] See Rohlfs (1971:327, 330f.); Sornicola (1997:77); Ledgeway (2000:ch. 2; 2009b:833f., 836); Fiorentino (2003:127f.); Iemmolo (2010:§3.4).

[76] This is clearly different from the case of diatopic lexical variation found across different national standards, as often happens in the case of French, Portuguese, and Spanish. For example, in the Spanish-speaking countries a 'drinking straw' is variously expressed by *caña* (Spain), *cañita* (Peru), *pajita* (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Equatorial Guinea), *pajilla* (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua), *bombilla* (Chile, Bolivia), *absorbente* (Cuba), *popote* (Mexico), *sorbeto* (Puerto Rico), *sorbete* (Ecuador, Argentina, Peru), *pitillo* (Colombia, Venezuela), *carrizo* (Panamá), and *calimete* (Dominican Republic).

[77] Clearly irrelevant here are tautologies such as *salire su* lit. 'to ascend up' and *entrare dentro* 'to enter inside' which are found in all areas of Italy.

[78] Illustrative in this respect is the (apocryphal?) example in (i), reported to have appeared outside a now-defunct Neapolitan bar in an attempt by its owner to advertise the swift service and the freshness of its *zabaglione*:

i Si sbattono uova in faccia ai clienti. (Iandolo 1994:253)
REFL= beat.3PL eggs in face to.the customers
'Fresh zabaglione prepared on the spot.'

Whereas in the regional Italian of Naples the compound preposition *in faccia a* (on a par with Nap.*'nfaccia a*) is intended to highlight the fact that the *zabaglione* is prepared 'on the spot' directly 'before' the customer, this intended accolade was lost on many of the general public who, interpreting the same preposition according to its Italian meaning, took the sentence quite literally to imply the threat that eggs would be hurled in the face of all customers!

[79] Traditionally there is also some variation in the distribution of the various denominations of the three (sometimes four) principal meals of the day. Today the standard typically opts for *colazione* 'breakfast', *pranzo* 'lunch', (*merenda* 'afternoon snack'), and *cena* 'dinner, evening meal' (with associated verbs: *colazionare* (rare), *pranzare*, *merendare*, *cenare*). However, there are areas of Italy (e.g., north) where, at least traditionally, *colazione* can ambiguously refer to both 'breakfast' and '(light(er)) lunch' (hence the not infrequent use, especially in hotels, of *prima colazione* lit. 'first meal' for 'breakfast' and, more rarely, *seconda colazione* lit. 'second meal' to refer to 'lunch'), in which case *pranzo*, the main meal of the day, comes to denote the evening meal. Nonetheless, even speakers who align with the standard distribution may use these terms with different meanings in specific collocations, e.g., *colazione di lavoro* 'work/business lunch' (alongside *pranzo di lavoro*), *pranzo di nozze* 'wedding breakfast' (whether consumed in the (early) afternoon or evening), *pranzo di laurea* 'celebratory graduation meal' (again whether taken in the afternoon or evening). In Tuscany, the midday meal is generally referred to with the term *desinare* (< DIS- 'un-' + IEIUNARE 'to fast', cf. Fr. *déjeuner*), which in standard Italian is a somewhat formal and rare term reserved for a special, typically celebratory dinner (e.g., romantic or gala dinner).

[80] In addition to the term *pomeriggio* reported in Table 1.12, the standard also often adopts *dopopranzo*, lit. 'after.lunch', a term particularly common in northern Italy, whereas in Tuscany *dopo desinare/dopodesinare* lit. 'after lunch' (cf. note 79) and in southern Italy *dopo mangiato* lit. 'after eaten' are frequent alternatives.

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Chapter 2

Tuscan, Florentine, and Italian

External history

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2.1 Introduction

The three language names that appear in the title synthesize the development that led, over centuries, to the formation and definition of modern Italian on the basis of medieval Tuscan vernaculars, and in particular Florentine, and the relations of contiguity, competition, and pre-eminence between the local dimension of the language in the Tuscan area and its national aspiration and scope. Furthermore, the delimitation to 'external history' implies that (compared, for example, to Manni 1994a) the discussion will essentially focus on the literary, cultural, historical, and social facts and events that led to the pre-eminence of Tuscany over other regions, as well as the primacy of Florentine over other Tuscan dialects, and finally the formation and affirmation, at a literary level, of a national language designated by the specific language name *italiano* 'Italian' (Maraschio and Matarrese 2021).

The discussion will therefore be structured along two lines: the peculiar genetic features of Italian and the nature and consequences of its development as a national language (Stussi 1972). Reference will be made to the expansion or exclusion of purely Tuscan and/or

Florentine linguistic phenomena only insofar as it is discussed in normative debates or is a symptom of broader socio-historical and cultural processes.

The genetic traits of Italian include:

- the particular history of ancient and medieval Tuscany from the point of view of its isolation, its linguistic characteristics, and the emergence of different local languages and then dialects, from the Roman conquest of Etruria in the third century BCE. In fact, Latinization took place in this area before the Latin spoken in Rome was influenced, due to immigration, by the other Italic languages, and the effects of the Etruscan substrate were very limited, given the profound difference between the two languages, hence the title of Merlo's study 'Lazio sannita ed Etruria latina?' ('Samnite Latium and Latin Etruria?') (Merlo 1927b);
- the formation in Italy of written vernacular languages that were not strictly local ('municipal') in environments where legal and rhetorical culture was alive (the Sicilian School, the Bolognese *studio*, vulgarizations, etc.);
- the late emergence, compared with Provençal lyricism and literature in *langue d'oïl*, of a literary language in an Italo-Romance vernacular, with the consequent absorption of both Gallicisms (Cella 2003) and also pre-humanistic elements—linked to the active presence in the Italian lexicon of Latin (Trifone 2023), the language of the Church and of jurisprudence—that ensured stability and above all continuity between the ancient and the later periods;
- the persistent incidence of such genetic features across the entire historical span of the Italian language, from the earliest times to the mid-twentieth century.

Among the consequences of the particular development of Italian as a national language (although the adjective is ill-suited to a territory that was for centuries politically and linguistically polycentric and fragmented; cf. §1.2) we may mention:

- polymorphism and abundance of synonyms (resulting from a number of factors, namely polycentrism, the relationship with

Latin, both external and internal contacts);

- the development of Italian as a predominantly written language, used by a minority of the population, and lacking any direct relationship with spoken usage almost anywhere in the peninsula (De Mauro 1963);
- the multiplicity of local, dialectal, and regional cultures, still actively present in the process of literary and linguistic unification;
- the persistence, at least from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, of the *questione della lingua* (Vitale 1978; Marazzini 2011; 2013; 2018c) and the periodic puristic and conservative currents or literary experimentalisms open to spoken language and innovation;
- uncertainties in the very definition of the national language, with the late and controversial emergence of the term *italiano* (Tomasin 2011; Alfieri 2025; D'Achille 2025).

2.2 From Tuscan vernaculars to literary Italian

2.2.1 Documents in the vernacular in Tuscany from the earliest texts to the fourteenth century

In the earliest centuries, from the appearance of the first Italo-Romance vernacular texts in the late eight or early ninth and tenth centuries until the first half of the thirteenth century, there is little to suggest that Tuscany, let alone Florence, was to emerge as the linguistic centre of Italy. However, by the end of the fourteenth century the situation had changed radically and the primacy of Tuscan and then Florentine had by then become indisputable.

How Tuscany first appears on the map of vernacular production can be seen from two external sets of data. In the inventory of the 'oldest Italian texts' compiled by Barbato (2016b:22–23) on the basis of Petrucci (1994:45–48), out of the thirty-six texts surveyed, spanning from the *Indovinello veronese* (late eighth century–early ninth century) to the fragments of a Florentine bankers' account book (1211), eleven are Tuscan, ten come from northern Italy, and fifteen from central-southern Italy (including Sardinia and Corsica). The Tuscan texts appear fairly late (1085, *Postilla amiatina*; late eleventh to early twelfth century, *Conto navale pisano*; see also §1.2), and they are predominantly practical texts (*Decime di Arlotto*, 1160–1180; *Affitti di Coltibuono*, late twelfth to early thirteenth century; the already mentioned fragments of accounts of Florentine bankers, 1211, the only document of the period from Florence) and legal or para-legal texts (*Testimonianze di Travale*, 1158; *Annotazione pistoiese*, 1187–1208; *Memoria di Coltibuono*, late twelfth century to early thirteenth century). There is also expository writing (*Iscrizione sulla tomba di Giratto*, 1174–1180) while one of the oldest rhymed texts (*Ritmo laurenziano*, 1188–1207) is also substantially Tuscan.

From the second half of the thirteenth century to the end of the fourteenth the situation is quite different, as witnessed by the *OVI* corpus where Tuscan texts dominate. More than half of a total of 2,991 texts from different areas were found to be Tuscan (Giuliani 2022:368) and among them Florentine texts prevail. So from the beginning of the thirteenth to the end of the fourteenth centuries Tuscan in general and Florentine in particular became the pre-eminent and defining component of so-called old Italian (this label has also been used, in a different way from its use in the *OVI* corpus and the *Tesoro della lingua italiana delle origini*, to denote only Florentine texts of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries: Salvi and Renzi 2010b; cf. Chapter 34). The prevalence of Florentine emerges first and foremost at a literary level. Other factors also determined Tuscan and Florentine supremacy: first, the socioeconomic boom of various cities in Tuscany from the end of the twelfth century until the plague of 1348, when economic prosperity contributed to the rise of autonomous city governments (republics and free communes) inspired by new principles and new legal-administrative models. Within this framework lies—among aristocrats, soldiers, judges, notaries, chancellors, etc.—the rise of

the figure of the merchant-banker, of exchange companies, pawnbrokers, and lending banks: the socioeconomic process summed up by Dante's 'la gente nuova e i sùbiti guadagni' (*Inf.*, XVI 73; 'new folk and quick profits'). The common denominator was knowledge and practice of vernacular writing and accounting (Ricci 2011). Furthermore, institutions and city life needed men of culture with knowledge of Latin; those needs were met by the technical schools of commerce (in which mathematics and algebra were taught), grammar and logic schools for learning the liberal arts (cf. Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, XI 94), and by the universities established in the main Tuscan cities. This cultural vitality was not limited to the linguistic-literary sphere but also invested the sciences (think of Leonardo Pisano, better known as 'Fibonacci') and the arts (especially painting, in Florence and Siena), and was characterized by the intense activity of 'merchant writers' (Palermo 1999:489–495) and the authors of vulgarizations from Andrea da Grosseto to Brunetto Latini of works which besides literary texts in Latin and old French also included technical literature (Vegetius), moral treatises (Albertano da Brescia; Pietro Alfonsi), and medieval canonical compilations (Martino da Braga).

2.2.2 'Golden' Florentine and the importance of the 'Three Crowns'

In secular lyric poetry, the second half of the thirteenth century saw a concerted rendering in Tuscanized form (but with traces of the original linguistic form in illustrious Sicilian) of the poems of the Sicilian school of poetry (Coluccia, 2011). This was the impetus for the Sicilian-Tuscan and Tuscan-Sicilian poets (including Guittone d'Arezzo, Bonagiunta Orbicciani, from Lucca, and Chiaro Davanzati, a Florentine), who preceded the *stil novo*, started by the Bolognese Guido Guinizelli. *Stilnovismo* was mainly based in Florence, with Guido Cavalcanti and the early Dante. A significant strand of comic-realistic poetry also developed in the Tuscan area (cf. Coletti 2022:20–35, 52–54), while, in the wake of Franciscan religious poetry, the first manifestations of religious lyric poetry (the Cortona

laudary) and anonymous popular lyric, set to music, date from the mid-thirteenth century.

It should be noted, however, that Dante, in a scathing review of Tuscan vernaculars in the *De vulgari eloquentia* (I XIII 2–5), excludes the possibility that the illustrious vernacular he sought as a substitute for Latin could be based on *tuscanae loquelae* such as the vernacular of Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Siena, and Arezzo, of which he gives examples designed to highlight their flaws and clumsy coarseness (Nencioni 1958). Dante, therefore, while licensing the poetic use of the vernacular, did not foresee the rise of his own literary Florentine as a linguistic model and as the basis of a tradition of using Italian (Bruni 2002:39–55). He himself made a fundamental contribution to this rise with his choice of Florentine in the (*Divine*) *Comedy*, as did later Petrarch and Boccaccio.

Indeed, it was the *Comedy*, with its immediate and extraordinary success (Baldelli 1994), together with the lyric poetry of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, and the prose of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (thanks also to Pietro Bembo's later making them a 'model', in his *Prose in cui si ragiona della volgar lingua*, 1525) that founded a written tradition that lasted for centuries and initiated a decisive process of linguistic unification of the literary language. Apart from the great stylistic and lexical variety of the *Comedy*, the 'internal solidity that binds the three great authors of the fourteenth century is based on the common linguistic substance that constitutes the raw material of their works (the basic grammatical structure and lexicon [. . .] are those of the Florentine of the time, while incorporating multiple cultural influences)' (Manni 2003:62). The continuity of tradition, written and literary, that links Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—and, in particular, what has been defined, with specific reference to the lexicon, as the 'Dante function' (De Mauro 1999; Serianni 2021; Manni 2021)—explains why one can legitimately speak of an 'old Italian' as opposed to 'modern Italian', distinct, but not entirely different, from the language of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Florentine texts ('golden' Florentine). In short, in the history of Italian, there has not been the discontinuity shown by other European languages between their modern and medieval stages, as with French and English compared to *langue d'oïl* and Old English.

That success of Florentine over other varieties of Tuscan (all well documented: Manni 1994b; Castellani 2000:253–457; Manni and Tomasin 2016) during the fourteenth century cannot be explained only by the undoubted literary primacy of Florence. Another important motivation for its success, not only at the regional but also at the national level, has been identified, in terms of its linguistic structure, which we do not discuss here, in its conservativeness (Nencioni 1958; Devoto and Giacomelli 1972:64–66), and thus in its greater closeness to Latin, as well as in its intermediate position between northern and central-southern vernaculars, which made it the natural intermediary between them (see, however §1.4.2). Then there is also a sociocultural dimension (Durante 1981:104–109), namely, the 'quality of Tuscan writing', and of Florentine writing in particular, traceable to 'that creative capacity and finesse' that manifested itself in commercial and banking activities, civil and political engagement, family life and problems, and in a taste for literature and the arts (one might think also of the importance and the success in Italy of Giotto and Arnolfo di Cambio). This is captured in passages of Florentine authors such as Jacopo Passavanti and Francesco da Barberino reported by Migliorini (1988:197f.), who clearly show an awareness of the expressive qualities of their language; but the statements of non-Tuscan authors such as Antonio da Tempo from Padua, Benvenuto da Imola, and Gidino da Sommacampagna on the beauty of Florentine, particularly in poetry, are even more significant. This is what we might call a drive to promote Florentine *extra moenia*, by non-Tuscan authors who were admirers of the masterpieces of the Florentine fourteenth century, an age whose literature is looked up to as a point of reference (Coletti 2022:81–90).

2.3 'Silver' Florentine and the linguistic crisis of the fifteenth century

From the second half of the fourteenth century, after the plague of 1348, the demographic crisis and the consequent repopulation of Florence with immigrants mainly from western Tuscany, there is a gradual movement of Florentine as used spontaneously in everyday life away from the 'golden' Florentine of the fourteenth-century writers (Manni 2003:55–60). Thus a new phase, 'silver' Florentine, takes shape during the fifteenth century (Manni 1979; Durante 1981:137–141; Palermo 1990–1992).

A further drive towards the divergence between literary Italian, still *in nuce*, from spoken Florentine and Tuscan in general was, paradoxically, due to the very 'linguistic crisis' brought about by Latin humanism, which also had among its protagonists Florentine or Tuscan *literati* and writers. The humanists' search for and proposal of a model of universal linguistic-literary civilization, which had become the common heritage of all the schools of the peninsula brought to bear, against the political and linguistic fracturing of medieval Italy, the idea of a unitary culture that led to the recognition and creation of an Italian literary community (Dionisotti 1967:41f.). Hence, around the middle of the fifteenth century, the reinvigoration of Florentine culture, which is both humanistic and vernacular, by Leon Battista Alberti (the author in 1440 of, among other things, the first grammar of a vernacular—contemporary Florentine—equated with that of Latin and Greek, for further discussion see §6.3) and by Agnolo Poliziano. On the other hand, the Florentine and Tuscan revival took place in a homogeneous historical-cultural context, dominated from one end of the peninsula to the other by humanistic culture, so that 'Tuscans did not conquer the rest of Italy, but rather the rest of Italy conquered Tuscany and revised and divided its linguistic and literary heritage in its own way' (Dionisotti 1967:42). An eloquent example may be the retrieval of Latin lexical elements in place of Tuscan synonyms or graphic-phonetic adaptations, as a result of which they went out of use or were reduced to dialectisms (Durante 1981:126f.). Thus the second member of the following pairs came to prevail: *avaccio*: *presto* 'fast'; *mogliazzo*: *matrimonio* 'marriage'; *primaio*: *primo* 'first'; *sezzaio*: *ultimo* 'last'; *amistà*: *amicizia* 'friendship'; *lalde: lode* 'praise'. Yet despite the support of Latin, *vulgare* and *populo* did not assert themselves over the Tuscanisms *volgare* 'vulgar' and *popolo* 'people'; on the other hand, while many innovations, the subject of normative

disputes during the sixteenth century, remained confined to writings of a regional or dialectal register, some forms of silver Florentine eventually succeeded in imposing themselves in the literary language (Castellani 1967–1970; Bruni 2002:81–87). It should also be noted that Lorenzo de' Medici ('the Magnificent') conducted a linguistic policy that aimed to expand Florentine, as evidenced by the *Epistola* (attributed by many to Poliziano), which prefaced the so-called *Aragonese Collection*, an anthology of Florentine poets sent by Lorenzo the Magnificent to the King of Naples Ferdinand of Aragon in 1476. The *Epistola* celebrates the excellence of Florentine, old and new, in poetry. In the fifteenth century, Florence was the centre of a profound renewal of the figurative arts thanks to the rediscovery of classical culture.

2.4 The sixteenth-century debate about the linguistic model and the language name

In the sixteenth century, the problem of the divergence between the Florentine used by the great fourteenth-century writers and that by then spoken in the Tuscan cities becomes acute, against the background of the spread of printing (cf. Eisenstein 1986) and the emerging *questione della lingua*. Indeed, the first attempt at linguistic 'unification' in the sphere of vernacular writings does not look to Florence but to the spoken usage of the various Renaissance courts, and in particular the court of Rome (this is the so-called *teoria cortigiana* 'courtly theory'), represented, among others, by Baldassarre Castiglione with his *Cortegiano*, which enjoyed a Europe-wide success; moreover, the final redaction of the work was decidedly closer on a formal level to Bembo's ideals). Traditionally considered 'a semblance of language' lacking actual substance, a 'ghost' (Rajna 1901), the 'courtly theory' has been the subject of a profound rethinking (Durante 1981; Drusi 1995; Giovanardi 1998; Tesi 2010). First, the lost treatise *Della volgare poesia* by Calmeta

(Vincenzo Colli), which is considered to be the basis of the theory, admitted the presence of a component based on literary Florentine, at least according to the synthesis offered a few years later by Lodovico Castelvetro, which is to be considered far more reliable than the polemical references to Calmeta of Bembo's *Prose* (Drusi 1995). In fact, the real founder of the courtly theory as opposed to ancient and modern Florentinism has been identified with Mario Equicola, according to whom many words documented in Boccaccio and Luigi Pulci have a congenital rusticness that would make Tuscan unsuitable for the ideal of classical composure that the vernacular, having Latin as its reference, should possess. The ideal of adopting the everyday language of the papal court in Rome as a model for literary language (as exemplified by Equicola with his *Libro de Natura de Amore*, published in 1525) was doomed to fail not only because of the Sack of Rome (1527) but also because of the lack of interest of the papal *entourage* itself, which was committed to the front of Latin humanism (it is no coincidence that, at the time, Rome was the capital of Latin printing, while Venice had the primacy in vernacular publishing: Marazzini 2002:113–118). The possible preference to be given not to Florentine but to the cultivated usage of Rome (whose dialect, after the Sack, had meanwhile moved away from the central-southern dialects, to which it had belonged in the Middle Ages, and had come closer to Tuscan: Trifone, P. 1992; 2008) would be proposed again not only during the sixteenth century by Angelo Colocci, Pierio Valeriano, Matteo Bandello, and others but also later: relevant in this respect are the remarks by Alessandro Tassoni on the first printing of the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* in 1612 (Tassoni 1986) or the saying *lingua toscana in bocca romana* 'Tuscan language in a Roman mouth', first documented in Ambrosio Frediani's grammars for foreigners (see Aprea 2015).

Much greater success accrued to the classicist-style theory of the Venetian Pietro Bembo (recently referred to as the 'Fourth Crown': Patota 2017). Bembo, with the publication in Venice in 1525 of his *Prose in cui si ragiona della volgar lingua* (which had already been circulating in manuscript form for a long time), fixed as a model for literary writings the fourteenth-century Florentine of Dante and especially Petrarch for poetry and Boccaccio for prose. This choice, already developed by Bembo during his publishing activity, at the

beginning of the century, in Venice with the printer Aldo Manuzio, is made explicit in the third book of the work. This, while maintaining the dialogic form of the first two, constitutes a true grammar, of a prescriptive type, of the vernacular (it had been preceded by a few years by Giovan Francesco Fortunio's *Regole grammaticali della volgar lingua*, published in Ancona in 1516). The acceptance, albeit not by everyone, of Bembo's ideas was decisive for the fate of Italian, which would remain anchored for centuries to its own medieval Florentine tradition, especially in poetry (an area in which the Bembian model was put into practice in Petrarchism, inaugurated by Bembo himself, and received with conviction by Ludovico Ariosto in the last edition, of 1532, of *Orlando furioso*). Bembo (who speaks generically of the vernacular, as opposed to Latin, then still widely used even in literature) indeed looks to golden Florentine and not to the contemporary language. Yet in Florence, poised under the Medici to take possession of the whole of Tuscany, the contemporary language had its authors (two 'giants' such as Niccolò Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini) and its scholars, who claimed the linguistic supremacy of contemporary Florentine as the direct heir of fourteenth-century Florentine. On the other hand, Siena, whose university was the first to create a chair of 'Toscana favella' ('of Tuscan tongue') in 1588, was also a centre of great linguistic prestige, thanks to Saint Catherine, the fourteenth-century author of major vernacular texts, and to philologists such as Claudio Tolomei (who was the first to describe, among other things, the phonetic feature of Florentine *gorgia*: cf. §1.4.3.1, §8.1), who preferred that the term 'Tuscan' be adopted instead of 'Florentine'.

The linguistic debate also involved the name of the language (Giovanardi 1998:75–109), and the language name *italiano* (cf. §1.2) —which had had an incipient use as early as the fifteenth century as a synonym for 'Florentine' and 'Tuscan' (Nencioni 1958)—was taken up by Giovan Giorgio Trissino of Vicenza. The latter was the first to speak of 'the Italian language as a general code of communication, ancient and modern, written and spoken' (Castelvecchi 1986:xli). Trissino published in 1529 a *Grammatichetta* that can be regarded as the normative point of reference for courtly theory (Giovanardi 1998:111–137) and a treatise, *Il Castellano*, in which he used the term *italiano* to refer to the 'genus' of the language, superordinate to the 'species' Tuscan, a regional language, and Florentine, a local

language. Both because of his failure to recognize the Florentine nature of the vernacular, resting on Dante's ideas expressed in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, which Trissino (cf. §4.3.3.2) discovered and translated, and because of the innovations he adopted in spelling (the rendering with ε and ω of /ɛ/ and /ɔ/, moreover not always used in a way that conformed to Tuscan pronunciation), Trissino's ideas were much challenged, especially in Florence: one might mention the anonymous *Discorso o dialogo sopra la nostra lingua*, unpublished until the eighteenth century and unanimously attributed to Machiavelli, who explicitly claimed that the *Commedia* was written in Florentine. Only during the nineteenth century were Trissino's ideas taken up, at least in some respects, by authors such as Perticari, Monti, and Ascoli. Trissino's own choice of the language name *italiano* compromised, at least temporarily, the diffusion of the term, which was felt to be polemical with regard to Florence and Tuscany. Conversely, Bembo's ideas, thanks to the mediation of Benedetto Varchi (author of *Hercolano*, which came out posthumously in 1570), managed to penetrate Florence as well, but the linguistic model was no longer only Petrarch and Boccaccio, but the whole of fourteenth-century Florentine, with concessions also to contemporary Florentine, which was derived from it. Precisely in order to reaffirm the primacy of Florentine, the philologist Lionardo Salviati, referring to Varchi, convinced the group of *literati* who formed the Accademia della Crusca (founded in 1582 as a sort of 'playful appendix' to the Accademia Fiorentina, which enjoyed the protection of the Grand Duke Cosimo de' Medici) to prepare a dictionary that would collect the entire heritage of the fourteenth-century Florentine lexicon. Besides including all the words used by Dante (whose first major modern edition after Bembo's was edited by the Accademia in 1595), the Dictionary had also to include authors of no great literary stature, as well as fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Florentine and even non-Florentine writers, as long as they had written in the language of Florence and recognized its primacy, such as Bembo and Ariosto (but not Tasso, who had clashed with Salviati himself).

2.5 The seventeenth century: the Italian of lexicography, science, preaching, and melodrama

It was not until 1612, more than ten years after Salviati's death, that the first printing was made, in Venice, of the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, thanks to which Italian was the first modern language to have a monolingual dictionary (with lemmas in alphabetical order). The title of the work, which was adopted after lengthy internal discussions and which prudently did not indicate the name of the language whose words it contained §1.2 (De Mauro 1989b; Muljačić 1997b; D'Achille and Proietti 2011; Tomasin 2011), did not explicitly reflect the goal of creating a 'thesaurus of the language of the fourteenth century' integrated with modern usage in Florence, with a view to 'highlighting the continuity' between fourteenth-century Florentine and contemporary language and documenting, in particular, the 'words of living Florentine [. . .] preferably through ancient authors' (Marazzini 2009:134). This aim was respected, however, in the second edition, of 1623, and was maintained in the much larger edition of 1691 (published in Florence in three volumes), in which the openness to entries from the technical-scientific sphere and to 'modern' authors such as Galileo Galilei sat side by side with the presence of numerous words indicated with 'V.A.' (*voce antica* 'ancient word')—already adopted in the two previous editions, but here more extensively used, and intended as an aid to reading old texts and as a way of marking terms that had now gone out of use.

Benedetto Buonmattei's treatise *Della lingua toscana* (1623–1643) was both a product of *cruscante* perspective and a systematic statement of its theories. This, together with Carlo Dati's anthology *Prose fiorentine* (1691), was still among the most widely circulated language teaching texts in the mid-eighteenth century that sanctioned the Tuscan-Florentine nature of a language now accepted in national (not only literary: Bozzola 2004) written usage and endowed with prestige at an international level as well (Bruni 2013a).

Throughout the seventeenth century, when people praised or rejected Florentine or Tuscan, or 'when "Italian" was increasingly spoken of, it was celestial Florence that was at issue' (Nencioni 1958), i.e., the fourteenth-century Florentine of the Three Crowns. However, the problem of language naming remained a topic of linguistic debate, as Adriano Politi's *Discorso della vera denominazione della lingua volgare* (1624) shows. Modern Florentine was the nursery of special uses of language (Nencioni 1958), i.e., political theory with Machiavelli, art criticism with Giorgio Vasari, and modern science with Galilei, but was gradually encroached on and displaced by the spread of technical terms derived or newly formed on the basis of classical languages or drawn from foreign languages duly adapted, morphologically and phonologically to the structures of Florentine-Tuscan.

The language name *italiano* (§1.2), banned by the Crusca even from the word list of the *Vocabolario* despite its use, as an ethnic term, in Boccaccio (Tomasin 2011), appears in three works that more or less openly challenged the Crusca: Paolo Beni's *Anticrusca* (1612), the *Osservazioni della lingua italiana* (1613–1644) of Cinonio (Marcantonio Mambelli), and *Il torto e il diritto del non si può* (1655), published by Daniello Bartoli under the pseudonym of Ferrante Longobardi.

The fact that all three authors of the works cited are Jesuits is a sign of the great attention paid by post-tridentine Catholic culture to the language question, particularly in preaching (Librandi 2012; 2017; Marazzini 2002:301–304). Thus, Francesco Panigarola's posthumously published *Predicatore* (1609) recommends showing 'the beauties of our Italian speech', and triggers a significant rhetorical and literary trend in seventeenth-century preaching. Language plays a distinctly anti-Tuscan role in Paolo Aresi's *Arte di predicar bene* (1611): in essence it should be the preacher's regional parlance, but in a 'correct' form, which is what 'we can call common Italian'. The *Quaresimale* (1679) by Paolo Segneri, a member of the Accademia della Crusca from 1678 and compiler of the third edition of the *Vocabolario*, in which examples from his work are also included, is puristic and anti-baroque in spirit.

There was no linguistic or stylistic wavering in the definition of the new expressive genre of melodrama, which emerged between Florence (*Eurydice* by Ottavio Rinuccini and Jacopo Peri, 1600) and

Mantua (*L'Orfeo* by Alessandro Striggio and Claudio Monteverdi, 1607) and soon spread to Rome, Venice, and the rest of Europe. The language of the *libretti* (Grilli 2006; Bonomi and Buroni 2017) was in the tradition of the Petrarchan lyric to which Torquato Tasso's *Aminta* returned, increasingly emphasizing the brevity of metrical structures—as also to be seen in poetry as in the case of Gabriello Chiabrera, who allowed truncated verses ending in words with consonantal endings (Serianni 2009b:339–341)—until it converged with the anti-Baroque classicism of the Academy of the Arcadians founded in Rome in 1690.

2.6 Linguistic continuity and renewal in the eighteenth century

The eighteenth century also presents a highly varied picture: it is called the age of 'Italian in Europe', when figures such as Goldoni, Voltaire, and Mozart (Folena 1983:359–469) were able to use both French and Italian, but it is also an age of constant pronouncements on matters relating to the lexicon and grammar (promoted or inspired by the Crusca) and of heated linguistic debates.

Thus, the Italian that spreads abroad as a language of music (musical terms and captions, melodrama, cantatas, opera buffa, etc.) is essentially that of late seventeenth-century treatises and opera libretti, ranging from Metastasio to Lorenzo Da Ponte. Then there is also the European success of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, with its characters in masks and improvised acting, often in dialect.

The diffusion of Italian in Europe also corresponds to the opening of large sectors of the Italian 'republic of letters' to French language and culture, with its ensuing controversies. At the end of the seventeenth century, the French abbot Dominique Bouhours had branded Italian an 'artificial' and unnatural language, and it was during this controversy that Giovan Gioseffo Orsi, in 1703, highlighted the expressive peculiarities of Italian, asserting its position as a language of culture in the new European intellectual context. In 1764 came Alessandro Verri's *Rinunzia avanti notaio al*

Vocabolario della Crusca, roughly 'abjuration under oath of the *Vocabolario della Crusca*', a hard-line expression of the anti-Tuscan linguistic renewal espoused by the Italian Enlightenment (in particular by the Milanese group associated with the magazine *Il Caffè*), in which relationship with French culture and language played a central role.

This openness, especially to French, but also to other European languages (English: Giuseppe Baretti and Melchiorre Cesarotti's translation of *Ossian's Poems*; German: Aurelio de' Giorgi Bertola: cf. Coluccia 2005), also gave rise, among the many different opponents of what was seen as excessive admiration of things foreign (particularly 'gallomania'), to extensive and multi-faceted attempts to describe Italian, in favour of 'modernizing' it or in defence of the traditional features of the 'national' language.

Thus, in the 'classicist restoration' of the early eighteenth century (Vitale 1978:229–257), an anti-Baroque initiative originating among the Arcadians, original rationalist-Cartesian principles converge and often mingle with influences from Port-Royal grammar and logic, with reflexions on the 'common' language, and above all with traditionalist Tuscanist instances. It starts with a redefinition of the boundaries between prose and poetry (Lodovico Antonio Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia*, 1706; *Riflessioni sul buon gusto*, 1708) and proposes for prose a 'modern' syntax (close to the French model) based on linearity, functionality, and thus greater freedom from rhetorical artifices (Eustachio Manfredi, letter to G. G. Orsi, 1706; Pier Jacopo Martello, *Il vero parigino italiano*, 1718; Francesco Algarotti, *Saggio sopra la necessità di scrivere nella propria lingua*, 1750). There emerge reflexions and proposals on the 'cultivated national language' of the 'Italian literary republic' (Muratori), perceptions of a 'common language' (Goldoni, cf. Folena 1983:22, 116) and, finally, consistent evidence of its diffusion in speech outside Tuscany (Migliorini 1988:452–455; Nencioni 1958 on the 'super-dialect' of the Tuscan spoken in the plays of Giovanni Battista Zannoni). These positions are reflected and often intertwined in the vast lexicographical and grammatical output of the first half of the century (in which the language name 'Tuscan' is preferred to 'Italian', by then prevalent in usage). Girolamo Gigli's *Regole per la toscana favella* (1734) gives instructions for using Gallicisms in the sciences, the arts, and in indicating newly introduced instruments or fashion

(Matarrese 1993:55). Although inspired (given its didactic aim) by greater normative rigour, Domenico Maria Manni's *Lezioni di lingua toscana* (1737, 1773²) is characterized by its openness to current Tuscan, against the archaicizing and popularizing tendencies of antiquated Tuscanism (e.g., in the works of Giulio Cesare Becelli, Niccolò Amenta, and Leonardo Di Capua). In Salvatore Corticelli's *Regole ed osservazioni della lingua toscana* (1745, 1754²), a balanced and successful description of literary Italian, an awareness of the evolution of the language in the Italian literary tradition underpins what must be considered the first coherent treatment of Italian syntax. The fourth printing, in six volumes, of the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (1729–1738) is also inspired by a moderate classicism and therefore open to contemporary cultivated usage (in line with the positions of Anton Maria Salvini, who collaborated in editing the work), with an increase in the range of the authors cited, whether Tuscan or Tuscanizing, up to the seventeenth century (Sannazaro, Cellini, Menzini, etc.) and the inclusion of entries and expressions from the natural and mathematical-physical sciences (with examples from Galilei, Torricelli, Redi, etc.).

The *Gramatica ragionata della lingua italiana* (1770) by Francesco Soave and the *Dizionario universale critico-enciclopedico della lingua italiana* (1797–1805) by Francesco d'Alberti di Villanova are two works that enjoyed wide circulation and which, even in their very titles (finally using the term 'Italian'), exemplify the distance between the culture of the Enlightenment, dominant in the second half of the eighteenth century, and the cautious classicist rationalism of the first half of the century.

The *Gramatica ragionata*, though indebted to the logicism of Port-Royal's 'reasoned' grammar, is predominantly modelled on the treatises of the *grammairiens philosophes* (César Chesneau Du Marsais and Nicolas Beauzée) and thus attentive to the linguistic theories of sensism (discussed in Italy by Cesare Beccaria in his *Ricerche intorno alla natura dello stile*, 1770) and at the same time redolent of the doctrines of Giambattista Vico. The *Dizionario universale*, which marked a clean break from the *cruscante* tradition, was the endpoint and a recapitulation of eighteenth-century Italian and French lexicographical activity. It also draws on the work of earlier bilingual vocabularies (including Baretti's

English-Italian dictionaries, 1760, and D'Alberti's own French-Italian dictionary, 1772), and sets out a description of the linguistic and cultural situation of eighteenth-century Italy (and its tradition) in comparison with that of France and other European countries.

The link between language and culture (the 'genius of a language') is at the heart of Melchiorre Cesarotti's *Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue applicato alla lingua italiana* (1800), fiercely opposed by traditionalists and Tuscanists (Carlo Gozzi, Onofrio Branda, Clementino Vannetti) but representing one of the pinnacles of the philosophy of language in the eighteenth century; it contains, among other things, the proposal to establish a National Council of Language in Florence in place of the Crusca, which in 1783 had been merged with the Florentine Academy and would be reopened by Napoleon in 1811. Cesarotti's positions during the nineteenth century were taken up, in Italy, by exponents of 'Enlightenment classicism' (Timpanaro 2011; C. Roggia 2020).

2.7 The nineteenth century and Manzoni

2.7.1 Purism, classicism, romanticism, and the national question

The idea of nationhood is the underlying theme and common denominator in linguistic and literary discussions in the first half of the nineteenth century: language and literary tradition are unified and the notion of the national language is explicit or inferrable in the treatises (Vitale 1978:374).

In the writings of the purists, opposition to Gallicisms (and to the unrestricted entry of any 'barbarism') is always accompanied by the vindication of the 'purity' of the Italian language and in particular of that of the golden Trecento: the 'blessed time' when 'everyone [. . .] spoke and wrote well', with 'a certain natural candour, a grace of

straightforward manners and sweetness, . . . there is nothing comparable' (Antonio Cesari, *Dissertazione sopra lo stato presente della lingua italiana*, 1808, in Migliorini 1988:544). A primitive perfection, then, certainly imbued with Tuscan but not reducible to it or only to the great authors: this was the extreme version of purism (demotic and anti-literary) to which Cesari adhered in the selection and definition of the thousands of entries added to the *Vocabolario della Crusca* in the revised edition he oversaw (Verona, 1806). In later works (notably in the dialogue *Le Grazie*, 1813) he pointed to the search for the 'innermost beauties of the Tuscan language' and their defence against 'barbarisms' (primarily, Gallicisms) as the purpose of literary studies. Other exponents of Purism (Basilio Puoti, Luigi Fornaciari, Marcantonio Parenti) while agreeing with Cesari to 'pick the most beautiful flower of the works of the ancients', did not limit their work to the fourteenth century, going so far as to consider Tuscan literary texts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this respect, Giuseppe Manuzzi in his *Vocabolario della lingua italiana* (1833–1840; 1854–1865^2) essentially upheld the canon of authors cited in the Crusca *Vocabolario*, drawing more heavily on them for examples. Entirely different were the observations assembled by Vincenzo Monti in the six volumes (plus one appendix) of the *Proposta di alcune correzioni ed aggiunte al Vocabolario della Crusca* (1817–1826), prepared in collaboration with Giulio Perticari and other exponents of Enlightenment classicism (Barbarisi 2005). Against the Tuscan-Florentine primacy it proclaimed the existence of an 'illustrious' Italian of writers 'common to all Italy', an Italian different from and superior to the dialects. This was a language which was not archaic but elegant and proper, elaborated in a long tradition of exemplary works from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century, including texts of philosophy, arts, and sciences, in which technical neologisms are essential and even loanwords acceptable, in moderation. On the national nature of the Italian language, Perticari published *Degli scrittori del Trecento e de' loro imitatori* (1817) and *Dell'amor patrio di Dante* (1820). Stigmatizing the philological sloppiness of purist editions and the *cruscante* habit of rummaging for examples in old texts, he denounced the 'tyranny of the Tuscan dialect' over the 'language that forms the only bond of union' and for which 'we continue [. . .] to be still an all-Italian family [. . .] therefore a language not Florentine, not Senese, not Pistoiese, but

Italian'. These perspectives were substantially shared by Pietro Giordani and Giacomo Leopardi, who in *Crestomazia italiana* (1827–1828) proved the continuity of the literary tradition and expressed the need for a common language that was 'modern, established, formed, recognized and proper', thus alive, since 'a language merely written is a dead language'. The inseparable nexus between spoken language and nationality is decisively set out in Ugo Foscolo's *Epoche della lingua italiana* (1824) and *Discorso storico sul testo del Decamerone* (1825): only with political union would Italian, which was only a written and not a spoken language 'and therefore literary, and not popular', become 'a language at once written and spoken, and literary and popular at the same time [. . .] But then: not now, and never before'.

The proximity of these positions to the idea of the homeland, summarized in Manzoni's famous couplet ('una d'arme, di lingua, d'altare, / di memorie, di sangue e di cor', *Marzo 1821*, vv. 31–32: 'as one in arms, language, altar, memory, blood, and heart') reflects a shared 'linguistic-social' orientation with respect to the question of language (Vitale 1978:437–441) and one which is clearly explicit in many of the interventions from the romantic side in the polemic on romanticism. Thus, in the pamphlet *Avventure letterarie di un giorno* (1816), Pietro Borsieri argued against purist and Tuscanist theses in favour of a prose entirely 'modern' in style and form, going so far as to reassess dialects as a product of 'the predominant ideas and passions of the peoples who speak them'.

2.7.2 The poetic language of the nineteenth century, between classicism and romanticism

A reflexion of the linguistic positions observed so far can be found in the development of early and mid-nineteenth-century Italian poetic language. The formula 'classicism within romanticism' largely sums up nineteenth-century Italian poetry, which is characterized by the 'coexistence [. . .] of archaicizing or classicist forms and options and concessions to modern usage (perhaps barely affected [. . .] by the

numerous truncations)' (Coletti 2022:230–231). This applies not only to major authors (Leopardi and, especially, Manzoni, from his neoclassical beginnings to the metrical and lexical innovations of the *Odi civili* and the *Inni sacri*) but also and especially to patriotic lyricism and, in particular, to the language of opera libretti. Moreover, while in the renewed genre of dialect poetry Romantic realism reached artistic heights with Carlo Porta's Milanese and Giuseppe Gioachino Belli's Roman dialect writing, Tuscan remained confined to the localistic sphere of 'playful' poetry (Filippo Pananti, Antonio Guadagnoli) and only in certain satyrical compositions of Giuseppe Giusti did it achieve national importance. Hence, in his anti-Romantic reaction, Giosue Carducci distinguished his own language (Tomasin 2007) from artificial and amateurish attempts to imitate Manzoni and drew especially on 'ancestral nostalgia' (Nencioni 1958), on the Tuscan speech of his grandmother Lucia.

2.7.3 Manzoni's 'revolution'

Alessandro Manzoni was, after Bembo, the second non-Tuscan intellectual truly to change the historical course of the relation between Florentine, Tuscan, and Italian. Manzoni was Milanese and his first-acquired tongue was Milanese; in fact he learned to speak French earlier and better than Italian. Manzoni turned his hand to writing a historical novel, set in seventeenth-century Lombardy, when the Duchy of Milan was under the sway of the Spanish. He well knew that he was tackling a prose literary genre that had no previous model in Italy but was intended for a 'popular' audience (in the romantic sense of the term), and in fact he did not publish the first draft of the work, entitled *Fermo e Lucia* (1821–1823), because it seemed to him to be written in a composite language, with words of 'local colour' mixed with outdated terms from the literary tradition, Gallicisms, and Latinisms. In search of a more uniform and coherent linguistic form, Manzoni turned to living Tuscan usage, reading and collecting forms and expressions from novelists and playwrights of that region and consulting and annotating the edition of the Crusca *Vocabolario* edited by Cesari in 1806 (the so-called *Crusca veronese*) and Francesco Cherubini's *Vocabolario milanese-italiano*, published

in 1814. This showed him that in terms of spoken language the correspondences between Florentine-Tuscan and Milanese were much greater than what was found in the purist lexicographical tradition. The first edition of the novel, revised even in respect of its plot and now entitled *I promessi sposi* ('The Betrothed'), which appeared between 1825 and 1827 (known as 'Ventisettana') was the result of this intense study, as really only became apparent after the posthumous publication of his annotations to those dictionaries and from works of linguistic reflexion such as his *Sentir messa* and the five editions of his unfinished treatise *Della lingua italiana*. The novel was a great success throughout Italy, but the writer was still not fully satisfied with the result: in that same year 1827 he went to Florence and became convinced that educated contemporary Florentine speech met his ideal of a unified, living and true language: thus, the final edition of the novel, published between 1840 and 1842 (the so-called 'Quarantana') with illustrations, presents the text of the 'Ventisettana', corrected almost word for word. Manzoni reduced the lexicon by suppressing archaisms, polymorphisms, and Lombard dialectisms; he adapted the morphology to the Florentine usage of the time, strongly reducing the third person pronouns *egli*, *ella*, *eglino*, and *elleno*, often replaced by the oblique forms *lui*, *lei*, and *loro* (cf. §4.3.3.1), or eliminating them or replacing them with full nominals; using the ending *-o* and not in *-a* in the first person singular of the indicative imperfect (cf. §1.4.2.2) and interrogative *cosa* 'what' rather than *che*. He admitted some Florentine phonetic traits (not only the reduction of diphthongs in post-palatal position but also the systematic nature of elisions and truncations, cf. §8.2.4, §14.6.3). At the syntactic level, not only in the representation of dialogues but also in the narrative parts, he used some general features of speech (and not of Florentine usage) hitherto censured in writing, such as anacolutha, right and left dislocations, relative phrases with the polyvalent *che* 'that' (cf. §26.3, §29.5.1, §37.2.3, §38.6). For this systematic revision (Vitale 1986; Serianni 1986; Sabatini, F. 1987) Manzoni was helped by literary friends and other Florentines, including the governess Emilia Luti: indeed it is in his dedication to her of a copy of his novel that we find the expression 'sciacquatura in Arno' (roughly 'a good rinse in the river Arno', the river that runs through Florence) which became the by-word for the whole of Manzoni's corrective procedure.

Manzoni made explicit his authorial leaning toward contemporary Florentine (the cultivated, not the popular, kind, which may explain his failure to accept the subject clitic pronouns typical of Florentine §1.4.3.3) and proposed it as a new linguistic model in his 1846 letter to the Piedmontese scientist Giacinto Carena, the author of a *Vocabolario domestico* leaning towards Tuscan-Florentine usage, but also (and wrongly, according to Manzoni) open to allowing geosynonyms (cf. §1.4.3.4, §1.5.2.5, §25.3.5.8, §38.5, §39.6, §40.2, §41.5). More than two decades later, when the process of national Unification had concluded and Florence had temporarily become the capital of Italy, there was another public intervention by Manzoni that had much greater resonance (cf. also §5.5): in 1868 the education minister Emilio Broglio, a Milanese and fervent Manzonian, appointed Manzoni, now in his eighties, as chairman of a national commission charged with 'seeking the easiest ways of spreading in all orders of our people news of good language and good pronunciation'. Manzoni was also chair of the Milanese subcommittee, while there was a second, Florentine, subcommittee, chaired by the Genoese priest Raffaello Lambruschini, pedagogist, senator, and, from 1869, *arciconsolo* (or 'president') of the Accademia della Crusca. Manzoni immediately wrote, on behalf of the entire Milanese subcommittee, a *Relazione* ('report') entitled *Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi di diffonderla* ('On the unity of the language and on ways of diffusing it'), in which he reiterated his choice for living Florentine usage and proposed to encourage its national diffusion via schools, especially by means of a new dictionary that was to collect the words actually in use in Florence, many of them absent from the lexicography of the Crusca tradition. Manzoni's *Relazione* created a 'fuss' (Marazzini 1976) and the Florentine subcommittee itself dissented, so much so that Manzoni resigned his chairmanship, but the minister accepted his proposal and directed, together with the Pistoiese jurist Giovan Battista Giorgini, Manzoni's son-in-law, the *Novo vocabolario della lingua italiana secondo l'uso di Firenze* ('New dictionary of the Italian language according to the usage of Florence', known as 'Giorgini-Broglio'), published in four volumes between 1870 and 1897. This was not an editorial success (partly due to the slowness of printing) but it certainly constituted a turning point in Italian lexicography (Ghinassi 1979), ensuring that the Florentine and Tuscan lexicon

enjoyed a lexicographical success that lasted throughout the twentieth century.

2.7.4 Between (neo-)Tuscanism, tradition, and linguistic unification

After the first edition of *I promessi sposi* and the publication of Manzoni's *Relazione* there followed a series of reactions (Vitale 1978:408–461), ranging from revivals of *cruscante* puristic Tuscanism to diverse (neo-)Tuscanist positions. Among the latter, Niccolò Tommaseo contrasted the Manzonian proposal with a 'Tuscan solution' (*Colloqui col Manzoni*, 1855, posthumously; *Aiuto all'unità della lingua*, 1874). Rejecting the assumptions of 'Manzonian linguistic Jacobinism' (Nencioni 1958), Tommaseo argued that a model of a national language already existed and it was the spoken languages of all Tuscany: the living 'Tuscanness', therefore, was the essence and vital foundation of the national language, in which, however, 'constant use' had to bear 'the seal of tradition'. That is to say that traditional but living materials had to be functionally integrated into the stream of modern usage, and had to be preserved as well as described in lexicographical works (to which Tommaseo devoted so much of his energy).

Even for Gino Capponi (Manzoni's friend and collaborator in the *Saggio di vocabolario italiano secondo l'uso di Firenze*, 1856), the cultivated Italian language, which had been forged by writers and which had fixed the 'intellectual language' of the nation, had in fact been a transposition into writing of the Tuscan 'superdialect' (Nencioni 1958), which was by its nature the most suitable to take on 'the universal and characteristic form of the language'. The language of writers, if it were not to wither away, had to return to its source, namely the Tuscan speech used in political and civil life, by becoming once again natural and alive (*Fatti relativi alla storia della nostra lingua*, 1869). Less distant from the Florentine solution was Giovan Battista Niccolini's position: not the language of the learnèd but the living practice of the 'people' had been and should again become the basis of the national written language (*Qual parte aver possa il popolo nella formazione d'una lingua*, 1818).

The idea of linguistic 'popularity' was also the basis of Giambattista Giuliani's naturalistic-demotic neo-Tuscanism (*Sul vivente linguaggio di Toscana*, 1858; *Delizie del parlare toscano*, 1880). The 'native grace' of the language of the authors of the fourteenth century and of the best authors was derived from the 'natural language' of the Tuscan vernaculars and had been perpetuated in the living languages of Tuscany, especially in the most isolated and uneducated. The written language had, therefore, 'to accommodate itself worthily to the nature of the Tuscan dialect' in which was concentrated the 'gentle spirit' that, by vivifying the language, would 'renew Italy'.

Also decidedly opposed to the Manzonian Florentine solution was Pietro Fanfani, who even in the title of one of his articles (*La lingua c'è stata, c'è, e si muove*, 1868; 'There was and will be a language and it's on the move') contested the idea of a modern spoken model, given the presence of the Italian of the literary tradition, which only needed to be supplemented with the resources of the spoken Tuscan languages. In heated controversy with Manzoni, Fanfani also published *La Paolina. Novella scritta in lingua fiorentina italiana* ('Paolina. A story written in Italian Florentine language', 1868 and 1870) and then, with an inversion of the adjectives, *in lingua italiana fiorentina* ('in Florentine Italian language', 1880), in which, he claimed, 'one does not see a word that was not Florentine, and that was not at the same time Italian'.

Opposition to the adoption of the Florentine of living use as a model for the national language was manifest even on the committee chaired by Manzoni: the report of the Florentine subcommittee, signed by Lambruschini, reiterated that common Italian already existed, and objected to the proposal to make a new dictionary of the Italian language according to the usage of Florence arguing that such a dictionary should be made by selecting only suitable words from already existing works and keeping in mind the purity of the 'naïve' language of country people. Distant from both the Florentine solution and the multifaceted front of the neo-Tuscanists were the views of Luigi Settembrini and the reflections of Carlo Cattaneo (Timpanaro 1965:229–357; Geymonat 2018), who shared a 'unitarist' perspective. Settembrini (in the epistle *Della lingua italiana*, 1868, and in *Lezioni di letteratura italiana*, 1866–1872), observing that 'language is the thought of the nation' and not of a

'single district', concludes that a common and 'living' Italian language can be born only when the 'peoples of Italy [. . .] coming closer together, knowing and loving each other', have formed a unitary national 'thought'. Cattaneo set out from the conviction that 'our language is a thing made, thanks be to God, not a thing to be made', and that, having become a common heritage, it should be defined as 'Tuscan-Italian' because of the joint contribution, over the centuries, of the different regional situations to the original Tuscan background. Thus he could conclude, with positions anticipating those later expressed by Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, that, having achieved political unity, the common Italian language would be better defined and strengthened as a product and at the same time a vehicle of the active participation of Italians in united national life and culture.

As for Ascoli, his *Proemio* to the first issue of the *Archivio glottologico Italiano* (the journal of Italian linguistics and dialectology that he founded in 1873), that is to say, following the publication of the first volume of Giorgini-Broglio, constitutes the most decisive critique of the Manzonian *Relazione*, because it argues that contemporary spoken Florentine is not entitled to be the reference point for the national written language, and that linguistic unity would be gradually achieved through the progressive expansion of culture, not through the dissemination through schools of a dictionary based on the use of Florence, which in the meantime had ceded the role of capital to Rome (Dardano 1974).

2.8 From the turning point of national Unification to the varieties of contemporary Italian

In the years following Unification, Manzoni's ideas were pervasively followed in school teaching, where *I promessi sposi* also had an early success (Polimeni 2011), and 'the identification of living Tuscan usage with the Italian language *tout court*' was increasingly widespread (Serianni 2013:131). Thus, the role of Tuscan was still

active, for example, in the reduction of the diphthong *-uo-* occurring in post-palatal position (*campagnolo* 'country', *figliolo* 'son', actually retreating before *figlio*; it resists longer in *giuoco* 'game' or in *aiuole* 'flowerbeds') and in the expansion of the imperative forms *dai* 'give!', *fai* 'do!', *stai* 'stay!', and *vai* 'go!' (for *da'*, *fa'*, *sta'*, *va'*), but failed to spread nationally the use of deictics such as *codesto*, *costì*, *costà* (cf. §1.4.3.3), or, except in literary usage, of the type *noi si fa* instead of *(noi) facciamo* 'we do' (cf. §1.4.2.2). Conversely, many lexemes of Tuscan, indeed Florentine, origin (*pesca* 'peach', *granata* 'broom', *pisolino* 'nap') spread in this era within the basic vocabulary (De Mauro 1980:149–183) and particularly in the lexicon of cooking, thanks in part to Pellegrino Artusi's cookbook (1891; Frosini 2009); also notable is the expansion throughout Italy of idiomatic expressions and proverbs proper to Tuscan speech (Giusti and Capponi 1871) and taken from works by Tuscan authors such as Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (Pizzoli 1998).

However, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, the question of the relationship between Florentine, Tuscan, and Italian takes a different form. While no one questions anymore what the name of the national language should be, there have been controversies, which can be considered manifestations of a 'new language question', concerning, directly or indirectly, the relationship of the national language to Florentine (cf. §1.4.2). At the beginning of the century, there was controversy between the Manzonian Edmondo De Amicis and the philosopher Benedetto Croce over language education (Tosto 1967) and, after World War II, the controversy (triggered by Lepschy 1966) over the pronunciation of Italian according to the Tuscan model proposed by Fiorelli (1964), and, thus, over the correspondence between Florentine/Tuscan and modern Italian; also, the debate sparked by Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1964 views on the emergence of a new, technological, Italian, along the Milan-Turin axis, to be contrasted with the Italian of a backward-looking Rome-Florence axis (Parlangeli 1969; D'Achille 2019); finally, the debate about the way in which Italian was taught in schools, criticized by the Florentine Don Lorenzo Milani in 1967 for being so far from popular usage (Amenta and Castiglione 2017).

Returning to the language name 'Italian', one should note the frequent use in linguistic studies in the second half of the twentieth century of the plural 'Italians', with reference to the spread of

different varieties of the national language and with specific attention to diatopic variation, so much so that we commonly speak (after Pellegrini 1960) of 'regional Italians' (see also Chapters 38–41). These also include the Tuscan variety, traditionally considered the closest to standard Italian (the latter being a label proposed by De Mauro 1963; cf. D'Achille and Proietti 2011; D'Achille 2012a). Yet, Tuscan seems to have contributed less than other regional varieties to the formation of the so-called neo-standard (Berruto 1987a). Thus, the centrality of Florence gradually diminished and the 'linguistic capital' was identified with other cities (Marazzini 2016a): first with Rome—during Fascism (Bertoni and Ugolini 1939), but also in the post-Second World War period (De Mauro 1963)—thanks, first of all, to its role as political capital and as the seat of Italian film and radio-television activity; then with Milan, and to some extent also Turin, the industrial capitals, considered not only as the popularizer of the 'technological language' identified by Pasolini but also as the 'standardized pole', whose prestige seems to have surpassed that of both Rome and Florence (Galli de' Paratesi 1984). However, in the teaching of diction and acting the model remains that of *fiorentino emendato* ('amended Florentine'), which has its roots in the early nineteenth century and is still to be heard in the theatre and especially in dubbing, albeit with progressive updates, especially in recent decades. For example, *rafforzamento fonosintattico* (§14.6.2, §15.2.1.2.4) has now been abandoned because it is perceived as regional, at least after the preposition *da* 'from'. The same model underlies the *Dizionario d'ortografia e di pronunzia* (Migliorini, Tagliavini, and Fiorelli 1969), as of 2023 also available on the Web in a new multimedia edition, although not even the Italian broadcaster RAI, which promoted it in 1969, applies it any more. In fact, and also as a result of the growth of speaking Italian and the scant attention paid in school teaching to details of pronunciation that are not marked orthographically, the phonological system of contemporary standard Italian (or 'neo-standard') seems to have given up on the phonological oppositions, typical of Florentine/Tuscan, between high and low-mid vowels (a trait, moreover, shared with Roman Italian) and especially those between voiceless and voiced in the case of fricative and affricate alveolar consonants (respectively /s/ vs /z/ and /ts/ vs /dz/, cf. §14.1, §15.2.1.2.2). Then there is also the acceptance, and indeed the presence in the basic vocabulary, of

unadapted foreign forms ending in consonant (*bar*, *stress*) or in consonant groups (*sport*, *film*) alien to the phonological structures of traditional Tuscan-Italian. On the morphological level, similar phenomena are also recorded, such as the tendency for the invariability of masculine nouns in *-o*—not only in the case of shortenings, foreign words, and words based on proper names (*euro*, *frigo* 'fridge', *gazebo*, *pachino* 'cherry tomato') but also in *sabato* 'Saturday' (D'Achille 2005b)—and, in word formation, the decreasing productivity of the suffix *-aio* to indicate denominal nouns, not only in the face of *-ista* but also of its typical non-Tuscan etymological cognate *-aro* (§1.4.2.1). Finally, at a syntactic level, a feature of southern origin that is, at least apparently, not Tuscan (or apparently less widespread in Tuscany and Florence than in Rome and the North) is the prepositional accusative or differential object marking (D'Achille 2018) (see discussion in §1.5.2.4, §39.5.4, §40.2).

The lexicon has been left until last, because here the centrality of Tuscan, and specifically Florentine, usage, pervasive until well into the early twentieth century, at least in lexicography, seems to have waned. In addition to the preparation by the Accademia della Crusca, taking as its starting point the Giorgini-Broglio, of a *Vocabolario del fiorentino contemporaneo* (Poggi Salani 2019), the fragmentary nature of Tuscan usage itself has been documented (thanks to the surveys of *Atlante lessicale toscano* 2000 and, more recently, those produced by the *LinCi* project: Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a). It has also been apparent at least since Rüegg (1956), and from the *LinCi* project that Tuscan geosynonyms have a low capacity for expansion when compared with geosynonyms from the north (*papà* vs Tsc. *babbo* 'dad', *anguria* vs Tsc. *cocomero* 'watermelon'), from Rome (*pupazzo* vs Tsc. *fantoccio* 'puppet'; *frocio* vs Tsc. *finocchio* (a derogatory term for a homosexual man): D'Achille and Giovanardi 2018), from the south (*cozze* vs Tsc. *mitili* 'mussels'), or even, more recently, when compared with Anglicisms (*baby sitter* vs Tsc. *bambinaia*). It should be added that, among the Italianisms that are more widely used abroad, apart from the ancient *bravo* in the function of an exclamation (Patota 2016), neither the *ciao* greeting 'hello, hi!' (De Blasi 2018), which is Venetian as is *grazie!* 'thank you', nor the food items *pizza* (Neapolitan: D'Achille 2017), *espresso*, and *cappuccino* (the former probably from Turin, the latter Milanese: D'Achille 2012b; D'Achille 2022b) have Tuscan origins.

However, the interest with which the general public and the press—even more than the political authorities—follow the activities of the Accademia della Crusca (to whose Advisory Service enquiries arrive daily on the acceptability of entries, particularly neologisms, of forms and constructs not present in the traditional standard) and the fact that Florence has been earmarked as the home of the planned Museo Nazionale dell'Italiano ('national museum of Italian') suggest that Tuscany still retains, in the 'collective imagination', an undoubted prestige at the level of the national language (see also many contributions in Marazzini and Nesi 2019). At issue, however, is an Italian increasingly drifting away from the medieval variety of Italo-Romance that formed its foundation, partly because of a series of circumstances external to the language that are altering, at least in part, its physiognomy (D'Achille 2024; Dessì Schmid 2024): the promotion of English as the sole language of the hard sciences, less attention by schools to literary texts of the past, the emergence of new Italians, second-generation immigrants, the growing diffusion of electronically mediated communication.

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Chapter 3

The history of Italian

The roles of literature and economics

Claudio Marazzini

3.1 The economy and money in the earliest vernacular documents

From the earliest times the management of money, property, and goods favoured the production of forms of writing in which vernacular could appear besides, or even instead of, Latin. This was because the writer was often not capable of using the language of culture (Latin), which could be learned only by attending grammar schools. Some of the earliest documents containing Italian emerged in response to economic needs. These were writings connected with the administration of property (ecclesiastical, family, or private), or mercantile accounting. Interestingly, some cases even involve keeping actual bank accounts. Everyday circumstances called for a kind of writing which we generally describe as 'practical', quite often the work of professionals, such as medieval notaries. We may think of the *Placito Capuano* of 960 CE, the best known of the early documents from Italy in the vernacular and widely hailed, with a not entirely unjustified metaphor, as the birth certificate of Italian (see also §1.2). In the *Placito*, the records of a civil court case, an economic dispute over the contested ownership of lands between a private party and the abbey of Montecassino is resolved through the

witnesses' testimonies (given in the vernacular) inserted into the legal Latin (Maconi and Volpi 2022:19–45). The other *Placiti campani*, from Sessa Aurunca and Teano in 963 CE, have a similar function, where the formulae in vernacular resolve disputes over the ownership of land (Maconi and Volpi 2022:121–125). The earliest Tuscan document known to us, the *Postilla amiatina* of 1087, is also attributable to an economic circumstance, even though the interpretation is controversial: the *Postilla*, added by the notary at the foot of a notarial act of donation, expresses a sarcastic criticism either of the donation itself or its consequences (Maconi and Volpi 2022:75–81).

The early twelfth-century *Conto navale* ('naval account book'), the earliest Pisan document currently known to us, also belongs to the domain of economic management (see also §1). It lists the expenses incurred in the fitting out of one or more vessels, and certainly comes from the mercantile world (Maconi and Volpi 2022:81–90). Another Tuscan document, the *Decime di Arlotto* (first decade of the thirteenth century), contains a list of tolls (Maconi and Volpi 2022:97–102). The earliest Florentine document also belongs to the category of practical texts of an economic nature. It is a fragment of a bankers' account book, and is therefore obviously linked to the professional management of money. It is the first document of its kind in Europe, the product of an urban, lay, and mercantile civilization (Manni 1994b:301), and it is an embryonic type of accountancy, the *libro del dare e dell'avere*, lit. 'book of giving and having', in which merchants' debits and credits were written down (Ricci 2011:871).

In the Veneto we find the *Garanzia* of the Venetian merchant Pietro Corner (late twelfth century), which is basically a brief note or aide-mémoire for a maritime expedition and a payment to be made. Here under a veneer of very approximate Latin we discern the real structure of a text conceived and pronounced in the vernacular (Stussi 2005:29): it comes from the time when written documentation of Venetian commerce (contracts, bills, obligations, proxies) was beginning. The Veneto has specific characteristics arising from the maritime ambitions of Venice. Venetian was later to become a colonial language as well. Yet while we find early mercantile vernacular documents from the Veneto, the use of the vernacular in literary writing comes late, contrary to what we find in

Tuscany, where, as Stussi (2005:47) observes, economic development seems to have the development of the literary use of the vernacular. This makes Tuscany the only area in which economic and literary primacy go hand in hand, creating favourable positions for the complete development of the language, used as it was in ever more complex and widespread forms.

3.2 The writing of merchants and Tuscan merchants

Taking mercantile writing overall, Tuscany seems to have the advantage over the other Italian regions. A look at the thirteenth-century texts gathered by Castellani (1952), augmenting Schiaffini's (1926) collection, confirms the massive presence of financial and business documents, in particular the *Libri del dare e dell'avere* (for which see Casapullo 1999:76–78), writings that certainly have no aesthetic appeal and indeed are repetitively formulaic and monotonous, yet allow us to reconstruct the characteristics of the ordinary language of the period, and compare it with the poetic language of authors, including Dante, identifying differences and similarities and thereby allowing a finer appreciation of the characteristics of the contemporary literary language. The common Florentine of the thirteenth century became notably rich in terms that were either specific to economic and financial domains, or were adapted to technical meanings. This can be seen from the glossary at the end of the second volume of Castellani (1952, II:823–939). Among these terms are *abbattere* 'take off, discount', *accattare* 'borrow', *accomanda* 'deposit of money', *agguagliare* 'to bring different credits and debts to a common term', *avanzo* 'profit', *cassare* 'cancel an account', *costo* 'passive interest', *detta* 'debt' (Fr. *dette*), *mendare* 'compensate', *menovare* 'fall short of reaching a certain amount', *navolo* 'maritime hire', *pagatore* 'guarantor', *pedaggio* 'toll', *pegno* 'pawn', *prestanza* 'obligatory public loan', *presente* '(a) present', *ragione* 'account', *ricomperare* 'redeem', *riconoscenza* 'receipt', *ristorare* 'compensate', *ristoro*

'compensation', *ritrarre* 'cash in', *sopracomperare* and *soprapagare* 'pay more than the value', *sostenere* 'delay payment', *tenuta* 'possession', not to mention *fiorino* 'florin', the famous coin which began to be made in 1252, bearing a lily, the symbol of Florence, the emblem of Florentine wealth (although other, older, Italian coins became internationally widespread, such as the Venetian silver *ducat* or the golden *zecchino*: Stammerjohann 2013:22f.). Some of these mercantile technical terms survive into modern Italian: for example, after the 2020–2021 Covid pandemic, the Italian government granted *ristori* (the official term) to those who had suffered various losses because of government-enforced closures. *Ristorare* and *ristoro* are frequent words in medieval mercantile texts, for example in the correspondence of the famous 'Merchant of Prato', Francesco di Marco Datini. The noun *ristoro* and the verb *ristorare* are also used in poetry, even in Dante (see *Purg*. XXVIII, 121–122, or *Par*. V, 31) [. . .] *Ristorare* and *ristoro* recur in other contemporary Tuscan authors (e.g., Chiaro Davanzati, *Canzone* 57, v.61 v.66), although in the latter the moral and metaphorical meaning departs from the association with economics and accounting. Comparison with the language of the thirteenth century, then, enhances our interpretation of Dante's usage and brings home to us its concrete motivation, and therefore its power. Returning to the technical-economic usage of Tuscan merchants, in some cases it was of limited private use while in others it extended to other parts of Italy, with equivalents in local *scriptae*: thus *abbattere* for 'to discount', found also in Sicilian, or *ragione* for 'account', as *rason* in Venice and *raxuni* in Sicily (Casapullo 1999:84).

Financial language, ancient and modern, has often been studied, precisely because of the particularly significant role of merchants (see Dardano 1998; Gualdo 2023a; Proietti 2010; Schiaffini 1930; Sosnowski 2006; Tomasin 2021:3–128) in the history of the development of the Italian language (Stussi 1982:69–72). The medieval definition of 'merchant' was broader than the modern one, because it covered artisan, commercial, and financial activity. While merchants generally did not know Latin (even if they could write and keep accounts, see Tavoni 1992b:21), they enjoyed writing and they wrote extensively, and were sometimes adept in using the new vernacular literature, including for poetry. The fourteenth-century Florentine merchant Domenico Lenzi, a trader in wheat and grain,

described himself as a 'rough and simple wheat-dealer', and explained that he had used his native vernacular because 'my tongue never learned Latin' (see Branca 1986:509). Yet what he wrote, and what other merchants wrote, shows a discerning feel for the art of narration, so much so that Branca (1986:xi) insisted that these texts, overall of rather poor quality, nonetheless revealed the down-to-earth directness of the great entrepreneurs who, besides their accounts and their calculation of profits, also find room for sentiment and imagination.

Latin may not have been part of the cultural equipment of merchants, but anyone involved in commerce and money-lending had frequent dealings with notaries. Familiarity with documents drawn up by notaries meant that merchants also got into the habit of using a set language full of set formulaic phrases, albeit lacking rhetorical frills. Scholars have often stressed that Tuscan mercantile civilization displays a sort of linguistic primacy over the rest of Italy simply on the basis of the vast amount of material that it produced (Manni 2003:26). This assumed superiority of Tuscan has sometimes been questioned, on the grounds that it is a distortion arising from the fact that there is more interest in texts from Tuscany or Florence than elsewhere, because of their 'superior language'. The fact remains that over three quarters of published (and therefore readily available) mercantile texts are of Florentine or Tuscan origin (see Tavoni 1992b:26; Cicchetti and Mordenti 1984:1117 n.). It is true that northern Italian merchants, generically known as 'Lombards', a term applied to all Italian money lenders, left their mark across Europe, not only in London's *Lombard Street* and the *Rue des Lombards* in Paris (Stammerjohann 2013:22–23). But the presence of Tuscan influences never ceases to be astonishing: great amounts of material from Tuscan merchants have emerged even in foreign archives, such as the one explored by Cella (2005; 2009), for the Sienese Gallerani company, which was active at the beginning of the fourteenth century in Paris, London, and Cambrai, with business interests in Flanders. The gigantic Datini archive in Pistoia alone offers extraordinary documentation (cf. Cella 2015:26). Tavoni (1992b:22), after Bec (1967:113), tells us that there are 125,000 letters in it, sent from the firm's headquarters in Prato, not far from Florence, between 1363 and 1422, from 267 different places in thirty-two countries in the world, including the Indies and China. Italian

mercantile epistolary documentation abounds from the end of the fourteenth century onwards. Casapullo (1999:70–71) notes that the prose of mercantile letters is indeed less repetitious than that of the account books, but that that does not make it spontaneous or close to speech. Rather, it adopts many formulaic phrases, although it does not have the ornate flourish of Latin letter-writing, which was only possible for those who had studied the art of rhetoric.

There were many opportunities for writing by merchants and money-dealers: besides letters and account books, there are the various *libri maestri*, *libri di famiglia*, *memoriali*, and so on, recounting more personal, family matters, although always with an economic tinge, such as births, deaths, marriages, and, if necessary, advice to descendants, maxims, and precepts. This always appears in something of a jumble, where family records and property records find themselves side by side (Branca 1986:xiv), and therefore it lies somewhere between a ledger and a journal (cf. Cicchetti and Mordenti 1984:1125f.).[1] The variety of types of writing can be seen from the Tuscan mathematician Luca Pacioli: in his *Summa de Arithmetica*, he explained that a merchant must have three books, the *Memoriale*, the *Giornale*, and the *Quaderno* (cf. Marazzini 2016:20f.). In the *Memoriale*, also called *Vacchetta* or *Squartafoglio*, the merchant records everything that happens day by day and hour by hour, noting every item of sale or purchase (Pacioli 1523:c.200*r*), sometimes placing within it an inventory of possessions. Yet another type of mercantile texts were the *pratiche di mercatura*, handbooks containing information on commodities, nautical matters, applied mathematics, or economics (Casapullo 1999:69), and also the *libri di abaco*, which taught elementary mathematics and book-keeping.

Palaeographers call the graphic form of mercantile writing *scrittura mercantesca*, that is to say the same cursive hand used in the account books (Branca 1986:xvii). It is linked, then, with practical activity and the management of money, yet is also characteristic of many codices that contain medieval literary texts, such as the famous Vatican 3793 containing the richest collection of early poetry and which must be seen as stemming from a ‘high mercantile’ environment (Antonelli 1992:28).

3.3 The prestige of literary language in Italy and the *Tre Corone*

Through an unforeseeable coincidence, literature in Italy acquired a special role in the diffusion and stabilization of the Tuscan language, beyond the natural boundaries of the area in which it was commonly and spontaneously spoken. Because the Italian political state was created late (in 1861), we need to bear in mind the true nature of the geographical area between the Alps and Sicily, characterized as it was by great linguistic variety and striking political fragmentation, and yet clearly accepted to be *Italy*, and therefore part of the consciousness of its inhabitants, at least the educated ones, and also because of its famous classical inheritance (cf. Bruni 2010; Tomasin 2011). The same literary models spread at a quite early date over this geographical area, otherwise so divided in character and traditions (Maconi 2012). These models left their mark on the written language, on the usage of the upper classes, on princely chancelries, and eventually on grammatical theorizing, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Literature therefore had a decisive role in the stabilization of the Italian language and a much greater one than in other European nations. As Tavoni (1992a:1083) rightly says, 'if statehood is the hallmark of French linguistic unification (as with English and Spanish), and socialness is the hallmark of the unification effected by German as the "Protestant language", the hallmark of Italian linguistic unification is an illustrious literary tradition'.

To understand this process, we have to consider a series of events which happened almost by chance. First and foremost, the very high quality of the literary masterpieces created was achieved by authors who used Florentine, even if they were not necessarily in Florence. The most prominent names are Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Only Boccaccio was firmly rooted in his own region, at least from adulthood. Dante and Petrarch lived, and produced literature, outside Tuscany. These three have attracted the somewhat abused label of the *Tre Corone* ('Three Crowns'), as the foremost figures of fourteenth-century Italian literature. But this term well captures

their predominance over all other authors. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio used, albeit in different ways, the Tuscan language of Florence, the language of that opulent city in which, as we have seen, there developed a particularly lively cultural, mercantile, and economic environment.

Yet something else also favoured the spread of the Florentine literary language beyond Florence and Tuscany: the exile of Dante. Dante wrote the *Divine Comedy* and distributed the text when he was living in northern Italy. This is one reason why the *Divine Comedy* was not limited to the culture of the cities, however much Dante loved Florence and often mentioned it. In fact, his own citizens had condemned him to death. His first readers were Italians from the north of Italy.

Petrarch, a generation younger than Dante and the son of a Florentine who had also been exiled at the same time as Dante, lived in many places, even outside Italy (Provence). He was at the court of Avignon, where the Italian and Tuscan presence was very strong, and he ended his life in the Veneto. He was famous also for his Latin works, but his *Canzoniere* is enormously important as the basis and foundation of the entire Italian lyrical language, down to modern times. His linguistic and stylistic system was a continual point of reference for the normative system of Italian poetry, as well as a natural ground for generations of poets, from minor ones to the greatest (see Afribo 2010:1098), such as Tasso, Metastasio, Foscolo, and Leopardi. It can actually serve as the basis of a system of poetic language capable of being codified as a 'grammar', as it has been systematically described by Serianni (2009b). The refined language of the *Canzoniere*, whose real title is, in Latin, *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, is Florentine, and Petrarch had learned Tuscan at home and in Arezzo and Pisa, where he spent the first ten years of his life until 1312. That was when his father ser Petracco decided to move the family to Avignon, where Clement V had transferred the papal see (Wilkins 1964:14). But the Florentine of *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* is produced by someone who never settled in Florence: it is a matter of literary environment, not of where the author happened to be born or lived, and it has elements from Latin, Provençal, and the Sicilian poetic tradition. Yet Boccaccio himself unfailingly stressed his friend's Florentineness (Boccaccio 1928:195).

Of the *Tre Corone*, the most rooted in the life of the city of Florence was Boccaccio, who nonetheless had an 'Italian' experience in Naples, in a mercantile environment, because he was living in the capital of the southern Kingdom working for a major Florentine bank, the bank of the Bardi, where he was involved in mercantile and banking activity' (Branca 1980:xlii). When he was caught up in the crisis that befell the bank, he had to return to Florence. While Petrarch creates what was to be for centuries the canon of the Italian poetic language, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, a book of one hundred short stories held together within a literary framework, is responsible for the dominant model in prose narrative, which also remained stable for centuries, although it was frequently challenged—especially from the eighteenth century onwards. Characteristic of this prose was not only a choice of vocabulary belonging to the living Florentine of the fourteenth century but a very elaborate syntax with considerable hypotaxis, sentence-final verbs as in Latin, and the parenthetical use of gerundive phrases. The *Decameron* can also show greater linguistic litheness, for example in dialogues between characters, and there are even recurrent chunks of direct speech and phrases linguistically from outside Tuscany (Coletti 2022:74–77). However, the prose model which for centuries bore on what passed for elegant writing was that most preferred by Pietro Bembo, who celebrated it in his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525). This work set the canon for Italian prose (cf. also §4.3.2). The elevated and mannered style is found in the introductory parts of the *Decameron*, in the literary framing which links the short stories together. The *Decameron* circulated most widely in the Florentine mercantile and financial world, and this world was in so many respects both a source and a privileged consumer of Boccaccio's narrative (Asor Rosa 1992:483). Indeed Branca (1981:134) called the *Decameron* 'the merchants' epic'. At the end of the fourteenth century, however, Italian literature had become rich enough to provide models for all European literature: *Petrarchism* is a phenomenon that does not take hold just in Italy, and Boccaccio's stories were not imitated and admired only south of the Alps, at least until Giraldi Cinzio's *Ecatommiti*, but also abroad: for example, for English, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and, for French, the *Eptameron* of Marguerite de Navarre.

3.4 The primacy of literature: the great fortune of Dante's *Divine Comedy*

Dante was not only a major promoter of the vernacular. In his *De vulgari eloquentia* (*DVE*) he described its characteristics and its potential for use in literature. This treatise, which remained virtually unknown, had no influence until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when it became the object of extensive debate. In any case it displays a full awareness of promoting the new language, as did the *Convivio*. In *DVE*, Dante shows the importance of hierarchy in types of writing, from the simplest, devoid of rhetorical devices, an elementary form comparable to the products of mercantile culture described earlier, to the art of the ornate and complex sentence, in which rhetorical figures and the deliberate elaboration of sentence structure make the discourse sublime, raising it to the highest level. Dante has no doubt that only high literary writing, especially poetry, can attain the greatness of a natural language and ensure its continuity. In Dante's time, and fuelled by the circulation of the *Divine Comedy*, the debate was already under way as to whether the vernacular should be used, or whether poetic greatness was more surely to be attained by recourse to Latin, the literary language par excellence. Dante had complete faith in the vernacular. He used it in his masterpiece, attempted a theoretical justification of its primacy, and in *DVE* he described the historical trajectory of the new language, from the Sicilians who were the first writers to use the vernacular, to the context in which he had himself been formed, that breeding ground of the Tuscan poets to which his *stilnovista* lyric poetry belonged.

As fate would have it, the proudly Florentine Dante ended up an exile in northern Italy, far from his homeland. In *DVE* indeed he called himself a 'citizen of the world' (*DVE* I. 6, 3). The *Divine Comedy* became widely known far from Florence, although the poem was written in Florentine, and it was a great success. This is proved by the number of manuscripts of the *Divine Comedy* that have come down to us, in such quantities as to make it difficult, indeed

impossible, to produce an edition along Lachmannian lines drawing on the entire manuscript tradition. Petrocchi (1994) and more recently Inglese (2022) had to resort to making a selection of witnesses on the basis of what is generally known as the *antica vulgata*. This involved selecting only the earliest manuscripts, to allow the *collatio* (comparison between the different codices), albeit limited to a small number of witnesses, in order to bring order to a tradition which immediately appears to be full of flaws and contamination, precisely because the copyists of Dante's *Comedy* were far from having a command of Tuscan. Linguistically, too, the poem was unfamiliar to those who spoke northern Italian dialects. The early damage caused by a textual tradition which was as extensive as it was corrupted constituted a major difficulty in reconstructing the authentic details of Dante's language. The original writings were lost as was the tradition that first disseminated his works in the Verona-Ravenna area, the origin of the family of Emilian-Romagnol codices (see Petrocchi 1975; Mercuri 1992:212–215). Thus the early tradition of the *Comedy* was, as Dante's biography also suggests, exclusively northern Italian (Trovato 2010:78). Old codices considered to offer authoritative readings, such as the famous Urbinate lat. 366 of the Vatican Library, have a Padanian patina which contaminates the linguistic Tuscanness of Dante's original, by inserting forms such as the typically northern *meggio* for *mezzo* 'half', *lassiò* for *lasciò* 'he left', *donque* for *dunque* 'therefore', *angossia* for *angoscia* 'anguish' (see Mecca 2017:115). The Urbinate codex, which descends from a manuscript close to the first Ravenna copies disseminated by Dante's sons, has an Emilian-Romagnol patina (Trovato 2010:80). The enormously important fact that emerges clearly from all this is Dante's indisputable success with his contemporaries, first and foremost in the places of his exile, in north-eastern Italy, together with the sheer hard work put in by those who had to grapple with Tuscan, which was not their native language, as they copied out the text. Dante thus became a model of literary language and his work laid the foundations for the formation of a literary Italian distant from the natural language used in everyday life to the north of the 'La Spezia-Rimini Line', the line by which linguists nowadays mark the boundary between northern Italian dialects and the central (including Tuscan) and southern varieties (Rohlfs 1972a:10).

3.5 The languages of the *Tre Corone* in grammar and lexicography

The influence of the literary language of the *Tre Corone* was fundamental, both because it gave rise to direct imitations (Coletti 2022:81–88) and because it was the basis of grammatical theorizing, becoming a reference point for those who established the linguistic norm. Italian grammar was not studied in schools until the start of the eighteenth century, but grammars were a means for success and those using the vernacular, both men of letters and high-level adult writers, made use of them. The first Italian grammar printed, Fortunio's (1516), is clear about its literary motivations and declares its sources, which are precisely the *Tre Corone*. Fortunio, a jurist by profession, states that he wrote his grammar after observing how the vernacular works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio showed in themselves a harmony which could not have existed without rules: all one had to do was to extract the rules from those authors. The success of Fortunio's grammar was immediate, because a book of literary rules explicitly founded on the usage of Dante and above all of Petrarch and Boccaccio seems even today just what was needed to meet the needs of the many non-Tuscans whose acquaintance with relatively cheap printed books made them enthusiastic admirers of vernacular literary production (Trovato 1994:90). Bembo's grammar, contained within the *Prose della volgar lingua* (first edition 1525), was also based on the usage of writers, even if it gave Petrarch pride of place over Dante. Unlike Fortunio's grammar, Bembo's also contained a more complex and theoretically developed narrative. Bembo, very theoretical in his approach, placed the language of literature in a very broad context, founding a truly classicizing aesthetic which would dominate for centuries, although it was to varying degrees contaminated with 'Florentinizing' theories which gave more or less room to the spoken Tuscan language. It is against the background of the grammars of the early sixteenth century that we should consider the 'vigorous and rapid process of appropriation of the Tuscan patrimony by non-Tuscans' (Tavoni 1992a:1065). Speech itself was evaluated in relation to the literary language, and

that was a language substantially trapped within traditional models, that is to say in the fourteenth-century Florentine of the *Tre Corone*. Italian lexicography, as well, from its origins in the sixteenth century, and from the exemplary development in Florence of the Accademia della Crusca (which in 1612 produced the first great dictionary of Italian), focused on the usage of writers, and first and foremost the *Tre Corone*. So Italian lexicography was based on literary authority, on a corpus of canonical authors, those famously cited in the Crusca, and the literary language on which principles of linguistic authority were based was essentially that of an earlier time, the fourteenth century.

3.6 The publishing industry and the Italian language

The first major dictionary of the Italian language was the Crusca's. It was published in 1612 and printed in Venice, even though it was the product of work done in Florence by academicians whose Academy was Florentine through and through, and proud of the fact. It was printed elsewhere for economic reasons, as we shall see, because Venice was the capital of Italian publishing. In the words of the Academy's secretary, in a dedicatory letter to the extremely powerful Florentine Concino Concini, the dictionary had been born, raised, and brought to perfection in Florence; it was the offspring of the Academy—whose goal was the universal benefit, glory, and eternal life of the language. The *Cruscanti* expected to be protected and supported by Concino Concini, not least because they themselves had paid for the dictionary, and they hoped that its circulation would allow them to break even. In 1623 the second edition of the dictionary appeared, again printed in Venice. Only from the third edition (1691) was it printed in Florence, the home of the Accademia della Crusca. To oversee the printing of the first edition, Bastiano de' Rossi had been sent to Venice. This had been the capital of publishing since the fifteenth century, and its presses produced the greatest number of Italian books of all kinds. In particular, it was

there that the new authors writing in the vernacular were printed. Quondam (1983:578–584) has some significant statistics on book production in Italian cities. The *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in Italy* for the period 1465 to 1600 shows that 52.39 per cent of the over twenty thousand volumes were produced in Venice (Quondam 1983:584f.). The printshops not only employed technicians, workers, and labourers of every level but also were the places where many men of letters worked to give editorial support to produce legible, correct books. The Venetian presses were the busiest, least expensive, and most efficient. That is why even at the beginning of the seventeenth century the academicians of the Crusca chose Venice over Florence. It has been shown that publishing, with mechanically produced books as a commercial product as a result of the development of the book industry, played a major role in the graphical normalization of Italian (and not only in Italy; see Trovato 1994:78). It is no accident that the first Italian grammarians, Fortunio and Bembo, were both from north-eastern Italy, and associated with Venetan humanism. The development of literary Tuscan, in the age of printing, is connected with the power of printing as an extremely important sector of the economy (Trovato 1991).

3.7 Language as money: a curious comparison by Bernardo Davanzati, translator of Tacitus

We have already seen that from the twelfth century the development of a strong merchant class had favoured the spread of a technical terminology for commerce and the economy, and this spread between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries into other European languages. From Sosnowski (2006:59) and Proietti (2010:412) one can find terms of this kind, such as *bilancio* (Fr. *bilan*, Ger. *Bilanz*) 'balance', *cassa* and *cassiere* (Fr. *caisse*, *caissier*, Eng. *cash*, *cashier*, Ger. *Kasse*, *Kassier*), *credito* (Fr. *crédit*, Eng.

credit). Also relevant here are words such as *banco*, which took on the technical meaning of merchants' table, and then came to mean the headquarters of bankers, and *banca* (see Schiaffini 1930:54; Stammerjohann et al. 2008 s.v.); one might add words such as *polizza* 'policy', *capitale* 'capital'—indeed one of the oldest and still surviving banks, albeit not as glorious as it once was, is the Monte dei Paschi di Siena, and the word *monte*, on its own or in the combination *monte di pietà* 'pawnshop', is a technical banking term which has spread from Italian more widely into Europe (Stammerjohann et al. 2008). The Italian tradition cannot boast authors of the calibre of an Adam Smith or a David Ricardo, but it offers two treatises on coinage, one by the fifteenth-century Bernardo Davanzati Bostichi, and one by the eighteenth-century abbot Galiani (who argued against Davanzati).

Bernardo Davanzati, whose passion for his native Tuscan put him in excellent relations with the Accademia della Crusca, was the author of another work that we might mention, the treatise on letters of exchange, or *Notizia de' cambi* of 1581 (see the appendix of Marazzini 2016). In it he shows clear awareness of the existence of a technical terminology (expressions such as *strignere e allargare la piazza* 'restrict and increase trade', *mandare all'incette* 'hoard for profit', *allogare* 'invest'), and strives to give a clear presentation of it (Marazzini 1993c:241). Anyone reading diaries and accounts of everyday life in the period from the Middle Ages until the sixteenth century and even beyond and anyone reading travellers' adventures such as those of Da Ponte or Casanova is bound to encounter those letters of exchange which were essential for the mobility of travellers, much like credit cards or Internet payments today. There is no clearer account of the complex procedure with letters of exchange than that given by Bernardo Davanzati, who explains how it functioned to yield an economic return connected with the transformation of the letter into a conversion tool, skilfully playing on the differences between the values of currencies. We find a curious marriage of economics and literature in another work by Davanzati (1853:I.1–477), his Italian translation of Tacitus. The French translators of Tacitus had accused Italian of being a prolix language, which led Davanzati to undertake a very succinct translation of a Latin author known for his brevity, in order to show how Italian could do the job using fewer words than French. The

presentation of the result was expressed in bankers' language, habitually used for money exchanges, to show that an Italian word had a greater exchange value than a French one (Marazzini 1993a:82f.). Whether the experiment worked or not (the translation contained many purely Tuscan terms), this constitutes a unique example of the link between banking culture, techniques of translation, and the *questione della lingua*.

3.8 Italian in Europe and theatrical impresarios

Sixteenth-century Italian literature was by now notable for its maturity, in all genres, from poetry to plays, from opera to the writing of treatises. Florentine lexicography was foremost in Europe, with the *Vocabolario della Crusca* of 1612. Bembo's classicism had been a considerable triumph and led to an aesthetic theory and the grammar. There were certainly those who spoke against the Accademia della Crusca and Bembo's linguistic theory, but they could not present themselves as real alternatives to the dominant, archaizing Florentinizing line based on the model of the fourteenth-century *Tre Corone* and also (but only in part) on the living modern Tuscan language. Tuscan remained the model followed by the majority of people. Florence was also home to an experiment which was to have great economic consequences: the creation of the first Italian musical drama, the brainchild of Vincenzo Galilei (father of the scientist Galileo Galilei), who had given a modern interpretation of the ancient model of Greek tragedy, bringing words and music together (Marazzini 1993a:129–134). Italian musical theatre developed with Claudio Monteverdi and triumphed throughout Europe in the eighteenth century, creating what Folena (2020:227) described as 'a new wave of centrifugal Italianism', or also a new 'international face of Italian'. Italian operas were already staged in the seventeenth century in Salzburg, Graz, Vienna, and in Poland; in the eighteenth century Italian operas were at home in Vienna with Metastasio and Da Ponte, in Dresden, Munich, Paris, Prague, and St

Petersburg (Bonomi and Buroni 2017:51f., 75–82; Saino 2015). The language of opera was based on the lyrical tradition of Petrarch and then Tasso, according to a standardized and fairly rigidly regulated model which was different from the common language. Yet it was gradually simplified, for example by Metastasio, albeit sparingly (Coletti 2022:191), in order to make it plainer and more communicative. But this was done without ever betraying the canons of the classical cultivated language, which will remain until the libretti of Verdi's operas in the nineteenth century (Mengaldo 2015), obviously with a greater degree of freedom in comic opera (see Folena 2020:289–330). Because opera was theatre, staging it involved many different kinds of professional figures: the impresario, the singers, the librettist, the musician, with all the associated economic consequences, because performances attracted a huge audience, often from the upper echelons of society. Coletti (2017:76) observes that opera soon assumed a 'commercial dimension', because companies had at least to break even. Italian libretto production was thus one of the main channels of dissemination of the Italian language, which gave rise to the still widely held opinion that the Italian language is inherently more poetic and musical than other languages, because it is endowed with an inherent *dolcezza* ('sweetness') (Bonomi 1998b; Stammerjohann 2013:99). Sometimes this positive prejudice was turned against Italian. In the seventeenth century the French Jesuit Dominique Bouhours, to the great displeasure of many Italians (Sorrento 1928:65–69), had claimed that French was superior as the language of the new European community, Italian being merely suited for poetry and musical drama rather than subjects requiring the exercise of reason, partly because of the ready availability in Italian of syntactic inversions. Such appreciation of the musicality of Italian accompanied by disparagement of its capacity to treat serious, substantial, elevated topics, is frequently to be found (Stammerjohann 2013:212–215). The predominance of Italian in musical theatre continued until the nineteenth century, and to this day music and opera carry Italian throughout the world, and musical terms such as *andante*, *lento*, *presto* remain Italian terms as part of international vocabulary (Bonomi 2015). In the twentieth century the spread of Italian cinema had a similar effect, mainly thanks to great directors such as Fellini, who is responsible for the international diffusion of an expression

such as *la dolce vita*, from the title of his 1959 film, or *paparazzo*, a surname which was transformed into a generic term for an intrusive, pestering press photographer (Migliorini 1968:149; Rossi 2006:39f.).[2]

3.9 Economic impetus and the spread of Europeanisms and foreign terms

The cultural and economic success of the poetic Italian, especially in the field of opera led to numerous Italianisms appearing in other European languages. Economic factors also led to the spread of many foreign terms into Italian, beginning with products imported after the discovery of America, such as *amaca* 'hammock', *cacao* 'cocoa', *caimano* 'cayman', *canoa* 'canoe', *cioccolata* 'chocolate', *mais* 'maize', *patata* 'potato', *tabacco* 'tobacco', based on exotic native American languages (Mancini 1992:137, 141), but transmitted into Italy via Spanish. Asian terms used by travel writers show transmission via Portuguese, such as *ananas* 'pineapple', *bambù* 'bamboo', *cocco* 'coconut', and *manga* (Mancini 1992:136f., after Cardona 1971–1973). Both are cases of transmission via the languages of nations which had achieved commercial superiority through colonialism. Various forms from languages of the Iberian Peninsula, which entered Italian sometimes stably and sometimes ephemerally, involved maritime life or navigation, in turn linked with commerce (Beccaria 1968:80–84). On the other hand, many words of Italian origin, mainly Venetan and Genoese, had spread through the Mediterranean area from the Middle Ages. As Tomasin (2010a:265) observes, the spread of the Venetian lexicon is generally a direct consequence of trading and political relations established during the Middle Ages, while the fortune of Genoese is often associated with the activity of shipyard workers or navigators who migrated from Genoa as sailors or admirals to the major ports of the western Mediterranean and the Atlantic, bringing with them their

technical know-how and putting themselves at the service of foreign rulers and their fleets. This happens mainly in France but also in the Iberian Peninsula and even in England. The sea is the ideal conduit for linguistic exchanges. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the colonial languages Portuguese and Spanish influenced Italian, but later the influence of French and English became much stronger.

The economic language of Italian began to undergo a renewal from about 1760, according to Folena (2020:61), under the influence of a more intense exposure to wider European culture: the effects of this linguistic renewal, full of new words and with a freer syntax, can be seen in authors from the southern Kingdom such as Galiani and Genovesi, as well as in the northern Italian *Illuministi*, such as Cesare Beccaria, the Verri brothers, Gianrinaldo Carli (Gualdo and Telve 2011:361). Antonio Genovesi held from 1754 the first European chair in economics in Naples, and taught not in the university Latin still general at the time, but in Italian. This novel choice astonished his listeners and the entire city (see Migliorini 1978:521). This chair, which would disseminate the principles of 'civil economics', had been privately funded by Bartolommeo Intieri, with the specific aim of keeping it out of clerical hands and ensuring that lectures should be delivered in the Italian language (Genovesi 1774:I.81). In the eighteenth century, with the beginning of the industrial revolution, it is no longer merchants who are the protagonists but *capitalists* or the State, the trading, industrial nation (Folena 2020:58).

As for the influence of English, the impact of technology and industrial development was decisive from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, such as the spread of railway terms, and then for engineering terms generally, to the language of information technology at the end of the twentieth and in the twenty-first century, by which time it is no longer British English but American English which prevails, dominant in finance as well as the most advanced technology in all sectors. This led to 'the impact of globalization, international education, and the knowledge economy as shaped by neoliberalism and the force of English as the dominant lingua franca' (Salomone 2022:ix). The dominance of English has often been invasive in Italian (Marazzini and Petralli 2015). Salomone (2022) offers a very wide-ranging analysis of the impetuous growth of the power of English over other languages, including Italian, and what has driven this are economic rather than

political factors. And political and economic hegemony are systematically intertwined. It is hardly coincidental therefore that the use of English in Italian universities (to the exclusion of the Italian national language) ended up in the supreme court, the *Corte costituzionale*, and that the dispute about the relative importance of English and Italian in the higher educational system was triggered by a decision by Milan Polytechnic, precisely an institution mainly concerned with advanced technical education and linked to the industrial world (for an account see Salomone 2022:89–105, as well as Marazzini 2018b). Naturally the language of the economy has deeply penetrated that of business and banking, and then that of newspapers, which give over considerable space to economic issues (Gualdo and Telve 2011:365–373). The language of big firms influenced that of advertising and marketing, which is strictly dependent on the economic needs of the market (Antonelli 2016:86–96; Arcangeli 2008).

3.10 Technical lexicon and economic improvement from the Enlightenment until Unification

The Italian literary tradition has been historically characterized, as we have said, by a strong continuity in poetic language and by an exquisitely literary written tradition, while essay-writing and practical and popularizing texts have always struggled to find their way into the canon. There has emerged in Italy a kind of fracture between elevated and literary writing, with its highly codified language, on the one hand, and practical, everyday, economic, or popularizing writing, on the other. Indeed, the lack of a popularizing literature broadly comprehensible to and enjoyable by less educated readers and by women was a frequently discussed issue in the eighteenth century. That was also the century in which Italy saw the spread of a kind of practical literature, often with economic aims, suggesting for example techniques for improving agriculture, or

breeding silkworms. Antonio Genovesi (1774:II.200), in his letter of 23 November 1754 recounting the reactions of the public to his lecture on the economy given in Italian, describes how his lectures led people of all classes to demand books on economics, trade, arts, and agriculture. The foundation in Florence of 1753 the Accademia dei Georgofili, which still exists and promotes the study of agronomy, forestry, economy, geography, and agriculture, bears witness to efforts to promote a popularizing scientific literature in areas which could lead to the improvement of economic conditions in society. In Piedmont, a journal such as *Biblioteca Oltremontana*, published between 1787 and 1793, reveals the search for a language for the new culture and the new science, not just a luxury language for poetry and literary prose (Beccaria 1982:21). The articles in this journal include regional terms, precisely when the subject is commerce, agriculture, or the education of peasants, because the authors are dealing with a concrete, practical reality which needs a nomenclature alien to the literary tradition (Beccaria 1982:23). In this context, from the Enlightenment onwards, there emerges a polemic against the excesses of an education in which there is too much Latin, of no use to people destined to work with textiles or leather, or in trading (Beccaria 1982:24). The progress of schools for the public in the first half of the nineteenth century reflects the fact that issues which had been widely discussed in eighteenth-century treatises on the Italian language and its virtues, for example in Galeani Napione (1791), were injected straight into the debate on the education and training of young people.

The publishing industry, too, underwent in the nineteenth century a renewal in which private enterprise had a major part. Book production was particularly important in Restauration Milan (Berengo 1980), a city which was then establishing the economic predominance which it has to this day in Italy. We may take the case of lexicographical production. From the end of the eighteenth century and above all in the nineteenth century what we might call the monopoly of the Accademia della Crusca on lexicography was over. Great dictionaries such as Alberti di Villanova's, or the Tommaseo-Bellini, are the result of an initiative by private entrepreneurs. Alberti was also the author of the *Dizionario del cittadino o sia ristretto istorico, teorico e pratico del commerzio* (1763) abounding in economic and commercial terms, even if it must

be recognized that the work is actually an adaptation of a similar French book by Honoré Lacombe de Prezel (Marazzini 2009:211–214). The most significant product of this nineteenth-century lexicographical heyday is the Tommaseo-Bellini, published by Pomba di Torino (Marazzini 2009:260–294), a publishing house which had shown great ability for innovation in its commercial enterprises, creating low-cost series of books that could be sold by post, thereby succeeding in bringing books to a new, and much broader, readership than ever before (Marazzini 2012).

3.11 Industrialization and urbanism as factors in the spread of Italian

Industrialization had appreciable linguistic effects, reflecting the effects of economic and demographic phenomena on the distribution of the population, which were all the stronger after the political unification of 1861. Tullio De Mauro (De Mauro 1963; 1970a) succeeded in convincingly linking such facts of an economic and social nature with the history of the language. In fact he ushered in a new way of exploring the linguistic development of modern Italy, a country that in the mid-nineteenth century was still mainly agricultural. In 1861 workers in industry (generally still artisanal) represented 23.6 per cent of the working population. The percentage gradually dropped over a century, and in 1970 was estimated at 43.4 per cent (De Mauro 1970a:64). The most obvious and linguistically relevant effect of industrialization was the rise of urban centres attracting populations from rural areas—at first from the same region and then from further afield, from the south towards the north. This led to a decline in the importance of local dialects and in the number of dialect speakers, with a rise in the spread of the Italian language. It is again De Mauro (1970a:71–73) who notes that in 1861 Italy had only twenty urban centres with over 50,000 inhabitants, and most of these centres were in northern Italy. In 1911 the situation had already changed, with towns of that size now numbering forty-nine (of which twenty-two were in the north). In

1961 there were ninety-six towns with over 50,000 inhabitants. Population movements had at first triggered a kind of osmosis in local speech varieties, in modifying the most archaic and conservative dialects and then applying pressure for a more widespread and frequent use of Italian in interpersonal and social relations, for example in the workplace.

A concrete case is Turin, the capital of the Kingdom of Sardinia and subsequently of the newly unified Italy. In 1865, Turin ceased to be the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, and the Parliament was temporarily transferred to Florence until Rome could be removed from papal rule. Turin suffered a grave economic crisis, before consolidating its destiny as an industrial city. In 1899 the *Fiat* company (*Fabbrica italiana automobili Torino*) was founded there, and would become a great producer of automobiles. The rapid development of this industry soon led to a major increase in the population, which became overwhelming in the new century.[3] The increase in population in Turin followed a trend comparable with that found in other major cities of the so-called 'industrial triangle', Milan and Genoa, and in absolute terms lies midway between these two cities (see the comparative graph in Gambi 1973:378). Turin, capital of the car industry, became at the beginning of the twentieth century the centre of the Italian workers' movement. The work of left-wing parties among the working classes brought the popular masses into contact with Italian through propaganda, political meetings, and assemblies, as well as through newspapers, pamphlets, and books. A case in point is the work done in Turin by Antonio Gramsci, one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party, who managed to raise a minor workers' aristocracy by getting men without education to write articles and political commentaries, working with comrades in the party who had received a bourgeois education (see Spriano 1963:645–658). In an industrial society, militants committed to the political struggle viewed the national language as a tool that it was important to master the use of. In the earliest stage of industrialization, the immigrant workforce did not immediately jeopardize the local dialect, because people were moving into the city mainly from rural Piedmont. With the rising proportion of immigration by peasants from further afield, Puglia, Basilicata, Sicily, Sardinia, Veneto, Campania, and Calabria (Gambi 1973:401), it became numerically impossible for the local dialect

simply to absorb the effects, and favoured a further spread of the Italian language, creating a situation which endured until Turinese industry fell into crisis and new economic immigrants appeared from other European (Romania, Albania) and non-European (Africa and Asia) countries.[4]

That the dialects were weakened due to industrialization in those areas of the Po plain affected by immigration is not to say that they disappeared. They did not. Rather, this was part of a typically Italian complex communicative situation, involving a great variety of relations between language and dialect, regional dialect, and regional varieties of Italian (De Mauro 1970a:73). Against this background, the petty and middle bourgeoisie abandoned or at any rate made less use of dialect, drawing significantly closer to Italian, however clumsily. De Mauro (1970a:88) believed that this transition was decisive, because in this way old Italian, the language of art and poetry, became an everyday linguistic tool, the living language of the new Italian society.

3.12 Pasolini's neo-Italian

The 'new *questione della lingua*' had a new lease of life in 1964–1965 (cf. also §5.7.1) thanks to the writer Pier Paolo Pasolini (an artist given to a wide range of experiments, from poetry in dialect and Italian, to novels, cinema, and essay-writing). It arose directly from the demographic situation created by industrialization and the so-called Italian 'economic miracle', the burst of growth that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s (Marazzini 2013:222–227). Pasolini addressed the *questione della lingua* in a lecture entitled *Nuove questioni linguistiche* delivered in various Italian cities in late 1964, and published by the review *Rinascita* (then in Pasolini 1972:9–28). In it, linguistic and social and economic issues were intertwined with literary questions. Pasolini was principally concerned with analysing the relationship between the Italian language and twentieth-century authors. At the same time he announced a great and unexpected event: the birth of what he judged to be the new national Italian language, a 'technological' Italian which had been forged in centres

of linguistic formation that were not the traditional ones, but lay in the north of Italy, where the factories were. This new Italian was being created not in Rome or Florence as in the past, but in places where a new hegemonic class was at work, the neocapitalist bourgeoisie. This new language, he reckoned, was 'communicative' but not expressive, unlike the dialects which the people, lacking access to the literary language, had used for centuries. The opposition between 'expression' and 'communication' Pasolini drew from his reading of the French linguist Charles Bally. Pasolini gave expressivity a social and historical value which was not present in Bally, and identified the brutally communicative phase in the arrival of industrial neocapitalism which was transforming the face of Italy, a country until then agricultural and rural, and therefore dialect-speaking. This theory was reinforced by the writings of Gramsci (1975:2339–2351), in which the *questione della lingua* was interpreted in terms of the relation between social classes.

Pasolini's article in *Rinascita* made waves, and triggered numerous reactions from academics, journalists, and writers. Writers such as Alberto Arbasino, Alberto Moravia, Ottiero Ottieri, Italo Calvino, Vittorio Sereni, and Elio Vittorini became involved, as well as thinkers about mass communications such as Umberto Eco (the relevant texts are gathered in Parlangèli 1979). On the whole it may be said that specialists in linguistics, and many writers and journalists, rejected what Pasolini said. They were particularly critical of the exaggerations of his provocative and radical thesis, denying that the contrast between expressivity and communication could be so sharp and that linguistic changes could so faithfully and immediately mirror social changes. With hindsight, while we must recognize that the criticisms of Pasolini's thesis are technically justified, we have to admit that he had a better feel than others for the direction the national language was taking as it began to break away from its humanistic and literary tradition. What Pasolini did not sense at all, though, was the influence that English would have on the new technological Italian.

3.13 The vocabulary of manufacturing and economic progress

Railway terminology is particularly significant among the technical terms which became widespread with late nineteenth-century industrial development. It reveals a major influence from English, from the word *ferrovia* itself, literally 'iron way' and a (partial) calque of *railway*, which became established after a period of rivalry from *via ferrata* 'metalled way', *strada ferrata* 'metalled road', *ferrata* 'metalled'. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century dictionaries reveal lexicographers' reactions to the new railway terminology, sometimes slow and sometimes attempting to censure them puristically. In the Tommaseo-Bellini dictionary, for example, there is no separate entry for *locomotiva* which is placed under the adjective *locomotivo* 'locomotive'. What we find there, preceded by two daggers, is '†† *Macchina locomotiva*: Macchina a vapore che serve a muovere e condurre lungo le strade ferrate le carrozze dei viaggiatori ed i carri delle merci. Dicesi anche sostantivamente *Locomotiva*' ('*Locomotive machine*. A steam machine which serves to move and carry along railways passenger carriages and goods wagons. Also called as a noun *Locomotiva*'). The two daggers warn the reader that the term is to be avoided. Similarly, Tommaseo preferred *guide* to the series *binari*, *rotaie*, and *ragli* 'rails'. *Ragli*, taken directly from English and French *rails*, really existed, albeit with a very limited circulation (it is still reflected in *deragliare* 'to derail', from Fr. *dérailler*). What is striking about the railway vocabulary in the Tommaseo-Bellini dictionary is that sometimes it is associated with economic expressions, for example the items '*Spropriare* (un terreno per far passare la via ferrata)', '*Expropriate* (land to build a railway over it')', '*Garantire una rendita* (per le sovvenzioni dello Stato alle società ferroviarie)', '*Guarantee a return* (for State subventions to railway companies)'. It marks a renewal of the language, apparent in vocabulary, which simultaneously conveys technological modernity and state legislative action with regard to the economy, commerce, and finance. This new climate is what

explains the construction of specialized tools such as the dictionary of Boccardo (1861) and Rezasco's (1881) with administrative and economic terminology and detailed information on commerce, trading, and finance (Marazzini 2009:280f.; Fusco 2023).

Industrial productions of cars brought with it a growth in widespread specialist vocabulary in the sector, with a great many foreign terms, such as *carter* 'crankcase' and *clacson* '(car) horn, klaxon', duly recorded in dictionaries of neologisms such as Panzini (1905),[5] but also dialectal terms already present in the language of factory workers, such as *scocca* 'chassis' (but the word existed with reference to carriages: Fornero 1999:137). The brand names of cars produced by twentieth-century Italian industry gained some international currency (*Fiat Millecento*, *Topolino*, *Cinquecento*, *Giardinetta*, later *Panda*, *Ducato*, and *Marea*), and likewise names of motorcycles *Vespa* (lit. 'wasp', because of its shape: D'Achille and Patota 2016:35) produced by the originally Genoese company Piaggio, and *Lambretta* (from the river Lambro) produced by the Lombard firm Innocenti (Migliorini and Griffith 1966:494). The Italian automobile industry reached outstanding heights with brands such as the world-famous *Ferrari*. Other names could be quoted for the textile and fashion sectors. The appeal of Italian names was proved by the fact that sometimes they were also used by foreign forms, even for cars, such as the Volkswagen *Scirocco* and the *Vento* (Caffarelli 2016:46).

Literature sometimes reflects the language of industrial workers. A novel by Primo Levi (1978) records the vocabulary of a Turinese skilled worker, balancing between the linguistic tradition of his region and the international space into which his work takes him. Levi explicitly states that he wanted to explore a language that was a virgin territory for literature (Beccaria 2020:28), a regional, sectorial, Italian playing in part on the lexicon (words such as *balengo* 'stupid', *boie panatere* 'beetles', *genare* 'to annoy', *gnaulare* 'to miaow': Beccaria 2020:30–34 gives the complete list), but also on syntax (e.g., *non mi oso* lit. 'NEG myself= dare.1SG' for standard *non oso* 'NEG dare.1SG (= I don't dare)', ***il*** *scimmiotto* 'the little monkey' for standard ***lo*** *scimmiotto* in accordance with the rule that the MSG form of the definite article *il* is replaced by its allomorph *lo* before the voiceless alveolar-palatal affricate). Levi was admirably successful in linguistically capturing the figure of this worker, and in

giving linguistic voice to his world. There is also a twentieth-century Italian literature which creates space for the new reality of the factory, in the so-called 'industrial novels' (Fornero 1999:182): authors such as Carlo Bernari, Ottiero Ottieri, and Paolo Volponi, reflecting the reality of Olivetti in Ivrea, a major producer of typewriters and early calculating machines. It is no coincidence that Olivetti also concerned itself with the Italian language, promoting the publication of Migliorini and Folena's (1954) handbook, as excellent as it is accessible; it has recently been republished in facsimile (Migliorini and Folena 2015). The days of the industrial novel seem now to be definitely over, as is the guiding and stimulating role of the literary language (Antonelli 2016:177). That role was extremely significant from the earliest times until the Renaissance, and was still important in the nineteenth century and during the unification of Italy, especially in the case of Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*. Not for nothing was its author called on to chair a ministerial committee charged with identifying the means necessary for making knowledge of Italian universal throughout Italy (Marazzini 2013:173–182). In the second half of the nineteenth century, writers, especially the *veristi*, such as Giovanni Verga (Alfieri 2016b), had the role of bringing traditional Italian closer to the Italian really spoken in the regions, lending it credibility and dignity, with a local colour which gave a sense of the real, while remaining comprehensible to the public throughout the nation, unlike what would have happened had dialect been used (Coletti 2022:293).

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[1] Cicchetti and Mordenti (1984) offer an expansive historical perspective on the development of the *libro di famiglia* up to the seventeenth century, when the *libro di famiglia* is ousted by other forms of writing such as diaries.

[2] The language of cinema has been much studied, from the pioneering Menarini (1955) to the more recent (Raffaelli 1978; 1992; Rossi 1999; 2006; Patota and Rossi 2017).

[3] Turin went from under 200,000 inhabitants in 1861 to over 500,000 in 1923, and more than a million in 1961, then dropping under a million in the new millennium, as the industrial activity of the city entered a period of crisis.

[4] Between the end of the 1970s and the 1980s, the attempt of the Italian working classes to master Italian is documentable from the testimony of militants, union delegates, and

members of factory councils (some of these are presented, with commentary, in Marazzini 1991:108f.).

[5] Panzini (1905:82) gives *carter* referring solely to the chainguard on a bicycle, but not yet *clacson*. Only in later editions does *carter* enter into automobilistic usage, tentatively glossed as *scatola del motore*, lit. 'box of the engine' as an equivalent, and *clàcson*, initially said to come from Eng. *clack*, with the polemical remark: 'deafening noises are one of the characteristics of the twentieth century'. Only later was the correct reference to the Anglo-American *klaxon* introduced.

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Chapter 4

The *questione della lingua* in the Renaissance

Brian Richardson

4.1 Introduction

Between the fifteenth and the early seventeenth century, the controversies that formed part of what in the nineteenth century came to be called the *questione della lingua* (language question) regarded two related aspects of linguistic usage. The first was the status of the vernacular languages of Italy in comparison with Classical Latin, the dominant language of humanism—the classicizing movement that underpinned the Renaissance—and of some domains of public life. Discussions among scholars led gradually to an affirmation of the high literary potential of the vernacular, especially that of Florence, and of its achievements in the verse and prose of the fourteenth century. In the sixteenth century, as the prestige and production of vernacular literature grew, a second concern became widespread: which form of the vernacular offered the most acceptable linguistic norm in a plurilingual and politically divided peninsula, and how should it be designated? This problem naturally affected anyone who aspired to use the vernacular correctly in writing, in orations and sermons, and even in polite conversation, and views on it coloured critical assessments of authors of the past and the present. Some linguistic proposals had social implications because they rejected the usage of lower classes. Conflicting views were set out in treatises, dialogues, letters, and paratexts, and they were implicit in the linguistic practices of authors and the work of grammarians, lexicographers, and textual editors.

The outcomes of the *questione* in the Renaissance determined the path to be taken by the Italian language until modern times; moreover, the discussions led to a better understanding of the histories of the vernacular and its literature, as well as promoting reflection on the nature of all languages.[1]

4.2 The origins and worth of the vernacular

The question of the relative worth of Latin and the vernacular had been discussed by Dante around 1303–1305. He saw Latin as an unchanging language created by humans who already spoke some form of vernacular. In the *Convivio*, I. 5, he argued that Latin was superior to the vernacular and would thus have been unsuitable for his commentary on his vernacular poems: it was nobler because it was perpetual and incorruptible, more capable of expressing concepts, and more beautiful because it followed art, not natural usage. However, he stated his love for the vernacular (I. 10), describing it as a 'sole nuovo' (new sun) which was destined to rise as Latin sets (I. 13). In the *De vulgari eloquentia* (*DVE*), I. 1, he resolved the issue by radically changing his approach: he declared the vernacular nobler than a secondary language such as Latin because it was the first language to be used by humans, it was used worldwide in its various forms, and it was natural rather than artificial (Grayson 1965). Dante hinted that the Italian vernacular, which uses as its affirmative *sì*, from Lat. *sic* 'thus', was closer to Latin than were the two Romance varieties used respectively by the 'Yspani' ('Spanish') and the 'Franci' ('French'), namely, the languages of *oc* and *oïl* (*DVE*, I. 8, 10), but he did not suggest that there was any genetic relationship between Latin and the language of the Italians.

The *DVE* was forgotten during the fifteenth century. The topic of the vernacular's historical relationship to Latin and of its relative status re-emerged in Florence in 1435 as an offshoot of a discussion held by humanists on the nature of the language spoken in ancient Rome. Leonardo Bruni of Arezzo suggested that there existed a 'high'

language, literary Latin, that could be mastered only by the learnèd, and a distinct 'low' language, unregulated by grammar and spoken by the uneducated. Flavio Biondo (Blondus Flavius) of Forlì, on the other hand, used evidence from Cicero's *Brutus* and *Orator* to argue that Latin had been used throughout society, but in different registers according to the context and the cultural level of its speakers. He wrongly implied that Bruni believed the *sermo vulgaris* spoken by unlearnèd Romans to be the same as the contemporary vernacular. Biondo added, in passing, a crucial historical dimension to the debate when he mentioned a view that he would develop in later writings, that Latin degenerated into the vernacular in a process of corruption caused by the invasions of Germanic tribes (Tavoni 1984:3–41, 197–221; Celenza 2009:213–222).

In the proem to Book III of his *Della famiglia*, added in 1437, Leon Battista Alberti, born of a Florentine family, unexpectedly and brilliantly used Biondo's recognition that Latin had been a natural and unitary language as an argument in support of the cultivation of the younger tongue, even though this had emerged from the corruption of Latin. He reasoned that if ancient Roman authors had chosen to write in a language that was not just the possession of an élite, then his contemporaries should write in their vernacular in order to be understood by the widest possible readership. Our language, he insisted, could become as authoritative as Latin if learnèd people refined and polished it with care, and he himself employed phonetic, syntactic, and lexical Latinisms as part of this process (Alberti 1996:3-12; Tavoni 1984:42–72, 222–225; 1992:180–187; Celenza 2009:222–225). This proem was not printed until 1843. In about 1438–1441, Alberti composed a *Grammatichetta* of Tuscan as a demonstration that the grammar of the vernacular could be analysed in the same way as that of Latin, and as another argument against Bruni's contention that a grammatical language could have been mastered only by the learnèd few. This grammar, the first of any Romance language, was not prescriptive and it described contemporary rather than fourteenth-century Tuscan, including for example the masculine definite article forms *el* and *e* rather than *il* and *i*, the imperfect first-person singular *amavo* 'I loved' rather than *amava*, and the future *io harò* 'I will have' rather than *io (h)avrò*. Alberti also marked the independence of Tuscan phonology from the Latin system by using a new alphabet that distinguished, for

instance, between open and close *e* and *o* and between voiced and voiceless *z* (Alberti 1996:13–39). Perhaps because of the boldly experimental nature of these initiatives, Alberti did not circulate them, and they were first printed only in the twentieth century by Ciro Trabalza (1908:529–548).

In Florence a few decades later, Lorenzo de' Medici and an outstanding humanist and poet closely associated with him, Agnolo Poliziano, went further in opposing the challenge of views such as Biondo's by demonstrating strong confidence in the achievements (not merely the potential) of the literary vernacular and a new appreciation of its long poetic tradition, which moreover was used by Lorenzo as a source of political prestige for the state that he ruled unofficially. Poliziano helped to put together a substantial anthology of vernacular poetry from the earliest times to his own day and composed a letter to accompany it when, around 1477, Lorenzo sent the poems as a gift to Federico d'Aragona, son of the king of Naples. Poliziano, writing in Lorenzo's name, asserts that the Tuscan language has already demonstrated expressiveness and polish, and he outlines its development in poetry. Dante and Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca) are its two 'mirabili soli' ('marvellous suns'), although Dante could not altogether avoid the 'rozzore' ('coarseness') of previous poets, and poetry has declined since their time, which implies that they should be studied and emulated (Breschi 2015; 2016; Camboni 2017). Lorenzo composed a commentary on a collection of his own sonnets, probably around 1482–1484, in which he justified his use of the vernacular, as Dante had done in his *Convivio*. His mother tongue is fully capable of expression, he claims, as is shown by the verse and prose of Dante, Petrarch, Giovanni Boccaccio, and others, and yet it is still in its adolescence and capable of greater perfection, especially if the Florentine state grows (Medici 1991:144–149; Zanato 1979:19–38). However, neither of these texts was printed until much later.

A few classical scholars continued to assert the superiority of Latin in the sixteenth century (Migliorini 1988:297–300). Romolo Amaseo, for instance, argued in two speeches of 1529 that it should be preferred to the vernacular, which was merely a corrupt form of the same language. Others used new arguments to oppose such views. For the Florentine author Pierfrancesco Giambullari in his dialogue *Il Gello* (1546), named after its main speaker, Giovan

Battista Gelli, Tuscan was a mixture of Latin and other languages including Etruscan. Linguists such as Claudio Tolomei of Siena and Benedetto Varchi of Florence used in favour of the vernacular the Aristotelian distinction between *alteratio*, a change of accidents not substance (something similar to what Biondo seems to have had in mind), and corruption leading to *generatio* of an entirely new substance (Faithfull 1953; Tavoni 1984:165–169; 1985; 1998:47f.; Marazzini 2013:75–83).

4.3 Using the vernacular

4.3.1 The trend towards a norm

In Renaissance Italy, unlike in England, France, or Spain, no single political capital provided a focus of linguistic centralization. The peninsula was divided between states that were at times in conflict with one another. During the Wars of Italy (1494–1559), in the face of invasions by French, Spanish, and imperial armies, the court system and the two major republics of Venice and Florence proved politically unstable. In the fifteenth century, vernacular authors who wanted to address audiences beyond their own regions based their usage on a high variety of literary language: a modified form of the fourteenth-century Tuscan used in the works that were recognized as the greatest achievements of vernacular literature to date, the *Commedia* of Dante and the *Canzoniere* and *Triumphi* of Petrarch in verse, and the prose of Boccaccio, although there was some variation of usage between and even within these texts. This language now had to be studied, of course, before it could be used, but literary Tuscan had the advantage of being well known and respected, geographically central, and relatively close to Latin in its phonology. However, literary usage in the fifteenth century did not follow that of the fourteenth century with any strictness. Humanist scholarship had undermined confidence in the independence of the vernacular, and authors were thus more likely than their predecessors to seek to ennoble the vernacular by admitting elements of Latin spelling in

consonants (as in *sequente*, *scripto* for *seguente* ‘following’, *scritto* ‘written’) and in vowels (as in *simplice*, *summo*, *populo* for *semplice* ‘simple’, *sommo* ‘highest’, *popolo* ‘people’). Furthermore, writers habitually adopted elements of their local vernaculars, especially if these elements coincided with Latin forms (as in *longo* rather than *lungo*, with the typically Florentine high stressed vowel). These tendencies were found even in Tuscany, whose phonology and morphology had evolved from that of the fourteenth century, as was seen in the case of Alberti’s grammar.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, a combination of cultural and practical factors encouraged discussion about a linguistic norm for literature in the vernacular. Confidence in the worth of the younger language encouraged more authors to use it ambitiously. As interest grew in its tradition and development, so authors paid more attention to cultivating their own usage. At the same time, the economics of publication through printing presses, which from the mid-1460s began to spread from the area of Rome to the rest of Italy and flourished particularly in Venice, created a need to sell copies of an edition as widely as possible, not just to local markets, and this suggested that authors and textual editors should make the language of printed works intelligible and acceptable to as many readers as possible.

It was, however, not obvious how this should be done. The dilemma can be illustrated by the contrasting approaches of two translators who were writing for presses in the first decades of printing. Nicolò Malermi, probably from the Veneto, prefixed a translation of the *Legenda aurea* by Iacopo da Varazze ‘in lingua materna et vulgare’ (‘in the mother vernacular tongue’) with a letter addressed to ‘tutte le devote et catholice Christiane persone’ (‘all devout and Catholic Christians’), in which he wrote that, in preparation for printing in Venice in 1475, he had the text revised by a certain Girolamo. This man was Florentine, and one of Malermi’s reasons for seeking Girolamo’s help with a work intended for wide diffusion could well have been his familiarity with a variety of language that had high prestige throughout the peninsula and beyond. Pietro Capretto of Pordenone in Friuli justified a different solution, intended for a regional readership, in a letter to the printer that opens his version of the *Constitutioni de la patria de Friuoli* (Udine, 1484; ‘laws of Friuli’):

> Volendo adoncha dar principio a cotal opera, e considerando la varietà de li paesi, sono varie anchora le lingue italiane, però volendone io elezer una che fosse condecente et conforme, non tanto a la materia del volume, quanto a le persone a chi per alguna casone tal constitutioni ponno esser necessarie, et non me parendo conveniente la elegantia de la toschana lengua, per esser troppo oscura a li popoli furlani, nè anchora la furlana, tra perché non è universale in tutto il Friule, e tra perché mal se può scrivere, e pezo lezendo pronunciare, et specialmente da chi non è praticho ne li vocabuli et accenti furlani, imaginai in tal translatione dovermi acostar più tosto a la lengua trivisana che ad altra, per esser assai expedita e chiara et intellegibile da tutti, come quilla che segondo il mio giudicio participa in molti vocabuli con tutte lingue italiane.
>
> Thus when I wished to begin this work, and considering the variety of both towns and languages in Italy, I wished to choose a language that was appropriate and in keeping, not only with the subject matter of the volume, but also with those who may need these constitutions for any reason. The elegance of the Tuscan language did not seem fitting to me, since it is too obscure to the people of Friuli; nor did the Friulian language, since it is not universal throughout Friuli, and it is difficult to write and worse to pronounce when reading it, especially by anyone unaccustomed to Friulian words and sounds. I thought in this translation I should stay close to the language of Treviso rather than another, since it is very fluent and clear and understandable by all, as a language that in my view shares many words with all Italian languages.

Capretto's usage is clearly closer to Tuscan than to that the dialect of Treviso, and yet he admits several non-Tuscan forms such as *adoncha* 'therefore' (cf. Tsc. *dunque*), *elezer* 'to choose' (cf. Tsc. *eleggere*), *casone* 'reason' (cf. Tsc. *cagione*), *pezo* 'worse' (cf. Tsc. *peggio*), and *quilla* 'that' (cf. Tsc. *quella*), as well as non-Florentine *lengua* 'language', alongside *lingue* in the plural, which matches the Florentine form. Tuscan is judged to be elegant but, in its pure form, it is too obscure for his readers in Friuli and its lexis has less in common with the languages of the rest of Italy.

4.3.2 The study and imitation of fourteenth-century Tuscan authors

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, some humanist scholars debated whether their Latin could draw on authors from different periods, as most believed, or should imitate strictly the Latin of Cicero in prose. Two major exchanges of letters took place concerning these two viewpoints, an eclectic approach versus *imitatio*, the first around 1485 (printed in 1498) between Poliziano and Paolo Cortesi, a member of the papal court, and the second in

1512–1513 (printed shortly afterwards) between the philosopher Giovan Francesco Pico and the Venetian patrician Pietro Bembo (DellaNeva 2007:2–125; McLaughlin 1995:187–227, 249–274; Celenza 2009:201–212). A question of imitation, in this case the imitation of fourteenth-century Tuscan, was also the central issue in the discussions on the vernacular that took place in the sixteenth century, chiefly in the Veneto and Tuscany, and to a lesser extent in the Kingdom of Naples. In this phase of the *questione*, the means of circulation of the views expressed must be borne in mind. Some opinions were given in writings that remained in manuscript, and thus had limited dissemination, but the publication of relevant texts was increasingly enabled and fostered by the new medium of print, with which several participants became personally involved.

For supporters of imitation, the first necessity was to have reliable texts for study. Bembo used authoritative manuscripts to edit the best-known vernacular verse works of the fourteenth century, Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and *Triumphi* and Dante's *Commedia*, and he had them published in collaboration with the printer Aldo Manuzio in Venice in 1501 and 1502 (cf. §3.3). A letter to readers in the edition of Petrarch, signed by Aldo but composed by Bembo, defended his use of forms such as *volgari* in the title *Le cose volgari* ('Vernacular works') rather than the Latinizing *vulgari* and the plural *canzoni* 'songs' rather than the *canzone* characteristic of contemporary Tuscan (Trovato 1991:143–149; Richardson 1994:48–53). With the same printer in 1505, Bembo published his dialogue *Gli Asolani*, the first substantial work to be based on close imitation of the authors regarded as the worthiest models, principally Petrarch in verse and Boccaccio in prose. Here Bembo also rejected the use of Latinisms, which Alberti and others saw as a means of ennobling the vernacular (Berra 1996:124–167, 260–287).

Effective imitation also depended on practical guidance and had to be validated in theory. The first manual of the language of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio to be printed (Ancona, 1516) was the *Regole grammaticali della volgar lingua* of a lawyer, Giovan Francesco Fortunio, born perhaps in Pordenone or Dalmatia (Gullino 2021). He tells students of the vernacular that he is sharing with them rules for morphology and orthography that he has drawn from the works of the three authors. They are to be followed by all Italians in his own day, especially by poets, since 'tutti li pellegrini italici ingegni di

qualunque si voglia regione che di scriver rime prendano diletto, quanto più possono il stile del Petrarcha et di Dante se ingegnano con quelle istesse loro tosche parole di seguitare' (Fortunio 2001:7; 'all outstanding Italian minds from any region who take pleasure in writing verse, endeavour to follow the style of Petrarch and Dante as far as they can with their same Tuscan words').

When the *Regole* appeared, Bembo was already well advanced with the composition of a masterpiece that combined a justification of his approach with a grammar, the *Prose della volgar lingua*, eventually printed in Venice in 1525. Bembo used the form of a dialogue, which was set in 1502, to underline how early he had determined his path. One of Fortunio's and Bembo's main aims was to gain recognition of the status of the vernacular alongside Latin by showing that it had a lofty form as worthy of imitation as the best Classical Latin. Bembo therefore frames his work as a discussion in which speakers set out to persuade the humanist Ercole Strozzi of the literary worth of the vernacular, as long as it is used in its correct form. In Book I, two possible models for the vernacular are rejected: first an eclectic 'cortigiana lingua' ('courtly language'), used in courts by educated persons from different states, on the grounds that 'non si può dire che sia veramente lingua alcuna favella che non ha scrittore' ('one cannot say that any language without a writer is truly a language'); then the Florentine of contemporary authors, since they have been too influenced by popular usage. To be born in Florence is now no great advantage in writing Florentine, because Florentines have neglected their language and tended towards '[il] popolaresco uso' ('popular usage'). This is never as beautiful as 'le buone scritture' ('the good writings') from which non-Tuscans learn, and written language must avoid the popular unless it can do so without losing its gravity. This does not mean that one is writing for the dead: by adopting a language that is not tied to the present, authors can seek to please readers in the future. Nor should modern Tuscan be combined with 'quella antica Toscana lingua' ('that old Tuscan language'). Book I concludes with the dictum 'Il pane del grano non si far miglior pane per mescolarvi la saggina' ('wheat bread is not improved by adding sorghum'); in other words, adding something inferior to what is best can only diminish its quality (Bembo 1966:106–125). In historical terms, Bembo argued, the vernacular had failed to grow after reaching a peak with the works of Petrarch

and Boccaccio, and it now needed to be revived, just as Latin had been cleansed of rust (Bembo 1966:128–132; McLaughlin 1995:268–269; Camboni 2019). Book II centres on how to recognize the best vernacular writings. Dante is criticized for using too wide a range of words, including some that are Latin, foreign, not Tuscan, archaic, crude, or harsh, so that 'si può la sua Comedia giustamente rassomigliare ad un bello e spazioso campo di grano, che sia tutto d'avene e di logli e d'erbe sterili e dannose mescolato' (Bembo 1966:178; 'one can rightly compare his *Commedia* with a beautiful and spacious wheatfield that is completely mingled with oats and rye-grass and harmful and barren grasses'). Book III constitutes a grammar of the best fourteenth-century Tuscan (Trovato 1994b:111–116). The importance of having unambiguous rules was such that Fortunio and Bembo alike chose to ignore some of the grammatical variety of their source texts (Richardson 1994:49f.; Fortunio 2001:liv–lix).

Because of its dialogic form, Book III of Bembo's *Prose* was hard to consult as a manual in comparison with Fortunio's *Regole*, which was reprinted more frequently, and it will be seen that Bembo's arguments were contested or modified; but their powerful exposition and the author's scholarly understanding of the history of the literary vernacular made them one of the major turning points in the evolution of the Italian language. Leading contemporary authors soon took heed of the *Prose* as well as of Fortunio's *Regole*. Baldassarre Castiglione of Mantua permitted the revision of *Il libro del cortegiano* by a Venetian friend of Bembo's, Giovan Francesco Valier, for the first edition of 1528, although Valier did not erase all traces of Castiglione's eclectic usage (Ghinassi 2006:161–206; Castiglione 2016). Ludovico Ariosto of Ferrara undertook revision of his chivalric romance *Orlando furioso* for the second version of 1521 (Torregrossa 2018) and especially for the third version of 1532 (Trovato 1994b:129–131). The Florentine historian Francesco Guicciardini studied the *Prose* carefully in the late 1530s (Trovato 1994b:274–282; Moreno 2018; 2020:72–82).

The imitation of fourteenth-century Tuscan was widely endorsed in the rest of the sixteenth century by grammarians (on whom see §6.3) and lexicographers: their works were based on the study of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and some modern authors who had followed in their footsteps. The forms prescribed by non-Tuscan

grammarians did not become much less conservative during the sixteenth century, even when they claimed to be describing Italian rather than simply Tuscan (Richardson 2020:69–75). Another source of support was the practice of editors in preparing literary texts from the 1530s onwards for Venetian presses, which dominated Italian printing. Editors gave practical assistance to readers of the chief texts used as models—Petrarch's verse, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* of 1532—by providing paratexts such as notes on usage and glossaries. They could adjust texts to make them conform with the linguistic rules that they believed should be followed. Lodovico Dolce, for instance, replaced some genuine archaic or popular forms in his *Decameron* of 1552 since he believed that Boccaccio could not have used them. Girolamo Ruscelli took a more conservative line when editing this work in the same year, distinguishing between Boccaccio's usage and that of Italy, but he still suggested that the *Decameron*'s language was sometimes too Tuscan or too affected (Trovato 1991:247–251; Richardson 1994:112–114). Editors also regularly emended the language of works from after the fourteenth century so that it conformed with what they considered correct usage. Lodovico Domenichi of Piacenza stated openly that he had 'reformed' the *Orlando innamorato* of the Emilian author Matteo Maria Boiardo, the main forerunner of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, for his edition of 1545. He echoed Bembo's imagery when he declared that he had purged the wheatfields of the poem of oats, thorns, and other weeds that had taken root 'per la nebbia de i lor tempi oscuri' ('through the fog of their dark times'; Richardson 1994:104). Editors and the publishers who employed them must have believed their readers preferred such revisions: when Tommaso Porcacchi revised Bernardino Corio's *Historia di Milano* ('History of Milan'), first printed in 1503, for a Venetian edition of 1565, he claimed to be cleansing it of 'certi errori di lingua, secondo che 'l mondo pareva di desiderare' ('certain errors of language, according to what everyone seemed to want'; Richardson 1994:152).

4.3.3 The claims of contemporary usage

4.3.3.1 Views from outside Tuscany

Despite the influence of the practice of strict imitation, many naturally continued to favour forms of the literary vernacular that could draw on the living languages of the peninsula as well as on fourteenth-century Tuscan, allowing more moderate and flexible forms of imitation than that advocated by Bembo. Outside Tuscany, several writers supported either an eclectic approach, combining elements from different regions, or the language of a specific state or region. Already in 1475, Niccolò Bendidio, the Ferrarese ambassador in Florence, had written that the Florentine Cristoforo Landino's new translation of Pliny's *Natural History* would have benefited from some mingling of Lombard (that is, northern Italian) with its Tuscan, and around the same year the Neapolitan humanist Giovanni Brancati had stated in a letter on Landino's translation that he preferred to use 'lo nostro medesmo [linguaggio] non pur napolitano ma misto' ('our own [language], not just Neapolitan but mixed'), so that it would be useful to everyone but especially to others in the Kingdom of Naples (Montanile 1996:59f.). In the early sixteenth century, a translator who aimed to use an interregional language was Anselmo Tanzi of Milan, who chose to make his version of the *De consolatione philosophiae* of Boethius, first printed in 1520, 'volgare, piano, chiaro, et intelligibile, non in sola lingua Napolitana, nè Tosca, nè Lombarda, ma mista, et in commune e domestico parlare, per più general satisfattione' ('vernacular, plain, clear, and understandable, not in the single language of Naples, or Tuscany, or Lombardy, but mixed, and in common and familiar speech, for the greater satisfaction of all'). Mario Equicola, born in Alvito in Lazio and working in the courts of Ferrara and Mantua, wrote around 1505–1508 in the manuscript redaction of his *De natura de amore* that he shunned the imitation of Tuscan, which sounded too rustic to his ears. He followed its rules only as far as it conformed with Latin, preferring for instance *Dio* and *homo* to *Iddio* and *huomo*. He was tolerant of variety in the writing of others, including Bembo's use of antiquated Tuscan terms in the recently printed *Asolani*, but he reported that some had criticized this work (Ricci 1999:98–108, 212–214, 272). Bembo's archaic vocabulary was also seen as affected by Castiglione in early redactions of *Il libro del cortegiano* (Ghinassi 2006:246–247; Berra 1996:288–295).

Some writers who worked in courts expressed support for the ideal of a courtly language. When Bembo discussed this variety in his *Prose* of 1525, he cited the case that had been made for it in a work now lost, the *Della volgar poesia* of Vincenzo Colli, known as il Calmeta, a courtier from a Piedmontese family who had died in 1508. In Bembo's account (1966:106–108), Calmeta identified the courtly language with that used in the papal court of Rome. It is more probable, however, that he recommended a combination of textual study and personal observation. According to a summary made later in the century by Ludovico Castelvetro, Calmeta believed that aspiring poets should study Dante and Petrarch, learn contemporary Florentine, and then visit the court of Rome to refine their language (Pozzi 1988:651–654; Giovanardi 1998:43–45). In the manuscript letter of dedication of *De natura de amore*, Equicola favoured 'la [lingua] cortesiana romana, la quale de tucti boni vocabuli de Italia è piena' ('the courtly Roman language, which is full of all the good words of Italy'), since members of the papal court come from all regions (Ricci 1999:213). However, a few years later Equicola must have sensed that the tide was turning against the concept: in the edition of 1525 this passage was omitted and instead the author stated that he had written in 'la commune italica lingua' ('the common Italian language'). Attractive though the construct of a courtly language was for men of letters associated with courts, and important as it was for its attention to spoken communication, it was inherently flawed as a general model for the written language. Bembo (1966:108f.) rightly noted that the personnel of courts such as the Vatican were in constant flux. Supporters of the 'lingua cortigiana' could point to no firm model that could be studied by all Italians, unlike fourteenth-century Tuscan.

Castiglione does not use the term 'lingua cortigiana' in *Il libro del cortegiano*, but he proclaims an eclectic linguistic ideal for his own writing and for the written and spoken usage of the ideal courtier that his dialogue describes. In the second redaction of the work (1518–1520), the courtier is encouraged to use 'termini italiani d'ogni sorte' ('Italian terms of every sort'), resulting, with due discretion in grammar and lexis, in 'una lingua che si potrà dire italiana, comune a tutti, culta, fiorita et abundante de termini e belle figure' (Castiglione 1968:44; 'a language that can be called Italian, common to all, cultured, blooming, and abundant in terms and fine figures of

speech'). Similar advice is given in the edition of 1528. The courtier, when speaking and writing, should choose elegant words from all parts of Italy and even from other languages. If contemporary writers did likewise, the vernacular would soon be as abundant as any other language. Although it would not be pure ancient Tuscan, it would be 'italiana, commune, copiosa e varia, e quasi come un delicioso giardino pien di diversi fiori e frutti' ('Italian, common, plentiful, and varied, and almost like a delightful garden full of different flowers and fruits'). It would avoid words no longer in use and 'corrupt' forms (further from Latin) such as *padrone* rather than *patrone* 'master' (Castiglione 1981:142–144). In the dedicatory letter of this edition, Castiglione justifies his own prose, in which he does not imitate Boccaccio or follow contemporary Tuscan speech but uses fine words from other noble cities of Italy, which can be closer to Latin than Tuscan is (Castiglione 1981:72–76). Like Equicola but not to the same extent, Castiglione continued to believe that Latinizing forms ennobled the vernacular.

The term 'Italian' was employed alongside 'cortigiano' to describe an eclectic linguistic ideal by Giovan Giorgio Trissino. He was born into a noble family of Vicenza that for some years after 1509 was forced into exile because of its support for the Imperial cause and the independence of their city from the state of Venice. He used 'Italian' in the title of his *Epistola de le lettere nuovamente aggiunte ne la lingua italiana* (Rome, 1524), a proposal for spelling reforms including the Greek letter epsilon for open *e* and omega for open *o*. These allowed him to indicate preferred pronunciations. In some cases, he followed 'l'uso cortigiano' ('courtly usage') rather than Florentine, as in *ωgni* 'each' and *rɛgno* 'kingdom', while he felt he was almost too Florentine in words such as *porre* 'to put' and *meco* 'with me' rather than *pωrre* and *mɛco*. Trissino explained the limits of his adherence to Tuscan by writing that in his recent tragedy *Sophonisba* he had imitated Tuscan in so far as he thought he could be easily understood by the rest of Italy but, where Tuscan seemed to create difficulties, 'l'abandonava ɛ mi riduceva al cortigiano e commune' (Richardson 1984:7; Pozzi 1988:115f.; 'I abandoned it and turned instead to the courtly and common language').

By this time Trissino was in possession of one of the three principal manuscripts of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* and, in discussions with other men of letters, he used this work of the most

renowned Florentine author in support of his pan-Italian views. In Vicenza in 1529, he had the work printed, 'tradotto in lingua italiana' ('translated into the Italian language'), using a revised version of his alphabet (Dante Alighieri 2012:441–596; the Latin original was not printed until 1577). In Book I. 11–19, Dante identified a high form of the literary vernacular, the *vulgare illustre*, that, in his view, was used by the best poets of the whole peninsula but was not exclusive to one region. Another adjective with which Dante described it was 'curiale', implying that it had been validated by a court of law. Provocatively and anachronistically, Trissino translated this as 'cortigiano'. Trissino expounded his theories more fully in the *Dialogo intitulato il Castellano, nel quale si tratta de la lingua italiana*, also printed in 1529. He used as his main speaker the Florentine author Giovanni Rucellai, governor of the papal fortress of Castel Sant'Angelo, thus underlining the support he had found among some in Florence and Rome. Rucellai defends Trissino's description of the language of Dante and Petrarch as Italian rather than Tuscan, since Tuscan shares words with other languages of Italy, and he counters arguments that the Florentine poet Lodovico Martelli had recently put forward in his *Risposta alla epistola del Trissino delle lettere nuovamente aggiunte alla lingua volgar Fiorentina* ('Response to Trissino's letter on the letters newly added to the Florentine vernacular language'). Rucellai then cites, in support of his case, passages from Trissino's translation of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, such as Dante's description of the 'brutto parlare' ('ugly speech') of almost all Tuscans (Pozzi 1988:171). Trissino is given a prominent role as a speaker in the *Dialogo della volgar lingua* of Pierio Valeriano of Belluno, composed perhaps around 1525 but not printed until 1620. While two characters speak in favour of Tuscan as the basis of literary usage, Trissino supports the view that the literary vernacular should be termed Italian or common (Pozzi 1988:45–93).

From the 1530s onwards, some outside Tuscany, while accepting that literary usage should be based for the most part on Tuscan, continued to voice opposition to the use of archaisms and the precept of restricting literary usage to Tuscan alone. Bembo himself was aware that antiquated terms were not to everyone's taste. He used such a word, *uopo* ('need'), in a letter of 26 December 1531 to Gabriele Avolta, the Venetian prior general of the Augustinians, but

then added jokingly that he should have avoided it so as not to give Avolta reason to make fun of him (Bembo 1992:303). Bembo is portrayed prominently and sympathetically as a speaker in the *Dialogo delle lingue* of Sperone Speroni of Padua, which was circulating in manuscript by 1537 and printed in 1542. Bembo asserts the potential of the vernacular to rise towards the heights reached by Greek and Latin authors and then speaks in favour of the old Tuscan language. However, another character called Cortegiano disagrees: he prefers to express his ideas in his mother tongue rather than in a language learned from books, he wants to accept words from all Italy, and he thinks it better to learn rules of speech from informal conversations with courtiers rather than from grammarians in schools (Pozzi 1988:315f.). Joachim Du Bellay borrowed heavily from this dialogue in *La Deffence et illustration de la langue françoyse* (1549). In 1534, Bernardo Tasso defended his choice not to follow in the footsteps of Dante and Petrarch in his own lyric verse (Richardson 2019:142–145). Silvano da Venafro, in his commentary on Petrarch (Naples, 1533), asked Bembo to forgive him for not becoming Tuscan, for shunning archaisms such as *guari* ('much', used mainly in negative phrases), and for using the erstwhile oblique *lui* 'he' and *lei* 'she' as subject pronouns (Sabbatino 1986:24–26). The *Rimario* (1535) of another Neapolitan, Benedetto Di Falco, used ten model poets including recently living authors such as Luigi Pulci and Niccolò Machiavelli of Florence and Iacopo Sannazaro of Naples. Di Falco believed that Petrarch was the best vernacular poet, but that he did not use only Tuscan words and forms. An ambitious but vague passage towards the end of the *Rimario* called on the learnèd to reform 'l'idioma italiano' ('the Italian language'), creating 'una sola lingua comune a tutti' (Sabbatino 1986:31–42; 1995:52–58, 90–94; 'a single language common to all'). Fabrizio Luna cast his net widely in his *Vocabulario di cinquemila vocabuli toschi* (Naples, 1536), drawing on many authors, not only Tuscan, and favouring a 'mixed' language (Sabbatino 1986:38–42; 1995:54f., 59–61; Montanile 1996:47–74, 101–32). Matteo Bandello, from Castelnuovo Scrivia near Alessandria, wrote in the letter to readers that prefaced his third book of *Novelle*, printed in 1554: 'io non sono toscano, né bene intendo la proprietà di quella lingua, anzi mi confesso lombardo' ('I am not Tuscan and do not understand well the nature of that language; rather, I admit to being Lombard'). If Tuscan had been his

native language or if he had learned it, he would have used it, since he admired it. But he echoed Trissino by commenting that, in any case, Petrarch's poetry consists mostly of 'parole italiane, communi per lo più a tutte le nazioni de l'Italia' (Bandello 1943:248; 'Italian words, mostly common to all the peoples of Italy').

Some authors patriotically promoted the claims of the language of their own region. Giovanni Filoteo Achillini argued in his *Annotationi della volgar lingua* (1536) that, while Tuscans could use their own language, refined Bolognese was not to be rejected (Giovanardi 1998:67–74; 2000). In the *Osservantii dila lingua siciliana, et canzoni inlo proprio idioma* (1543), Claudio Mario Arezzo, a Syracusan nobleman, made a case for Sicilian as the origin of the literary language and advocated the use of an ennobled form of Sicilian in lyric verse (Zaggia 2003:184–187). His own usage has moderately strong regional features: he prefers, for instance, *amari* 'to love', *ligno* 'wood', and *quillu* 'that' to Tsc. *amare*, *legno*, and *quello*, but he accepts *amori* 'loves' alongside *amuri* and he rejects forms with final *-u* such as *andamu* for *andamo* 'we go' (Arezzo 1543:14v–15r).

Another reaction against the growing influence of Tuscanization consisted in the composition and printing of dialect and plurilingual texts, especially in verse and for the comic theatre (Trovato 1994b:133–137, 161–168; Richardson 2023:49f.). The Paduan playwright Angelo Beolco mocked the use of refined Tuscan in contrast with *pavan*, a rural Paduan dialect that his stage character Ruzante considered to embody naturalness (Dersofi 1990; Marcato 2003:116–120). The speaker Cortegiano in Speroni's *Dialogo delle lingue* gives a telling instance of the disagreement between supporters of imitation and their opponents when he ranks Beolco's comedies, which seem to come forth 'nella sua lingua natia naturalmente e da niuna arte aiutate' ('in his native tongue naturally, unaided by art'), far above Beolco's Petrarchan verse, skilful though this is (Pozzi 1988:315f.).

4.3.3.2 Views from Tuscany

The stances on correct vernacular usage taken by northern Italians in the early sixteenth century provoked mixed responses in Florence

and Siena. A few younger Florentine patricians such as Giovanni Rucellai admired Trissino, and Trissino noted that a group of poets who frequented the Rucellai family's gardens imitated the language of Dante and Petrarch (Pozzi 1988:149f.). Some Tuscans felt, however, that Bembo and Fortunio were presumptuous in dictating rules to them, wrong to deny them any innate linguistic advantage and to exclude any role for contemporary Tuscan in literary usage, and ungrateful for the benefits they had received from Tuscany. The Florentine poet Girolamo Benivieni, born in 1453, typified the views of some of his generation when he wrote, in a letter to Giovan Francesco Pico that probably dates from the early 1520s and remained in manuscript (Trovato 1991:179–183), that those who had taken Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio as an infallible exemplar of Tuscan were not entirely wrong, but that they took too narrow a view. If the advocates of imitation had been born and raised in Florence—which was, for him, the only way to appreciate the nature, sound, and pronunciation of the city's language—they would not have restricted their language to that of these three authors who, if they were alive nowadays, would have accepted developments in orthography (Latinizing spellings such as *concepto* 'concept') and morphology (such as the originally oblique *lui* 'him' and *lei* 'her' as subject pronouns, both *el* and *il* as masculine singular definite articles), and would have avoided archaisms such as *guari* ('(not) much') and *poscia* ('then').

Trissino's use of Dante's rediscovered *De vulgari eloquentia*, in support of a common or courtly language, led to a scathing response from Machiavelli in his *Discorso o dialogo intorno alla nostra lingua*, datable to the autumn of 1524 (Machiavelli 2012). Dante's *vulgare illustre* would not have been appropriate for works in the 'comic' register, but Machiavelli, who had evidently not been able to read Dante's treatise himself, understood that it claimed the *Commedia* was written in a 'lingua curiale'. In an interrogation of Dante, Machiavelli demonstrates that the language of the poem is Florentine, albeit with the kinds of borrowings that are characteristic of all languages. He rejects descriptions of the literary language as 'comune italiana', 'cortigiana', or even 'toscana', rather than 'fiorentina'. In conclusion, he accuses others of ungratefully wanting to merge the language of Florence with 'tutte le bestemmie di Lombardia' ('all the gross errors of northern Italy'). The *Discorso*

was perhaps, in its present form, revised by another hand. It was not printed until 1730 but it had some influence among Florentines during the sixteenth century.

The publication in late 1524 of Trissino's *Epistola de le lettere nuovamente aggiunte* triggered the first polemic on the *questione della lingua* in print (Richardson 1984). Three works published by Tuscans in Rome or Florence in 1524–1525 considered the spelling reforms of the *Epistola* poorly conceived and rejected its mixture of pronunciations. Two of the works laid stress on the naming of the literary language. Agnolo Firenzuola called it Tuscan in his *Discacciamento de le nuove lettere, inutilmente aggiunte ne la lingua toscana* ('Driving out of the new letters needlessly added to the Tuscan language'). Martelli used Florentine and Tuscan alike in the *Risposta* mentioned in §4.3.3.1 but, like Machiavelli, whose *Discorso* he probably knew, insisted that it was not Italian. He also tried to undermine Trissino's position by questioning Dante's authorship of the *De vulgari eloquentia*. Claudio Tolomei, as a Sienese, naturally preferred the term Tuscan in his dialogue *Il Polito*, but he rose above the disputes on nomenclature by giving the first detailed analysis of the phonology of Tuscan, demonstrating how the traditional alphabet did not represent its sounds adequately and yet how Trissino's recent proposals were unhelpful. Tolomei did, however, present arguments on the correct naming of the literary language in his major dialogue, *Il Cesano de la lingua toscana*, set around 1525 and printed without his knowledge in 1555 (Pozzi 1988:175–275). Here, as characters, Bembo speaks for the term 'volgar lingua', Trissino for the 'lingua italiana', and Castiglione for the 'lingua cortigiana'. The Florentine tragedian Alessandro Pazzi patriotically insists on the identity of the language with that spoken and used perfectly in his city. The lengthy concluding discourse is given to Gabriele Cesano, a Pisan, who rejects all these names and presents Tolomei's views on the origins, nature, and excellence of contemporary Tuscan. Cesano points out that the lexis of Tuscan now extends well beyond the words used by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio (Pozzi 1988:251–253). A Florentine author who acknowledged the need to innovate in a spirit of continuity was Iacopo Nardi, who rejected a total imitation of '[i] nostri antichi auttori' ('our ancient authors') in his translation of Livy of 1540,

noting that living languages need to develop without cutting themselves off from the past (Richardson 2019:150–152).

If modern Florentine was to establish itself as a literary language for all Italy, there was a need for a grammar of the language that could be studied by learners. Gelli was one of the five members of a commission set up to create such a resource in 1550 by the Accademia Fiorentina, whose activities promoted the cultural politics of Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence (Plaisance 2003:29–234). Gelli then decided, however, that it was impossible to codify a language that had not quite reached perfection and differed within Tuscany, as he explained in a *Ragionamento sopra le difficoltà del mettere in regole la nostra lingua*, printed in 1552. At the same time, he made a concession to the doctrine of imitation by acknowledging that the morphology of Florentine had been neglected between the fourteenth century and the revival led by poets of the Rucellai circle (Gelli 1967:311f.). The *Ragionamento* was printed together with a grammar that resulted from a personal initiative, Pierfrancesco Giambullari's *De la lingua che si parla et scrive in Firenze*. The title suggests that the work is describing the modern language of the city, and Giambullari states that in living languages rules come from educated speakers as well as the best writers. However, the work includes few instances of forms typical of the contemporary spoken language, such as *ero* alongside *era* ('I was', imperfect) and *arò* rather than *avrò* (Giambullari 1986:43, 52, 99). Carlo Lenzoni's dialogue *In difesa della lingua fiorentina e di Dante*, printed posthumously in 1556, gives prominent roles as speakers to Gelli, as a defender of the need to learn the language from cultured Florentines, not from the common people, and to Giambullari, as a defender of Dante against the criticisms of Bembo and others (Pozzi 1988:337–429).

Opposition to a strict form of imitation came from an author of Florentine birth who lived outside Tuscany, Michelangelo Florio. In the letter to readers of his vernacularization of a practical work, Georgius Agricola's treatise *De re metallica* (published in Basel in 1563), he rejected possible criticism that he had not observed precisely 'tutte quelle regole del parlare, e de lo scrivere, le quali essi o nel Bembo, o nel Fortunio si trovano haver studiate et apparate' ('all those rules of speaking and writing that they happen to have studied and learned in Bembo or Fortunio') and that he had not used

many words from Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Dante. His translation, he points out, is to be read in the present day, not in the fourteenth century, and not only by those who have pored over the canonical authors but also by those who have been taught 'la lingua Italiana' (he does not call it Tuscan) by nature, practice, or art (Richardson 2020:61f.).

The writings of Gelli and Lenzoni were directed in part against Benedetto Varchi, a fellow-citizen who had met Bembo in Padua in 1535 and 1536 and had expressed strong support for the Venetian's linguistic theories. Varchi spoke on his appointment as consul of the Accademia Fiorentina in 1545 about the need for Florentines to study their language, now that others had learned to write and even speak it better than them (Plaisance 2003:144). In 1547 he delivered an oration on the death of Bembo, and he edited the *Prose della volgar lingua* for its first Florentine printing in 1549 (Sorella 2004:247–295). In a lengthy dialogue on languages, *L'Hercolano*, begun around 1560 and printed posthumously in 1570, he aimed to reconcile Bembo's tenets with the claims of modern Florentines to linguistic hegemony in Italy. Florentine, he maintains, declined after Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, and Bembo was the first to show how to write correctly in this language. Bembo was right to say that a language cannot truly exist without writers, but one must understand this to mean that writers are essential in making languages noble. The spoken language must be learned in Florence from educated citizens, not from the lowest social classes. It was true that Florentine authors had been too influenced by popular usage and therefore wrote less correctly than Bembo, but they would clearly have some linguistic advantage over non-Florentines (Varchi 1995:522–526, 657f., 797, 808f.).

The mission of promoting the authority of Florentine and the natural linguistic advantage of Florentines was pursued with great vigour by a member of the next generation, Lionardo Salviati. He made his mark with an *Orazione* [. . .] *nella quale si dimostra la fiorentina favella, et i fiorentini autori essere a tutte l'altre lingue, così antiche, come moderne, e a tutti gli altri scrittori di qualsivoglia lingua di gran lunga superiori* ('Oration in which the Florentine tongue and Florentine authors are shown to be far superior to all other languages, ancient and modern, and to all other writers in any language'), given before the Accademia Fiorentina in

1564, when he was aged just twenty-four. While Varchi considered Florentine superior to classical Greek and Latin in most respects but not yet in richness and nobility (Varchi 1995:917), Salviati claimed that the language now spoken in Florence was more capable than any other language of bringing perfection to writings (Salviati 1564:B1r). He elaborated on his linguistic principles in his *Avvertimenti della lingua sopra 'l Decamerone*, printed in 1584–1586 (Salviati 2022). After discussing his recent edition of Boccaccio's work, he confronts in the second book the question of regulating the vernacular, as a living language with a distinguished history. Its usage should be based principally on Boccaccio and all other authors of the fourteenth century, which he saw as a Golden Age and studied in detail, but some old words and idioms can be excluded, and modern usage can be used as a source where fourteenth-century texts do not provide adequate information. The language can still be learned 'dalla voce del popolo' ('from the voice of the people') before it is refined in writing (Salviati 1584:72–75; Pozzi 1988:806–810). The decline of the vernacular in the fifteenth century is blamed on the spread of Latinisms (Salviati 1584:87–89; Pozzi 1988:820–823). The revival of the written language dates from a Florentine poem on a Medicean joust, Poliziano's *Stanze per la giostra* (1475–1478), and from the writing and teaching of Bembo, while in the 'favellar domestico' ('private speech') the revival has been less strong and dates from only about twenty years ago (Salviati 1584:93f.; Pozzi 1988:828f.). Salviati envisaged that the language could develop in future years, but any improvement, he felt, was likely to be found in the field of vocabulary rather than in that of grammar (Salviati 1584:134).

Salviati announced in the *Avvertimenti* his intention to publish a dictionary of 'tutti i vocaboli, e modi di favellare, i quali abbiam trovati nelle buone scritture, che fatte furono innanzi all'anno del 1400' (Salviati 1584:129f.; Pozzi 1988:886; 'all the words and expressions we have found in good texts written before 1400'). This project was taken up by a private body, the Accademia della Crusca, that grew out of a group of Florentines who began to meet in the 1570s. They had set out to be different from the formal Accademia Fiorentina and light-heartedly called themselves the 'crusconi', implying that they merited only coarse bran (*crusca*) rather than fine flour. Salviati joined this academy in 1582 and gave it a new

direction, reinterpreting its name to signify that its task was to sieve out the best of the language and reject impurities. Work on a dictionary based on Salviati's normative ideals began around 1591, two years after his death, and the first edition of the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* was printed in Venice in 1612 under the supervision of the academy's secretary, Bastiano de' Rossi (Parodi 1983:43f.). The letter to readers explains that the dictionary has been compiled in accordance with the views of Bembo and Salviati and principally on the authority of authors of the fourteenth century, when the vernacular flourished most vigorously. From more recent writers, including non-Tuscans such as Bembo and Ariosto, the compilers included some words judged 'belle, significanti, e dell'uso nostro' ('beautiful, meaningful, and in accordance with our usage') but they did not admit others, 'anzi straniere, che Fiorentine' ('from other states rather than Florentine'), that could bring to the language 'più confusion, che bellezza' ('more confusion than beauty'). 'L'esemplo d'alcuni autori moderni, tenuti da noi per migliori' ('the example of some modern authors whom we judged better') was followed as the source for some words that texts of 'quel buon secolo' ('that good century') did not happen to include, so that the language would not be impoverished (Marazzini 1993a:171–186; Maraschio and Matarrese 2021:324–326). In view of sixteenth-century discussions of the name of the literary language, it is significant that *italiano* is not a headword; *italico* is preferred. The *Vocabolario* met with some strong opposition on the grounds of its omissions and its inclusion of forms that were archaic or derived from Tuscan dialects; its critics included figures such as Paolo Beni and Alessandro Tassoni. Nevertheless, this first major European dictionary and its next three editions (1623, 1691, 1729–1738) remained the leading authority on the lexis of the Italian language for well over a century.

Not all Tuscans adopted such strict criteria. The Sienese author Orazio Lombardelli, for instance, in a work of advice on the resources to be used in learning Tuscan (*I fonti toscani*, 1598), addressed to foreigners and Italians who lived in regions 'ove malamente si pronunzia, e senza regole si parla' ('where people pronounce badly and speak without rules'), admits that Tuscans themselves disagree about the best form of their language. His sources include uneducated Tuscans such as women, children, servants, and shepherds, since they preserve a true and natural

pronunciation, and modern authors from outside Tuscany such as Castiglione and Ruscelli, although he has some reservations about their language (Richardson 2010:89f.).

4.3.4 Advice on speech

Some linguists of the period recognized the importance of the spoken language. Varchi, for instance, wrote that 'la propria e vera natura delle lingue è che si favellino e non che si scrivano' (1995:640; 'the proper and true nature of languages is to be spoken not written'). The *questione della lingua* of the period centred on the written language, but it paid attention to the spoken vernacular in two main areas of discussion: the relationship between orthography and pronunciation, and appropriate usage in refined speech.

As was seen in §4.3.3.1, Trissino added symbols to the traditional alphabet in 1524 and 1529 to indicate more fully the sounds of the vernacular. Tolomei studied the phonology of Tuscan in *Il Polito* and in a later treatise on initial doubling that was not printed, and he experimented with new letters in the first edition of his *Lettere* in 1547 (Cappagli 1990). A certain Neri Dortelata, a pseudonym perhaps concealing the involvement of Giambullari, experimented with new symbols in two Florentine editions of 1544 (Richardson 1984:xliii–xlv). Francesco Sansovino compiled a dictionary, addressed to his young son, that highlighted the correct use of single and double consonants in speech and writing: *Ortografia delle voci della lingua nostra o vero Dittionario volgare et latino nel quale s'impara a scriver correttamente ogni parola così in prosa come in verso, per fuggir le rime false et gli altri errori che si possono commettere favellando et scrivendo* (1568; 'Orthography of the words of our language, or vernacular and Latin dictionary in which one learns to write every word correctly in both prose and verse, to avoid false rhymes and other errors that can be made when speaking and writing'). In the second half of the sixteenth century, there was a move away from etymological spellings, such as *honore* and *philosophia*, which did not indicate pronunciation. Ruscelli limited the use of spellings of this kind in the texts that he edited in Venice. This tendency won influential support from Salviati, followed by the

Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca, which adopted spellings such as *abito* and *pronunzia* rather than *habito* and *pronuntia*.

The question of the vernacular to be used by preachers, who were sometimes itinerant, came to the fore as the effective communication of the Catholic Church's doctrines to the faithful became a matter of urgency during the Counter-Reformation. Francesco Panigarola, a Franciscan born in Milan, advocated in the second part of *Il predicatore* ('The preacher'), printed posthumously in 1609, the sole use of cultured Florentine as the most beautiful language of Italy, while keeping to an 'uso comune' and avoiding terms that were poetic, archaic, plebeian, or not understood outside Tuscany. The grammar of the language was to be studied in sources such as Bembo's *Prose*, but Panigarola, to whom Salviati dedicated the second volume of his *Avvertimenti*, also recommended that preachers should spend some time in Florence to absorb the living language (Panigarola 1609:a1r–c2v; Laurenti 2008:413–419). Paolo Aresi, a Theatine from a Milanese family, took issue with Panigarola and argued in his *Arte di predicar bene* (1611) that Italian preachers should use the 'comune lingua italiana' ('common Italian language'). This was to be learned from grammars such as Bembo's *Prose* and from writers; but preachers should also use the judgement of their ears and be aware of the usage and pronunciation of cities, not necessarily Florence, outside their own (1611:336–347, 356–365, 733).

Some works on vernacular rhetoric touched on the orator's need to use language in a way that would not alienate the audience. Sansovino, who came from a Florentine family, supported the linguistic claims of Tuscany and praised the usage of Boccaccio, but he recognized that a public speaker should avoid archaisms. In *L'arte oratoria* (1546), Book II, he implies that Florentine pronunciation is superior to that of northern Italy, but advises the orator to pronounce his words according to 'l'uso comune senza affettatione' ('common usage without affectation'). His *L'avocato* (1554) similarly advises the lawyer to speak naturally and unpretentiously: 'Et non è cosa più dispiacevole a' nostri orecchi che sentir un huom d'una lingua favellare in quella d'un'altro' (Telve 2019:457f.; 'and there is nothing more disagreeable to our ears than hearing a person of one language speak in that of another'). The Florentine author Bartolomeo Cavalcanti (1559:251f.) urged the orator to avoid 'il

parlare affettato, spiacevole, et oscuro' ('affected, unpleasant, and obscure speech') and words that are either 'troppo antiche, et da pochi Autori usate' ('too old and used by few authors') or too new. In practice, a public speaker might opt to use a local variety of speech. In a Paduan academy in 1558, Speroni justified his giving a lecture about his Tuscan verse 'in questa mia lingua padovana' ('in this Paduan language of mine') because, even if he managed to use Tuscan words without mixing in some from northern Italy, his pronunciation would certainly not be Tuscan; he therefore intended to speak in his native language but to write otherwise (Speroni 1982:257f.).

Advice was given on the language of conversation among the well-educated. Equicola recommended in the *De natura de amore* of 1525 that in courts one should avoid words 'remote dal commune uso' (Ricci 1999:97; 'remote from common usage'), and Castiglione wanted the courtier to avoid affectation in speech, in particular the use of Tuscan archaisms (1981:129f.). The *Galateo* of the Florentine author Giovanni Della Casa, printed posthumously in 1558, recommended that in everyday exchanges one should avoid obscure archaisms such as some of Dante's terms and use the tongue of one's own region; even Lombards, who have the most irregular language, should not attempt to speak Tuscan because they will never do so like Tuscans (Della Casa 1999:86–89). A behaviour manual in dialogue form by Stefano Guazzo, a Piedmontese who had worked in northern Italian courts, *La civil conversatione* (1574), distinguished between writing as one ought, in literary Tuscan, and speaking as one is accustomed, and he proposed for most people a 'parlar misto' ('mixed speech') that blended Tuscan with words and pronunciations used by educated people in one's own city (2010:I.97–103). Both Della Casa and Guazzo echo Castiglione's *Libro del cortegiano* in their linguistic thought as in other respects.

The extremes of coarseness and affectation were also to be avoided by children in their spoken language, according to two behaviour manuals (Sanson 2007:171, 175f.). Lodovico Dolce advised in the 1547 edition of his *Dialogo della institution delle donne* that a young girl should use the educated language of her own city while avoiding ridicule by trying to imitate fourteenth-century Tuscan. The Piedmontese writer Bernardo Trotti, in his *Dialoghi del matrimonio, e vita vedovile* (1578) urged the wise mother to ensure that her

children learned not a plebeian language but ‘una lingua propria, distinta, con parole usate, comuni, e civili, non sfoggiate, nè affettate’ (‘a language that is appropriate, distinguished, with words that are in use, common, and respectable, not pompous or affected’), for ‘egli è molto disdicevole ad alcune Donne, il cambiare per vezzi la naturale favella’ (‘it is most unbefitting to some women to change their natural speech through mannerisms’).

4.4 Conclusion

In the course of the Renaissance *questione della lingua*, the proposals with which Bembo and others wished to regulate and ennoble the vernacular dispelled most of the reservations about the prestige of the younger language that had been expressed by some humanists. In vernacular usage, the imitation of the language of fourteenth-century Tuscan texts, championed most prominently by Bembo, provided a relatively stable model for writing and was welcomed by many. This doctrine met with some opposition, however, both from outside Tuscany and from within the region. There were persistent concerns about ensuring comprehensibility and avoiding pretentiousness, especially in lexis. To some extent in the written language and to a greater extent in formal speech, there was a desire to maintain some contact with the living languages of the peninsula. The vernacular also had to be allowed to develop over time and for new needs. Nevertheless, by the early seventeenth century the central role of fourteenth-century Tuscan as a source of correct usage was strongly affirmed by the Accademici della Crusca. Although their stance on the *questione* was more conservative and Florentine-centred than some others wished, the influence of their intensive mining of the resources of the fourteenth century was such that, for the remainder of the early modern period, all writers needed to consider and reckon with the linguistic criteria that underpinned the academy’s *Vocabolario*.

[1] Overviews of the *questione* in this period include Vitale (1978:39–153, 627–659); Migliorini (1988:309–344, 407–314); Marazzini (1993b:237–279); Trovato (1994b:75–121); Marazzini (2013:33–119); Campanelli (2014); Maraschio and Matarrese (2021:313–327). There are valuable essays on several aspects of the *questione* in Pozzi (1989).

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Chapter 5

The *questione della lingua*

Nineteenth and twentieth centuries

Nigel Vincent

5.1 Background

Prior to the nineteenth century the *questione della lingua* (literally, 'question of the language'; see also Chapter 4) can be characterized in terms of two broad strands of thinking and argument. On the one hand, there are debates around the Tuscan-based literary norm and its place beside other regional dialects and the non-literary uses of language. On the other, there is what we may call 'philosophy of language', discussions about the nature of language in general and its connexions to thought and society. The two strands are already present in Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* ('On Eloquence in the Vernacular'), which was written in the first years of the fourteenth century and where he considers both the role of vernaculars in relation to literary composition and the place of language in history. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries these threads develop and intertwine in new ways.

5.2 Melchiorre Cesarotti and the philosophy of language

The strands converge explicitly in the title of Melchiorre Cesarotti's *Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue applicato alla lingua italiana* ('Essay on the Philosophy of Languages with Reference to the Italian Language') (Cesarotti 1943, published in 1800), a work which builds on French rationalist thinking about language as it plays out in the context of Italy and Italian. Cesarotti (1730–1808) has been described by Serianni (1989:39) as 'il più grande linguista italiano del XVIII secolo' ('the greatest Italian linguist of the eighteenth century') and by Nencioni (1983a:7) as the 'vero e grande iniziatore del nostro moderno pensiero linguistico' ('genuine and great initiator of our modern linguistic thought') precisely because of the way his thinking integrates general considerations about the nature of language and languages with the specifics of the Italian situation. He argues that language and society are intrinsically connected, with no language being inherently superior to any other. Languages develop as social structure develops; local dialects serve local needs, with their vocabulary changing and expanding as circumstances dictate and as they move from the spoken to the written domain. Applying this approach in the context of the *questione della lingua* involves a rejection of the purism implicit in the efforts by the Accademia della Crusca (see §4.3.3.2) to define a restricted lexis and a willingness to accept loanwords when appropriate, both from other regions of Italy and from elsewhere, as for example with the many French words which came into Italian during Cesarotti's own lifetime, the period of the so-called *gallomania* (Guggenberger 2019; Marazzini 2020; see also discussion in §12.6.3). The latter in particular led to the introduction of technical and administrative terms such as *burocratico* 'bureaucratic', *ambulanza* 'ambulance', *controllo* 'control', *metro* 'metre', *litro* 'litre' which are now part of everyday usage. By contrast syntactic borrowings from French in that period such as *venire di*, lit. 'come from', 'to have just [done something]', as an expression of recent past parallel to Fr. *venir de* have not survived.

A fundamental distinction in Cesarotti's thought is that between 'genio grammaticale' and 'genio retorico'. Exactly how to interpret this pair of terms has been a matter of debate but we follow Graffi (2020) in seeing this as a contrast between grammar and lexis and hence as a precursor of the modern distinction between morphosyntax and lexicon. It is the latter, in particular, which will

both be responsive to and serve new needs, whether of a social or a literary kind, and which has been—and continues to be—the focus of heated discussion over the centuries.[1]

5.3 Language and literature

While the discussions about the standard language have focused on the literary outputs in Tuscan, not least but not only those of the so-called *Tre corone* 'Three Crowns', Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch (cf. §3.3), it is by no means the case that other varieties do not have their own literary histories often many centuries long. A case in point, and one that is pertinent to later debates, is Milanese, the home language together with French of Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873) and the vehicle of prose and poetry dating back to the thirteenth century (Morgana 2022). An interesting contrast emerges if we compare the work of two of Manzoni's contemporaries and fellow citizens, Carlo Porta (1775–1821) and Francesco Cherubini (1789–1851). Porta is part of a tradition of moving from literary Italian to dialect through his translation (or *travestimento* 'costume, disguise', as he preferred to call it) of *The Divine Comedy* into Milanese (see Vincent 2010b for discussion and exemplification). By contrast, Cherubini's *Vocabolario milanese-italiano* ('Milanese-Italian Dictionary'), the first two volumes of which were published in 1814 and the complete five-volume dictionary from 1839 to 1856 is a resource both for those who wanted to access works in the city's literary tradition and, more importantly in the present context, opening up the road from Milan to Florence for Manzoni, who made use of this work in revising the 1827 edition of his classic novel *I promessi sposi* ('The Betrothed') (Nencioni 1993).

As noted by Poli (2021:59), Porta is also the source of inspiration for his Roman contemporary Giuseppe Gioachino Belli (1791–1863), a writer mostly cited for his sonnets composed in Romanesco despite his substantial output in standard literary Italian. What is notable in his case is the way he keeps dialect and standard language separate, deploying his poetic talents in both independently rather than merging the two or giving priority to one or the other.

The idea that the literary language can be distinct from everyday language is to be found too in the writings and practice of Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837), who cites parallels with ancient Greek literature, in which he had thorough philological expertise (Timpanaro 1978; 2011). He further notes, in this sense anticipating the later position adopted by Graziadio Ascoli, a parallel with contemporary Germany, where there was a considerable degree of language standardization induced through the Lutheran church but without any connexion with a particular city or region. In this way Manzoni and Leopardi come together in recognizing the role and importance of a modern language of literature but diverge when it comes to the need for an inherent association between language and place (Gensini 2012). Of course, what Porta, Belli, and Leopardi have in common is that they are poets and the issues they discuss relate to the language of poetry, while Manzoni's concern, as is clear from his own writings about language (Monterosso 1972), comes with his move from poetry and non-fictional prose to the novel, a genre not as developed in the Italian literary tradition of the time as it was elsewhere. It was for this reason that, still not satisfied with the 1827 revision of *I promessi sposi*, he moved to Florence later that year to be, as he put it, '[s]ulle rive di questo Arno nelle cui acque risciacquai i miei cenci' ('on the banks of the Arno in whose waters I rinsed my rags'). In other words, he sought to enhance the realism of the novel by adapting its language to the everyday usage of that city's elite. It is this revised version, published in instalments between 1840 and 1842, which forms a key part of the modern Italian literary canon. And it is the thinking behind it which underpins its author's stance in the post-Unification debates (see §5.5).

5.4 Biondelli, Ascoli, and the development of dialectology

A different strand of thought about language in general and about the way languages change with time emerged in the first years of the nineteenth century with the recognition that languages could be

grouped into families and the historical stages in their development reconstructed through systematic comparison of the attested forms. The new discipline bore the name *Vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft* in the German universities where it found its first academic home, and shortly after 'Comparative Philology' in the English-speaking world. In 1870 the Italian scholar Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (1829–1907) coined the corresponding Italian label *glottologia* (Morpurgo Davies 1998:ch. 1). One of the first people in Italy to immerse themselves in this new way of thinking was Bernardino Biondelli (1804–1886). Throughout the 1830s and 1840s he wrote articles covering a range of different languages and linguistic phenomena, a selection of which are collected in the volume *Studi linguistici* ('Linguistic Studies') (Biondelli 1853).

More important in the present context, however, is the research reported in his *Saggio sui dialetti gallo-italici* ('Essay on the Gallo-Italic Dialects') (Biondelli 1856), which contains versions of the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32) in ninety-two local dialects from Piedmont, Lombardy, and Emilia. We see here the fruit of a range of techniques that are now taken for granted in linguistic research: original fieldwork, attention to phonetic detail via a special system for notating sounds, cross-variety phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and lexical comparison. More generally, the relation between language and dialect is considered in its appropriate socio-cultural context, in this sense continuing the line of thought we have noted in the writings of Cesarotti.

While Biondelli had developed his knowledge of linguistic theory and analysis through regular contacts with German scholars and visits to their institutions, Ascoli, in the words of Morpurgo Davies (1998:155), 'was strictly an autodidact and was proud to be so', who nonetheless went on to a very successful career at the Accademia scientifico-letteraria in Milan. His work was exceptional for its theoretical depth and empirical breadth, covering not only the dialects of Italy and their historical connexions but also the comparative analysis of Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit and possible relations between Indo-European and Semitic languages. He engaged too with the Neogrammarians on more general debates about the nature and mechanisms of linguistic change and the role of substrates. In his *Studj critici* (Ascoli 1861) he reviews Biondelli's *Studi linguistici* and, while reacting positively to the overall goal of

his work, is critical of points of detail about dialect forms and etymologies. He also notes that Biondelli makes factual errors such as stating that the language of the Iguvine tablets is Etruscan rather than Umbrian or that we have only occasional dialect evidence for the Celtic languages when, in fact, Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic have been attested over many centuries and are still spoken today. As Ascoli puts it (1861:37), mistakes such as these besmirch the learnèd pages of Bollelli's studies.

Similar concerns were expressed about Biondelli's later work but the fact remains that both Biondelli and Ascoli represent an innovative tradition of empirical research which is anti-purist and fully cognisant of the inevitable processes of linguistic change (Savoia 1986).[2] Indeed, Benincà (1988:59) remarks about Biondelli that 'alcuni suoi principi metodologici sono rimasti tradizionale patrimonio della geografia linguistica, anche scavalcando l'Ascoli dei *Saggi ladini*' ('some of his methodological principles have continued to be part of the traditional patrimony of linguistic geography, going beyond those adopted in Ascoli's *Saggi ladini*'). That said, in Ascoli's writings in particular there is also a clear recognition that a community may well have more than one level of language and hence, in more recent terms, be diglossic. In this sense there is an evident link with Leopardi's general understanding of the nature of linguistic communities, as noted by Timpanaro (2011).

5.5 The Manzoni–Ascoli debate

While Ascoli's exchange with Biondelli remained within the academic confines of the emerging disciplines of dialectology and historical linguistics, his debate with the novelist Alessandro Manzoni was played out on the public stage of the newly united Italy (cf. also §2.7.3). In January 1868 Manzoni had been appointed by the education minister, Emilio Broglio, to chair a commission charged to report on the language needs and policy of the new state. The commission was divided into two sub-commissions: one informally labelled 'Milanese' and chaired by Manzoni himself and the other 'Florentine' and chaired by the teacher and politician Raffaello

Lambruschini. Within a month, Manzoni had drafted and delivered his report: *Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi per diffonderla* ('Concerning the Unity of the Language and the Means of Disseminating It'). The unity is the one that he had long advocated in a literary context, namely that the current language of educated Florentines should become the language of Italy, and the means for disseminating it should include on the one hand the compilation of a new dictionary of contemporary Florentine, and on the other a series of measures to ensure that all the teachers in the nation's schools should either have been brought up and educated in Tuscany or should be required to spend a year at a school in Tuscany in order to acquire the necessary linguistic training. This advocacy of the language of a cultured Tuscan elite, however, already met strong opposition from the 'Florentine' sub-commission in Lambruschini's counter-report, which argued against the need for a new dictionary and suggested that the language of the great fourteenth-century writers was better preserved amongst Tuscan peasants. Lambruschini's reservations notwithstanding, work began at once on the new dictionary and the first volume, edited by Broglio and Giovan Battista Giorgini, of the *Novo vocabolario della lingua italiana secondo l'uso di Firenze* ('New Dictionary of the Italian Language According to the Usage of Florence') was published in 1870.

The publication of these reports, and Manzoni's in particular, led to intense debates amongst writers, thinkers, and politicians (for details see Vitale 1978:452–461; Serianni 1990:41–49), to which one of the most notable contributions was the response written by another member of the Florentine sub-commission, Gino Capponi (1792–1876): 'Fatti relativi alla storia della nostra lingua' ('Facts in relation to the history of our language') (1869). Here he criticized Manzoni for separating language and literature and argued instead that spoken and written language should be seen as an integrated and historical whole. He also anticipated modern thinking in his criticism of the report's exclusive focus on the lexicon and his emphasis on the need to consider syntax and text structure.

However, there can be no doubt that the most thorough response to Manzoni's and Broglio's position, and the one that has continued to attract scholarly attention over the years, is Ascoli's *Proemio* ('Preface') (Ascoli 1873a). It bears that name because it was

published as the preface to the first issue of the journal *Archivio glottologico italiano* which Ascoli had founded as a means to disseminate research in the new field of historical linguistics within the Italian academic world. He begins by comparing the word *novo* in the title of the dictionary, a spelling which represents the distinctively Florentine pronunciation of the word (cf. §1.4.3.1), with the usual written form *nuovo* and develops an argument based on precise phonological and morphological analysis of the relations between monophthongs and diphthongs in different dialects. He concludes that decisions about language questions cannot be made in the absence of a proper, technical understanding of linguistic structure and diversity, skills which of course he had but many of the contributors to the debates, including Manzoni, did not. He goes on to challenge the pre-eminence that Manzoni and others had accorded to the contemporary dialect of Florence and in particular to contrast the Italian situation to that of France, where standardization was linked to a clear sense of national unity and with Paris as a recognized capital city, and, as we have already noted, to Germany, where the Lutheran Bible had served to promote a standard language even in the absence of political unification. In those countries, as he puts it, 'il vocabolario ivi risulta [. . .] ben piuttosto il sedimento che non la norma dell'attività civile e letteraria della parola nazionale' ('the vocabulary is much more the sediment rather than the norm of the civil and literary activity conducted in the national language'). The goal for Italy should be the same: not the imposition of a national norm but rather the development of a uniform language as the new nation emerges and develops. There is a clear link back to the thinking of Cesarotti, supplemented now by the scientific precision of the new discipline of *glottologia*.

5.6 Language in Italy post-Unification

The split between standard language and dialect which has characterized the *questione della lingua* over the centuries is reflected in levels of literacy, with illiteracy being treated as an indication of a monolingual dialect speaker. According to the figures

compiled by De Mauro (1970a), only 25 per cent of the population were literate at the time of Unification in 1861, with significant regional differences, ranging from 46 per cent in Liguria, Lombardy, and Piedmont down to 14 per cent in mainland Italy south of Naples and as low as 10 per cent in Sicily and Sardinia. There is a link here to similar differences in other social and educational patterns. Minimal literacy, often only the ability to read simple words and write one's own name, came with primary school education, which exhibited extensive regional variation, while more advanced writing and reading skills follow in secondary education, which was more evenly spread across the country but was typically only taken up by the middle and upper classes. As De Mauro (1970a:45) puts it:

> La situazione linguistica dell'Italia appena unificata era, insomma, uno degli aspetti in cui si palesavano le profonde fratture che nel corso storico si erano create non solo tra regione e regione ma anche tra l'una e l'altra delle classi sociali esistenti nel paese.
>
> The linguistic situation in Italy at the time of unification was, in short, one of the respects in which were evident the deep splits that in the course of history had developed not only between different regions but also between the different social classes which existed in the country.

From the end of the nineteenth century into the beginning of the twentieth various factors, similar in many respects to those attested in many other nation states, served to remedy this situation. The educational requirements introduced by the new unified government increased the levels of school attendance and the imposition of military conscription provided a new route to literacy and a more regular interaction, for men at least, with speakers from different regions. Industrialization also led to people moving from the countryside to find work in towns and hence to join different linguistic communities from those in which they had grown up. Such social developments in turn saw the launching of new magazines and newspapers whose language reflected the emerging sociolinguistic diversity, breaking down the traditionally strict divisions between spoken and written usage and leading to what has been called 'dilalia' (Berruto 1989), namely a shared written language with extensive spoken differences.

5.7 The twentieth century and beyond

Traditionally the Ascoli-Manzoni debate and related topics have been seen as the endpoint of the *questione della lingua*. The six hundred pages of the classic account by Maurizio Vitale (1978), for instance, conclude with a chapter devoted to the nineteenth century followed by a five-page *appendice novecentesca* ('appendix on the twentieth century'). And yet both the strands identified in this chapter have continued to be debated, and new ideas and topics have come into play throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century.

5.7.1 National language questions

The factors identified by De Mauro (1970a) in post-Unification Italy continue into the twentieth century; even as late as 1951 there was a 25 per cent illiteracy rate in mainland Italy south of Naples and in Sicily and Sardinia. More generally, there was still diversity, but it went beyond the simple binary splits of dialect and standard language or written and spoken language. Berruto (1987a) goes so far as to distinguish nine varieties or levels, covering standard literary Italian as taught in schools and used in public speeches and performances; the so-called neo-standard (see §26.3) or *italiano di uso medio* (Sabatini 1985), often with detectable regional differences in lexis, grammar, and pronunciation; colloquial spoken language; informal language and jargon; high-register speech and writing; and technical, scientific, and bureaucratic language. It perhaps goes without saying that in the day-to-day usage of individual speakers there may be shifts from one variety to another according to context and interlocutors. In a similar vein, in a follow-up to his earlier work De Mauro (2014a) assesses the situation in the years following the Second World War. He notes the post-Fascist resurgence of comics and satirical magazines and the spread of radio and television which served further to blur the distinction between the written and the spoken language (Maraschio and Matarrese 2021:336–338). The

levels of literacy and familiarity with the language of literature increased too in 1963 with the statutory requirement that attendance at middle school was obligatory and free to all.

One issue that arose with the spread of international contacts and the development of new technology was the question of lexical neologisms and borrowing, in response to which the noted historian of Italian, Bruno Migliorini (1896–1975), proposed a policy of what he labelled *neopurismo*, which he described as 'un tentativo di applicazione degli insegnamenti della linguistica a un moderato purismo' ('an attempt to apply the lessons of linguistics to a moderate form of purism') (Migliorini 1940). This was a response to the harsh stance of the Fascist authorities, who sought to banish all foreign items or so-called *forestierismi*, even trying to block the use of *Lei* as a polite form of address on the mistaken grounds that it was a Spanish import. Hence their (unintendedly ironic) slogan 'Italiani, boicottate le parole straniere!' ('Italians, boycott foreign words!'). Migliorini's proposal involved two strategies.[3] The first was to adapt the foreign term in a way that respected Italian rules of word structure, so that Fr. *régisseur* 'film director' could be remoulded to *regista* and a player of a sport imported from abroad could be labelled *tennista*. Where this was not possible an alternative would have to be created as with Fr. *chauffeur* 'driver' being replaced by *autista* (cf. *auto* 'car, automobile'). Even so, some well-established items remained such as *bar* and *camion* 'lorry', sometimes with unexpected semantic shifts as with *golf* in the sense not only of the sport itself but also the kind of striped pullover worn by its players and hence any type of sweater or cardigan. A more radical and less successful move in the same direction was made by Arrigo Castellani (1987) with his diagnosis of Italian as suffering from what he called *morbus anglicus* (Latin for 'English disease': see also §12.6.4) which led him to propose such new forms as *abbuio* instead of *blackout* or *fubbia* (= *fu(mo)* 'smoke' + *(ne)bbia* 'fog') instead of *smog*, and which have not found any place in the modern language. Nonetheless the question of how to deal with the increasing number of Anglicisms and technical terms is still much discussed in Italy as it is in many other countries and is in a sense the modern correlate of the *gallomania* which figured in debates between Cesarotti and his contemporaries at the end of the eighteenth century.

A second issue has been the diamesic and diastratic changes discussed under the heading of *italiano popolare* 'Italian of the people' (Guerini 2024; see also Chapter 37). The term was coined by De Mauro and subsequently defined by Manlio Cortelazzo as the Italian 'imperfettamente acquisito da chi ha per madrelingua il dialetto' ('imperfectly acquired by those whose native language is a dialect'). In addition to the interference between language and dialect, which has the consequence that there are in fact regional varieties of *italiano popolare*, Berruto discerns two more general factors at work here: hypercorrection and simplification. An example of the former is the tendency to replace irregular synthetic comparatives such as *migliore* 'better' and *maggiore* 'bigger' with the analytic forms *più buono*, *più grande* 'more good, more big' in all contexts, while instances of the latter are the reduction in the use of the subjunctive and the elimination of nouns ending in *-e*, hence *confino* instead of *confine* 'boundary', *culmino* for *culmine* 'peak' (Guerini 2024:69–71).

The relation between language and dialect in literature has also taken on a new dimension in the modern era. A good example is Carlo Emilio Gadda (1893–1973), a Milanese by birth who moved to Rome. His *Quer pasticciaccio brutto di via Merulana* ('That Awful Mess on Via Merulana') (1946–1947) is an early case with Romanesco forms such as *quer* for standard *quel* and other local forms mixed into a narrative couched in Italian in a novel set in Fascist Rome in the 1920s. More systematic is the pattern in Laura Pariani's *Milano è una selva oscura* ('Milan Is a Dark Wood') (2009) with its allusion in the title to the opening of *The Divine Comedy*, once again with the central narrative in the standard language but with as lead character a flâneur called Dante who speaks Milanese as he wanders the streets of the city. More complex and more thoroughly integrated is the relation between Italian and Sicilian in the novels of Andrea Camilleri, where the author develops a variety of his own that does not correspond to any particular regional pattern (for detailed analysis see Russi 2020). In a modern development the mix of Italian and genuine regional Sicilian moves to the spoken language via the successful television series based on his character the detective Montalbano.

Someone who famously spoke out about the language question (see also §3.12) was the writer and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini

(1922–1975), born in Bologna but raised in Friuli and author both of novels in standard Italian and poetry in Friulian (see also Chiesa and Tesio 1978). In 1964 he gave a public lecture with the title *Nuove questioni linguistiche* 'New linguistic questions', in which he contraposed the current development of a new technical Italian mainly, as he saw it, in northern Italy with the older language of bureaucracy based on Florentine and Roman usage. This in turn led him to conclude that 'avanzano ora prepotentemente la loro candidatura a centri irradiatori di cultura e di lingua nazionale le città del Nord, l'asse Torino-Milano' ('the northern cities, the Turin-Milan axis, are now aggressively advancing their candidacy as the sources of national culture and language'). There can be little doubt that, important though the large northern cities have become in the post-war years, he greatly overstates his case, but perhaps what is most striking about this lecture was the way it triggered responses not only from fellow writers but from many of the leading linguistic theorists and philologists of the day including Maria Corti, Tullio De Mauro, Giacomo Devoto, and Cesare Segre.[4] In all these discussions we can detect a continuation of the Manzoni-Ascoli debate with users and theoretical linguists lining up on different sides and developing conflicting arguments while sharing the need to address the question of the national standard language and its relation to the regionally and socially defined varieties.

A more balanced assessment of the relation between the standard language and developments in northern Italy is to be found in Galli de' Paratesi (1984), who reports on a comparative study of the pronunciation of the standard language by speakers from Milan, Florence, and Rome. The results show the emergence of a supra-regional norm which corresponds very closely to the written language, with the Milanese speakers tending not to have the contrast between /e, o/ and /ɛ, ɔ/ to be seen in Florentine minimal pairs such as *v*[e]*nti* '20' vs *v*[ɛ]*nti* 'winds' and *b*[o]*tte* 'wine barrel' vs *b*[ɔ]*tte* 'blows' or to distinguish intervocalic /s/ vs /z/ and only contrasting single and double consonants when they are represented in the orthography, thus avoiding *raddoppiamento sintattico* (see §14.6.2), while the Florentine and Roman informants are more likely to preserve regional traits (see also Crocco 2017). She goes on from there to consider the implications of developments of this kind for the teaching of the standard language in schools, something which

has become a much-discussed aspect of the *questione della lingua* in the post-war period, not just as regards pronunciation but also syntax and lexis.

An important figure in this connexion was Tullio De Mauro (1932–2017), who was involved in and contributed to linguistic debates at all levels.[5] In addition to his academic activity, he was a member of numerous bodies that oversaw school syllabuses and was briefly Minister of Education in the Italian government from 2000 to 2001. In that role he argued for the need for pupils to be introduced to a full understanding of the nature and history of the linguistic situation in Italy and not simply taught the grammar and vocabulary of the standard language linked to the study of the classical literary canon. He was also a leading figure in another current issue, namely the attempts to simplify and clarify the language of public administration (Piemontese et al. 2009).

5.7.2 Linguistics and linguistic theory

Mention of De Mauro brings us back to the convergence of general linguistic theorizing and participation in the national language question which, as we have seen, has been a feature of these debates certainly since Ascoli and arguably back to the time of Cesarotti. In recent work the debate about the proper way to approach the analysis of language structure and change is embedded in a wider philosophical context in Giovanni Nencioni's classic work *Idealismo e realismo nella scienza del linguaggio* ('Idealism and Realism in the Science of Language'), first published in 1946 and republished as Nencioni (1989a) with the inclusion of reprints of some of the author's later articles on the same theme. Here he addresses a set of issues that had arisen in Italy in a way that does not have parallels elsewhere, not least because of the influential thinking of the philosopher and literary critic Benedetto Croce (1886–1952) and his denial of the possibility that linguistic structure existed and could be studied as an autonomous system.

In this connexion, Loporcaro (2010) identifies two lines of thought which he labels structural and sociolinguistic. The first develops out of Ascoli and includes figures like Carlo Salvioni (1858–1920) and

Clemente Merlo (1879–1960) and ultimately leads to engagement with European structuralism in the Saussurean mould (Graffi 2023). The second, represented by Matteo Giulio Bartoli (1873–1946) and in particular by Benvenuto Terracini (1886–1968), emphasizes instead the role of the individual in language. A figure who bridges both strands and who has already been mentioned several times in the present chapter is Tullio De Mauro, a leading representative of what has come to be called the *scuola linguistica romana* (De Palo and Gensini 2018).

Different again is the Italian engagement with generative grammar through figures such as Paola Benincà, Guglielmo Cinque, Luigi Rizzi, and Giuseppe Longobardi. Here is not the place to go into the theoretical implications of their work, but what is important in the present context is their contribution to the analysis and description of the morphosyntax of the modern standard language, as for example in their contributions to Renzi et al. (2001), which have established a new non-prescriptive, non-purist but theoretically aware approach to Italian grammar and to the language question more generally.

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[1] For further discussion of Cesarotti's thought, see the contributions to Roggia (2020).

[2] For more detail on Biondelli and the relation to Ascoli, see Santamaria (1981) and, for Ascoli's own thinking, Dardano (1974).

[3] For a more detailed analysis of Migliorini's thinking, see Covino (2023).

[4] The full text of the lecture and the responses it generated are collected in Parlangeli (1979).

[5] The contributions to Lo Piparo and Ruffino (2005) provide comments on and appraisals of the full range of De Mauro's work.

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Chapter 6

Grammaticography

Alvise Andreose

6.1 Historiography of Italian grammar: state of the art

There is no up-to-date work that comprehensively and organically analyses the history of Italian grammar. Trabalza's *Storia della grammatica italiana* (Trabalza 1908) is of little use today. His study is dated not so much because, for chronological reasons, it obviously does not examine the grammaticography of the twentieth century, which was decisive for the progress of the discipline, but because it is deeply affected by Croce's 'condemnation' of grammar (Croce 1902). In Croce's neo-idealist conception, language was conceived as a perpetual individual creation and therefore was excluded from any possible objective and rigorous analysis. Consequently, grammar was demoted to a mere didactic and practical tool and its scientific value denied. The pages of Trabalza's volume most heavily influenced by Crocean thought are those that deal with the grammatical works inspired by the 'general and rational' grammar of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose theoretical assumption was the close correspondence between logic and language. This outlook explains Trabalza's strongly reductive judgement of Soave's *Gramatica ragionata* (Soave 1771), an innovative work today highly appreciated by scholars (see §6.3). Trabalza's analysis also often appears inadequate to modern needs even from a methodological stance. Despite these conspicuous limitations, it is a mine of information, and remains an irreplaceable tool for those who wish to reconstruct the history of grammatical theories in Italy from the

fifteenth to nineteenth centuries (see Fornara 2005:21–23 and Nesi 2012).

It is now possible to fill many of the gaps in Trabalza's treatise thanks to Fornara (2005), a concise and careful book, designed for university teaching, that does not aim to scrutinize Italian grammaticography wholesale, but provides a well-balanced historical *excursus* that dwells on the fundamental stages in the history of grammar in Italy and also sketches a diachronic analysis of some particularly debated aspects of the standard, showing how language-description has changed over time, progressively approaching the current model.

Prior to Fornara's volume, other scholars had attempted to update Trabalza's overview. It is interesting to note that these syntheses were published from the 1980s onwards, a decade that, as we will argue (see §6.4), was very important for the renewal of grammatical research in Italy and that also marked the resumption of historical studies on grammar. A first step in this direction was Poggi Salani (1988). After dealing with some general concepts, she undertakes a rapid historical survey of Italian grammars, analysing the main works over the centuries. In the final part, some problematic aspects of morpho syntax are examined, thus making it possible to outline the evolution of the linguistic norm, despite its 'great stability' (Poggi Salani 1988:783). A chronological approach is also the basis of Patota (1993), which focuses more on cultural aspects since it aspires to reconstruct the major lines of development of grammatical reflection in Italy 'as a product and reverberation of the great movements that oriented thought' (Patota 1993:93). Because it is impossible to retrace these intellectual *percorsi* ('paths') analytically, the author chooses to dwell on the texts that can serve 'as a point of reference for orienting us in the system of relationships between norm, language, and users' (Patota 1993:93). More analytical is the panorama offered by Bonomi (1998a), conceived as a tool for university courses. The first section presents a historical profile of Italian grammaticography, which examines the main grammarians but also several secondary ones, drawing attention to the cultural context. The second offers a significant anthological selection of the major grammars of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries. Marazzini's (2010) essay appeared as an entry in the *Enciclopedia dell'italiano* directed by Raffaele Simone. Despite its conciseness, it offers an

effective overview of the cardinal moments in the history of grammar in Italy, taking into account the connexions with the historical-cultural context and the problems related to the teaching of Italian in schools.

A different approach is adopted in the volume *Grammatiche* edited by Antonelli, Motolese, and Tomasin (2018). Unlike the studies considered so far, its aim is not to provide a historical sketch of Italian grammaticography. The most conspicuous section of the book deals separately with the traditional partitions of grammar (punctuation, spelling and pronunciation, parts of speech, simple sentences and complex sentences), examining, for each, the history of their analysis over the centuries.[1] The novelty of the volume also consists in the fact that the first chapters are devoted to research topics that had found rather limited space in grammatical historiography: historical grammar, grammars for schools, and grammars for foreigners.[2] The essays in that work by Tomasin (2018), Cella (2018), and Mattarucco (2018) are each excellent critical summaries of the studies devoted to these areas of grammar in recent decades. The volume also distinguishes itself by devoting a chapter to descriptions of Italian based on the linguistic theories of Structuralism and Generative Grammar (Andreose 2018). Typically, this type of grammar had been analysed quite succinctly in previous surveys (see §6.1 and §6.4), usually in an initial or final section. An exception to this trend is Serianni's brief overview (Serianni 2016), which appeared in a handbook specifically aimed at updating and deepening the contents of *LRLIV*. This essay, therefore, constitutes an ideal continuation of Poggi Salani (1988) and only examines Italian grammaticography from the mid-twentieth century onwards, focusing on grammars produced after the conceptual and methodological turn of the 1980s. Serianni also dedicates a paragraph to recent grammatical descriptions of old Italian. A similarly restricted view is displayed by Patota and Persiani (2002), who examine production between 1987 and 1997, paying particular attention to the three reference grammars published in 1988 (cf. §6.4).

6.2 Paradigms and periodization

In the volumes and essays that offer an extensive overview of Italian grammar, a chronological approach prevails. To present the historical development of the discipline, a subdivision by centuries, periods, or authors is normally adopted. The general tendency is to relate grammatical thinking to the historical-cultural context, notably to the history of literature and the debate on the models of literary language—the long-standing *questione della lingua* (see Chapters 4–5). As mentioned, a break with this pattern is made by Antonelli, Motolese, and Tomasin (2018). Their choice to distinguish structuralist and post-structuralist grammars from the 'so-called grammatical tradition' (Antonelli, Motolese, and Tomasin 2018:14) that developed between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries reflects a bipartition that has gradually emerged within the historiography of grammar in the last decades.[3] The project of rethinking the grammatical description of Italian arose as early as the 1970s but produced significant results only from the end of the following decade. Since then, grammaticography appears polarized into two opposing methodological approaches: on the one hand, grammars inspired by the theories of twentieth- and twenty-first-century linguistics and, on the other, grammars that, while integrating some principles of contemporary linguistics, essentially adopt the method of analysis consolidated and refined between the Renaissance and the mid-twentieth century. In order to emphasize the elements that set apart the most recent grammatical research from that carried out within the previous methodological framework, it has become customary to define the former as *modern grammar*, the latter as *traditional grammar*. We will maintain this subdivision for reasons of convenience, although it carries the risk of oversimplification.

An initial clarification is required by the expression *modern grammar*. In linguistics, the adjective *modern* does not usually refer to a periodization analogous to that followed in historiographical usage, which speaks of ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary ages, but is opposed to *pre-modern*, thus indicating the current research paradigm. In this sense, *modern* has a meaning close to *contemporary*. In the course of the twentieth century, the

term began to be used for designating the linguistic trends that emerged after the historical-comparative method, namely Structuralism and its subsequent developments: Functional Linguistics, Generative Grammar, Sociolinguistics, etc.[4] Seen from this perspective, the adjective *modern* in association with *grammar* takes on the specific value of 'inspired by updated linguistic paradigms' (Andreose 2017:11–16). *Modern* or *new* grammars of Italian actually form a fairly heterogeneous group, as they often reflect different grammatical models. However, the absence of a homogeneous and unanimously accepted linguistic theory does not mean that they do not share a consistent core of categories and descriptive principles that mark a clear departure from the traditional analysis (Vanelli 2012:11).

Let us now turn to *traditional* grammar. The descriptive model on which it is based has its roots in Greek philosophical and grammatical reflexion, was then adapted to Latin—in particular by the grammarians Donatus (fourth century) and Priscian (fifth to sixth centuries), and the philosopher Boethius (*c*.480–524/526)—from which it passed into medieval thought, humanism, and the Renaissance, finally becoming established within the system of Port-Royal's 'general and rational grammar' and Enlightenment rationalism. The history of Italian grammar is characterized by a perennial dialectic between conservation and innovation. An improvement in descriptive adequacy of the model was achieved by adapting the patterns inherited from the Graeco-Latin tradition to the structures of the vernacular language. This process was carried out gradually, within a theoretical framework that, over the centuries, has maintained its fundamental assumptions and has never seen any paradigmatic breaks. Today, traditional grammar still appears deeply rooted in universities and especially in Italian schools. This is undoubtedly due to its tendency towards schematization and simplification of concepts, but also to the authoritativeness and prestige of the tradition behind it.[5]

The label of *traditional grammar* nonetheless risks flattening out the complexity of the history of grammatical thought in Italy, minimizing the innovations that have gradually increased the accuracy of linguistic description. It is reductive, for example, to equate grammars founded on empirical principles or on a passive reception of Latin grammatical categories with treatises animated by

a strong desire for methodological renewal. Clear examples of this are the 'philosophical' grammars of Buommattei (1623; 1643) and Soave (1771), but the in-depth works of Fornaciari (1879; 1881) also benefit from the progress of historical linguistics in the nineteenth century. But other examples could be given. Moreover, several twentieth-century grammars, especially since the 1980s, have made traditional patterns interact fruitfully with innovative research perspectives. The Italian grammatical tradition has a 'complex and in some cases tormented' history: representing it as a 'viscous aggregate almost immobile in its compactness' is clearly a stretch (Antonelli, Motolese, and Tomasin 2018:14). Ultimately, the expression *traditional grammar* is a handy and succinct designation of the descriptive apparatus established before the emergence of modern linguistics, but it does not account for the development of the grammatical debate in Italy between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. The traditional model is the culmination of a centuries-long dialectic.

The traditional approach focuses mainly on the identification of parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, pronoun, adverb, etc.), the recognition of grammatical functions (subject, predicate, complement, etc.) and the description of the inflexional processes for the categories of gender, number, person, tense, mood, etc. Another hallmark of the traditional method is the prominence given to semantic-conceptual criteria in sentence analysis, as opposed to distributional or morphological criteria. Modern grammars do not completely reject the results of the previous tradition, but reinterpret them in the light of the theoretical principles of the linguistics of the second half of the twentieth century, such as the descriptive as well as explanatory task of grammatical theory, the idea of grammar as a formal, explicit model of native speaker competence, the prime role of syntax in the hierarchy of the components of language, and the recourse to formal models in the description and interpretation of linguistic facts. Another distinctive feature concerns the method of language analysis: every description of the rules governing the formation of sentences, phrases or words is conceived of as a scientific hypothesis that must respond to criteria of general coherence of the system and, above all, find confirmation in empirical evidence.[6] Within this renewed theoretical framework, it

has been possible to describe the structures of Italian in a much more rigorous manner.

A second dichotomy sometimes encountered in studies on Italian grammar is between *normative* and *descriptive* grammars.[7] Whereas descriptive grammars aim to describe the structures of a language without passing judgement on their correctness, normative grammars aspire to present a model of language, pointing out the constructs and forms to be adopted or avoided. For centuries, the grammars produced in Italy were normative. This depended on the linguistic history of the country. Italian only began to be used as a spoken language after the Unification of Italy (1861), but its diffusion throughout the country and into all social strata did not occur until the second half of the twentieth century. In previous centuries, it was a written, literary language, used only by a few educated people. The primary purpose of grammarians was to guarantee the 'reproducibility' of a written norm considered exemplary and timeless (Poggi Salani 1988:782). Naturally, if a linguistic model is prescribed, it must also be described. This relationship of mutual implication between the normative and descriptive approach is well summarized by two eminent linguists. Renzi (2001a:360) notes that 'ancient grammars could not be prescriptive without first being descriptive' and Nencioni (1974:vi) that 'the descriptive grammar of Italian necessarily had to coincide with the normative grammar'. It must be specified that the proposed linguistic model was not always based on the written language. There existed a tradition of grammarians—albeit a minority—taking the language spoken in Florence as their reference point (see §6.3). However, their grammars were also of a normative type,[8] insofar as they contrasted the dominant model, based on literary language, with the norm of contemporary language. It was not until the twentieth century that dissatisfaction with a grammar, understood as a series of rules designed to teach how to write (and speak) Italian correctly, began to manifest itself. Some grammars of the first half of the century already manifest anti-prescriptive attitudes. The decisive turn took place between the 1970s and 1980s and was the result of several factors. The *GISCEL*[9]—a group of scholars and teachers inspired by Tullio De Mauro (De Mauro 1977)—and other authoritative scholars (e.g., Renzi, Simone) strongly contested the normative approach of traditional grammar and promoted a profound renewal of the

teaching of the language, based on the idea of 'language education'. In the same years, several scholars recognized that the linguistic unification of Italy could now be said to be complete, because Italian, a language learned from books for centuries, had become the mother tongue of a large part of the population. It was especially noted that speakers from all regions and social strata used a variety of language in oral and semi-formal written expression that presented linguistic features different from those of the norm codified by grammars. This variety has been called *italiano dell'uso medio* (literally 'average-usage Italian', 'everyday Italian') or 'neo-standard' (Sabatini 1985; Berruto 1987a; also §26.3).[10]

It was above all the advances in linguistics in the second half of the twentieth century that determined the transition from a (predominantly) normative grammatical model, based on written language, to an (exclusively) descriptive one, based on spoken language. The generative model has undoubtedly contributed most to the renewal of grammatical research in Italy. In the theory elaborated by Chomsky, grammar is assigned the objective of providing a description (and eventually an explanation) of the system of rules that the speaker uses unconsciously, and not that of indicating what is 'right' and 'wrong' in relation to a codified norm. The achievements of sociolinguistics and functional linguistics, then, favoured greater attention to the social variation of language and extended the analysis to constructions and forms considered aberrant with respect to the literary standard for centuries. In this context, the first important *modern grammars* of Italian emerged (cf. also §6.4): Renzi et al. (1988–1995); Schwarze (1988).

6.3 The establishment of a tradition

The first grammars of modern European languages began to appear in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Several languages were beginning to establish themselves as important vehicles of culture and, in some cases, as the languages of the nascent modern states, and the idea that they deserved to become the subject of detailed grammatical treatises gradually gained ground (see

Kukenheim 1932; Metzeltin 2004; 2007). The first printed grammar of a European language was Nebrija's *Gramática sobre la lengua castellana* (1492). The chronological primacy, however, belongs to Italy, where grammatical thinking began very early. The humanist Leon Battista Alberti wrote a *Grammatichetta* of Florentine between 1438 and 1441 (or, according to another hypothesis, between 1434 and 1438), which remained unpublished (see also §2.2). The work is related to the discussion that took place in 1435 between the humanists Leonardo Bruni and Biondo Flavio about which language was spoken in ancient Rome (cf. Tavoni 1984:3–41). According to Bruni, two distinct language varieties existed in the Roman Empire: Latin, used by the learnèd, and a non-codified language spoken by the common people. According to Flavio, Latin was the common language of all ancient Romans, and the vernacular was derived from the corruption of Latin caused by the barbarian invasions. At the beginning of the treatise, Alberti takes up Flavio's thesis and claims to have collected 'the usage of our language', as Greek and Latin grammarians had done with their languages. The variety assumed as a model is that spoken in Florence in his time. This choice was destined to remain marginal in the later grammatical tradition, which was mainly based on the written literary language. Another peculiarity of Alberti's work is that its intent is not normative but *demonstrative*. Its purpose is to demonstrate that the vernacular is a language with its own grammatical structure, which can therefore be described through the same grammatical apparatus used for Latin (Vineis 1974). The eccentricity of Alberti's grammar explains why it circulated very little, only being published at the beginning of the twentieth century.[11]

The first printed Italian grammar was published by the humanist Giovanni Francesco Fortunio in 1516, under the title *Regole grammaticali della volgar lingua*. In 1525, Pietro Bembo published a work of paramount importance to the linguistic history of Italy: the *Prose della volgar lingua*, the third book of which is a grammatical treatise, albeit not a systematic one, since the work has a dialogical structure. The linguistic norm proposed and described by Fortunio and Bembo is the Florentine of the three great writers of the fourteenth century: Petrarch, Boccaccio, and, lastly, Dante. The caution that Bembo expressed towards Dante's *Commedia* reflected the fact that, in some passages of the poem, 'rough' and 'unpleasant'

words are used. Bembo's perspective was in fact not only linguistic but also—and above all—aesthetic and rhetorical, since he pointed to the works of Petrarch and Boccaccio as stylistic models for poetry and prose, respectively. In Fortunio's and Bembo's conception, the humanist concept of 'imitation of the classics' was transferred from the domain of Graeco-Latin literature to that of vernacular literature. The fact that the works of the great authors of the fourteenth century acquired the same dignity as the classics made their language worthy of the same grammatical and philological care as that of the masterpieces of ancient Greece and Rome.

Fortunio's and Bembo's works must be placed in the context of the *questione della lingua*, the debate on literary language models that developed in Italy from the beginning of the sixteenth century (see Chapters 4 and 5). Their thesis, recommending the adoption of fourteenth-century Florentine, eventually prevailed after a heated controversy that lasted beyond the end of the century. The success of their proposal can be seen not only in the editorial fortune of their books but also in the rapid spread of their ideas among literati and scholars. The archaizing model gained a growing consensus among grammarians and lexicographers as early as the 1520s to 1540s, and completely routed the competition in the second half of the century. A more or less dynamic adherence to the Fortunio-Bembo line underlies the lexicographic repertories of Liburnio (1526)[12] and Alunno (1539; 1543; 1546/48) and the grammars of Acarisio (1536; 1543; 1555); Gabriele (1545; 1548); Corso (1549; 1550); Dolce (1550; 1562);[13] and Ruscelli (1581). Sansovino (1562) brings together the grammars of the authors now considered to be benchmarks: Bembo, Fortunio, Gabriele, Corso, Acarisio.

The reductionism of Fortunio-Bembo's stance was criticized by the supporters of the *teoria cortigiana* ('courtly theory'), according to which the literary language should be inspired by that actually spoken in the courts of Italy, especially of Rome. This was an eclectic model, based on fourteenth-century Tuscan, but open to the influence of other prestigious regional varieties. A certain affinity with this thesis can be discerned in the ideas of the Vicenza humanist and poet Gian Giorgio Trissino. He unearthed one of the three extant medieval codices of the *De vulgari eloquentia* and published it in translation in 1529. Based on the ideas expressed in Dante's treatise, Trissino elaborated the theory that the great writers of the fourteenth

century would not write in Florentine, but in an 'Italian' language that included non-Tuscan forms. His linguistic ideas, set out in the dialogue *Il castellano*, were put into practice in the *Grammatichetta* (Trissino 1529), which describes an abstract and composite language. This work stands as the progenitor of a grammatical line that had a certain success until the mid-sixteenth century. It is a group of quite heterogeneous treatises, which however share some typical characteristics: the reference to an 'Italian' or 'common' language, strong adherence to the categories and terminology of Latin grammar, and frequent use of classificatory schemes (Corti 1955; Fornara 2005:52f.; 2013:32–36, 42–43). In this typology, one might include the grammars of Carlino (1533); Achillini (1536); Tizzone da Pofi (1539); and San Martino (1555).

The 'Italian' thesis was opposed above all by authors of Florentine and Sienese origin, who assigned paternity of the literary vernacular to Tuscany. The manifesto of the Florentine theory is the *Discorso intorno alla nostra lingua* (Castellani Pollidori 1978; Trovato 1982), now unanimously attributed to Niccolò Machiavelli (1524), who contested Trissino's interpretation of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, claiming that the language of the *Commedia*, although rich in loan-words, is Florentine. This idea was developed by various authors, who insisted on the natural character of the language and the absolute priority of usage, and therefore proposed adopting contemporary Florentine (or 'Tuscan') as the linguistic norm. The extrapolation of a set of rules from the living language, however, proved complex. In 1550, the Accademia Fiorentina appointed a commission to draw up a grammar of Florentine. One influential member, Giambattista Gelli, gave up due to difficulties.[14] The undertaking was completed by Pier Francesco Giambullari (Giambullari 1552), who produced a highly innovative work within the sixteenth-century grammaticographic tradition. First, he attempted to describe the language 'spoken and written in Florence',[15] even though he took most of the examples from the great writers of the fourteenth century. Furthermore, he devoted much space to the treatment of syntax, following the pattern of his source: Thomas Linacre's *De emendata structura latini sermonis* (1524). The originality of Giambullari's grammar probably explains its poor circulation. In general, the Florentine model appeared difficult to adopt by authors of non-Tuscan origin.

The ultimate triumph of the archaizing theory came with Lionardo Salviati, who played a fundamental role in orienting the activity of the Accademia della Crusca towards philology and lexicography. He was a staunch supporter of the primacy of Florentine, but believed that the language had begun to 'fade' in the fifteenth century. He therefore proposed to derive the linguistic norm from the authors of the previous century. Unlike Fortunio and Bembo, however, he did not limit the canon to Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, but considerably expanded the list of fourteenth-century writings to be taken as models. This idea was the basis for drafting the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (1612), although Salviati died before he could contribute to it. His linguistic ideas are expressed in the *Avvertimenti della lingua sopra 'l Decamerone* (Salviati 1584/1586). The important grammatical and philological considerations contained in it are the result of the revision that Salviati conducted on Boccaccio's masterpiece to adapt its contents to the principles of the Counter-Reformation (1582)—the so-called *rassettatura* ('tidying up') of the *Decameron*.

The sixteenth century has been called the 'age of the norm'. In the period from 1516 (publication of Fortunio's grammar) to 1612 (first edition of the *Vocabolario della Crusca*), a linguistic norm was established, which, with limited fluctuations and adjustments, was taken on board by the literati of the following centuries and was adopted as the standard language of the newly born Italian state from 1861. The affirmation of Bembo's and Crusca's proposal did not stop the debate, however. The persistence of the *questione della lingua* had repercussions for grammatical thinking, which remained closely connected to the unavoidable problem of defining literary and linguistic models, until after the Unification of Italy. First and foremost, the extension of the canon to 'modern' authors and the flexibility of the norm were discussed. The question of archaisms, Tuscanisms, and the high polymorphism of fourteenth-century language was particularly delicate. A need that emerged from the seventeenth century onwards was to provide a theoretical framework for the mass of empirical rules that had been elaborated by sixteenth-century grammar.

The grammar of the seventeenth century cannot be compared to that of the sixteenth in terms of breadth and variety. Together with a series of works that essentially re-propose the descriptive model

developed in the previous century, there are, however, grammatical treatises that profoundly rethink the assumptions of language analysis. The grammar of Benedetto Buommattei (Buommattei 1623; 1643) marks 'the true beginning of the dissolution of empirical grammar and the entry of intellectualism or logicism' into the Italian tradition (Trabalza 1908:300). He draws on the Aristotelian theoretical apparatus developed by Julius Caesar Scaliger for the description of Latin (*De causis linguae latinae*, 1540) and for the first time applies it to a modern language. From a normative point of view, Buommattei is less rigid than his predecessors, because in many cases he attempts to reconcile the authority of fourteenth-century models and modern usage. The work of Marcantonio Mambelli, nicknamed Cinonio (Cinonio 1644), pursues a more practical purpose, but is equally innovative because it examines a part of grammar that did not find a model in the Latin tradition and had not been systematically described until then: the syntax of the so-called 'particles' (article, pronoun, adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection). Cinonio also compiled a treatise on verbs (Cinonio 1685).

From the eighteenth century, the Italian language gradually became one of the subjects taught at school. Grammarians adapted their works to the new teaching requirements and tried to organize them so as to facilitate students' learning. In this way, the strong link between grammar and school was created that persists today. The model that inspired them was that of Latin grammar, which had been the starting point for the education of young people for centuries. The text most representative of this trend is the grammar by Salvatore Corticelli (Corticelli 1745/1754), addressed to students at the seminary in Bologna. The work is based on the successful Latin grammar of the Portuguese Jesuit Manuel Álvares (*De institutione grammatica*, 1572). Among its greatest merits are clarity of exposition, methodical presentation of its contents, and, above all, the amount of space devoted to syntax, which is specifically analysed in the second book. As far as the prescribed norm is concerned, Corticelli remains tied to the past. The linguistic canon he proposes coincides with that of Bembo and the Crusca. The other great grammar of the eighteenth century, that published by Francesco Soave in 1771 and reprinted several times thereafter, is animated by a much more radical desire for renewal. Soave was actively involved in

the reforms of the school system in Austrian Lombardy. His grammar was intended as a manual for the *Collegio dei Nobili* ('College of Nobles') in Parma. Its title (*Gramatica ragionata della lingua italiana*) declares its connexion with the *Grammaire générale et raisonnée* of Port-Royal (1660) by Antoine Arnauld and Claude Lancelot. It is also deeply influenced by the rationalist grammar of the Enlightenment. In full agreement with his sources, Soave believes that language is the manifestation of thought and that there is a perfect correspondence between these two levels. The novelty of his work lies in the philosophical framework that seeks to give a 'logical' explanation of grammatical rules. This explanatory effort often allows him to increase the adequacy of the descriptive apparatus, especially in verbal morphology and syntax. Despite these innovations and a certain attention to diaphasic variation, his grammar does not break with tradition. The linguistic norm he proposes essentially coincides with the literary norm established in previous centuries (Sgroi 2002; Marazzini and Fornara 2004).

The history of nineteenth-century Italian grammar can be divided into two phases. The production of rational grammars continued beyond the middle of the century, sometimes with original results (Mortara Garavelli 1975). It was opposed by a 'purist' line on grammar, which sought to counter the growing influence of French on Italian by proposing a return to the 'purity' of fourteenth-century language (see §5.2). The most representative work of this second tendency is the highly successful grammar by Basilio Puoti (Puoti 1833). The Unification of Italy (1861) also constituted a watershed, because it brought to light the problem of the linguistic unification of the new state. The *questione della lingua* was no longer just a subject of discussions between literati, but a political problem: it was a question of how to achieve a national language, spoken by all Italian citizens. In the debate that developed in the following years, a leading role was played by Alessandro Manzoni, who proposed adopting as a common language contemporary Florentine as spoken by educated people (*Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi per diffonderla*, 1868). To expand its use throughout the country, he suggested using teachers born or educated in Tuscany and drawing up bilingual dictionaries that would translate the terms of the various dialects into Tuscan. His criticism of general grammar and Purism did not prevent some of his epigones from drafting extensive

grammatical descriptions based on 'living Florentine usage'. Some post-Manzonian grammarians sought a balance with tradition, avoiding more markedly regional constructions (Morandi and Cappuccini 1894). There were also those, such as Petrocchi (1887), who were more receptive to colloquial registers, also prescribing the innovative features that distinguished modern Tuscan from the literary language, based on old Florentine. These grammars mark a break with the previous grammatical tradition, because they devote great space to the typical phenomena of spoken language, but maintain a normative structure: the authority of the literary tradition is replaced by the 'idolatry' of the popular language of Florence.[16]

'Modern usage' is also one of the reference points of Fornaciari's works, which are undoubtedly the most mature products of traditional Italian grammar. His *Grammatica italiana dell'uso moderno* (Fornaciari 1879) and *Sintassi italiana dell'uso moderno* (Fornaciari 1881) seek a compromise between codified norm and living language: the foundation of 'modern usage' lies in the 'middle people of Tuscany', but must be confirmed by the authority of 'careful writers, both ancient and recent' (Fornaciari 1881:x). Although the prevailing perspective is a classicist one, the openness towards usage emerges from the great variety of examples, taken from the authors of each century or the language of use. The idea of continuity between literary language and modern Tuscan reveals Fornaciari's full awareness of the linguistic history of Italian, founded on the advances of the historical-comparative method.[17] The most important results of his work, however, concern syntax. For the first time, a grammarian addresses sentence structure in a systematic manner, also devoting space to word order.

Grammaticography in the first half of the eighteenth century was negatively influenced by Croce's 'condemnation' mentioned earlier. The few grammars produced in this period either had a practical character or were affected by the neo-idealistic climate and/or Fascist rhetoric (Trabalza and Allodoli 1934; Panzini 1932).[18] A notable exception is the in-depth grammar by Pier Gabriele Goidanich (1918), which presents various aspects of novelty, while staying in the groove of tradition. In particular, Goidanich appears sensitive to diachronic, diatopic, and diaphasic variations of the norm, noting how certain forms are typical of the archaic language, of Tuscan speech, of literary, poetic, family, or administrative usage,

etc. A change in the general attitude towards grammar began to emerge as early as the 1940s. Two eminent linguists—Giacomo Devoto and Bruno Migliorini—published two grammars designed for the needs of Minister Giuseppe Bottai's school reform (1940).[19] Their innovative methodological approach reflects impatience with traditional prescriptive grammar and anticipates the need for renewal in language-teaching in the 1970s–1980s. Battaglia and Pernicone (1951) represents the last major product of the traditional grammar perspective. It not only provides a meticulous description of the linguistic norm but also includes rudiments of metrics and appendices on semantic or lexical issues.

One of the characteristic elements of the history of Italian grammar is its constant comparison with classical models. The process of development of the traditional descriptive apparatus, which came to fruition between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, was realized through progressive distancing from, but not total rejection of, Latin grammar.[20] In the earliest phase, the reference points were the authoritative Latin grammars of Donatus and Priscian. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, linguistic thinking was increasingly influenced by the thought of Aristotle.[21] The spread of general grammar in Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to important advances in the description of language, but did not cause a clear rupture with the previous tradition. The prominence that ancient grammar attributed to the analysis of parts of speech was inherited by the grammar of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, which, until Fornaciari, showed little interest in syntax—with the notable exceptions of Giambullari, Corticelli, and Soave. Even today, grammars based on a traditional approach are influenced by this age-old custom, in that they examine first the parts of speech, then the structure of simple and complex sentences.

6.4 New grammars of Italian

After World War II, grammatical research underwent a profound renewal, due to two factors: the evolution of the general Italian

linguistic situation, which saw Italian become abundantly widespread even in oral usage (see §6.2); the gradual opening up of scholars' attitudes towards the theoretical innovations of twentieth-century linguistics.

Structuralism penetrated Italy quite late and did not take deep root.[22] This explains why the first grammatical descriptions using structuralist methods were produced abroad. The first 'modern' Italian grammar came into being in the framework of post-Bloomfieldian linguistics. This is Hall's *Descriptive Italian Grammar* (Hall 1948) published in a revised Italian translation as Hall (1971). The great development of linguistics in Scandinavia also bore fruit in Italian grammar. In addition to the early *Italiensk grammatikk* by the Norwegian Ulleland (1966), there are the extensive and innovative grammars by the Danes Spore (1975) and Bach and Schmitt Jensen (1990).

From the 1960s, various grammars for foreign-language learners appeared, describing the structures of Italian in an analytical manner. Of note are the works by the Dutch Hijmans-Tromp (1964) and the Hungarian Herczeg (1970). Non-Italian scholars were also responsible for the first two grammars in Italian that attempted to graft elements of twentieth-century linguistics onto the traditional model. Regula and Jernej (1965)—an Austrian and a Croatian—follow a classical approach and devote very limited space to the theoretical thinking that Jernej was developing at the time. The organization of the subject matter reveals the clear influence of the descriptive model current in Italy. The definition of the parts of speech is based exclusively on semantic criteria and preference is given to morphology over syntax. Nevertheless, the volume also presents innovations, especially in the analysis of grammatical functions (cf. Regula and Jernej 1965:76f., 196–204). The Hungarian Fogarasi (1969) attempts to blend traditional models and advances in twentieth-century linguistics. The large opening chapter is devoted to phonology and contains interesting observations on phrasal phonology. The chapter on morphology, however, is strongly affected by the traditional descriptive apparatus. The section on syntax scarcely appears innovative, either: apart from the introduction of the concept of 'phrase', the rest of the discussion follows the contemporary scholastic pattern. In general, we can say that the innovative ambitions of the work are weakened by the

continual re-emergence of nomenclatory and taxonomic tendencies typical of the classical approach but also found in certain strands of Structuralism.

The most evident limitation of grammatical investigations into Italian in the pre-generativist age concerns syntax. The lack of a solid linguistic theory results either in the empiricism of approach, or in the revival of traditional patterns. Devoto (1974) is, despite its title (*Lezioni di sintassi prestrutturale*), influenced by various concepts of Jernej's structuralist school, but takes a predominantly classificatory stance. An exception is the monograph by the Russian Tatiana Alisova (Alisova 1972), which represents the most important study of Italian syntax written until that time due to its innovative method and the large corpus of data examined.

The conceptual basis necessary for an effective syntactic analysis of language was offered by Generative Grammar, which found convinced supporters in Italy almost from its beginning. Analyses of Italian inspired or influenced by Chomsky's theories appeared in the 1960s and became more frequent in the 1970s: Costabile (1967); Saltarelli (1970); Puglielli (1970); Gamberini (1971); Parisi and Antinucci (1973; 1975). These works adapt the conceptual and formal apparatus developed by Chomsky and his followers to Italian and often reflect a stage of the theory superseded by later developments. The same is true of the generative grammars published outside Italy in roughly the same years: in Romania, Cârstea-Romașcanu (1971; 1980; 1973; 1976); in France, Genot (1973).

Some works combine concepts and methods of analysis from different sources. Lepschy and Lepschy (1977; 1981) was originally conceived for the English-speaking world and later revised and translated into Italian. The part intended to provide an 'outline' of Italian grammar is not a systematic treatment of linguistic structures, but is arranged as a series of short descriptive chapters following a concise and practical approach. However, the final section of the volume, originally entitled 'Fifteen Points of Syntax',[23] contains an innovative, in-depth appendix on specific aspects of Italian grammar, influenced by structuralist and generative theories. The very extensive grammar by Brunet (1978–2011) occasionally refers to Chomskyan categories, but is mostly based on empirical criteria not linked to an explicit theoretical framework. Moreover, the examples are mostly taken from written texts.

Several scholars have recognized that the turning point occurred in 1988,[24] the year in which three important grammars of Italian came out. One is traditional (Serianni 1988), but two make use of current tenets of linguistics: these are the first volume of the *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione* directed by Renzi (Renzi et al. 1988) and Schwarze's *Grammatik der italienischen Sprache* (Schwarze 1988). These latter works are based on partly different theoretical models—Generative Grammar and Lexical-Functional Grammar, respectively—but share the explicit desire to propose a systematic analysis of Italian language capable of overcoming the limitations of the traditional pattern.

The *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione* (*GGIC*) was born of the intention to provide a grammatical description of Italian conducted according to the principles of Generative Grammar, without resorting to the formalism typical of this model. Unlike traditional grammars, the work focuses on syntax, while only marginally touching on other areas of linguistic structure. The conceptual framework of reference is implicit throughout the work, but is left in the background to make room for extensive and rigorous empirical research. Through recent advances in the description of language, traditional grammatical concepts are clarified, sometimes confirmed, sometimes rejected (*GGIC* 1:23). One new element is the general 'descending' architecture of the exposition, which starts with sentence analysis and then moves on to lexical categories. The main difference from the traditional model is that, in accordance with the Chomskyan conception, the definition of rules is based on native speakers' grammaticality judgements. The aim of the authors, however, is not to describe the '"competence" of an ideal Italian speaker', but 'the set of non-dialectal linguistic usages present in Italy' (*GGIC* 3:5). Everyday spoken language represents the fundamental object of grammatical description, but the analysis also takes into consideration constructions typical of the formal or literary registers. Furthermore, space is devoted to constructions found in regional Italian. Because of this broad perspective and the systematic way in which syntactic phenomena are examined, the *GGIC* is intended as a 'reference work' for research on contemporary Italian, as well as 'one of the richest grammars among all the languages of the world' (*GGIC* 1:33).

Schwarze's *Grammatica della lingua italiana* (Schwarze 2009; henceforth *GLI*) is an expanded and revised Italian translation of Schwarze (1995). It too attempts to combine 'the breadth of the phenomena covered with the rigour of the scientific approach' (Colombo 2009:20). Although Schwarze avoids explicit references to the complex formalism of lexical-functional grammar, his treatment nevertheless differs from the *GGIC* in its use of more technical terminology. On the other hand, the general arrangement of the contents appears more traditional than that of the *GGIC*, in that it presents the classical noun-verb order and the 'upward' progression from lexical categories to the sentence. The *GLI* also systematically describes the processes of nominal and verbal inflexion, due to the need to provide a systematic description of the language. The analysis, however, focuses on syntax as in the *GGIC*. Further points of overlap between these grammars are the object of analysis and the methodology of investigation. Schwarze aims to describe non-regional everyday language and derives his data mostly from the judgements of native speakers (*GLI*:36).

The release of the *GGIC* and *GLI* was followed by the publication of grammars that were less extensive but equally based on innovative criteria. Andorno (2003a) is a slim volume that updates Andorno (1999). It is intended for universities and critically revisits grammatical concepts that students learned in middle and high school. The descriptive scheme is traditional, but the grammatical categories are reformulated and problematized in the light of assumptions in contemporary linguistics. A greater departure from the classical pattern is made by Michele Prandi (Prandi 2006; later Prandi and De Santis 2011).[25] The analysis often appears indebted to the theoretical apparatus of Generative Grammar, but is distinguished by the original attempt to interpret grammatical phenomena as the result of the interaction between formal and conceptual structures. Salvi and Vanelli (2004) revises and expands Salvi and Vanelli (1992), which in turn follows two earlier essays (Salvi 1988; Vanelli 1988). The work is designed for teachers and students and intended as a kind of synthesis and update of *GGIC*, in which both scholars were active collaborators. Compared to the *GGIC*, it makes broader, albeit still limited, use of concepts and terms from Generative Grammar and is therefore characterized by a greater distance from the traditional method. Ferrari and Zampese

(2016) reworks a previous school textbook (Ferrari and Zampese 2000). Although the organization of topics and the identification of the parts of speech reflect the classical scheme, the examination of the syntactic and semantic properties of the sentence and its constituents is based on modern theoretical criteria. In particular, the analysis of the utterance- and text-level draws on the principles of Text Linguistics. Lo Duca and Solarino (2004) adopt an innovative approach to the semantic and textual aspects of language,[26] but show a more traditional orientation in the illustration of morphosyntactic structures. Finally, Maiden and Robustelli (2000), although written for an English-speaking readership, presents a high degree of analyticity and makes use of current advances in linguistics, so that it can be ranked among the works that have contributed to modernizing grammar production in recent decades.

The modern approach to language study has also had a beneficial effect on those grammatical currents that, for historical and cultural reasons, have maintained a closer link with the tradition. Since the 1980s, some of the most accurate descriptions of standard Italian have appeared: Dardano and Trifone (1983; 1985; 1997); Sensini (1990); Trifone and Palermo (2000); Patota (2006). These works incorporate categories and concepts from twentieth-century linguistics, but remain anchored in the traditional paradigm in terms of their theoretical foundations.[27] Among these, Serianni (1988; 1997) deserves special mention. It felicitously reconciles the normative and descriptive approaches, also devoting attention to less formal and more colloquial registers.

6.5 Historical grammars and grammars of old Italian

So far, we have dealt with synchronic grammars, i.e., grammars that describe 'a state of language' or—in the case of traditional grammar—a language considered immutable. Diachronic grammars describe a language's evolution through time. The first important illustration of the phonetic and morphological development of Italian was outlined

by D'Ovidio and Meyer-Lübke (1888; 1906). The historical Italian grammar that Meyer-Lübke published two years later as a supplement to his *Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen* is more comprehensive and detailed (Meyer-Lübke 1890).[28] The reference point in this field remains Rohlfs's *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti*, first published in German and then in a reworked Italian translation (Rohlfs 1949; 1954; 1966; 1968; 1969; now republished as Rohlfs 2021a; 2021b; 2021c), which brings together exceptionally extensive material. While Meyer-Lübke had mainly focused on Tuscan varieties, Rohlfs considers a great number of Italian dialects from medieval to modern times. Tekavčić (1972) pays particular attention to Florentine-based Italian and endeavours to apply recent linguistic advances to the analysis of language change. An even stronger connexion with the methods of contemporary linguistics characterizes Maiden (1995a; 1998), which accounts for the evolution of the main structures (particularly morphological and phonological) of the language from old Tuscan to modern Italian. The historical grammar planned by Arrigo Castellani was discontinued after the publication of the introductory volume (Castellani 2000).[29]

The *Grammatica dell'italiano antico* edited by Salvi and Renzi (Salvi and Renzi 2010a) diverges considerably from previous works from a theoretical and methodological perspective. Like the *GGIC*, it adopts the generative-grammar model and therefore devotes much space to the analysis of syntax. On the basis of an extensive corpus of written texts, both literary and non-literary, it describes the Florentine linguistic system in its earliest documented phase (thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries), providing a 'synchronic grammar' of old Italian. The *Sintassi dell'italiano antico* edited by Maurizio Dardano (Dardano 2012a; 2020a) is another collective work, but differs from Salvi and Renzi (2010a) in its more empirical and traditional approach and because it is based on a corpus that is more compact from a textual viewpoint, but less diatopically and diachronically limited: Tuscan prose of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Serianni 2016:548–550).

[1] Ferrari (2018); Vaccaro (2018); Picchiorri (2018); Fornara (2018); Gizzi (2018); Consales (2018); De Roberto (2018); Poggiogalli (2018).

[2] For reasons of space, we will not consider grammars for schools or non-native speakers. In addition to the extensive bibliography in Cella (2018) and Mattarucco (2018), see Lugarini (2007); and Palermo and Poggiogalli (2010). On the relationship between grammar and school see Marazzini (1997).

[3] See Renzi (2001a); Vanelli (2010c); Graffi (2012); Colombo and Graffi (2017); Andreose (2017; 2018).

[4] See e.g., Renzi (1977); Lepschy (1989a); Vanelli (2010c); Graffi (2012).

[5] For the link between grammar and school, see §6.3.

[6] Renzi (1977:18–33, 27–32); Vanelli (2010c:11, 29–32); Salvi (2013:40); Andreose (2017:12, 16).

[7] Poggi Salani (1988:771); Fornara (2005:13f.); Serianni (2016:542f.).

[8] The exception is the first grammar of Italian by Alberti (see §6.3).

[9] *Group for Intervention and Study in the Field of Language Education*. On the famous *Ten Theses*, see GISCEL (1975; 2007); De Mauro (2007b).

[10] Mioni (1983) speaks instead of 'tendential Italian'.

[11] The text is handed down by a codex transcribed for Bembo, today preserved in the Vatican Library (hence the widely used name *Grammatichetta vaticana*). Editions: Trabalza (1908:529–548); Grayson (1964); Patota (1996; 2003).

[12] He is also the author of the treatise *Le vulgari elegantie* (Liburnio 1521), which deals with rhetoric, orthography, and morphology.

[13] There were eight editions of Dolce's grammar between 1550 and 1562.

[14] The reasons for his giving up are expressed in the dialogue *Ragionamento* [. . .] *sopra le difficultà del mettere in regole la nostra lingua*, printed as a preface to Giambullari's grammar (Giambullari 1552).

[15] The work was published as *De la lingua che si parla et scrive in Firenze*, although in the autograph manuscripts it is entitled *Regole della lingua fiorentina* (Bonomi 1986).

[16] As Ascoli (1873a:xxx) remarked.

[17] He was also the author of a historical grammar (Fornaciari 1872).

[18] Demartini (2014).

[19] Devoto (1941); Migliorini (1941).

[20] Antonelli, Motolese, and Tomasin (2018:chs 7–12). For the sixteenth century, Padley (1985–1988, II:85–131); Poggiogalli (1999); Fornara (2013).

[21] Trabalza (1908:254–266); Padley (1985–1988, I:250–268; II:74f.).

[22] One exception is 'Valence theory', whose first formulations date back to Tesnière (1953; 1959). It has had a wide diffusion in Italy—particularly at school level—thanks to Francesco Sabatini, who adopted it in his successful grammars (Sabatini 1984; Sabatini, Camodeca, and De Santis 2011), and in the *DISC* dictionary (Sabatini and Coletti 1997).

[23] 'Sixteen Points' in the Italian version (Lepschy and Lepschy 1981) and the second English edition (1988).

[24] Stammerjohann (1989); Boer (1990); Berruto (1990c); Radtke (1991).

[25] Prandi and De Santis (2019) expands on the 2011 edition.

[26] The work develops an earlier school grammar (Lo Duca and Solarino 1990).

[27] For more details, see Vanelli (2010c; 2012; 2013a). See also Branciforti (2023:492–496).

[28] The Italian translation, prepared by Bartoli and Braun (Meyer-Lübke 1901), is an abridged version that considers only the Italian language and Tuscan dialects.

[29] For broader analysis of historical grammars of Italian see Tomasin (2018). Also Marazzini (2010:602).

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Chapter 7

Women in the history of the Italian language

Helena Sanson

7.1 Introduction

Women's presence in, and contributions to, the history of the Italian language have long been overlooked.[1] Italian historical and sociolinguistic studies on women's productions are still often dominated by views and perspectives that can largely be traced back to old cultural deprivations and constraints, as well as to gender prejudices that women have had to face for centuries. There is often a tendency to conduct analyses of texts by women of popular or lower-middle-class extraction that focus chiefly on their deviations from a more standard variant of Italian, both in writing and speaking, rather than exploring, for instance, their contribution to the literary language and its codification. The focus has therefore been on the diastratic aspect of language (cf. Chapter 29), working on the assumption of a long-standing identification between women and the less learnèd (Cappai and Fresu 2018:13). It is only in more recent years that scholars have adopted a more wide-ranging research perspective and have questioned women's absence and recovered their long-lost contributions in a range of fields, such as the history of linguistic thought and the *questione della lingua*, the 'language question' (Sanson 2007; 2011), the codification of language and women's presence in the field of metalinguistic production (Sanson 2011; 2020), as well as their contribution to the popularization of language in a crucial moment of Italian history—

the post-Unification period—by their rich production in the paraliterary sphere (Fresu 2016a; Magazzeni 2019).

This chapter aims to provide an overview of women's roles in and contributions to the history of the Italian language from the Renaissance to the present day. Its focus is on the Italian language only but, as is well known, it is not always possible to provide a clear distinction between Italian and the dialects of Italy. In the Italian context, dialects should not be considered in opposition to Italian, since the various dialects and their cultural and literary traditions are fully embedded in the country's own national culture. Because of the centuries-old identification between women and the vernacular/the dialects, women's presence in, and their contributions to, the history of the Italian language often belong to an intermediate space that exists between the two main spheres.

7.2 Metalinguistic texts of Italian

7.2.1 Women as dedicatees and the intended audience of metalinguistic texts

When the treatise *Prose della volgar lingua* 'Discussions on the Vernacular Language' (1525) by the Venetian humanist Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) was published, the Italian peninsula was politically and linguistically fragmented. Within the lively *questione della lingua* debates (see Chapters 4–5) about which of the many existing vernaculars should become the language of culture that could compete with Latin, Bembo upheld the view that the politically neutral fourteenth-century Tuscan, backed by the unsurpassed rich literary models of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio (the so-called 'Three Crowns'), provided a clear and prestigious model for printers and authors. This position came to be widely accepted, creating a complex linguistic situation that had wide-ranging implications. It was ultimately one reason why the literary language—that is, Italian—would remain for centuries beyond the reach of the majority of the

population, who were largely illiterate and mostly only spoke their local dialect with at best imperfect knowledge of the language of culture. As for women, because of their restricted access to education and the widespread prejudices against their intellectual abilities, for centuries Italian was not easily accessible.[2] It is therefore unsurprising that women were not in a position to compose metalinguistic texts on Italian until the second half of the nineteenth century when, as we shall see, political Unification marked a turning point in their access to education and formal schooling.

If women could not author metalinguistic texts in sixteenth-century Italy, they nonetheless played an important role as dedicatees and intended readers of the first vernacular grammars. These grammars of fourteenth-century Tuscan as written by Petrarch and Boccaccio and, to a lesser extent, Dante, were initially produced for learnèd readers, overwhelmingly male, who had a good knowledge of Latin and literary works in the vernacular that the same grammars were meant to give better access to. It was therefore a language 'created *by* members of the élites, *for* the élites', which was by its very nature 'socially exclusive' (Richardson 2002:13). The *Regole della volgar lingua* 'Rules of the Vernacular Language', written in 1516 by Giovan Francesco Fortunio (*c.*1470–1517) from Pordenone, was composed for the benefit of those who studied 'the regulated vernacular language' (Fortunio 1516:a2r) and based on the works of the 'Three Crowns'. The *princeps* of Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* was similarly intended for educated male readers who were familiar with such works.

Increasingly, and also owing to the growing literary trend of Petrarchism, authors, editors, and printers targeted less learnèd readerships for vernacular works of various genres, including grammars. They wrote for beginners, foreigners, and also women. Because less learnèd readers might not have been familiar with Latin or the great authors of the past, grammarians aimed, or at least avowedly aimed, to produce works that were more accessible and helped readers learn the literary vernacular for practical purposes, as well as for literary appreciation or composition. A number of grammars were dedicated to female members of the upper classes, such as the *Grammatica volgare trovata ne le opere di Dante, di Francesco Petrarca, di Giovan Boccaccio, di Cin da Pistoia, di Guitton d'Arezzo* 'Vernacular Grammar as Found in the Works of

Dante [. . .]' (1539) by Gaetano Tizzone (known as Tizzone), dedicated to Dorotea Gonzaga, daughter of the duke of Sabbioneta Gianfrancesco Gonzaga and wife of the marquis of Bitonto Gianfrancesco Acquaviva d'Aragona. The grammar was composed, the author claimed, for a readership of male and female beginners and founded on principles of 'brevity and clarity', to avoid grammatical terminology derived from Latin. Rinaldo Corso's *Fondamenti del parlar thoscano* 'The Foundations of the Tuscan Tongue' (1549), published in Venice by Comin da Trino,[3] was meant for 'barbarians and foreigners' (that is, for readers from other parts of the Italian peninsula or from abroad). It was also composed for the woman whom Corso would eventually marry, Lucrezia Lombardi (presented under the pseudonym 'Hiparcha'), to help nurture her ambition to compose vernacular verse and as a tool to help her gain better access to the prestigious Tuscan literary heritage. In addition to a more accessible size and graphic layout, Corso created his own grammatical examples alongside those taken from the works of the great fourteenth-century authors.

Other grammarians composed their works with women among their intended readers, such as *Le tre fontane* 'The Three Fountains' (1526) by Nicolò Liburnio, intended, among others, for 'the honest and virtuous women of Italy' (Liburnio 1526:2r), and *De' commentarii della lingua italiana*. [. . .] *Libri sette* 'Commentaries on the Italian Language [. . .] in Seven Books' (1581) by Girolamo Ruscelli. The second of the seven books is a brief and effective summary of the same material presented in the second, but stripped of the inessential, expounded with clarity and brevity, specifically meant for a readership of women, young people, foreigners, and those ignorant of Latin. In his *I fonti toscani* 'Tuscan Sources' (1598) the Sienese Orazio Lombardelli closes his text with a discussion of the social and cultural groups that might benefit from his work. Alongside children, foreigners, notaries, chancellors, secretaries, academicians, preachers, humanists, poets, translators, and historians we find women, who are therefore recognized as a specific social category of readers interested in learning Tuscan through literary and metalinguistic texts. Lombardelli identifies and lists a number of works that are particularly suitable for them, and among these are devotional and moral texts, in poetry and prose, collected letters by renowned authors, works of conduct, and grammars,

namely Lodovico Dolce's *Osservationi* 'Annotations' (1550) and Ruscelli's *Commentarii*, mentioned earlier (Lombardelli 1598:122f.).

Notwithstanding women's restricted access to education and study, by the end of the century they were recognized as a separate, distinctive audience with an interest in the grammar of the literary vernacular, not only as readers but also as authors of works of literature. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy saw a considerable number of women—compared to other European countries—participating in cultural production as poets, prose authors, and theatre writers (Cox 2008; 2011). Bembo's linguistic and literary reforms, which promoted and upheld fourteenth-century Tuscan and its literary heritage as a model to imitate, proved to be accommodating to women writers. Despite its inherent elitism, the literary vernacular used in the print medium brought about a democratization of culture. Renaissance Petrarchism provided a clear linguistic model to imitate and a decorous and dignified model of literature whose decency facilitated women's access to the literary world (Cox 2008:57f.; also Dionisotti 1967).

7.2.2 Women and the Italian language abroad

From the second half of the sixteenth century, Italian, also prized for its literature, enjoyed vitality and appreciation at a European level, in particular in France and England.[4] The expansion of Italian beyond the peninsula occurred through literature, art, and music. Women played an important role in the spread of Italian as dedicatees and intended readers of grammars of Italian as a foreign language. In the wake of appreciation for the great fourteenth-century authors, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, then Ariosto and Tasso and, later in the eighteenth century, Metastasio, it became a refined language used in conversation and in salons. It often came to be associated with women as *the* language to learn in order to shine in society.

Already in sixteenth-century England a number of influential women knew Italian. Elizabeth I (1533–1603) had received a particularly refined linguistic education and was highly proficient in a range of languages: besides Italian, which she had studied with her

tutor Giovanni Battista Castiglioni, she also knew Latin, Greek, and French (Salmon 1994; Wyatt 2005:124). Elizabeth had a clear preference for Italian and Italian culture was accorded clear prominence at her court (Wyatt 2005:125). Iacopo Castelvetro, a second-generation language teacher, taught James VI of Scotland and his wife Anne of Denmark during his stay in Edinburgh in the early 1590s. It is to Anne that John Florio dedicated his 1611 dictionary *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, which includes the *Necessarie Rules and Short Observations for the True Pronouncing and Speedie Learning of the Italian Tongue*. Florio, one of the most important figures not only among the Italian teachers but also the Italianists and intellectuals at Elizabeth's court, had many illustrious women pupils (Lawrence 2005:8).

Clearly, interest in the Italian language in the upper classes was very much linked to the prestige of its writers, and some students reached high levels of expertise in this sense. In the 1590s, Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke and sister of Sir Philip Sidney, counted among her many achievements the translation of part of Petrarch's *Trionfo della morte* 'Triumph of Death', 'unquestionably the finest English version of Petrarch's masterpiece ever made' (Waller 1977:iii). Anna Hume translated the entire text, as *The Triumphs of Love: Chastity. Death*, in 1644.

Aristocratic women's involvement in the study of Italian is also reflected in works on language. Henry Granthan's *An Italian Grammer* (1575) is dedicated to 'the right vertuous mystres Mary and mystres Francys Berkeley'—daughters of Lord Henry Berkeley. Granthan expressed his admiration for 'their endeavours towardes th'attaining of the Italian tongue', wishing to be of 'an helpe to [their] studies, to shorten [their] travelles that otherwaies might be longe' (Granthan 1575:*2r). The text, a 'very necessary booke for all such as are studious of the' Italian tongue (Granthan 1575:*2r) is a translation of the *Italicae grammatices praecepta ac ratio* 'Italian Grammar Rules and System', a grammar of Italian written in Latin (the first edition was printed in Geneva in 1567), by the Neapolitan Scipione Lentulo. Claudius Hollyband's quadrilingual *Campo di Fior* (1583) was dedicated to Lucy Harington, daughter of Sir John Harington, translator of Ariosto's chivalric poem *Orlando furioso* into English. She was also one of the dedicatees of Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598). In the same year, Giovanni Michele Bruto's *La*

institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente (Bruto 1555) was published in English translation (Bruto 1598), with a title that reveals its twofold aim, *The Necessarie, Fit and Convenient Education of a Young Gentlewoman. Written both in French and Italian, and Translated into English* [. . .] *now Printed with Three Languages Together* [. . .] *for the Better Instruction of such as Are Desirous to Studie Those Tongues*. Giovanni Torriano's *New and Easie Directions for Attaining the Thuscan Italian Tongue* (1639) and his *The Italian Tutor or a New and Most Compleat Italian Grammer* (1640) were both addressed to Elizabeth, Countess of Kent. Torriano (1639) credited aristocratic women for reviving and putting again into vogue the Italian tongue after a period of neglect following Queen Anne's times.

From the last decades of the seventeenth century, we see in England, France, and Germany an interesting production of metalinguistic works of the Italian language meant specifically 'for the ladies'.[5] These works are meant above all for women learners but also, more broadly, for beginners, especially learners who, once again, were unfamiliar with Latin, which was still considered the foundation for any serious study of languages and their grammar. The authors of these texts often insisted on having devised and adopted study methods that did not require any knowledge of the classical language or any pedantic, boring, or taxing application. They claimed that they made use of a style and terminology that were accessible to everyone, offering instead a light, engaging, and easy way of learning a new language. Their reassurances stemmed from long-standing common assumptions that women's weaker intellectual abilities or lack of academic experience made them less able than men to devote themselves to what were perceived as taxing subjects, or to engage with abstract ideas. But the same kind of approach would seemingly work for all those who were new to learning languages or not too familiar with grammar, its terminology, and categories, that is, a readership of 'commençants' (Sanson 2014b). These metalinguistic texts usually comprise a first section on phonetics, followed by the morphology of the language. Often, they include excerpts from well-known authors, model-letters, set phrases, and model-dialogues, as well as lists of vocabulary arranged according to semantic field. The aim was to offer readers support in using Italian in society and also in gaining some initial

ability to access Italian literary texts. Italian, as spoken language, seemed to have more recognition and presence abroad than within the peninsula (Serianni 2002b:58; Richardson 2002).

Women, then, or 'ladies'—as they are presented in the title referring to the social class of their potential readers—considered as the 'beginners' par excellence, seemed to have spurred a lively activity of Italian grammar production. In Paris, Abbé Annibale Antonini (originally from near Salerno) taught the young girls of the aristocracy and the high bourgeoisie for twenty-five years. His *Traité de la grammaire italienne* 'Treatise on Italian Grammar' (1726), is dedicated to Maria Leszczyńska, wife of Louis XV. It was followed by his *Grammaire italienne à l'usage des Dames* 'Italian Grammar for the Use of Ladies' (Antonini 1728), dedicated this time to the Princess de Bouillon, which became very popular, going on to have a further edition three years later and then to be reprinted by four different Parisian printers in that same year. The type of Italian that Antonini taught and used in the dialogues of his grammar is permeated by artificiality; it is the Italian of the opera, of serious or playful melodramas, ballets, and farces, intended to be practical and allow conversation in the salon environment with minimal effort (Folena 1983:406).

Similarly, after his *L'Art d'apprendre la langue italienne dédié à Mademoiselle* [. . .] *La Comtesse Josephe de Wilzek* 'The Art of Learning the Italian Language dedicated to Mademoiselle [. . .] Countess Josephe de Wilzek' (Bencirechi 1764), the Tuscan Abbé Bencirechi, an Italian language tutor, published his *Leçons hébdomadaires de la langue italienne à l'usage des Dames* 'Weekly Italian Lessons for Ladies' (Bencirechi 1772, revised 1778). The French author Nicolas Adam proposed a series of grammars based on the principle that a systematic and sound knowledge of French, rather than Latin, allowed acquisition of any other language. His *Grammaire françoise universelle à l'usage des dames* 'Universal French Grammar for the Ladies' (Adam 1779), inspired by the new approach of the Port-Royal grammarians, was followed by grammars of Latin, English, German, and Italian: the *Grammaire italienne, à l'usage des dames, ou la vraie manière d'apprendre aisément, et le plus promptement qu'il est possible, la langue italienne, par le moyen de la Grammaire françoise universelle, à l'usage des dames* 'Italian Grammar, for the Use of Ladies, or the Real Way to Learn

Easily, and as Quickly as Possible, the Italian Language, by Means of the Universal French Grammar, for the Use of Ladies' was published in 1783 (see Sanson 2016). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Sicilian Antonio Scoppa, a member of various learnèd academies and a university teacher in Paris, published several texts on Italian grammar, including his *Grammaire italienne pour les Dames* 'Italian Grammar for the Ladies' (Scoppa 1808). It was intended for an undefined readership of French lovers of the Italian language, but Scoppa claims to have purposely adopted simplicity and clarity for the sake of his female readers.

Grammars of Italian 'for the ladies' were published also in England and Germany. Gasparo Grimani's *Ladies' New Italian Grammar for the Use of English and French Scholars* (Grimani 1788), with parallel text English/French, claims to make the study of Italian as easy as possible. Other works were specifically intended for young ladies, such as the *Easy Phraseology, for the Use of Young Ladies, Who Intend to Learn the Colloquial Part of the Italian Language* (Baretti 1775), by the Piedmontese Giuseppe Baretti. In Germany Francesco Saverio Giuliani published his *Gramatica toscana italiana per le dame. Italiänisch-Toscanische Sprachlehre für das Frauenzimmer und für diejenigen, die kein Latein verstehen* 'Italian-Tuscan Grammar for the Ladies. Italian-Tuscan Grammar for Women and for Those Who Do Not Understand Latin' (Giuliani 1768), once again equating ladies with those unfamiliar with Latin (Beck-Busse 2014:297).

7.2.3 Women as authors of metalinguistic texts of Italian

The 1859 Casati Law of the Kingdom of Sardinia, extended to the entire Italian Kingdom after Unification in 1861, marked the birth of a lay public school open to all, independent of gender or social class. This was a turning point in women's access to literary Italian. The Coppino Law of 1877 reinforced the principle of compulsory education. Schooling made the acquisition of the national language one of its central elements (De Mauro 1963; Raicich 1982). Moreover, two Royal Decrees by ministers Bonghi and Coppino in

1875, de facto opened the doors to university education for women. A secondary-school diploma from a *liceo* was required to proceed to university education, for both sexes. There was nothing that overtly forbade women from attending this type of school, but legislators had not really conceived of this possibility, which is why secondary schools (*ginnasi* and *licei*) did not provide separate classes for the two sexes, as was usually the case in the Italian school system. Since few parents were keen on seeing their daughters attend mixed classes, female attendance in secondary schools of major cities in the 1870s was sporadic, at least until a ministerial circular of 1883 clarified the issue of girls' enrolment. In the absence of legal obstacles to prevent women accessing higher education, there still remained cultural and social prejudices that concretely limited them (Raicich 1989). Inevitably, women continued to face obstacles in the type of intellectual training they could gain, and also consequently in terms of their scholarly contributions to the codification of the Italian language and in their studies in the fields of dialectology and philology.

But by the end of the nineteenth century (see §7.5), women had also been assigned, at least in theory, a quasi-official role as teachers of Italian within the family and in school. It is therefore unsurprising to find in these years their first contribution to the normativization of language use and to linguistic codification by means of grammatical and lexicographical works, reading manuals, and other kinds of publications. In the newly created kingdom, the growing presence of an infrastructure of specialized publishing houses, driven by profit, ensured an openness to accepting grammatical handbooks and manuals by female authors.[6] Women who contributed to this type of pedagogical production on language tried their hands at other related genres, often targeting an audience of young readers. Several authors who composed grammars, reading manuals, and primers that targeted children (boys *and* girls) in particular, and combined moral and linguistic instruction, were women. Many were *maestre* 'primary-school teachers'. Some became quite popular, such as the Florentine Ida Baccini (1850–1911), well known as an educationalist, periodical director, writer of children's literature, and author of grammars of Italian for school pupils, such as her *Nozioni di grammatica italiana, esposte secondo il metodo intuitivo ad uso delle scuole elementari* 'Rudiments of Italian Grammar, Presented

According to the Intuitive Method for Use in Primary Schools' (Baccini 1882) and *L'insegnamento dell'italiano nelle scuole elementari* 'The Teaching of Italian in Primary Schools' (Baccini 1893). The intended readership of children was made clear also in the layout and titlepage of these grammars, as well as the illustrations that accompanied them.

Women grammarians at times adopted the dialogical format in their grammars, offering their readers 'model' conversations on grammar and language between a mother and her children. Cases in point are Sarina Corgialegno's *Grammatica della mamma, ossia avviamento allo studio della grammatica* 'Grammar for the Mother: Or an Introduction to the Study of Grammar' (Corgialegno 1875), and Maria Viani-Visconti Cavanna's *Enrichetto e Lina o la grammatica in famiglia* 'Enrichetto and Lina, or Grammar in the Family' (Viani-Visconti Cavanna 1882).[7]

Often there are only a few extant copies of these grammars produced by women for children or schools, both because of their cheap paper and because they were not deemed worthy of preservation in libraries. In many cases we also have very little information about their authors or their background. Deifile Bindi Bulgarini (1869; 1874), Angiolina Bulgarini (1878), Adalgisa Costa (1886; 1909; 1916), Camilla Stazi-Mattioli (1899), Emma Bassi Brusoni (1900; 1906), Eugenia Casilli (1900), and Camilla Bevilacqua-Odetti (1907) are just some of the female grammarians who wrote grammars in post-Unification Italy.[8] These authors are usually excluded from the more traditional historiography of the Italian language and its metalinguistic production.

Some women writers, aiming to improve and perfect their knowledge of literary Italian, conducted close studies of the language, including comparative studies of Italian and the dialects. This kind of study was necessary before they could apply themselves to the process of writing novels and short stories or was part of their interest in local folklore and language collection and preservation. The work they produced should be considered important contributions not only to dialectology but also to the history of Italian because of their contrastive approach. The Friulian Caterina Percoto (1812–1887), for instance, worked on a compilation (still unpublished) of Friulian expressions and idioms (*Frasi friulane maggio* 1863) that collects observations on phonology, and also

includes a comparison between Friulian and Italian phonology, and points of morphology (Percoto n.d. 'Carte friulane'; Percoto n.d. 'Note linguistiche'). The Bolognese Carolina Coronedi Berti (1820–1911) published between 1869 and 1874, first in instalments and then in two volumes, a *Vocabolario bolognese italiano* 'Bolognese–Italian Dictionary',[9] preceded by a grammar of the dialect, *Grammatica del dialetto bolognese* 'Grammar of the Bolognese Dialect' (Coronedi Berti 1869–1874, I:xvii–xl). Coronedi belonged to the upper classes of Bologna, but had not received any formal philological training. Not surprisingly, etymological reconstructions of the terms included in her dictionary are limited: she had to acknowledge that etymology was 'a vast and difficult field [. . .] a dark abyss' that she was not equipped to 'defeat' (Coronedi Berti 1869–1874, I:iv). She had prepared her work 'amid family duties', but was supported by a strong motivation, of the kind 'that women are usually not deemed to possess' (Coronedi Berti 1869–1874, I:ii).

Women also contributed in other ways to the production of metalinguistic texts of Italian. Some produced language handbooks that adopted a prescriptive approach, alerting speakers against interferences between Italian and dialectal terms and expressions, and providing them with the correct lexical and morphological choices. The *Voci e modi errati. Saggio di correzione di idiotismi e d'altri errori dell'uso milanese* 'Erroneous Words and Expressions: Essay on the Correction of Peculiar Expressions and Other Mistakes of Milanese Usage' (Errera and Errera 1898) by the two teachers, and sisters, Rosa Errera (1864–1946) and Emilia Errera (1866–1901), was intended for school pupils and teachers.

A number of periodical publications, often edited by women, explicitly targeted mothers and teachers in the years following Unification, contributing to improving and spreading knowledge of the national language. Some journals, such as *La donna e la famiglia* 'The Woman and the Family', *La maestra educatrice* 'The Female Primary-School Teacher as Educator', and *Il corriere delle maestre* 'The Journal of Female Primary-School Teachers', also published articles that specifically dealt with issues related to language education, aimed at both mothers at home and teachers in the classroom. Some periodicals did this systematically: the Genoese magazine, *La donna e la famiglia*, published between 1863 and 1865 a series of studies on the Italian language composed by Baroness

Marina Sprea Baroni. Subdivided by semantic fields, they were intended to offer solid help in learning vocabulary for everyday life (which was usually covered by the dialect), as well as concrete examples of Italian morphology and syntax. The lessons were structured as reproducible dialogues.

Other women also produced works that aimed to improve knowledge of Italian vocabulary in everyday life and activities, adapting a contrastive 'Italian vs dialect' approach. Emilia Sofia Thomas-Fusi composed a *Manualetto sulla nomenclatura dei lavori femminili con cenni intorno alla maniera di eseguirli: ad uso delle scuole e delle famiglie* 'Manual on the Nomenclature of Women's Work with Advice on How to Produce Them: For the Use of Schools and Families' (Thomas-Fusi 1870), adding in subsequent editions a short dictionary of Italian words and their corresponding forms in various dialects (Thomas-Fusi 1896). Sofia Cavazzutti similarly produced a *Manualetto di nomenclatura romagnola-italiana dei lavori femminili in forma di quadri sinottici* [. . .] *compilato ad uso delle scuole infantili, elementari e delle famiglie* 'Short Dictionary of Romagnol-Italian Lexicon for Female Handiwork in Tables [. . .] Compiled for Nursery Schools, Primary Schools and Families' (Cavazzutti 1880).

Besides some works of lexicography and other texts that played an important role in the history of the Italian language, there are some mostly forgotten female figures. The critic and lexicographer Niccolò Tommaseo (1802–1874) expressed his gratitude in the preface to the second edition of his *Nuovo dizionario dei sinonimi della lingua italiana* 'New Dictionary of Synonyms of the Italian Language' (Tommaseo 1838), to a 'poor and unknown' woman for her help in compiling his work. From conversations held with this unnamed woman, he explained, he drew the 'pleasure of noble sentiments and of an elegant language': this work, he acknowledged, 'in its best part, is hers' (Tommaseo 1838:lxi). We can give a name to this woman: Giuseppa Catelli Papi, called Geppina, Tommaseo's landlady during his stay in Florence where he had moved in 1827 hoping to improve his knowledge of Tuscan. Tommaseo, born in Sebenico (Dalmatia), was not a native speaker of Italian, but rather of a variety of the Venetian dialect. All his reading could not make up for his lack of that natural linguistic competence that Catelli Papi possessed and

that allowed him to identify which forms of Tuscan were still in use and which were archaic or disused.

Another example of an informal contribution to language codification is the Florentine governess Emilia Luti, who worked on the revision of one of the masterpieces of Italian literature, *I promessi sposi* 'The Betrothed' by the Milanese writer Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873).[10] A native speaker of Milanese who was more at ease in French than Italian, Manzoni relied on the assistance provided by Luti (and her mother Giovanna Feroci Luti) to revise the language of the definitive edition of the novel, the so-called Quarantana, published between 1840 and 1842. Luti worked in Manzoni's study in his home in Milan, where she was employed for a year, as well as later acting as linguistic informant, at a distance, by answering his detailed queries.

There are also figures such as the writer, patriot, poet, and educationalist Caterina Franceschi Ferrucci (1803–1887), from Narni in Umbria, who was involved in the compilation of the fifth edition of the *Vocabolario della Crusca* 'Dictionary of the Crusca Academy' (1863–1923).[11] In 1871, she was the first woman admitted to the ranks of the Accademia della Crusca, the most ancient linguistic academy in Europe, founded in 1583, by becoming a corresponding member (rather than a full member).[12] A supporter of the purist stance of Father Antonio Cesari (1760–1828), in her works Franceschi Ferrucci stressed the importance of giving women a national and patriotic education, based on sound knowledge of the Italian language and grammar.[13] Her admission among the Cruscanti is indicative of the kind of female scholar who was thought acceptable by the establishment: a modest woman who had devoted herself to the study of the great classics of Latin and Italian literature, and, above all, a devoted wife and mother.

7.3 Women and the dissemination of the Italian language: paraliterary production

Political unification of the country led to a gradual extension of literacy to all social strata, including both men and women. The need for a national language that was accessible and in use across the newly created state became pressing, but this could only be achieved progressively and not without difficulties and setbacks. Particularly useful for the dissemination of the national language among young female readers and adults was the production of educational paraliterature aimed at women, produced by both male and female authors.[14]

Paraliterature has long been ignored by critics or classified as marginal and qualitatively inferior to 'high literature'. It nonetheless played an important socio-pedagogical role in post-Unification Italy, offering a cohesive linguistic model that could be imitated across social classes (Cappai and Fresu 2018:22; Fresu 2019). In this respect, thanks to the wide distribution of this type of text and the approval it gained among readers, it functioned, indirectly, as an example of linguistic pedagogy (Fresu and Sotgiu 2021:323). Women authors of this kind of production came from diverse social and educational backgrounds across the peninsula. They contributed to this type of book and periodical production by combining their intellectual activity as writers or journalists with their commitment to education, in some cases also as teachers or headmistresses. Paraliterary works marked women's transition from their private role as educators within the family to a more public role as teachers or social and cultural agents. Some authors were also politically active and particularly attentive to women's issues and the 'woman question'. Paraliterary texts by women belong to a range of subgroups that include children's literature, plays (also meant for home performances), magazines and periodicals targeting girls, short stories, novels, and magazine articles, as well as prose production focusing on the intellectual and moral education of the female sex.

These women authors also published diaries, chronicles, journalistic reports, political texts, pamphlets, and propaganda booklets. They often wrote for an audience of young readers or female readers, hoping to foster in them an awareness of the new unified state also by focusing on the 'language question'. An example is the linguistic model presented by the Lombard author Anna Vertua Gentile (1846–1926), whose works show a substantial

adherence, especially on the phono-morphological level, to the Tuscan literary solutions promoted by Alessandro Manzoni (Fresu and Sotgiu 2021:326). Vertua Gentile's rich and varied production was meant above all for women and children and ranges from educational works and conduct literature texts, to novels, short stories, and short theatrical pieces. Vertua Gentile also contributed to a number of literary and educational periodicals, including *La donna* 'Woman', *Giornale delle Maestre* 'Journal of Women Primary Teachers', and *Fanciullezza italiana* 'Italian Youth'. Alongside their varied content, these periodicals were useful means to promote and disseminate the literary—now national—language to their middle-class readers. Maria Viani-Visconti Cavanna (*c.*1835–1926), mentioned earlier as the author of *Enrichetto e Lina, o La grammatica in famiglia*, was also a prolific translator and children's writer, applying her skills, like Vertua Gentile, to several genres of texts, including moral readings for children and school manuals.

Within this varied and multifaceted production of post-Unification Italy, we should also remember recipe books. For the first time these were no longer aimed at professional cooks but at the 'young ladies' (or young brides) of the increasingly urban, and literate, lower and middle classes who were thus being introduced to household management, table manners, and the preparation of food and dishes, as part of broader moral and civil education of Italian women. Recipe books and domestic economy manuals became one of the main channels for the dissemination of a 'female model' to be proposed to Italian society of the time, but they also directly contributed to the dissemination and standardization of Italian within the household. In light of their intended audience, the language of these late nineteenth and early twentieth-century manuals became simpler and clearer, for instance including fewer French and other foreign loanwords that had until then been more commonly in use in the field (Capatti 1998:792; Bertini Malgarini and Caria 2016:277–281).[15] Hence they became more accessible to readers with different levels of education and from across social classes, so that even housewives or servants who could 'barely read' could become the most expert women in the kitchen 'in a very short time', as the editors emphasized in the introductory note to Giovanni Battista and Giovanni Ratto's *La cuciniera genovese* 'The Genoese Female Cook' (Ratto and Ratto 1893 [1863]:4f.).[16] In some editions, *La cuciniera*

Genovese included a useful *Piccolo dizionarietto genovese-italiano* 'Short Genoese-Italian Dictionary': its intended readers comprised, above all, lower-middle-class women—mothers and housewives—who could improve their practical cooking skills as well as their Italian. This trend was then expanded by the widely popular *Scienza in cucina e l'Arte di mangiar bene. Manuale pratico per le famiglie* 'Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well: A Practical Manual for Families' by Pellegrino Artusi (1891), which brought about a significant change in the practice and language of Italian cuisine, normalizing the national gastronomic language by means of a new Florentine-style language (Lubello 2010a). First published in 1891, it had already reached its fifteenth edition by 1911: the simple colloquial Italian and confidential note and register that Artusi adopted made him 'the Manzoni of Italian gastronomic language' Serianni (2009a:107).

Women were involved in this type of book production both as intended audience and as authors, thus directly contributing to the dissemination of Italian. For instance, Giulia Ferraris Tamburini's *Come posso mangiar bene?* 'How Can I Eat Well?' (Ferraris Tamburini 1900), Ida Baccini's *Fuoco Sacro* 'Sacred Fire' (Baccini 1903), and Giulia Lazzari Turco's *Ecco il tuo libro di cucina. Manuale di cucina, pasticceria e credenza per l'uso di famiglia* 'Here's Your Cookbook: Cookery, Pastry and Sideboard Manual for Family Use' (published anonymously: Lazzari Turco 1904), as well as *Dalla cucina al salotto. Enciclopedia della vita domestica* 'From Kitchen to Living Room: Encyclopaedia of Domestic Life' (Donna Clara 1905) and *Far molto con poco. L'arte di creare buoni piatti coi residui di cucina* 'Making a Lot with Little: The Art of Creating Good Dishes from Kitchen Scraps' (Donna Clara 1909); 'Donna Clara' was Lidia Morelli's pseudonym.

Closer to our times, another paraliterary genre that contributed to the dissemination of Italian in relation to women is the *fotoromanzo* (lit. 'photographic novel'), which combines romance novel and comic book, using words with pictures, or in this case, with photographs that function as stills or movie frames. The genre originated in Italy after the Second World War, with magazines such as *Kolossal*, *Sogno*, *Grand Hotel*, and *Bolero* soon gaining a very high number of readers (especially, but not exclusively, women) between the 1950s and 1960s, thanks to publishers such as Lancio that sold millions of

copies every month. Within a short time, the *fotoromanzo* became the biggest publishing success of this era, but it was considered such a marginal genre that the occasional surveys on the circulation of periodicals usually did not take them into account: we have data for the year 1958, indicating that *Grand Hotel* and *Bolero* had, respectively, 3 million and 2 million readers, of whom 25 per cent were male (Bravo 2003:77). In the second half of the 1970s, the *fotoromanzi* were read across social classes, but predominantly in the north and in industrialized areas (Bravo 2003:79f.). Despite widespread criticism for being a low-brow production, they managed to reach parts of the population that otherwise would not have had access to other forms of reading (Bravo 2003:86; see also Dalla Vecchia 2021). In a country where illiteracy rates continued to be high and everyday life was still dominated by the dialects, they were a sort of 'friendly, portable primer' that allowed readers to familiarize themselves with the national language (Bravo 2003:86). The language used in the bubbles for the dialogue obviously needed to be concise: it was far from everyday spoken usage and rather contrived and characterized by a certain level of formality. But it was also a model of language that functioned like the opera dialogue in the grammars for ladies, mentioned earlier, a linguistic point of reference for those who felt that full use of Italian in everyday life was beyond their reach.

7.4 Women and the making of Italian as writers and translators

Given the literary nature of Italian, it is necessary to touch upon the role that women writers and translators had in the establishment, recognition, and dissemination of the language. Notwithstanding women's limited access to education and studying across the centuries, already in the early modern period the Italian peninsula saw a large number of women engaged in composing poetry, prose, and theatre works (Cox 2008; 2011). Towards the end of the seventeenth century the literary academy of Arcadia, founded in

1690, promoted ideals of 'good taste' and simplicity, re-evaluating the canon of imitation of classical writers of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, as a reaction against the exaggerations and artifices of the Baroque. This approach was well suited to accommodating women poets in the many Arcadian colonies that sprang up all over the peninsula, their numbers initially small but growing progressively in time. But it is in the nineteenth century, and particularly from the second half, that women's presence grew in the field of literary production, across all genres. Improvements in education, together with the new political and cultural situation, meant that the post-Unification period saw a flourishing of women who devoted themselves to writing—and to writing professionally to earn a living. They wrote novels and short stories, journal and newspaper articles, fiction for children and young women, books of etiquette and conduct, *strenne* 'Christmas gift books', and almanacs, schoolbooks, political essays, and plays, earning the appreciation of their readers, and at times that of critics, some achieving clear success and becoming recognized public intellectual figures. Despite the criticisms they also had to endure with regard to their imperfect knowledge of Italian, women writers were able to reach an ever-growing audience of female readers hungry for accessible and entertaining works. Whereas critics often commented on the gap between the linguistic abilities and competence of the readers and the literary language writers employed, women writers' approach was less concerned with having to bend language to fit their own requirements. Authors such as Carolina Invernizio (1851–1916) and Matilde Serao (1856–1927), despite being criticized for their Italian, managed to build a vast following of loyal readers that cut across social classes. Widely popular with their readers were also writers such as Liala (pseudonym of Amalia Cambiasi Negretti Odescalchi, 1897–1995), exponent of the so-called *romanzo rosa* (popular novels with a sentimental focus). The contribution women writers offered to the renewal, dissemination, and consolidation of Italian in making it more accessible to a larger part of society, and therefore able to circulate more widely across social ranks, should not be underestimated (Sanson 2011).

Equally important in the establishment and renewal of Italian across genres and fields of knowledge, and dissemination among readers, is the contribution of translators. From the sixteenth

century a growing number of women, lay and religious, devoted themselves to the activity of translation (Tylus 2019; Sanson 2021; 2022a; 2022b). They translated above all from Latin and Greek, especially religious or classical works. Ippolita Clara translated the first six books of the *Aeneid* (Albonico 1989), Laura Battiferri Ammannati (1564) and Chiara Matraini (1586) translated the seven penitential psalms, and Fiammetta Frescobaldi, in the convent of San Jacopo di Ripoli, left behind an impressive opus that also comprised her translations of 118 saints' lives by Luigi Lippomanno and Laurentius Surius (Lorenz Sauer). Women translators grew in number especially after the eighteenth century (Sanson 2022a): across the peninsula, they applied themselves to language study by translating a rich variety of texts, from poetry, novels, and plays to history, biography, conduct literature, economic and legal texts, and religious and devotional writings. While women translators with their work helped the circulation of knowledge and ideas, they also contributed to making Italian a subtler, and more modern, tool of expression. Some women also acted as translators and summarizers of foreign scientific texts: Giuseppa Eleonora Barbapiccola, Maria Angela Ardinghelli, and Maria Vigilante translated, respectively Descartes (1722), Stephen Hales (1776a; 1776b; 1776c, first published 1750–1756), and Isaac Watts (1789). From a linguistic perspective, with their translations of scientific or more technical texts into Italian, women translators helped expand the lexicon of Italian in fields where there was great need for innovation. Translating was also a form of linguistic scholarship. In the paratextual material of their translations, some women also displayed attention to language issues (Sanson 2022a).

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, there is a noticeable increase in translations by women from languages other than French, English, and German. From the first decades of the twentieth century, translation took on a more 'professional' role for women, becoming at the same time an activity that was commercially driven—women translators being commissioned by publishers to work on certain texts—and an intellectual endeavour that allowed them to engage with, and be part of, contemporary literary circles and networks (Sanson 2022a).

7.5 Discussions of and ideas about women's use of the Italian language

Ideas about women's use of language in the early modern period encompass women's limited access to educational opportunities and to the literary, written nature of 'Italian' itself. If, like Latin, the literary vernacular needed to be studied and learned in books and from the great authors of the past, the language of women, mothers, or wet-nurses had to be shunned, because, as Stefano Guazzo wrote in his *La civil conversatione* 'On Civilized Conversation', 'to always tell things with those bare words that the mother taught us [. . .] bores the listener' (Guazzo 1574:64r). The default variety associated with women and, usually, also with orality, was the native vernacular, one of the many dialects of the peninsula.

In the sixteenth century the process of codification and establishment of a norm concerned the written rather than the spoken language, but this contributed nonetheless to the creation of a certain hypersensitivity towards language variation in terms of speech habits. Metalinguistic, as well as literary, texts, by early modern theorists and men of letters are a rich source of information for socio-historical investigations on language. Linguistic habits associated with women often feature in these works.[17] A rich source of ideas about women's use of language is conduct literature: these works often include a section devoted to women's speech (Sanson 2007:169–177). Women should restrict themselves to 'the language that is proper and native to their town' and specifically to 'civilized usage' rather than that 'of the populace', Lodovico Dolce explained in the second edition of his *Dialogo della institution delle donne* 'Dialogue on the Education of Women' (Dolce 1547 [1545]:30v).

The fact is that, as a spoken language, the fourteenth-century Tuscan expounded in grammatical works was always at risk of incurring accusations of affectation, by non-Tuscans and Tuscans alike. In everyday life, the prestigious literary vernacular seemed beyond the reach of women as it entailed unacceptable displays of erudition and knowledge. Very few Tuscan and non-Tuscan theorists and men of letters felt inclined to consider in a favourable manner—

as something that was not artificial or affected—non-Tuscan women who spoke Tuscan or, more loosely, who 'Tuscanized'. By so doing, women clearly expressed a level of intellectual pretentiousness that was reprehensible or deemed unacceptable in women.

Because of the very nature of the Italian language and its written identity, women could not easily claim any authority on language use. Annibale Antonini touched upon this in his *Traité de la grammaire italienne* 'Treatise on Italian Grammar'. Italian, he explained, was a dead language, inasmuch as its rules and vocabulary were all taken from ancient authors: its rules did not change and were shielded from the 'the tyranny and [. . .] whims of usage', on which women could perhaps have had some inevitably negative influence. But Italian was also in part 'a living language': usage was not established by the people at court, but fixed by men of letters and writers (Antonini 1726:xvif.). In seventeenth-century France, ladies at court influenced, and even ruled, language use, as Claude Favre de Vaugelas had suggested in his *Remarques sur la langue française* 'Remarks on the French Language' (1674), but this authority was denied to them in the Italian context.

Misogynistic attitudes also resulted in women being more easily accused of indulging in the use of French at the expense of Italian. French was, in fact, in some parts of the peninsula and among higher social ranks, more commonly used than Italian in conversation. Women's supposedly excessive use of French was considered the reason for the perceived linguistic and moral decadence of the peninsula that concerned all speakers, but particularly the female sex (Sanson 2024). In parallel to these accusations levelled at women, we find a number of treatises on women's education in which moralists stressed that women *should* be directed to an in-depth study of Italian. Friar Gioachino Trioli, in *L'educazione delle fanciulle* 'The Education of Girls', for instance, deploring young girls' poor linguistic knowledge, insisted they read good Italian books, of proper moral content, and had a daily lesson in Italian grammar (Trioli 1765:cxxvii). Similarly, Gaspare Morardo in his *La damigella istruita* 'The Educated Young Lady' explained that young women of all social ranks should learn the 'principles and rules of the Italian language' so as not to be ashamed of being unable to explain their thoughts in the 'national language' or understand the Italian books they were presented with (Morardo 1787:45).

Reflecting the spirit of the Enlightenment, moralists and educationalists started to support better education for women so that they could in turn better educate their children, for the greater good of society. The figure of the *madre educatrice* (Sanson 2013), the mother as educator, including in the area of language, emerged in the eighteenth century, but it was only from the 1840s and beyond that it was fully developed, allowing women to have a more central role in the history of the language and its codification. The figure of the *madre educatrice* was supported by strong patriotic stances and strongly politicized declarations in which educationalists and moralists justified their claims based on the good of society. Male and female educationalists wrote about the centrality of the 'mother' in giving children their first linguistic education in Italian, and therefore in spreading the national language. The question of women's education remained nonetheless, as in previous centuries, controversial. This is why even female educationalists who upheld the importance of women's access to education placed limits on the kind of studies that were suitable for young girls. Anna Vertua Gentile claimed in *Per la mamma educatrice* 'For the Mother as Educator' that it was a mother's duty to instruct her children and seriously ensure that her daughters were 'well' and 'reasonably educated' (Vertua Gentile 1894:177): there was a commonly accepted belief that women's first and foremost role was within the family, as wives and mothers, and that their studies and education should not lead them astray from their main purpose in life.

At the time of Unification, when Italy was faced with the core problem of effectively making Italian a mother tongue that could be used within the family, women's—and more specifically mothers'—potential contribution in this regard came to be at the centre of public debates. Theorists, writers, but also members of the public suggested linguistic policies that sought to spread the Italian language to the lower classes 'from above', but which were unrealistic in their approach, given the high levels of illiteracy. The everyday linguistic reality of the peninsula was in fact one in which, on average, 78 per cent of the population was illiterate, with the percentage of female illiteracy reaching 90 per cent in parts of the south and the islands. The majority of these women were monolingual dialect speakers with little or no literacy who could hardly become linguistic educators of Italian.

For the situation to improve, time was needed.[18] Since mothers could not be in charge of the linguistic education of new Italian citizens, the closest figure potentially to fulfil that crucial role was the primary school teacher, the *maestra*. Trained in the *Scuole Normali*, teacher training colleges, the *maestra* was considered a 'motherly' figure who could take the mother's place, when she could not be both educator and housewife.[19] The role of *maestre* in spreading Italian across the peninsula should not be overlooked and represents an important grass-roots contribution to the codification and establishment of what was to become the 'national' spoken language. Posted away from their hometown, the *maestre* lived and worked in often precarious conditions, in charge of overcrowded classes and grossly underpaid. As single women, they were also exposed to attacks on their reputation.

As teaching was one of the few acceptable professions for women of the lower-middle classes who needed to make a living, women's presence in Italian schools as teachers, in both primary and secondary schools, steadily increased from post-Unification onwards. According to the Italian Ministry for Education and Merit, in the academic year 2020/2021, 83.2 per cent of the teachers in Italy were women. Twenty years earlier the percentage was 79 per cent. In the last fifty-five years the percentage of women teaching in secondary schools has increased from 48 per cent to 67 per cent.[20]

Ideas on women's use of language after Unification often touched upon women's contribution in curtailing the influence and extent of dialects as against the national language. In a number of nineteenth-century conduct books and etiquette manuals by both male and female authors, intended primarily for the middle classes, we find a recurrent preoccupation that women ought to restrict their use of dialect to well-defined contexts and occasions, in favour of a more civilized (and patriotic) Italian. In *Le buone usanze* 'Good Manners' the Turinese Mantea (pseudonym of Gina Sobrero, 1863–1912) deplored the usage of the local dialect in refined salons at the expense of Italian. It was unseemly for the lady of the household to converse in her local dialect in the presence of people from different provinces, thus excluding or embarrassing those who did not know it. Instead, she stated that it would be desirable that the same language be spoken across all provinces (Mantea 1897:174).

In time—while Italian was gaining more ground in everyday life and within the family, progressively acquiring the status of a mother tongue learnt naturally in childhood—in the wake of the 1960s–1970s feminist movement and a rising international scholarship on language and gender, discussions on women and language use have turned rather to issues of sexism in language (see Chapter 30).

7.6 Women and the Italian language in popular media

Mass media in Italy played an important role in disseminating and standardizing the Italian language because of the specificity of the pre-Unification cultural and linguistic history of the peninsula, characterized by that 'low density' which, according to Ascoli, was one of the main obstacles to achieving a common language (Ascoli 1873a). After Unification the need to understand and speak Italian became urgent (De Mauro 1963). With compulsory schooling, education of the working classes began to make progress, albeit slowly. Reading periodicals and books spread to the middle classes. Other factors would later strengthen and accelerate the spread of the Italian language, such as the struggles of the disenfranchised classes, transoceanic migration, the First World War, and national mobilization in the two world wars. The world wars acted as a powerful writing catalyst not only for illiterate peasant-soldiers but also for mothers, sisters, and wives for whom access to culture and language had been limited and difficult for so long (Cappai and Fresu 2018). After the Second World War, internal migrations across the peninsula accelerated the 'Italianization' of the masses, who also, slowly but gradually, gained access to higher education.

Mass media were a low-cost means to promote forms of language education, alongside schooling, across multilingual Italy at a time of rapid social and cultural transformations.[21] The telephone, radio (the first state broadcasts were in 1924), talking cinema (1927), vinyl records (1948), and then television (1954), were instrumental in making Italian more accessible, and more used, as a spoken

language. The low literacy rate and widespread low readership of newspapers and books meant that radio, cinema, and television in particular played an important role in making the language accessible to a larger audience. For years the Italian state entrusted first radio and then television with an educational task as part of their public service function (Monteleone 1992). State intervention began with Fascism, which focused on radio and its role in modernizing the country and creating public consensus. Radio and television initially favoured Italian as the language of their programmes, only later opening up to more varied linguistic choices and expressions. From having a linguistic educational and didactic role radio and television became 'mirrors' of the language in use (Simone 1987), reflecting, reproducing, and amplifying socially widespread behaviours, phenomena, and language styles.

The role of television in spreading Italian to audiences across social classes is unanimously acknowledged.[22] The national language entered everyone's homes, gradually becoming more familiar. It raised the passive competence of speakers, increasing their ability to understand the language. It also influenced Italian itself, proposing new normative models and contributing to the establishment of so-called 'neo-standard' Italian (Berruto 1987a). In this sense, the way actors and presenters on television spoke played an important role, in vocabulary, syntax, and pronunciation. Explicit attention to the language and its problems was part of television's educational goals in programmes such as *Telescuola* 'Televised School' (1958), *Non è mai troppo tardi* 'It Is Never Too Late', with courses for illiterate adults by Alberto Manzi (1960–1968), and *Parlare, leggere e scrivere* 'Speak, Read, and Write' (1973), by Piero Nelli, Tullio De Mauro, and Umberto Eco. For decades, especially between the 1950s and the 1980s, the announcers who were commonly called *Signorine Buonasera* (because they were young ladies who said *Buonasera* 'Good evening!') on RAI, the Italian State broadcasting company, became instantly recognizable faces and voices in the homes of Italians.[23] Filmed at half-length, symbols of elegance, refinement, and education, they became a point of reference for generations of Italian women and men not only for their impeccable manners and style but also as a model of language and of proper diction.

We should also acknowledge the indirect role played by the great actresses of talking cinema, whose language was at first modelled on

literary theatrical language and then opened up to 'speech' in its regional varieties.[24] In this field, we should not forget the contribution of the *doppiatrici*—the voiceovers of many actresses—to the dissemination of Italian across social classes. In the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the majority of voiceover actors/dubbers came from the theatre. The first dubbing of an Italian production took place in 1934. It was for *Odette*, starring former silent film diva Francesca Bertini (the pseudonym employed by Elena Seracini Vitiello), dubbed by Giovanna Scotto who erased the actress's Neapolitan accent. The importance of dubbing in the history of Italian cinema cannot be ignored: cinema came to Italy in years when the illiteracy rate was very high. Had foreign films been shown in the original language with subtitles, very few would have been able to read them. The practice was then extended to television and continues to be the norm for foreign television and cinema productions. In the first decades of cinema, among various *doppiatrici* we may mention Tina Lattanzi, Rosina Fiorini, Andreina Pagnani, Rina Morelli, Lydia Simoneschi, and Rosetta Calavetta, the Italian 'voices' of many Hollywood stars. Simoneschi, for instance, also known at times as the 'Queen of dubbing', lent her voice to countless well-known actresses throughout her career.[25] In the 1930s, dubbing was a requirement for foreign movies, as dictated by the Fascist regime. Most interesting, however, as we saw earlier, is the fact that voice actresses also dubbed Italian actresses, either on account of their lack of acting versatility or because of their dialectal accent. Francesca Bertini in *Odette* was the first such example, but we can also mention Laura Nucci in *Fra' Diavolo* (1942), Carla Candiani in *Il leone di Damasco* (1942) and *Capitan Tempesta* (1942), Anna Capodaglio in *Carmela* (1942), Elena Zareschi in *Rita da Cascia* (1943), Dina Perbellini in *La corona di ferro* (1941), and Francesca Braggiotti in *Scipione l'Africano* (1937). Various Italian actresses popular during and after the war were dubbed in the course of their career, including V. Cortese, L. Ferida, G. Lollobrigida, S. Loren, A. Lualdi, S. Mangano, L. Massari, S. Milo, A. Noris, S. Pampanini, A. Valli, E. Rossi Drago, and Y. Sanson.

[1] Research for this chapter has been possible thanks to the generous support of the Leverhulme Trust.

[2] In early modern Italy, linguistic varieties were available to speakers to varying degrees, at varying moments in time, and according to varying historical, cultural, and social factors: they ranged from the local vernacular to the elusive *lingua cortigiana* 'courtly language', from the literary vernacular and Latin to foreign languages such as Spanish and French. On this, with reference to women, see Sanson (2022b).

[3] More extensive discussion in Sanson (2005; 2011:94–99).

[4] On grammars of Italian for French speakers between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Mattarucco (2003). On grammars of Italian for English speakers between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, see Pizzoli (2004). Also Bingen (1987; 1994) and Mormile (1989).

[5] See Ayres-Bennett (1994); Beck-Busse (1994); Reuillon-Blanquet (1994); Dobnig-Jülch and Staudinger (1994); Reuillon-Blanquet (1995); Minerva (2000); Beck-Busse (2014); Sanson (2014b; 2016; 2017).

[6] On women producing school and educational texts between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Magazzeni (2019).

[7] On Corgialegno's and Viani-Visconti Cavanna's grammars, see Sanson (2011:318–321); Cella (2016).

[8] For more detailed discussion of women authors of grammars of Italian in post-Unification Italy, see Sanson (2011:307–324). For a bibliography of school grammars in this period, see Catricalà (1991).

[9] On Coronedi Berti, see Badini (2012) and Campana (2012).

[10] On Luti's role in the revision, see Sanson (2011:287–298).

[11] See Barbarulli (1985); Bottegal (1993); Benucci (2011; 2016).

[12] Only in 2008 did the Crusca elect its first woman president, Nicoletta Maraschio.

[13] See for instance Franceschi Ferrucci (1849–1850; 1856–1858; 1876; 1932).

[14] On language and paraliterary production, see Ricci (2013); with reference to women, see Fresu (2016a; 2019; 2021) and Fresu and Sotgiu (2021).

[15] See also Capatti and Montanari (2017); and, in particular Chapters, 5, 6, and 7.

[16] Cited in Bertini Malgarini and Caria (2016:273).

[17] For more extensive discussion, see Sanson (2014a).

[18] See De Mauro (1963). Also, with special reference to women, Fresu (2016a; 2019); Cappai and Fresu (2018); and Fresu and Sotgiu (2021).

[19] On the role of primary school teachers in spreading the Italian language in the peninsula see Sanson (2011:275–284).

[20] See https://www.orizzontescuola.it/8-docenti-su–10-in-italia-sono-donne-percentuale-in-aumento-fenomeno-che-non-riguarda-soltanto-linfanzia-e-la-primaria/ (accessed 8 March 2023).

[21] See Bonomi, Masini, and Morgana (2003) and Alfieri and Bonomi (2008; 2012).

[22] On television and the Italian language, see Alfieri and Bonomi (2008; 2012); Giaccardi (1998); Menduni (2002); and Arcangeli (2014).

[23] For instance, Mariolina Cannuli, Aba Cercato, Beatrice Cori, Maria Giovanna Elmi, Anna Maria Gambineri, Roberta Giusti, Nicoletta Orsomando, Paola Perissi, Maria Grazie Picchetti, and Rosanna Vaudetti.

[24] On language and Italian cinema, see Raffaelli (1992; 2003); Patota and Rossi (2017); Gargiulo (2016); and Rossi (2003; 2023).

[25] See 'Il mondo dei doppiatori', https://www.antoniogenna.net/doppiaggio/voci/vocilsim.htm (accessed 12 October 2023). On dubbing in Italian cinema, see also Lattanzio (2016).

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Part II

HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

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Chapter 8

Historical phonology

Lori Repetti

Jordan Kodner

8.1 Introduction

Italian has long been a testing ground for historical phonology. We know more about Latin, from which Italian is derived, than we do about all but a few other ancient languages; Latin has had an uninterrupted history of being passed down from generation to generation for roughly two millennia in most parts of the Italian peninsula, and we have an extremely rich documentary history of Italian across the past thousand years. In this chapter, we follow the evolution of Latin phonological structures and show how they changed, merged, or were replaced in Italian.

We usually define 'Italian' as the Romance variety whose origin can be found in Tuscany, in particular Florence, and which was first attested in the thirteenth century (see §§1.2–4, §2.2, §§3.3–5). By the fifteenth century, Florentine Tuscan had become a supra-regional written language for literary and public documents, and increasingly a supra-regional *koiné* for communication among people from various parts of the peninsula and beyond. However, Italian is not merely modern Florentine, but the descendant of the written and supra-regional language from those early centuries. Some evidence that Italian is not modern Tuscan is that many characteristics of modern Tuscan are not also characteristics of Italian. The most notable phonological example is *gorgia toscana*, namely, the realization of intervocalic voiceless singleton stops, both word-internally and across word boundaries, as fricatives: /p t k/ > [ɸ θ h] (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Effects of *gorgia toscana* in Tuscan

pipa [ˈpiɸa] 'pipe'	*la pipa* [la ˈɸiɸa] 'the pipe'
tirato [tiˈɾaθo] 'pulled'	*hanno tirato* [ˈanno θiˈɾaθo] 'they have pulled'
Coca-Cola [ˈkɔha ˈhɔla] 'Coca-Cola'	*una Coca-Cola* [una ˈhɔha ˈhɔla] 'a Coca-Cola'

Gorgia characterizes modern spoken Tuscan, but is not a feature of standard Italian. In this chapter, we address the historical phonology of standard Italian, referring to other Romance varieties of Italy, including Tuscan dialects, only to shed light on the evolution of Italian.

The historical phonology of Italian manifests a surprisingly high degree of *irregularity*. In the Neogrammarian tradition, sound change is assumed to be essentially regular and free from lexical exceptions. For the Neogrammarians, any irregularities in sound change could be explained as the result of 'borrowing' (including between closely related dialects) or 'analogy' (see further Hock 2003). The relative irregularity of the outcomes of sound change in modern Italian can be seen as a remnant of the language's development as a supra-regional *koiné*, which was therefore subject to an unusually high degree of borrowing in the Neogrammarian sense. Words adopted from other, closely related, dialects have not necessarily undergone the same sound changes, so their influence on the formation of an Italian *koiné* may result in apparent irregularities in sound change.

This kind of irregularity affects all of Romance to some degree. Latin itself developed in the context of dialectal borrowing, and we know from old and late Latin inscriptions that a significant degree of variation always existed, although it was mostly 'submerged' in the historical record by the Classical Latin written standard (cf. Clackson and Horrocks 2011; Adams 2013). Many of the changes that linguists typically associate with late Latin and Romance, including monophthongization of the Classical Latin diphthongs and sporadic, possibly morphologically conditioned, deletion of final consonants, and the raising of mid vowels before nasal + velar clusters, are already attested in old Latin (Clackson and Horrocks 2011:92–97; Adams 2013:78–9; Barbato 2016a). In addition to occasional inscriptional evidence, Latin writers sometimes commented directly on variation. This may provide a tantalizing window into the nature of variation and changes in progress in Roman Italy. The most famous of these testimonies is the *Appendix Probi*, an appendix to a treatise (named after the first-century grammarian Probus), compiled in the third to fourth centuries, and surviving in a later copy.[1] It comprises a list of, presumably, commonly made errors, reported in the format 'X not Y'. Of interest to us are those errors identified in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages which might reflect the spoken language of a particular area. Many of these reflect changes common across Romance (such as deletion of N before S in *ansa non asa* 'handle, tiller'), while we might recognize others as distinctly Italian (such as occasional lengthening of the consonant following an antepenultimate stressed vowel in *camera non cammara* 'room, chamber'). See Loporcaro (2007) and Mancini (2007).

With evidence dating as far back as the Roman period, the historical record that bears on Italian historical phonology is quite long, predating the divergence of Italian from the rest of Romance by centuries. While our focus is on the historical phonology of Italian, we also reference changes that affected Romance in general, such as the loss of contrastive vowel length discussed in the following section.

8.2 Vowels

8.2.1 Introduction

Latin had a five-vowel system with phonemic length distinctions, so that every vowel could be realized as long or short (Fig. 8.1). The diacritics used to indicate vowel length in Latin include the macron for a long vowel (v̄) and the breve for a short vowel (v̆). Latin

had various falling diphthongs, including *ae* and *au*, that are important for Italian historical phonology.



Figure 8.1 The vowel system of Latin.

Evidence of a restructuring of the vowel system and loss of vowel length distinctions can be found by the fourth century (Adams 2013:70) and may have occurred much earlier (Marotta 1991). Italian today has seven vowels (Fig. 8.2) and many glide + vowel (GV) and vowel + glide (VG) sequences.[2] We indicate pre-vocalic on-glides as [j w] and post-vocalic off-glides as [i̯ u̯].

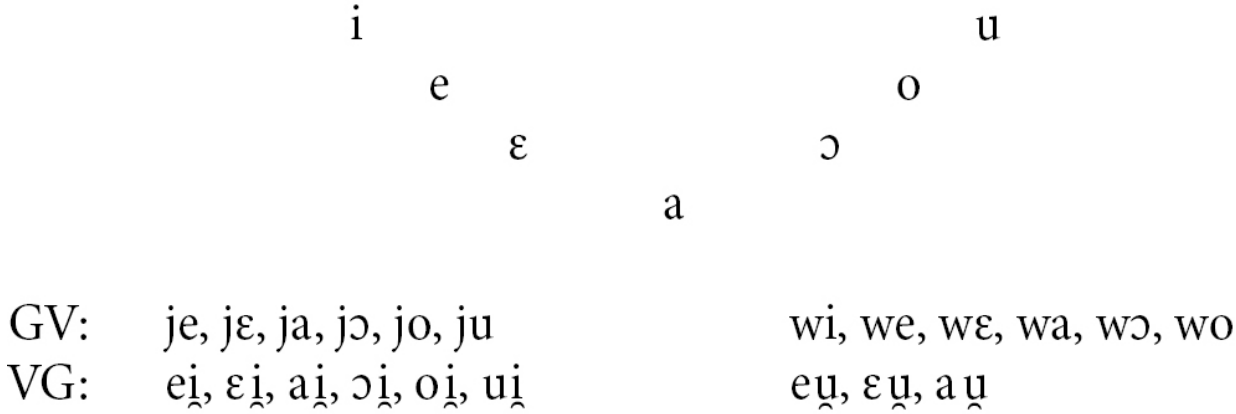


Figure 8.2 Modern vowels and diphthongs.

Latin length distinctions were restructured as differences in quality in the ancestor of Italian, and we will see in §8.4 that a new type of vowel-length differentiation was introduced, based on syllable structure. The Latin vowel changes were dependent on various factors, including stress, and if the vowel was stressed whether the syllable was open or closed, and in final, penultimate, or antepenultimate position.

8.2.2 Stressed vowels

Latin vowel length distinctions were reinterpreted as differences in quality. Long high vowels (ī and ū) remained high vowels ([i] and [u]), while short high vowels (ĭ and ŭ) and long mid vowels (ē and ō) merged, respectively, into tense upper mid vowels ([e] and [o]). Latin short mid vowels (ĕ and ŏ) evolved into the lax lower mid vowels ([ɛ] and [ɔ]), and long and short Latin ā/ă merged, but remained unchanged in quality (Fig. 8.3).

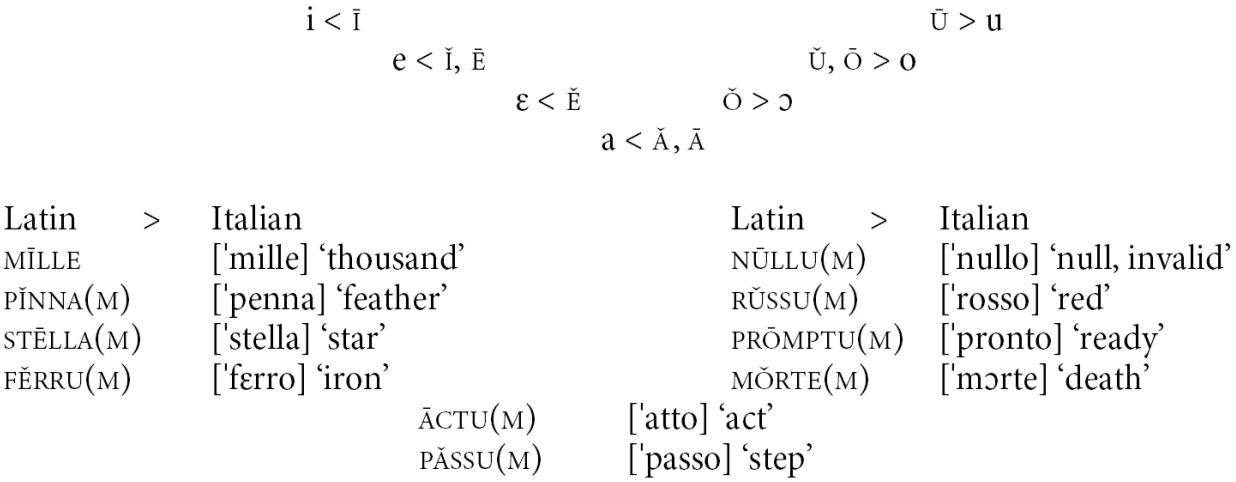


Figure 8.3 Development of stressed vowels from Latin to Italian.

In the examples above, the target vowel is in a closed syllable. In most cases the same evolution took place in open syllables, except for Latin short mid vowels (ĕ and o˘) which diphthongized to [jɛ] and [wɔ] (probably through an earlier [je] and [wo] pronunciation) in open syllables, at some time between the third and seventh centuries (Schürr 1980; Loporcaro 2015; Maiden 2016a) (Table 8.2). While some claim that the Tuscan diphthongization process is a 'spontaneous' effect of stressed vowel lengthening in an open syllable (see §8.4) (Loporcaro 2011), others argue that the origin of this Tuscan diphthongization is to be found in metaphony, a historical vowel harmony process found throughout Romance whereby stressed vowels were raised and/or diphthongized in the presence of a post-tonic high vowel (Maiden 2016a). Whether metaphony was ever active in Tuscan is debated, and Maiden (2016a) and others invoke apparent exceptions to Tuscan diphthongization, such as NO˘UE(M) > [ˈnɔve] (**[ˈnwɔve]) 'nine', and BĔNE > [ˈbɛne] (**[ˈbjɛne]) 'well', as evidence of the metaphonic origin of diphthongization since the absence of diphthongs in such cases correlates with the lack of a triggering post-tonic high vowel.

Table 8.2 Development in open stressed syllables

Latin >	Italian	Latin >	Italian	Latin >	Italian
PRĪMU(M)	[ˈprimo] 'first'			LŪNA(M)	[ˈluna] 'moon'
NI˘UE(M)	[ˈneve] 'snow'			NU˘CE(M)	[ˈnoʧe] 'walnut'
TĒLA(M)	[ˈtela] 'canvas'			SŌLE(M)	[ˈsole] 'sun'
SĔDE(T)	[ˈsjɛde] 'sit.3SG'			MO˘RI(T(UR))	[ˈmwɔre] 'die.3SG'
		FĀTU(M)	[ˈfato] 'fate'		
		CA˘NE(M)	[ˈkane] 'dog'		

In the cases examined above, the target vowel is in a stressed, penultimate syllable. In stressed antepenultimate position, we find more variation (Table 8.3). In some cases, the vowel in a proparoxytone evolves in the same way as in a paroxytone: for the low mid vowels, we find diphthongization in an open syllable: TĔPIˇDU(M) > [ˈtjɛpido] 'tepid', HOˇMIˇNE(S) > [ˈwɔmini] 'men'. Some of these proparoxytones underwent syncope, and the diphthong remained in a closed syllable: POSTĔRUˇLA(M) > *[posˈtjɛɾola] > [posˈtjɛrla] 'postern', TOˇRUˇLU(M) > *[ˈtwɔɾolo] > [ˈtwɔrlo] 'yolk'. In other cases, the stressed antepenultimate vowel in an open syllable evolved as if in a closed syllable, and for the low mid vowels, we do not find diphthongization: PĔCOˇRA(M) > [ˈpɛkoɾa] 'sheep', STOˇMAˇCHU(M) > [ˈstɔmako] 'stomach' (Vincent 1988; Marotta 1991). In yet other cases, the onset of the syllable following an open stressed antepenultimate syllable was lengthened: CAˇTHĔDRA(M) > [ˈkattedra] 'desk', FĒMIˇNA(M) > [ˈfemmina] 'female'.[3]

Table 8.3 Stressed short mid vowel in an open syllable in proparoxytones

	diphthongization	no diphthongization
Ĕ >	TĔPIˇDU(M) > [ˈtjɛpido] 'tepid'	PĔCOˇRA(M) > [ˈpɛkoɾa] 'sheep'
Oˇ >	HŎMĬNE(S) > [ˈwɔmini] 'men'	STOˇMAˇCHU(M) > [ˈstɔmako] 'stomach'

Starting in the Renaissance, we find a retreat of these diphthongs after consonant + *r*, palatal consonants, and *i*. Diphthongs attested after consonant + *r* in early texts are not found today. For example, Latin PROˇBA(T) 'try.3SG' and BRĔUE(M) 'brief, short' gave *pruova* and *brieve*, but today are *prova* [ˈprɔva] and *breve* [ˈbrɛve]. Similarly, diphthongs were present after (alveo-)palatal consonants (*figliuolo* 'son.DIM' and *giuoca* 'play.3SG'), but today we do not find diphthongs in this context (*figliolo* [fiʎˈʎɔlo] and *gioca* [ˈʤɔka]). We find a similar monophthongization after [i]. Original *capriuolo* 'roe deer' and *viuola* 'violet' are today realized with a monophthong [ɔ]: *capriolo* [kaˈprjɔlo] and *viola* [ˈvjɔla].

Not all VV sequences form diphthongs, and a stressed mid vowel raises when followed by another vowel with which it does not form a diphthong, but a VV hiatus (Patota 2002:62): e.g., TUˇA(M) > *[ˈtoa] > [ˈtua] 'your'; ĔGO > *[ˈɛo] > [ˈio] 'I'; BOˇUE(M) > *[ˈbɔe] > [ˈbue] 'ox'.[4] This does not happen if the two vowels form a diphthong. Compare singular BOˇUE(M) > *[ˈbɔe] > [ˈbue] 'ox' with the two vowels in hiatus, with plural BOˇUES > *[ˈbɔi̯] > [ˈbwɔi̯] 'oxen' with the vowels forming a diphthong (or triphthong).

Another change that stressed vowels underwent involves the raising of tense mid vowels before a palatal sonorant or a velar nasal, processes referred to as 'anaphonesis' (*anafonesi*) (Castellani 1952).[5] The first type of anaphonesis took place between the third and seventh centuries and involves raising of [e] to [i] before a palatal sonorant coda (Castellani 1980:86): [ʎ] (FAMIˇLIIˇA(M) > *[faˈmeʎʎa] > [faˈmiʎʎa] 'family') or [ɲ] (GRAMIˇNĔA(M) > *[graˈmeɲɲa] > [graˈmiɲɲa] 'couch grass').[6] This type of anaphonesis does not affect back vowels: UERECUˇNDIˇA(M) > [verˈgoɲɲa] (**[verˈguɲɲa]) 'shame', MUˇLIˇE(R) > [ˈmoʎʎe] (**[ˈmuʎʎe]) 'wife' (Patota 2002:58f.). This vowel raising process can be attributed to the palatal consonant, although in-depth investigation of the phonetics of this pattern has not yet been done.

A second type of anaphonesis, which involves raising of tense mid vowels before a velar nasal coda, predates Italian. It 'appears to have been productive from about the third century (or even before), and continued to be productive until at least the sixth-seventh centuries' (Calamai 2019:51f.; see also Castellani 1980:86). This is attested with front vowels before [ŋg] and [ŋk]: LI˘NGUA(M) > *[ˈleŋgwa] > [ˈliŋgwa] 'tongue; language', UI˘NCŌ > *[ˈveŋko] > [ˈviŋko] 'I win'. It is less common with back vowels. It is attested regularly before [ŋg] (FU˘NGU(M) > *[ˈfoŋgo] > [ˈfuŋgo] 'mushroom'), but only in a handful of words before [ŋk]:[7] IU˘NCU(M) > *[ˈʤoŋko] > [ˈʤuŋko] 'rush'; cf. SPELU˘NCA(M) > [speˈloŋka] (**[speˈluŋka]) 'cave', TRU˘NCU(M) > [ˈtroŋko] (**[ˈtruŋko]) 'trunk'. It is unattested before coronal or labial nasal coda consonants: I˘NTRŌ > [ˈentro] (**[ˈintro]) 'I enter', LI˘MBU(M) > [ˈlembo] (**[ˈlimbo]) 'flap'.

The origin of this latter type of anaphonesis is less clear. Is vowel raising influenced by the backness of the vowel, vowel nasalization, features of the velar nasal consonant, or the voicing of the post-nasal consonant (Sampson 1999)? Calamai (2019) presents the results of production and perception experiments, and concludes that 'the height change appears to be a function of nasal place of articulation rather than nasality' and that there is a 'complex interaction between voicing of the post-nasal consonant and vowel quality' (Calamai 2019:61).

Recent work by Sampson (2006), Barbato (2016a), Calamai (2019), and others suggests that anaphonesis should be considered a case of conservation of the original Latin vowel quality rather than vowel raising. In all examples, they say, the Latin etymon has a short I˘/U˘, so perhaps that quality is retained rather than having been lowered and then raised, reversing the otherwise unconditioned lowering of short high vowels. Meyer-Lübke (1972:44), Maiden (1995a), Patota (2002), and others explicitly argue against such a position, with Maiden (1995a:86n25) pointing out that LO˘NGU(M) > [ˈluŋgo] 'long' proves that this type of anaphonesis cannot be conservation of the Latin high vowel quality since the Latin etymon does not have a high stressed vowel. Furthermore, there is a similar phenomenon in old Latin whereby mid vowels are raised before a nasal + velar cluster: Gr. ὄγκος *onkos* > U˘NCU(M) 'hook', OLat. *honc* > HU˘NC 'this', *legnos* > LI˘GNU(M) 'wood', assuming, as is customary, that the first consonant of the GN cluster was pronounced [ŋ] (Barbato 2016a:4). Nevertheless, Calamai (2019:60) reviews the literature for both the lowering/raising analysis and the conservation analyses, and concludes that 'all these data could be seen as indirect evidence of anaphonesis as a conservative phenomenon'. In fact it may be one of the 'submerged' phenomena already present in vulgar Latin dialects of the classical era.

Another more sporadic change in the evolution of stressed vowel quality involves raising of low-mid vowels before a nasal coda (Table 8.4). It is sporadic with the front mid vowel, and regular with the back mid vowel, except before geminate *nn* where we find various realizations: [ˈdɔnna] 'woman', [ˈgonna]/[ˈgɔnna] 'skirt', [ˈsonno] 'sleep'. Sampson (1999:241f.) suggests that this process might be due to some level of vowel nasalization, although 'the levels of vowel nasality are unlikely to have been intense'.

Table 8.4 Low mid vowels before a nasal coda

Ĕ > ˈɛ > ˈe	O˘ > ˈɔ > ˈo
MĔNTU(M) > *[ˈmɛnto] > [ˈmento] 'chin'	PO˘NTE(M) > *[ˈpɔnte] > [ˈponte] 'bridge'

Ĕ > ˈɛ > ˈe	o͡ > ˈɔ > ˈo
UĔNTU(M) > [ˈvɛnto] ‘wind’	

8.2.3 Glides and diphthongs

We analyse glides as positional variants of high vowels (see note 2), and the glides of Italian must always be followed and/or preceded by a vowel. They can be found in word-initial position ([ˈjɔdjo] ‘iodine’, [ˈwɔmo] ‘man’), intervocalic position ([maˈjale] ‘pig’, [taˈwone] ‘tauon’),[8] and post-consonantal position ([ˈbjondo] ‘blond’, [ˈbwɔno] good’). They can also be found in syllable-final position word-internally ([ˈlai̯.ko] ‘lay, secular’, [ˈpau̯.za] ‘pause’) and word-finally ([dai̯] ‘give.2SG.PRS.IND’, [tau̯] ‘tau’).[9]

In addition to [ˈjɛ] and [ˈwɔ], Italian today permits nearly every GV and VG sequence (Table 8.5). See further Marotta (1987; 1988), Mioni (1993), Bertinetto and Loporcaro (2005), Krämer (2009), and Canalis (2018).

Table 8.5 Diphthongs

	i	e	ɛ	a	ɔ	o	u
pre-vocalic j	–	je [sofˈfjetto] ‘bellows’	jɛ [ˈsjɛde] ‘sit.3SG’	ja [ˈkjave] ‘key’	jɔ [ˈkjɔdo] ‘nail’	jo [ˈfjoɾe] ‘flower’	ju [ˈpju] ‘more’
pre-vocalic w	wi [ˈgwida] ‘guide’	we [ˈkwesto] ‘this.M’	wɛ [ˈkwɛrʧa] ‘oak’	wa [ˈgwado] ‘ford’	wɔ [ˈmwɔɾe] ‘die.3SG’	wo [liˈkwoɾe] ‘liquor’	–
post-vocalic i̯	–	ei̯ [nei̯] ‘in the.MPL’	ɛi̯ [ˈsɛi̯] ‘six’	ai̯ [ˈmai̯] ‘never’	ɔi̯ [ˈpɔi̯] ‘then’	oi̯ [ˈvoi̯] ‘you.PL’	ui̯ [ˈlui̯]
post-vocalic u̯	–	eu̯ [reu̯maˈtizmo] ‘rheumatism’	ɛu̯ [ˈnɛu̯tro] ‘neutral’	au̯ [ˈau̯to] ‘car’	–	–	–

GV sequences result from various historical and synchronic processes. In addition to the diphthongization of Latin Ĕ to [ˈjɛ], pre-vocalic [j] derives from other sources, including the palatalization of post-consonantal L > [j] (CLA͡UE(M) > [ˈkjave] ‘key’, FLŌRE(M) > [ˈfjoɾe] ‘flower’, PLŪ(S) > [ˈpju] ‘more’). Similarly, the diphthongization of Latin o͡ to [ˈwɔ] is one source of pre-vocalic [w], and other sources include the realization of Latin QU + V as [kwV] (QUANDO > [ˈkwando] ‘when’), the resolution of unstressed pre-vocalic [u] as [wV] ((EC)CU I͡LLU(M) > [ˈkwello] ‘that’), and borrowings (Grm. **werra* > [ˈgwɛrra] ‘war’).

VG sequences with post-vocalic [i̯] can result from the gliding of word-final [s] following a stressed vowel (UŌS > [voi̯] ‘you.PL’, PO͡S(T) > [pɔi̯] ‘after’) (see §8.4.1),

historical [V́i̯] sequences (*[(il)ˈlui̯] > [ˈlui̯] ‘he, him’), and the realization of unstressed post-vocalic [i] at a morpheme boundary (/a + i/ > [ai̯] ‘to the.MPL’, /nuklɛ + iko/ > [nu ˈklɛi̯ko] ‘nucleic’). Post-vocalic [u̯] derives from learnèd and borrowed words (NEU˘TRU(M) > [ˈnɛu̯tro] ‘neutral’, Gr. αὐτός > [ˈau̯to]- ‘auto-’).

The Latin palatal glide will be discussed in §8.3.3. The labiovelar glide evolved in various ways depending on the preceding consonant and following vowel. The sequence [kw], orthographically QU, was retained before A (as it widely is in Romance) in word-initial position (QUANDO > [ˈkwando] ‘when’) and in intervocalic position, where it underwent gemination of the consonant (A˘QUA(M) > [ˈakkwa] ‘water’, attested as *aqua non acqua* in the *Appendix Probi*; see also Maiden 1995a:68). In Italian and more generally in Romance, before all other vowels, [kw] lost the post-consonantal glide word-initially (QUĪ > [ki] ‘who’, QUŌMO˘DO E(T) > [ˈkome] ‘how; as’); word-internally, both intervocalically and post-consonantally, the glide was sometimes lost (CO˘QUĔRE > [ˈkwɔʧeɾe] ‘to cook’,[10] TO˘RQUĔRE > [ˈtɔɾʧeɾe] ‘to twist’, with palatalization of the velar stop before the front vowel, see §9.3.3) and sometimes retained (QUĪNQUE > [ˈʧiŋkwe] ‘five’). The sequence [gw] is not attested in Latin in word-initial position,[11] but it is attested and retained word-internally after nasals (LI˘NGUA(M) > [ˈliŋgwa] ‘tongue; language’, SANGUE(M) > [ˈsaŋgwe] ‘blood’). Word-initially, non-velar C + [w] sequences were rare and did not survive in Italian (PU˘ELLA(M) ‘girl’, with *puella non polla* in the *Appendix Probi*). Word-internally, the [w] of non-velar C + [w] sequences lengthened the preceding consonant and was subsequently deleted (I˘ĀNU˘ĀRI˘U(M) > [ʤenˈnajo] ‘January’), a process amply reflected in perfect verb forms with -U˘Ī-: HA˘BU˘Ī > [ˈɛbbi] ‘I had’, UO˘LU˘Ī > [ˈvɔlli] ‘I wanted’, TĔNU˘Ī > [ˈtɛnni] ‘I held’. With -CU˘Ī - perfects, we find gemination and retention of the [w]: TA˘CU˘Ī > [ˈtakkwi] ‘I was quiet’, PLA˘CU˘Ī > [ˈpjakkwi] ‘I pleased’.

The fate of certain Latin diphthongs provides an interesting example of how we can establish relative chronologies of phonological changes. The Latin diphthongs *ae* and *au* in stressed syllables became monophthongized as lax mid vowels, [ɛ] and [ɔ], respectively, but at different periods, and with prolonged periods of variation. Both were apparently subject to substantial class-based and geographical variation, though evidence for the exact social factors that conditioned the monophthongizations is lacking and open to many alternative interpretations. One particularly famous example of the sociolinguistic evaluation of monophthongization of AU is the case of the first-century BCE senator P. Clodius Pulcher, who used an apparently monophthongized form of the name CLAUDIUS. This is often explained as the populist’s attempt to appeal to lower-class urban Romans, though exact circumstances and linguistic details of this choice are unclear (Riggsby 2002). The front diphthong was already monophthongized to [ɛ] by the Republican period (Adams 2013:71) and later underwent diphthongization in an open syllable.[12] However, the back diphthong did not undergo open syllable diphthongization, suggesting that by the time *au* became [ɔ] (both Classical Latin *au* and derived *au*: AU˘RU(M) > [ˈɔɾo] ‘gold’, PA˘RA˘BO˘LA(M) > *[paˈɾau̯la] > [paˈrɔla] ‘word’), the diphthongization process affecting [ɔ] from Latin O˘ had already ended (Maiden 1995a:41):[13] SAEPE(M) > [ˈsjɛpe] ‘hedge’ vs TAU˘RU(M) > [ˈtɔɾo] ‘bull’. In unstressed syllables AU > [o] (AU˘RI˘CU˘LA(M) > [oˈɾekkja] ‘ear’), [u] (AU˘DĪRE > *[oˈdiɾe] > [uˈdiɾe] ‘to hear’), or [a] (AU˘GU˘STU(M) > [aˈgosto] ‘August’).

8.2.4 Unstressed vowels

The unstressed Latin vowels that were retained in Italian had a much simpler evolutionary trajectory than their stressed counterparts (Fig. 8.4). While Latin allowed all vowel qualities and quantities in stressed and unstressed position, in Italian only five vowel qualities exist in unstressed position ([i e a o u]) and only four word-finally ([i e a o]).[14]

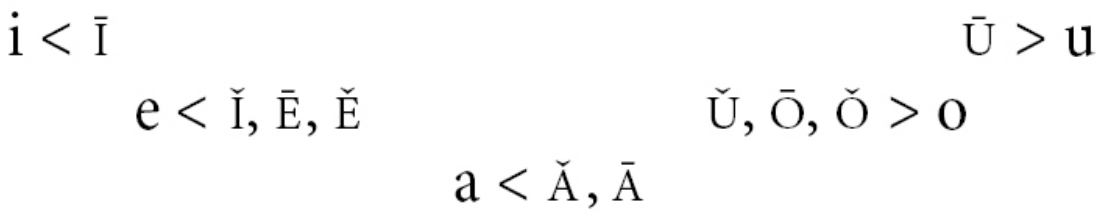


Figure 8.4 Development of unstressed vowels.

Italian retained most of the Latin unstressed vowels, although some were deleted. Syncope of non-final post-tonic vowels (except [a]) in proparoxytones was already attested in the first century (Tagliavini 1969:242): DO͡MI͡NA(M) > *[ˈdɔmna] > [ˈdɔnna] 'woman', O͡CU͡LU(M) > *[ˈɔklu] > [ˈɔkkjo] 'eye' (attested as *oculus non oclus* in the *Appendix Probi*); it also occurs in intertonic position: CĔRĔBĔLLU(M) > [ʧerˈvɛllo] 'brain'. This was not found in learnèd words (SAECU͡LU(M) > [ˈsɛkolo] 'century'), leading to popular vs learnèd doublets from the same Latin etymon, where the former underwent syncope but the latter, (re)introduced later, did not: [ˈʧerkjo] 'circle' / [ˈʧirkolo] 'social group' < CI͡RCU͡LU(M). Italian also has syncope of pretonic vowels in some verbs in future and conditional forms which are derived from the infinitival stem: /veˈder/ 'to see' + suffix /ˈɔ/ > [veˈdrɔ] (**[vedeˈrɔ]) 'I will see'. There is also a handful of cases of aphaeresis: ABSĔNTI͡A(M) > [ˈsɛntsa] 'without', HOMICIDIĀLE > [miʧiˈdjale] 'deadly'.

Word-final vowel deletion is not widespread; however, there are cases in which an unstressed final vowel in non-phrase-final position can be deleted. This process has been labelled elision and *troncamento*. Elision refers to deletion of an unstressed final vowel followed by a word beginning with a vowel, and usually involves function words such as demonstratives, clitic pronouns, and articles. It can be optional (*questo affare* = *quest'affare* 'this (business) deal', *la amavano* = *l'amavano* 'they loved her', *mi invitano* = *m'invitano* 'they invite me'), but there are cases in which it is obligatory (***quello ragazzo* ≠ *quel ragazzo* 'that boy', ***ci è* ≠ *c'è* 'there is'). *Troncamento* is loss of an unstressed final mid vowel ([e]/[o]) preceded by a coronal sonorant and followed by a consonant or vowel. This process can be optional (*colore* 'colour' > *colore blu*/*color blu* 'blue colour'), or obligatory (*coprire* 'to cover' > *coprir(**e)la* 'to cover=it.F', *facile* 'easy' > *facil(**e)mente* 'easily', cf. *dolce* 'sweet' > *dolc**(e)mente* 'sweetly'). See further Peperkamp (1997); Cardinaletti and Shlonsky (2004); Meinschaefer (2006); Garrapa (2012).

Italian does not permit mid lax vowels in unstressed position. Hence, mid lax vowels in stressed position are realized as tense when unstressed: [ˈbɛllo]/[belˈlissimo] 'beautiful/very beautiful', [ˈɔkkjo]/[okˈkjali] 'eye/eyeglasses'. The stressed diphthongs [ˈjɛ]/[ˈwɔ] may alternate with unstressed monophthongs [e]/[o] in the same paradigm ([ˈsjɛde]/[seˈdeɾe] 's/he sits/to sit', [ˈmwɔɾe]/[moˈɾiɾe] 's/he dies/to die'); the alternating diphthongs/monophthongs are commonly called 'dittonghi mobili' or 'mobile diphthongs' (Van der Veer 2006; Cavirani 2022). The alternation appears to be regular in Tuscan as late of the sixteenth century, and by the eighteenth century it is largely

ignored (Migliorini 1984:385, 467, 537). Today, the alternation is only preserved in a handful of cases, with some forms allowing for optionality: [ˈmwɔvo] ‘I move’, but [mo ˈvjamo]=[mwoˈvjamo] ‘we move’; the mid vowel is always realized as tense in unstressed position. In most cases in which the ‘mobile diphthongs’ were eliminated, the diphthong prevailed and is now used throughout the paradigm in stressed and unstressed position ([ˈkjɛdo]/[kjeˈdjamo] ‘I ask/we ask’, [ˈvwɔto]/[vwoˈtjamo] ‘I empty/we empty’), but in some cases the monophthong prevailed (*nego/negare* ‘I deny/to deny’ for earlier *niego/negare*). See also §9.2.1.4.

The inventory of unstressed vowels is further reduced through raising. Sporadic raising of mid vowels ([e o] > [i u]) in pretonic position is attested (1–2), with numerous exceptions. This raising also affected unstressed monosyllabic function words, such as prepositions and atonic pronouns which usually appear in pretonic position before the host they are associated with.

1 Pretonic [e] > [i]
NĔPŌTE(M) > *[ne'pote] > [ni'pote] ‘niece, nephew; grandchild’
RĔCĬPĔRE> *[re'ʧevere] > [ri'ʧevere] ‘to receive’
ĬN > *[en] > [in] ‘in’
MĒ > *[me] > [mi] ‘me’
exceptions: FĔBRŬARĬU(M) > [feb'brajo] ‘February’, (Ĭ)N(D)E > [ne] ‘(partitive/elative pronoun)’
2 Pretonic [o] > [u]
CŎQUĪNA(M) > *[ko'ʧina] > [ku'ʧina] ‘kitchen’
AŬDĪRE > *[o'dire] > [u'dire] ‘to hear’
exception: AŬRĬCŬLA(M) > [o'rekkja] ‘ear’[15]

[15]

Raising of [e] > [i], but not [o] > [u], also occurs in post-tonic, non-final position (3).

3 Post-tonic [e] > [i]
HŎMĬNE(S) > *['wɔmeni] > ['wɔmini] ‘men’
CĪMĬCE(M) > *['ʧimeʧe] > ['ʧimiʧe] ‘bed bug’
exception: LĬTTĔRA(M) > ['lettera] or ['lɛttera] ‘letter’[16]

[16]

Another peculiarity of Tuscan unstressed vowels, which became part of the standard language, is the evolution of unstressed (pretonic and intertonic) [ar] > [er] (MARGARĪTA(M) > *[margaˈɾita] > [margeˈɾita] ‘daisy’), a process that conspicuously affected the future and conditional forms of first conjugation verbs (e.g., CANTĀRE ‘sing.INF’ + HABEŌ ‘have.1SG’ > [kanteˈɾɔ] ‘I will sing’). There are many exceptions borrowed from varieties that do not have this process (e.g., *mozzarella* from Neapolitan/Campanian, *sigaretta* ‘cigarette’ from French), and it is no longer productive in Italian.

Unstressed pretonic front vowels ([e i]) sometimes become back rounded vowels ([o u]) when the vowel is followed by a labial consonant. Thus DĒBĒRE > *[deˈvɛɾe] > [doˈvɛɾe] ‘owe; must’; DĒMANDĀRE > *[demanˈdaɾe] > [domanˈdaɾe] ‘ask’; LĪMĀCE(M) > *[liˈmaka] > [luˈmaka] ‘slug’. There are also cases of hypercorrection, such as DO͡MĔSTI͡CU(M) > [doˈmɛstiko] realized as [diˈmɛstiko] ‘familiar, customary’.

8.3 Consonants

8.3.1 Introduction

Latin has a simple consonant inventory of six stops (voiceless vs voiced), three fricatives (voiceless only), and the sonorants [m], [n], [l], [r]. Each of these, except [h], could be long or short in intervocalic position. We consider glides to be positional variants of vowels, namely, a glide is an unstressed high vowel adjacent to another vowel with which it forms a syllable (see note 2). We compare the Latin inventory (Table 8.6) with that of Italian consonants (Table 8.7), indicating in bold the segments present in one language but not the other.

Table 8.6 Latin consonants

Latin		bilabial	labiodental	dental (alveolar)	(alveo-) palatal	velar	glottal
obstruents	stop	p / b		t / d		k / g	
	fricative		f	s			**h**
	affricate						
sonorants	nasal	m		n			
	lateral			l			
	rhotic			r			

Table 8.7 Italian consonants

Italian		bilabial	labiodental	dental (alveolar)	(alveo-) palatal	velar	glottal
obstruents	stop	p / b		t / d		k / g	
	fricative		f / **v**	s / **z**	**ʃ**		
	affricate			**ʦ / ʣ**	**ʧ / ʤ**		
sonorants	nasal	m		n	**ɲ**		
	lateral			l	**ʎ**		
	rhotic			r			

8.3.2 Segments lost and gained

The consonant [h] apparently played no role in Latin phonology (but see Cser 2020:15). All other Latin consonants are present in Italian, with nine new segments, including

voiced fricatives, palatal consonants, and affricates.

Latin had no voiced fricatives, but Italian has two: [v] and [z]. Italian [v] derives from word-initial and intervocalic U̯ (U̯ĪU̯Ō > [ˈvivo] ‘I live’), and from Latin B in intervocalic position (BI̯BŌ > [ˈbevo] ‘I drink’), including the [b] that resulted from intervocalic voicing of P (PAU̯PĔRU̯(M) > [ˈpɔveɾo] ‘poor’) (see §8.3.4). Latin B in word-initial position remained unchanged (BĔNĔ > [ˈbɛne] ‘well’). Hence, two Latin segments (U̯ and B) were neutralized intervocalically, but remained distinct word-initially. Another source of [v] involves its insertion between unstressed [o] and another vowel (UI̯DU̯A(M) > [ˈvedova] ‘widow’, GĔNU̯A(M) > [ˈʤɛnova] ‘Genoa’), although this epenthesis is no longer productive ([ˈɔboe] ‘oboe’).

Latin fricative S became voiced in some contexts, a fact concealed by orthography, since both [s] and [z] are represented with <s> in Italian. In word-initial and post-consonantal position we only find voiceless [s] ([ˈsole] ‘sun’, [ˈfalso] ‘false’, [ˈkorsa] ‘race’, [ˈansja] ‘anxiety’). In pre-consonantal position, we find [s] before a voiceless consonant ([ˈpasta] ‘pasta’, [ˈskwɔla] ‘school’) and [z] before a voiced consonant ([ˈkɔzmo] ‘cosmos’, [ˈzbaʎʎo] ‘error’). In intervocalic position, southern varieties generalize voiceless [s] (§40.4), and northern varieties the voiced [z] (§38.3.1). The most widely held view is that the Latin voiceless pronunciation [s] was retained in Tuscan, while learnèd forms introduced from the north favoured voiced [z] (Franceschi 1965). This bipartition into popular words (with [s]) and learnèd forms (with [z]) works well for many cases, such as voiceless [s] in *casa* ‘house’, *naso* ‘nose’, *asino* ‘donkey’ vs voiced [z] in *chiesa* ‘church’, *musica* ‘music’, *paradiso* ‘heaven’. However, it is difficult to see how it can account for other cases, such as Florentine toponyms with intervocalic [z] (e.g., *Fiesole*). There is unexplained variation in the perfect form of some verbs with [z] (*misi* ‘I put’) and others with [s] (*chiesi* ‘I asked’), in the suffix *-ese* with [z] in some cases (*francese* ‘French’) but [s] in most (*inglese* ‘English’, *olandese* ‘Dutch’), and even for the same word (*piselli* ‘peas’ is pronounced with either [z] or [s]). This leads to minimal pairs such as *chiese* with [z] meaning ‘churches’ and with [s] meaning ‘s/he asked’, *fuso* with [z] meaning ‘melted’ and with [s] meaning ‘spindle’. See also Rohlfs (2021a:281–284); Maiden (1995a:63).

Borrowing or linguistic influence from northern varieties, in particular Gallo-Romance varieties of northern Italy and France, is claimed to underlie the treatment of intervocalic /s/ as [z], and we will see that the same is claimed for sporadic intervocalic voicing of all voiceless obstruents, and for the various outcomes of Latin [dj] ([ʤ] or [ʣ]), [kj] ([ʧ] or [ʦ]), and [tj] ([ʧ], [ʦ], or [ʒ]). The reasons for the enormous influence of northern varieties include centuries of political influence of those regions on civil and church government, continual social interactions between people from those areas and Tuscany because of internal migration and extensive trade and pilgrimage routes between northern Italy/France and Tuscany, and cultural influence of old French and Provençal literature on Tuscan. The linguistic evidence supporting this hypothesis includes the fact that many of the words claimed to be borrowed are precisely in the semantic fields in which the influence of the northern regions was most profound, as will be discussed in more detail below.

8.3.3 Palatalization

In the evolution of Latin to Italian, we find the emergence of two new categories of consonants that were unknown in Latin—(alveo-)palatal consonants and affricates—

which result from palatalization processes. Within Romance phonology, the term 'palatalization' refers to the creation of palatal and alveo-palatal consonants as well as dental affricates, since both result from the same process.[17]

Some of the consonants that resulted from palatalization, namely [ʦ, ʣ, ʃ, ɲ, ʎ], are always realized as long in intervocalic position (Chierchia 1986; Burzio 1989; Davis 1999), although [ʧ]/[ʤ] are not part of this group.

The major trigger of palatalization was the palatal glide, yod ([j]), the *only* palatal segment in Latin. The palatalization effects of yod, referred to as the 'first palatalization', are evident by the second century (Tekavčić 1980, I:114–121; Väänänen 1974). Through compensatory lengthening caused by the gliding of Latin short I̯/ĕ when adjacent to a vowel, most preceding consonants were geminated intervocalically. The exceptions are [rj], which underwent deletion (PARI̯A > [ˈpaja] 'pairs'), [sj] and some cases of [tj] discussed in §8.3.3.[18] Furthermore, all consonants immediately preceding yod underwent a change of quality, except that labials were simply lengthened in intervocalic position: SAPI̯A(T) > [ˈsappja] 'know.SBJV.SG', HABĔAT > [ˈabbja] 'have.SBJV.SG', UINDĒMI̯A(M) > [venˈdemmja] 'grape harvest'.

The palatal sonorants [ɲ] and [ʎ] resulted from the palatalization of Latin N and L when followed by the palatal glide, and they are geminates in intervocalic position: UĪNĔA(M) > *[ˈvinja] > [ˈviɲɲa] 'vineyard'; PALĔA(M) > *[ˈpalja] > [ˈpaʎʎa] 'straw'. The palatal sonorants also have other origins. The palatal nasal results from the palatalization of Latin N preceded by a palatal glide, which derives from a velar stop (Maiden 1995a:56): LI̯GNA > *[ˈleiɲa] > [ˈleɲɲa] 'firewood', PU̯GNU(M) > *[ˈpoiɲo] > [ˈpuɲɲo] 'fist'. A nasal consonant followed by [gj], which underwent palatalization, was itself palatalized: SPO̯NGI̯A(M) > *[ˈspɔnʤa] > [ˈspuɲɲa] 'sponge'. Similarly, a source of the palatal lateral is palatalization of L when followed by a GE/GI which itself underwent palatalization: CO̯LL(I̯)GĔRE > *[ˈkɔldʒeɾe] > [ˈkɔʎʎeɾe] 'gather, collect', EXĒL(I̯)GĔRE > *[ekˈseldʒeɾe] > [ˈʃeʎʎeɾe] 'choose'.

The origin of palatal obstruents is more complex (see Table 8.8). The affricate [ʤ] can derive from word-initial or word-internal yod: I̯A(M) > [ˈʤa] 'already', MAI̯U(M) > [ˈmaʤo] 'May'. It can also result from the palatalizing effects of [j] after a voiced coronal or dorsal stop. The sequence [gj] always resulted in [ʤ] perhaps through an intermediate stage in which it was realized as yod (Tuttle 1978:93n9; Maiden 1995a:87n37): [gj] > [j] > [ʤ]. We find this outcome in word-initial and post-consonantal position (GĔORGI̯U(S) > [ˈʤorʤo] 'Giorgio'), as well as in intervocalic position, where it is realized long (EXAGI̯U(M) > [ˈsaddʒo] 'essay', RĒGI̯A(M) > [ˈrɛddʒa] 'royal palace'). When [gj] was preceded by a nasal consonant, the nasal was ultimately palatalized to [ɲ]: SPO̯NGI̯A(M) > *[ˈspɔnʤa] > [ˈspuɲɲa] 'sponge'.

Table 8.8 Yod and [g]/[d] + yod and the origin of alveo-palatal and dental affricates

Latin	Italian	word-initial position	intervocalic position	post-consonantal position
[j]	[ʤ]	I̯A(M) > [ˈʤa] 'already'	MAI̯U(M) > [ˈmaʤo] 'May'	

Latin	Italian	word-initial position	intervocalic position	post-consonantal position
[gj]	[ʤ]	GĔORGIˇU(S) > [ˈʤordʒo] ‘Giorgio’	EXAGIˇU(M) > [ˈsaddʒo] ‘essay’	GĔORGIˇU(S) > [ˈʤordʒo] ‘Giorgio’ SPOˇNGIˇA(M) > *[ˈspɔnʤa] > [ˈspuŋŋa] ‘sponge’
[dj]	[ʤ]	DIˇUˇRNU(M) > [ˈʤorno] ‘day’	HOˇDIˇE > [ˈɔddʒi] ‘today’	UERECUˇNDIˇA(M) > *[verˈgonʤa] > [verˈgoŋŋa] ‘shame’
	[ʣ]	—	MĔDIˇU(M) > [ˈmɛddʒo] ‘half’	HOˇRDĔU(M) > [ˈɔrʣo] ‘barley’ *[ˈmandjo] > [ˈmanʣo] ‘beef’

The sequence [dj] became [ʤ] in word-initial position (DIˇUˇRNU(M) > [ˈʤorno] ‘day’, DĔŌRSU(M) > [ˈʤu] ‘down’). In intervocalic position it has a dual outcome: long [ʤ] (HOˇDIˇE > [ˈɔddʒi] ‘today’) and long [ʣ] (MĔDIˇU(M) > [ˈmɛddʒo] ‘half’), resulting in various doublets ([ˈraddʒo]/[ˈraddʒo] ‘ray/rocket’ < RADIˇU(M)). After a consonant, we similarly find two reflexes: [ʣ] (HOˇRDĔU(M) > [ˈɔrʣo] ‘barley’), but also [ʤ] which palatalized the preceding nasal consonant (UERECUˇNDIˇA(M) > *[verˈgonʤa] > [verˈgoŋŋa] ‘shame’).[19] Maiden (1995a:53f.) suggests that [ʤ] is the main indigenous outcome of word-initial and intervocalic [dj], since [ʤ] is the only outcome word-initially, and it is the usual outcome intervocalically. Rohlfs (2021a:391) suggests that the forms with [ʣ] are borrowings from northern Italy or influenced by northern pronunciation, but Maiden (1995a:55) proposes that ‘[ʣ] may have been an alternative, indigenous, Tuscan resolution of intervocalic [dj]’. D’Achille (2001:64), on the other hand, suggests that the original development of [dj] is [ʣ] (as does Meyer-Lübke 1972:108), with intervocalic [ʤ] being the result of an earlier reduction of [dj] > [j] which then evolved to [ʤ].

The voiceless coronal/dorsal stop + yod sequences also have various outcomes (Table 8.9). The sequence [kj] regularly results in [ʧ] (CALCĔU(M) > [ˈkalʧo] ‘kick’), realized as long in intervocalic position (FAˇCIˇŌ > [ˈfatʧo] ‘I do’), and less frequently results in [ʦ] (*[faˈkjɔlu(m)] + *-etto* > [fatʦoˈletto] ‘handkerchief’, *[ˈkalkja] > [ˈkalʦa] ‘sock’) (D’Achille 2001:62), which Maiden (1995a:53) suggests might be northern Italian borrowings. As with other consonant + yod sequences, we also find doublets from [kj], such as the suffixes [ˈutʧo]/[ˈuttso] < -ŪCĔU(M).[20] When preceded by [s], the [kj] > [ʧ] sequence palatalized the [s], resulting in a long [ʃʃ]: ASCIˇA(M) > *[ˈasʧa] > [ˈaʃʃa] ‘axe’. While no Latin words with these sequences in initial position survived in Italian, some derived forms do, such as [ˈʧɔ] ‘that’ derived from (E)CCĔ HOˇC in which the [kj] sequence became word-initial only after loss of the unstressed initial vowel.

Table 8.9 [k]/[t] + yod and the origin of alveo-palatal and dental affricates

Latin	Italian	word-initial position	intervocalic position	post-consonantal position
[kj]	[ʧ]	(E)CCĔ HOˇC > [ʧɔ] ‘that’	FAˇCIˇŌ > [ˈfatʧo] ‘I do’	CALCĔU(M) > [ˈkalʧo] ‘kick’

Latin	Italian	word-initial position	intervocalic position	post-consonantal position
	[ʦ]		*[faˈkjɔlu(m)] + *etto* > [fattsoˈletto] ‘handkerchief’	*[ˈkalkja] > [ˈkalʦa] ‘sock’
[tj]	[ʧ]		*[ˈguttja] > [ˈgotʧa] ‘drop’	*[kominˈtjaɾe] > [kominˈʧaɾe] ‘to begin’
	[ʦ]		PUˇTĔU(M) > [ˈpottso] ‘well, pit’	FOˇRTIˇA > [ˈfɔrʦa] ‘force’
	[ʒ] > [ʤ]		RATIŌNE(M) > [raˈʒone] > [raˈʤone] ‘reason’	

The sequence [tj] has a much more complex history. It regularly resulted in [ʦ], realized long in intervocalic position (PUˇTĔU(M) > [ˈpottso] ‘well; pit’), but also [tʧ] < [ttj] : *[ˈguttja] > [ˈgotʧa] ‘drop’. In post-consonantal position we find [ʦ] (FOˇRTIˇA > [ˈfɔrʦa] ‘force’, *[alˈtjaɾe] > [alˈʦaɾe] ‘to lift’, LĔNTĔA(M) > [ˈlɛntsa] ‘fishing line’), as well as [ʧ] in later forms (*[kominˈtjaɾe] > [kominˈʧaɾe] ‘to begin’) (D’Achille 2001:64). This [ʧ] palatalized a preceding sibilant, resulting in long [ʃʃ] (ANGUˇSTIˇA(M) > [aŋˈgɔʃʃa] ‘anguish’; ŌSTIˇU(M) > [ˈuʃʃo] ‘doorway’, BĒSTIˇA(M) > [ˈbiʃʃa] ‘grass snake’). While [ʦ] < [tj] may be due to northern Italian influences, Maiden (1995a:53) proposes that both [ʦ] and [ʧ] are indigenous reflexes of [tj], the latter evolving through an intermediate form [tsj] where the [sj] sequence palatalized to [ʃ].[21]

The [tj] sequence also frequently resulted in [ʒ] in Tuscan and was adapted as [ʤ] in Italian: RATIŌNE(M) > [raˈʒone] > [raˈʤone] ‘reason’, STATIŌNE(M) > [staˈʒone] > [staˈʤone] ‘season’. The realization of [ʒ] as an affricate rather than a fricative may be due to a complex interplay of spelling and hypercorrection, discussed below. This is one of the two cases of palatalization by yod which did not result in a geminate in intervocalic position; the other involves the evolution of [sj] discussed below. Some cases of [tj] > [ʒ] > [ʤ] are possibly loans from northern Italian varieties, or were influenced by northern Italian varieties, but Maiden (1995a:51) posits that these voiced outcomes may also represent ‘an *indigenous* tendency to voicing’. We also find doublets with [ʦ] and [ʤ] (< [ʒ]), such as PRĚTIˇU(M) > [ˈprɛttso]/[ˈprɛʤo] ‘price/merit’.

Like the palatal nasal, [ʃ] can result from palatalization of [s] by preceding [j], which itself derives from a velar stop: COˇXA(M) > *[ˈkɔksa] > *[ˈkɔjsa] > [ˈkɔʃʃa] ‘thigh’, EXĀME(N) > *[ekˈsame] > *[ejˈsame] > [ˈʃame] ‘swarm’. In other cases, [ks] underwent assimilation: AXE(M) > *[ˈakse] > [ˈasse] ‘axle’ (see Wireback 2007). Other sources of [ʃ] include STJ, SKJ, and SC + front vowel, lexical borrowings (Ar. *šarab* [ʃiˈrɔppo] ‘syrup’, Fr. *châle* [ˈʃalle] ‘shawl’), and the sequence [sj]. Like the other Latin consonant + yod sequences discussed above, Latin [sj] was also palatalized.[22] It developed into a short alveo-palatal fricative in intervocalic position in Tuscan (BASIˇU(M) > [ˈbaʃo] ‘kiss’, PHASIˇANU(M) > [faˈʒano] ‘pheasant’), reanalysed as an alveo-palatal affricate in Italian ([ˈbaʧo], [faˈʤano]). This is another case of palatalization by yod which did not result in a geminate in intervocalic position, the other being [tj] > [ʒ] > [ʤ] discussed above. As with [tj] > [ʒ] > [ʤ], the intervocalic voiced reflex resulting from [sj] may be due to borrowings from Gallo-Romance or to indigenous intervocalic voicing. The realization of [ʃ]/[ʒ] as Italian affricates [ʧ]/[ʤ] is due to a complex interplay of orthographic practices

and hypercorrection which is intimately tied to the 'second palatalization', to which we turn next.

The alveo-palatal affricates also have another origin: they resulted from palatalization of a velar stop preceding a front vowel in word-initial and intervocalic position (Table 8.10).[23] From the fifth century, we find evidence of this 'second palatalization'.[24]

Table 8.10 Velar stop + front vowel

	word-initial position	intervocalic position
CE/CI	CĒNA(M) > [ˈʧena] 'dinner'	UĪCĪNU(M) > [viˈʧino] 'near'
GE/GI	GIˇNGĪVA(M) > [ʤenˈʤiva] 'gum'	LĔGĔRE > [ˈlɛddʒeɾe] 'to read'

The voiceless affricates resulting from the second palatalization process are singleton in intervocalic position (PĀCE(M) > [ˈpaʧe] 'peace'), the voiced ones are usually geminate in intervocalic position (LĔGĔRE > [ˈlɛddʒeɾe] 'to read'), although some forms lost the voiced velar (MAGIˇSTRU(M) > [maˈɛstro] 'teacher', SAˇGIˇTTA(M) > [saˈetta] 'lightning bolt').

When [k] + front vowel was preceded by a sonorant, the result is a voiceless affricate: DUˇLCE(M) > [ˈdolʧe] 'sweet', CAˇRCĔRE(M) > [ˈkarʧeɾe] 'jail'. For Latin SCE, SCI sequences, the result was first [sʧ], then [ʃ] (SCĒLĒRĀTU(M) > *[sʧelleˈɾato] > [ʃelleˈɾato] 'wicked'), realized as long in intervocalic position (PIˇSCE(M) > *[ˈpesʧe] > [ˈpeʃʃe] 'fish'). The results are more complex with the voiced velar stop. After [r] we find the expected outcome with the voiced affricate (SUˇRGĔRE > [ˈsorʤeɾe] 'rise', ARGĔNTU(M) > [arˈʤɛnto] 'silver'); when preceded by [l], we find palatalization of the lateral (COˇLL(Iˇ)GĔRE > *[ˈkɔldʒeɾe] > [ˈkɔʎʎeɾe] 'gather, collect', EXĒL(Iˇ)GĔRE > *[ekˈseldʒeɾe] > [ˈʃeʎʎeɾe] 'choose'); and when preceded by a nasal, we find two outcomes: nasal + voiced affricate (PLANGĔRE > [ˈpjanʤeɾe] 'cry') and the palatal nasal (EXPIˇNGĔRE > [ˈspeɲɲeɾe] 'extinguish'). The former is the western Tuscan/modern Florentine form and the latter the eastern Tuscan/old Florentine form, and in early Tuscan texts we find both: EXPIˇNGĔRE > [ˈspenʤeɾe]/[ˈspeɲɲeɾe], PLANGĔRE > [ˈpjanʤeɾe]/[ˈpjaɲɲeɾe], FINGĔRE > [ˈfinʤeɾe]/[ˈfiɲɲeɾe] 'feign'. In most cases the form with the nasal + affricate is found in Italian ([ˈpjanʤeɾe], [ˈfinʤeɾe]), but some forms with the palatal nasal survived ([ˈspeɲɲeɾe]) (Rohlfs 2021a:362).

The short alveo-palatal affricates in intervocalic position resulting from the second palatalization process underwent deaffrication, resulting in neutralization of the distinction with the descendants of Latin [sj] (and some cases Latin [tj]).[25] While this state of affairs is retained in some dialects, the short intervocalic [ʃ]/[ʒ]—both the original ones from Latin [sj] and [tj], as well as the deaffricated ones resulting from the second palatalization—were replaced by affricates in Italian. Tuttle (1977; 1978) proposes a two-stage process. The initial deaffrication was resisted in conservative varieties of Tuscan, thereby maintaining a distinction between short intervocalic alveo-palatal fricatives resulting from palatalization of intervocalic [sj]/[tj], and the short intervocalic affricates resulting from the second palatalization. With the increasing prestige of fourteenth-century Florence, those who aspired to the 'tonier style' of the elite, conservative groups attempted to reintroduce the intervocalic affricate (Tuttle 1977:610f.); however, the distinction between the fricative and affricate was lost, and

(hyper)correction of all intervocalic short alveo-palatal fricatives to affricates resulted, neutralizing the distinction between them (Table 8.11).

Table 8.11 Treatment of short intervocalic alveo-palatals

	BASIˇU(M)	DĪCIˇ(T)
[sj] palatalization	[ˈbaʃo]	—
k]/[g] + front vowel palatalization	—	[ˈdiʧe]
optional deaffrication	—	[ˈdiʧe]/[ˈdiʃe]
hypercorrection/standardization	[ˈbaʧo]	[ˈdiʧe]

The variation and confusion in the spelling of the palatal obstruents, which did not exist in the Latin inventory and, therefore, did not have a standardized spelling, might have also influenced their pronunciation by non-Tuscans and their adaptation in Italian. For example, <sci> reflected the spelling of [ʃ], [ʃʃ], and [ʒ], <ci> [ʃ] and [ʧ], <gi> [ʒ] and [ʤ] (Maiden 1995a:50f.). Some scholars (D'Achille 2001:65) adopt this explanation.

Reanalysis of these alveo-palatal fricatives as affricates did not affect the long alveo-palatal fricative [ʃʃ] derived from other sources or short [ʃ] in other contexts, but these changes did result in complete elimination of the voiced fricative [ʒ] (Table 8.12).

Table 8.12 Palatalization from Latin to Italian

	#____	V____V	C____
[j]	[ʤ]	[dʤ]	
[gj]	[ʤ]	[dʤ]	[ʤ]
[dj]	[ʤ]	[dʤ] [dʣ]	[ʤ] [ʣ]
[kj]		[tʧ] [tʦ]	[ʧ] [ʦ]
[tj]		[tʧ] [tʦ] [ʤ] (< [ʒ])	[ʧ] [ʦ]
[sj]		[ʧ] (< [ʃ]) [ʤ] (< [ʒ])	
[ke], [ki]	[ʧ]	[ʧ]	[ʧ]

	#____	V____V	C____
[ge], [gi]	[ʤ]	[ddʒ]	[ʤ]
[ks], [stj], [skj]		[ʃʃ]	
[ske], [ski]	[ʃ]	[ʃʃ]	
[lj],[lge], [lgi]		[ʎʎ]	
[nj], [gn], [ngj], [ndj], [nge], [ngi]		[ɲɲ]	

Post-consonantal [l] became [j] but did not palatalize the preceding consonant in Italian (but see Repetti and Tuttle 1987 for Romance generally). In intervocalic position, these sequences became geminate (Table 8.13).[26]

Table 8.13 Yod from post-consonantal [l]

	word-initial position	intervocalic position
[kl] > [kj]	CLAU˘STRU(M) > [ˈkjɔstro] 'cloister'	O˘C(U˘)LU(M) > [ˈɔkkjo] 'eye'
[gl] > [gj]	GLACI˘E(M) > [ˈgjatʧo] 'ice'	MŪG(I˘)LĀRE > [mugˈgjaɾe] 'bellow'
[pl] > [pj]	PLU˘ĔRE > [ˈpjɔveɾe] 'to rain'	CAP(U˘)LU(M) > [ˈkappjo] 'noose'
[bl] > [bj]	Grm. **blanku* > [ˈbjaŋko] 'white'	FĪB(U˘)LA(M) > [ˈfibbja] 'buckle'
[fl] > [fj]	FLŌRE(M) > [ˈfjoɾe] 'flower'	SUFFLĀRE > [sofˈfjaɾe] 'to blow'

8.3.4 Fortition and lenition

The relationship between palatalization and fortition ('strengthening'), has received much attention in recent literature (Kochetov 2016; Bybee and Easterday 2019; Coutsougera 2019). One type of fortition involves gemination, discussed above regarding the realization of certain 'new' consonants resulting from palatalization ([ʦ, ʣ, ʃ, ɲ, ʎ], but not [ʧ]/[ʤ]), the evolution of intervocalic yod (MAI˘U(M) > [ˈmaʣʤo] 'May'), the lengthening of intervocalic consonants before a glide (A˘QUA(M) > [ˈakkwa] 'water', FACI˘O > [ˈfatʧo] 'I do', O˘CU˘LU(M) > [ˈɔkkjo] 'eye'), as well as the intervocalic voiced reflexes of the second palatalization (LĔGĔRE > [ˈlɛddʒeɾe] 'to read'). In §8.4.2, we discuss another gemination process: *rafforzamento fonosintattico* (see also §14.6.2 and §15.2.1.2.4).

A more commonly discussed historical change affecting consonants is lenition ('weakening'), such as spirantization and the voicing of voiceless obstruents, both of which occur in intervocalic position (and between a vowel and a sonorant consonant).

Spirantization only affects labials: Latin intervocalic [b] was usually spirantized to [v] (FABU˘LA(M) > [ˈfavola] ‘fable’), as was intervocalic [b] derived from voicing of [p] (RĪPA(M) > *[riba] > [ˈriva] ‘shore’). Intervocalic voicing was more frequent than spirantization, although it was non-systematic. Variable intervocalic voicing, affecting all obstruents except [f] and geminates, was pervasive in western Romance, but only applied irregularly in Italian. While most Latin intervocalic voiceless obstruents remain voiceless, a sizeable number were voiced (Table 8.14). This dual outcome places Italian in a unique position within Romance since all the other languages show one or the other solution (Guazzelli 1996:8).

Table 8.14 Lenition of intervocalic obstruents

geminate (no intervocalic voicing)	singleton (sporadic intervocalic voicing)
STU˘PPA(M) > [ˈstoppa] ‘tow’	APE(M) > [ˈape] ‘bee’
	RĪPA(M) > *[ˈriba] > [ˈriva] ‘shore’[a]
MI˘TTĔRE > [ˈmettɛre] ‘to put’	ŪĪTA(M) > [ˈvita] ‘life’
	STRATA(M) > [ˈstrada] ‘street’
BU˘CCA(M) > [ˈbokka] ‘mouth’	FO˘CU(M) > [ˈfwɔko] ‘fire’
	LO˘CU(M) > [ˈlwɔgo] ‘place’
PASSU(M) > [ˈpasso] ‘step’	CASA(M) > [ˈkasa] ‘house’
	FŪSU(M) > [ˈfuzo] ‘melted’

[a] *Straripare* ‘to overflow’ conserves the intervocalic [p].

Since the majority of words retain the voiceless intervocalic obstruent, it is usually assumed that voicelessness is native, and that the forms with voicing are the ones that require explanation. Some argue that the forms with intervocalic voicing are borrowed from Gallo-Romance varieties, or that Tuscan voicing imitates those prestigious varieties. Evidence that Gallo-Romance is the source of Tuscan voicing includes the fact that many of the words affected tend to be in areas such as civil and church government in which the influence of northern Italy and France was greatest, that voicing is more widely attested in north-western Tuscany which has closer ties to northern Italy, and that other phonological characteristics of many of those words are typical of Gallo-Romance. Furthermore, much of the core vocabulary and most place names are not affected by voicing, and these are forms that we would not expect to be borrowed. However, many of these claims are debatable, including the claim that core vocabulary items and place names lack intervocalic voicing, and that northern Tuscan has more voicing than other Tuscan varieties. There are other facts that cannot be explained by borrowing, such as words with voicing found in Tuscan but not elsewhere, and the pattern of voicing of only one of two voiceless obstruents in a word. Because of these problems, others argue that a

(variable) intervocalic voicing rule is native to Tuscan, along with a smattering of borrowings from the north. Canalis (2014) presents the results of a corpus study of old Tuscan showing that intervocalic voicing is phonologically conditioned by place of articulation of the obstruent (more common with dorsals), by height of the adjacent vowel (more common with low and mid vowels), by the position of the stressed vowel (more common when adjacent to a stressed vowel). He concludes that intervocalic voicing was a non-systematic process whose irregularity was due to the fact that voicing was only partial and variable and interacted with another lenition process that resulted in spirantization of intervocalic voiceless stops, namely, *gorgia toscana*. See also Castellani (1960); Tuttle (1977); Giannelli and Savoia (1978; 1979–1980); Izzo (1980); Maiden (1995a:61–63); Guazzelli (1996); Giannelli and Cravens (1997); Patota (2002:81f.).

Another, much older, lenition is consonant assimilation (Table 8.15). Regressive assimilation affected most obstruent-obstruent clusters (except [s] + obstruent clusters: CO͡STA(M) > [ˈkɔsta] 'coast') and nasal-nasal clusters.

Table 8.15 Consonant assimilation

[ks]	AXE(M) > [ˈasse] 'axle'
[kt]	FACTU(M) > [ˈfatto] 'fact'
[bt]	SU͡BTU(S) > [ˈsotto] 'under'
[pt]	SĔPTE(M) > [ˈsɛtte] 'seven'
[gd]	FRI͡G(I͡)DU(M) > [ˈfreddo] 'cold'
[mn]	DO͡M(I͡)NA(M) > [ˈdɔnna] 'woman'

We do not find assimilation of obstruent-sonorant clusters (CAPRA(M) > [ˈkapra] 'goat') or sonorant-obstruent clusters (CARTA(M)> [ˈkarta] 'paper'). The *Appendix Probi* lists examples of the latter (*persica non pessica* 'peach') which Pisani (1975:177) claims is the origin of *pesca* 'peach', but which might instead reflect cluster simplification of PĔRSICA(M) > *[ˈpɛrska] > [ˈpɛska].[27]

We also find partial assimilation. Voicing assimilation of a sibilant to the following consonant is productive and exceptionless, as is evident from /s/-prefixation: [kon ˈtɛnto]/[s-konˈtɛnto] 'happy/unhappy', [garˈbato]/[z-garˈbato] 'polite/impolite', [le ˈale]/[z-leˈale] 'loyal/disloyal'. Nasal place assimilation, which is also productive today, is evident in the realization of the nasal consonant in the negative prefix ([in-tolleˈrante] 'intolerant', [iŋ-konsisˈtɛnte] 'inconsistent', [im-posˈsibile] 'impossible'), as well as in function words (*con Pina* [kom ˈpina] 'with Pina', *in casa* [iŋ ˈkasa] 'at home').

Coda deletion can be considered a type of lenition, and deletion of word-final consonants is attested sporadically in old Latin inscriptions, and is exceptionless in Italian, except in function words such as CU͡M > [kon] 'with', NŌN > [non] 'not', PĔR > [per] 'for'. (See §8.4.1 for final [s] deletion.) The deletion of a nasal coda before a sibilant is a pan-Romance phenomenon (MĒNSE(M) > [ˈmese] 'month', PENSĀRE > [peˈsaɾe] 'to

weigh’), with learnèd forms retaining the nasal ([menˈsile] ‘monthly’, [penˈsaɾe] ‘to think’).

8.3.5 Metathesis and dissimilation

Metathesis is sporadic; when it occurs, it involves [l] moving from medial position to form a word-initial complex onset: CO͡MU͡LA(M) > *[ˈkɔmla] > *[ˈklɔma] > [ˈkjɔma] ‘head of hair’, FABU͡LA(M) > *[ˈfabla] > *[ˈflaba] > [ˈfjaba] ‘fable’.

We also find sporadic dissimilation of non-adjacent identical sonorants (Posner 1961), the first sonorant changing in most cases (cf. also *Appendix Probi*: *cultellum non cuntellum* ‘knife’); however, occasionally the second changes or one of the sonorants is deleted (Table 8.16).

Table 8.16 Dissimilation

	dissimilation or deletion of one of the sonorants	no dissimilation
N-N	UĔNĒNU(M)> [veˈleno] ‘poison’	FONTĀNA(M) > [fonˈtana] ‘fountain’
L-L	U͡LU͡LĀRE > [urˈlaɾe] ‘to scream’ LĪLI͡U(M) > [ˈʤiʎʎo] ‘lily’	PI͡LU͡LA(M) > [ˈpillola] ‘pill’
R-R	PĔRĔGRĪNU(M) > [pelleˈgrino] ‘pilgrim’ MĔRCURII DI͡Ē(M) > [merkoleˈdi] ‘Wednesday’ ARMĀRI͡U(M) > [arˈmadjo] ‘cupboard’	FURŌRE(M) > [fuˈroɾe] ‘fury’

8.4 Suprasegmental phonology

8.4.1 Syllable structure

The nucleus of an Italian syllable can be preceded by an (optional) onset and followed by an (optional) coda; the nucleus + coda form a unit called the rhyme. Italian has specific restrictions on segments permitted in each of these positions.

A syllable with a long vowel or a coda is ‘heavy’: (C)Vː or (C)VC, and a syllable with a short vowel and no coda is ‘light’: (C)V. A ‘closed syllable’ is one with a coda: (C)VC, while an ‘open syllable’ is one without a coda: (C)Vː or (C)V. The structure of a syllable is regulated by the Sonority Sequencing Principle, whereby sonority rises from the onset to the peak (nucleus), then falls through the coda, resulting in a sonority curve. We adopt the sonority hierarchy (Zec 2007): vowels > liquids > nasals > fricatives > stops.

Latin nuclei can be filled by any vowel, including long or short vowels in open or closed, stressed or unstressed syllables. The length of the vowel as well as the open vs closed structure of the syllable were determining factors in the evolution of vowel quality.

In Latin, empty onsets are permitted, or simple onsets consisting of any consonant. A word-initial onset cluster consisting of obstruent + liquid or *muta cum liquida* (BRĔUE(M) 'brief, short') or obstruent + glide (SUĀDĒRE 'to advise') are also found.[28] Some simple onsets or clusters can be preceded by [s] (SPĔCU˘LU(M) 'mirror', SQUĀMA(M) 'scale'). Word-internally, we similarly find empty onsets or simple onsets consisting of any consonant. Sequences of flat sonority (obstruent + obstruent, sonorant + sonorant) or falling sonority (sonorant + obstruent) are heterosyllabic (i.e., are divided between syllables), while obstruent + glide sequences are tautosyllabic. The original syllabification of word-internal obstruent + liquid is controversial, some arguing for variation in syllabification (Loporcaro 2005) and others for tautosyllabicity (Steriade 1987). See also Bullock (2001); Sen (2015).

In the Latin coda, both word-internally and word-finally, we may find a single consonant, although [h] is not permitted in coda position, nor is [f] except as the first part of a geminate. Non-coronal consonants are rare in word-final position, with [p f h g] unattested, while word-final <m> indicates nasalization of the preceding vowel (Cser 2020:18). Coda clusters consist of a sonorant plus voiceless stop (SANC.TUS 'saint'), and word-finally we find [s] following some one-consonant or two-consonant codas (RĒX 'king' where <x> represents [ks], STIRPS 'root'). Latin also permitted intervocalic geminate consonants, or a consonant associated with a coda and an onset position, and any consonant—except [h]—could be realized as geminate (Cser 2020:16).

We saw in §8.2.3 that Latin word-final [s] following a stressed vowel was vocalized to [i̯] (NŌS > [ˈnoi̯] 'we', DĀS > [ˈdai̯] 'you.SG give'); however, the fate of Latin word-final [s] following an unstressed vowel is more complicated because of its role in inflexional morphology. Nominative singular final [s] was already absent in some old Latin inscriptions (Clackson and Horrocks 2011:96). However, in most western Romance languages and Sardinian, word-final [s] marks plurality of nouns and adjectives and second-person singular of verbs, where it is uniformly retained. In Italian and other eastern Romance languages we find [i] and [e] in these positions. There are two main lines of explanation, termed by Maiden (1995a) the 'morphological hypothesis' and the 'phonetic hypothesis'. (See Maiden 1995a; 1996b; and Faraoni 2018.)

The 'morphological hypothesis' posits that Latin final [s] was deleted, like other final consonants, resulting in neutralization of person-marking in various verb forms and of number-marking in nouns/adjectives. For verbs, this resulted in identical forms for second- and third-person singular verbs in the first, second, and third conjugations, but with a distinction maintained in the fourth conjugation. The neutralization in the first three conjugation classes was allegedly resolved by analogically extending the distinct second-person singular suffix [i] from the fourth conjugation to all second-person singular forms (Table 8.17).[29]

Table 8.17 2sg and 3sg present indicative verb forms

	2SG	3SG	
1st conjugation:	AMĀ(S) > **[ˈama] ([ˈami])	AMA(T) > [ˈama]	'love'
2nd conjugation:	UI˘DĒ(S) > **[ˈvede] ([ˈvedi])	UI˘DĔ(T) > [ˈvede]	'see'
3rd conjugation:	MI˘TTI˘(S) > **[ˈmette] ([ˈmetti])	MI˘TTI˘(T) > [ˈmette]	'put'

	2SG	3SG	
4th conjugation:	SĔNTĪ(S) > [ˈsɛnti]	SĔNTĬ(T) > [ˈsɛnte]	‘hear’

Similarly for nouns, deletion of Latin final [s] resulted in loss of distinction between the singular and plural forms in the accusative, which is generally assumed to be the basis of Romance nouns (Table 8.18).

Table 8.18 acc.sg and acc.pl forms

	ACC.SG	ACC.PL	
1st declension:	CASA(M) > [ˈkasa]	CASĀ(S) > **[ˈkasa] ([ˈkase])	‘house’
2nd declension:	ANNU(M) > [ˈanno]	ANNŌ(S) > **[ˈanno] ([ˈanni])	‘year’
3rd declension:	MATRE(M) > [ˈmadre]	MATRĒ(S) > **[ˈmadre] ([ˈmadri])	‘mother’

According to the morphological approach, Italian plurals do not derive from Latin accusative plurals which became identical to the accusative singular forms, but instead from the nominative plural (Table 8.19). The loss of distinction between the singular and plural forms in the third declension is resolved by analogically extending the plural [i] marker from the second declension.

Table 8.19 nom.pl forms

1st declension:	CASAE > [ˈkase]	‘house.NOM.PL’
2nd declension:	ANNĪ > [ˈanni]	‘year.NOM.PL’
3rd declension:	MATRĒ(S) > **[ˈmadre] ([ˈmadri])	‘mother.NOM.PL’

One of the facts unexplained by the morphological approach is lack of palatalization by the endings [i]/[e] in some of these forms (cf. §8.3.3). For example, the first-declension plural suffix [e] < AE does not palatalize a preceding velar (AMĪCAE > [aˈmike]/**[aˈmiʧe] ‘friend.FPL’), although in other contexts [e] < AE does palatalize a preceding velar consonant: CAELU(M) > [ˈʧɛlo] ‘sky’. Plurals derived from the other declensions only occasionally undergo palatalization: [aˈmiko]/[aˈmiʧi] ‘friend.MSG/PL’ with palatalization, but [ˈfiko]/[ˈfiki] ‘fig.SG/PL’ without it. We never find palatalization in the second-person singular form of first conjugation verbs ([ˈpago]/[ˈpagi] ‘I/you.SG pay’), although verbs in other conjugation classes do palatalize ([ˈdiko]/[ˈdiʧi] ‘I/you.SG say’) (Rohlfs 2021b:44–47, 261–263).

An alternative, 'phonetic', hypothesis proposes that Latin final [s] vocalized to [i̯] in stressed and unstressed position. In this approach, the second-person suffix of verbs derives directly from the Latin forms with final [s] > [i̯], and the resulting diphthong then undergoes monophthongization; similarly the plural ending of nouns/adjectives derives from the Latin accusative plural. In short, for verbs and nouns/adjectives, Latin word-final unstressed AS > *[ai̯] > [e], and ĒS/ĭS > *[ei̯] > [i] (Table 8.20).

Table 8.20 'Phonetic hypothesis' of Italian [i]/[e] inflexional endings

verbs:		
1st conjugation:	AMĀS > *[ˈamai̯] > [ame] ([ˈami])	'love.2SG'
2nd conjugation:	UĬDĒS > *[ˈvedei̯] > [ˈvedi]	'see.2SG'
3rd conjugation:	MIĬTTIĬS > *[ˈmettei̯] > [ˈmetti]	'put.2SG'
4th conjugation:	SĔNTĪS > *[ˈsɛntii̯] > [ˈsɛnti]	'hear.2SG'
nouns (and adjectives):		
1st declension:	CASĀS > *[ˈkasai̯] > [ˈkase]	'house.ACC.PL'
2nd declension:	ANNŌS > *[ˈannoi̯] > **[ˈannu] ([ˈanni])	'year.ACC.PL'
3rd declension:	MATRĒS > *[ˈmadrei̯] > [ˈmadri]	'mother.ACC.PL'

This approach allows us to account for all second-person singular verb suffixes, except in first-conjugation verbs, and for all plurals, except in second-declension nouns. For the second-person singular ending in the first conjugation (AMĀS > *[ˈamai̯] > [ame], modern [ˈami] 'love.PRS.IND.2SG'), the old Tuscan forms with ending [e] support this proposal, and the modern suffix [i] is, on this account, due to analogical extension of the suffix from other conjugations. As for nouns and adjectives, we might expect suffix [u] with second-declension plural nouns (ANNŌS > *[ˈannoi̯] > **[ˈannu] 'year.ACC.PL'), but the actual [i] ending can be explained through analogical extension from the third declension, although the second-declension nominative plural [i] might have played a role as well. The problems encountered by the morphological hypothesis with regard to palatalization are obviated if one accepts the phonetic hypothesis: we never find palatalization with first-declension plural nouns or second-person singular forms of first conjugation verbs because in both cases the endings originally derive from non-palatalizing -AS.

As for syllable structure, as with Latin, any Italian vowel can appear in the nucleus (with restrictions on stressed vs unstressed syllables, and final vs non-final syllables), and onsets can be empty, or any single consonant can appear in the onset (simple onset [z] can only appear intervocalically). The clusters are more complicated: a cluster consisting of a stop or [f] + liquid/glide (but not **[tl, dl]) can appear in word-initial position (*blu* 'blue', *bruno* 'brown', *bietola* 'Swiss chard', *buono* 'good'), intervocalic position (*biblico* 'biblical', *ibrido* 'hybrid', *tibia* 'tibia'), or post-consonantal position

(*assemblea* ‘assembly’, *ambra* ‘amber’, *ambiente* ‘environment’). Fricatives [v] and [ʃ], and the affricates [ʧ, ʤ, ʦ, ʣ] cannot form an onset cluster. Any singleton onset or onset cluster can be preceded by /s/ (realized as [s] or [z]), except the palatal consonants and sibilants ([s, z, ʃ, ts, dz, ɲ, ʎ]), although alveopalatal [ʧ] and [ʤ] can cluster with prefix /s/ ([sʧenˈtraɾe] ‘to decentre’, [zʤeˈlaɾe] ‘to thaw’). Voicing assimilation of pre-consonantal /s/ to the following consonant is categorical ([ˈspandi] ‘you.SG spread’ vs [ˈzbandi] ‘you.SG skid’).[30]

Unlike Latin, Italian codas are severely restricted. Only sonorants, [s], and the first part of a geminate consonant are allowed in coda position word-internally. Any consonant can be geminate (except [z]), and some consonants are always long in intervocalic position ([ʦ, ʣ, ʃ, ɲ, ʎ]). Word-final codas are found only in function words, such as determiners and prepositions which can end in a coronal sonorant consonant ([kon] ‘with’, [il] ‘the.MSG’, [per] ‘for’), and in recent loanwords. Loans ending in a consonant are variably realized as consonant-final or with a schwa-like vocalic element after the final consonant throughout Italy (Miatto 2023): *jet* [ˈʤɛt], [ˈʤɛtᵗᵊ], [ˈʤɛttə]. Coda clusters are limited to borrowings: *boulevard*, *golf*, *test*, *sport*.

8.4.2 Stress

Word stress in Latin is predictable, and the pattern has formed the basis for our understanding and the development of metrical stress theory (Hayes 1995): final syllables of polysyllables are not stressed, the penult is stressed if heavy, and if light, the antepenult is stressed. The Latin stress rule survives in Italian in a weakened version. Italian has a ‘three-syllable window’ whereby stress must fall on one of the final three syllables of a word. Within this ‘three-syllable window’ stress is largely unpredictable, except that antepenultimate stress is normally banned if there is a closed penult,[31] but there are exceptions, including common nouns ([ˈpɔ.lit.ʦa] ‘policy’, [ˈman.dor.la] ‘almond’) and toponyms (*Taranto* [ˈta.ɾan.to], *Otranto* [ˈɔ.tran.to]), all of Greek origin. Stress can fall on a syllable to the left of the antepenult in a few cases: some third-person plural verb forms of the first conjugation where the corresponding third-person singular form is proparoxytonic (e.g., [te.ˈlɛ.fo.na] ‘s/he telephones’, [te.ˈlɛ.fo.na.no] ‘they telephone’), and some imperatives and infinitives with enclitic pronouns. Italian stress is not reassigned after encliticization, so imperatives and infinitives with enclitic pronouns retain stress on the same syllable as the base form ([ˈkompra]/[ˈkompra-me-lo] ‘buy.IMP.2SG/buy.IMP.2SG it for me’; [teˈlɛfona]/[teˈlɛfona-me-lo] ‘telephone.IMP.2SG/telephone.IMP.2SG it to me’; [ˈlɛdʤeɾe]/[ˈlɛdʤer-me-lo] ‘to read/to read it to me’), resulting in some forms with stress on a syllable to the left of the antepenult.

One change in stress assignment from Latin to Romance involves words with a short penultimate vowel followed by *muta cum liquida*. In Latin these words were stressed on the antepenult, but at some point became stressed on the penult, as evidenced by some Romance forms (INTĔGRU(M) > [inˈtɛɾo] ‘entire’), and on the antepenult as evidenced by others (PALPĔBRA(M) > [ˈpalpebra] ‘eyelid’). One recurring question concerns the syllabification of this sequence of consonants: coda+onset or complex onset?[32]

We saw in §8.2 that Latin vowel length distinctions were eliminated, and new vowel length differences introduced, based on syllable structure, so that a vowel is lengthened in a stressed open penultimate or antepenultimate (but not final) syllable,[33] and is short

everywhere else. This has been described as a requirement that stressed syllables be heavy, or bimoraic (Repetti 1989), a trend already attested in Latin resulting in the lengthening of the short vowel in monomoraic (light) stressed syllables (Kiss 1971:105), or the doublets consisting of a long vowel+short consonant and short vowel+geminate consonant, as in BĀCA(M) ~ BA˘CCA(M) 'berry'. In well-integrated loans, instead of vowel lengthening, we often find lengthening of the consonant following the stressed vowel (Ar. *zarāfa* > [ʤiˈɾaffa] 'giraffe'), including before an inserted final vowel (Eng. *beefsteak* > [bisˈtɛkka], Sp. *caracol* [kaɾaˈkɔllo] 'movement of a horse') (Repetti 2006).

Support for the proposal that stressed vowels in Italian must always be heavy also comes from *rafforzamento fonosintattico* 'phonosyntactic strengthening' (RF)—the gemination of a word-initial consonant when preceded by a stressed vowel (cf. §14.6.2, §15.2.1.2.4): *metà torta* [meˈta tˈtorta] 'half a cake', *città francese* [ʧitˈta ffranˈʧeze] 'French city' (Repetti 1991; Borrelli 2002; Passino 2013). Here the stressed syllable of the first word becomes heavy through consonant lengthening. The only exception to the lengthening of the word-initial consonant following a stressed vowel involves word-initial /s/ in sC clusters which does not lengthen in RF contexts. This provides further evidence in support of a heterosyllabification of this cluster, since the /s/ can resyllabify as part of the preceding stressed syllable, making it heavy (see note 31). The historical origin of this type of RF has been analysed as a reinterpretation of a consonant assimilation process since some of the stress-final trigger words were originally consonant-final (see Loporcaro 1997a): TRĒ(S) > [ˈtre] 'three', PĔR QUI˘(D) > [perˈke] 'why, because'.

A second type of RF involves a trigger that does not end in a stressed vowel, and includes a closed list of grammatical words, including *come* 'like', *sopra* 'above', *qualche* 'some', *dove* 'where', *a* 'to', *da* 'from' (Borrelli 2002; Passino 2013): *come me* [ˈkome mme] 'like me', *a Prato* [a pˈprato] 'to/at Prato'. The origin of this type of RF can also be found in the Latin etyma with a final consonant that underwent assimilation to the following word-initial consonant: AD TE > [atˈte] 'to you'.[34] While the final consonant was eventually deleted historically, the lengthening effect still remained in a closed set of words.

A third type of consonant lengthening, called 'backwards *rafforzamento*', is found at word boundaries when a consonant-final word is followed by a vowel-initial word: *tram elettrico* [ˈtramm eˈlɛttriko] 'electric tram'. This only occurs if the word-final consonant is part of a stressed syllable: *alcol etilico* [ˈalkol eˈtilico]/**[ˈalkoll eˈtilico] 'ethyl alcohol' (Chierchia 1982; Borrelli 2002; Passino 2013).[35]

In RF with a stressed trigger and 'backwards *rafforzamento*', the stressed syllable of the first word becomes heavy by lengthening, not the vowel, but the following consonant.[36] This dual method of making a stressed syllable heavy (V: or VC) is reminiscent of doublets in Latin such as BŪCA(M) ~ BU˘CCA(M) > [ˈbuka] 'hole' ~ [ˈbokka] 'mouth', mentioned above.

We occasionally find gemination of a consonant following secondary stress. In particular, the initial secondary-stressed syllable in a four-syllable paroxytone may become closed through gemination: PĔLĔCĀNU(M) > [ˌpelliˈkano] 'pelican', PĔRĔGRĪNU(M) > [ˌpelleˈgrino] 'pilgrim', SCĔLĔRĀTU(M) > [ˌʃelleˈɾato] 'evil' (Marotta 1991). This gemination is not found across the lexicon ([ˌkalaˈmita]/**[ˌkallaˈmita] 'magnet').

Vowel epenthesis may serve to 'repair' phonotactic or syllable-structure violations. Examples include epenthesis in word-internal /sm/ (*[blas(ti)ˈmaɾe] > *[blasˈmaɾe] > [bjaziˈmaɾe] 'to blame'), or, more recently, in illicit onsets in some varieties of popular Italian (*pneumatico* [pineu̯ˈmatiko] 'tyre', *psicologo* [pisiˈkɔlogo] 'psychologist'). We also find fixed (learnèd) phrases such as *scritto/per iscritto* 'written/in written form' and

scuola/in iscuola ‘school/in school’ with epenthesis avoiding a /CsC/ sequence, a process more prevalent in early texts, as in these examples from the fifteenth century: *per escriptura* ‘in writing’, *cento iscudi* ‘100 scudos’ (Migliorini 1984:286). Sampson (2010) offers a detailed study of vowel prosthesis in Romance. The schwa-like vocalic element after the final consonant of recent loanwords (*jet* [ˈʤɛtᵗᵊ]) is analysed as an excrescent vowel aiding the perceptibility of the preceding consonant (Miatto 2023).

8.5 Learnèd forms and recent borrowings

Some forms and borrowings arrived too late to undergo the sound changes discussed above (Migliorini 1984; Maiden 1995a:84; §25.3.3). The earliest learnèd forms were introduced from Latin and Greek sources from the Middle Ages. Over recent centuries, we find borrowings from other European languages, especially French and English, as well as pan-European neologisms and neo-formations using indigenous material, such as clippings, acronyms, and hypocoristics.

Stressed vowels in learnèd forms often retain the quality indicated by the Latin written form, so that Latin (short) I˘ and U˘ are integrated as [i] and [u] rather than [e] and [o], (UI˘TRĔU(M) > [ˈvitreo] ‘vitreous’, NU˘MĔRU(M) > [ˈnumero] ‘number’). In addition, stressed mid vowels are generally pronounced lax (EXTRĒMU(M) > [eˈstrɛmo] ‘extreme’, MŌTU(M) > [ˈmɔto] ‘movement’), as are stressed mid vowels found in new words of various origins, including loans (*jet* [ˈʤɛt]), acronyms (D.O.C. [ˈdɔk] ‘denominazione di origine controllata’, a wine certification), hypocoristics (Edoardo/Edo [edoˈardo]/[ˈɛdo]) (Kenstowicz 2011). Monophthongization of Latin AU > [ɔ] ceased to be productive, resulting in doublets such as autochthonous [ˈkɔsa] ‘thing’ and learnèd [ˈkaʊ̯za] ‘cause’, both from CAUSA(M) ‘cause’. Syncope also ceased to be productive (SPĪRI˘TU(M) > [ˈspiɾito] ‘spirit’, SAECU˘LU(M) > [ˈsɛkolo] ‘century’), and unstressed vowels adjacent to another vowel are generally retained as glides (NEUTRU(M) > [ˈnɛu̯tro] ‘neutral’, VI˘TI˘U(M) > [ˈvitʦjo] ‘vice’).

Historical changes affecting consonants do not always affect learnèd words or recent borrowings. Gemination triggered by glide is not productive (A˘QU˘I˘LA(M) > [ˈakwila] ‘eagle’), and neither is palatalization by glide (AMBRO˘SI˘A(M) > [amˈbrɔzja] ‘ambrosia’, HOSTI˘A(M) > [ˈɔstja] ‘host’). The many words containing [VtʦjV], orthographic <zi> between vowels, are learnèd words whose spelling reflects ecclesiastical pronunciation (GRĀTI˘A(M) > [ˈgrattsja] <grazia> ‘grace’) (D’Achille 2001:64). Orthography affects the pronunciation of the graphemes <c, g> before front vowels (*CEE* [ˈʧɛe] ‘Comunità Economica Europea (= European Economic Community)’), and also accounts for the lack of gemination of voiced velars expected from the second palatalization (AGI˘LE(M) > [ˈadʒile] ‘agile’). Consonant clusters that had been changed in the historical phonology, are usually unchanged in learnèd words and recent borrowings, including consonant + [l] clusters (SI˘GLA(M) > [ˈsigla] ‘acronym’), [ns] clusters (MĒNSĪLE(M) > [menˈsile] ‘monthly’), and obstruent-obstruent clusters (AMYGDA˘LA(M) > [aˈmigdala] ‘amygdala’). Spirantization of intervocalic [b] is not productive (A˘RA˘BU(M) > [ˈaɾabo] ‘Arab’), and neither is intervocalic voicing (Eng. *water(-closet)* > [ˈvater] ‘toilet’), except intervocalic [s] which is generally pronounced voiceless in southern varieties of Italian and voiced in northern varieties (§8.3.2).

[1] See Powell (2007) and Barnett (2007) for recent studies of the *Appendix Probi*.

[2] Glides can be considered as unique phonemes or as positional variants of vowels; we adopt the latter model. However, see Cser (2020:14f.) for glides in Latin as unique phonemes. Cser (1999:188) suggests that intervocalic yod was 'redundantly geminated' in Latin, like the situation in some southern varieties of Italian today (see note 8). Kent (1932), Allen (1965), Väänänen (1974), and Cser (1999) discuss the realization of unstressed vowels adjacent to another vowel in Latin.

[3] The evolution of low mid vowels in proparoxytones may shed light on the role of metaphony in diphthongization in Tuscan (Maiden 1991; 2016a) where the presence of a diphthong in forms like [ˈtjɛpido] 'tepid' and [ˈwɔmini] 'men', but not in others like [ˈpɛkoɾa] 'sheep' and [ˈɔpeɾa] 'work', may be attributed to the influence of the penultimate as well as final vowel. This also holds for some southern Italian dialects where diphthongization is more pervasive: Rohlfs (2021a:22) reports for Calabrian [ˈpjertika] 'pole', [ˈpworfiɟe] 'scissors' with a high vowel in the post-tonic syllable and diphthongization, but [ˈmɔnako] 'monk', [kaˈsɛntaru] 'earthworm' with a low vowel in the post-tonic syllable and no diphthongization.

[4] The lax mid vowel may have diphthongized first (Rohlfs 2021a:138f.).

[5] Another type of vowel raising often mentioned in the context of anaphonesis involves [V´skj], as in *[ˈmisk(u)loː] > *[ˈmeskjo] > [ˈmiskjo] 'I mix', which, according to Sampson (1999:275n3), is 'more recent and hence not directly related'. We also find stressed-vowel raising before [stj] which palatalized to [ʃʃ], as in BĒSTIˇA(M) > *[ˈbestja] > [ˈbiʃʃa] 'grass snake', ŌSTIˇU(M) > *[ostjo] > [ˈuʃʃo] 'exit' (Franceschini 1991:262). See §8.3.

[6] Anaphonesis of this type does not usually take place before coda [ɲ] derived from Latin GN: LIˇGNU(M) > [ˈleɲɲo] (** [ˈliɲɲo]) 'wood'. The exceptional case of apparent anaphonesis in this context—PUˇGNU(M) > [ˈpuɲɲo] 'fist'—could be due to a variant Latin form *p*[uː]*gnu(m)* (Sampson 1999:239).

[7] Sampson (1999:275n5) reports DUNC + UˇMQUA(M) > [ˈduŋkwe] 'therefore', and related forms, but notes that early Florentine texts have an *o* in these contexts.

[8] The pronunciation of intervocalic yod today varies between singleton and geminate (Marotta 1993).

[9] [i̯] can be followed by [w] ([ai̯.ˈwɔ.lo] 'flower bed'), but [u̯] cannot be followed by [j].

[10] *Appendix Probi* has *coquens non cocens* 'cooking' and *coqui non coci* 'I cooked' with loss of post-consonantal [w].

[11] Many Italian words beginning with [gw] are loans, often from Germanic languages (**werra* > [ˈgwerra] 'war', **wardon* > [gwarˈdaɾe] 'to watch'), and a few [gw]-initial words derive from Latin word-initial Ŭ through a process called the 'secondary Germanization': UADU(M) > [ˈgwado] 'ford', UĀGĪNA(M) > [gwaˈina] 'sheath' (Patota 2002:76).

[12] We do not find diphthongization of *ae* > [jɛ] in all open syllables for the reasons discussed above: [ˈsɛkolo] 'century' < SAECUˇLU(M) because the vowel is in antepenult position, [ˈprɛmjo]/ 'prize' < PRAEMIU(M) because it follows a consonant + *r* cluster.

[13] There are cases of early monophthongization of AU > [o]: CAUˇDA(M) > [koda] 'tail' (Adams 2013:81).

[14] Final [u] is present in recent loans, which are often pronounced with stress on the [ˈu] (*zulu/zulù*). See Repetti (2006).

[15] An entire chain of intermediate forms for AUˇRIˇCUˇLA(M) > [oˈɾekkja] is found in the written record, providing an unusually clear example of the successive application of sound changes discussed in this chapter. The classical form is attested by several authors including Pliny the Elder and Martial. Next, the form *oricula* with monopthongization is identified in Festus and in *Ad Herrenium* as rural, simple, or rustic (Adams 2013:181), and *oricla*, which adds syncope of the unstressed vowel, is attested in the *Appendix Probi*. The modern form adds to this lowering of the remaining (short) high vowel as well as the distinctly Italian replacement of post-consonantal [l] with [j] and gemination of the preceding [k] (§9.3.3).

[16] Patota (2002:67) notes that post-tonic [e] from Latin ĕ tends to be retained.

[17] See also Celata (2002); Kochetov (2011); Repetti (2016); and Zampaulo (2019).

[18] See Hayes (1989) for analysis of gemination triggered by gliding of a consonant or vowel.

[19] Rohlfs (2021a:392) reports early Tuscan [ˈɔrʤo] < HOˇRDĔU(M) 'barley'.

[20] The changes Latin [kj] > [ʧ] and [gj] > [ʤ] should not be viewed as parallel evolutions (Maiden 1995a:87n37). Rather, Latin [gj] became [j] before evolving to [ʤ], while no such change occurred with Latin [kj] sequences.

[21] Other sources of dental affricates include borrowings, such as [ˈʦɔlla]/[ˈʣɔlla] 'clod', from Longobard, and the alveo-palatal affricates are also the result of the 'second palatalization' discussed below.

[22] See further Castellani (1960); Aski (2001); and Canalis (2017).

[23] For recent approaches to the productivity of palatalization of velars before front vowels, see Steddy (2015); Flor (2020); Shao et al. (2023).

[24] There are a few cases of palatalization of [s] before a front vowel: SĪMIˇA(M) > [ˈʃimmja] 'monkey', UESSĪCA(M) > [veʃˈʃika] 'bladder'. Intervocalic [ll] before [i] also occasionally palatalized: **elli* > [eʎʎi] 'he', and in the fifteenth century we find forms such as *frategli* for modern *fratelli* 'brothers', suggesting more widespread palatalization of [ll] before [i] (Migliorini 1984:288).

[25] The distinction between short (/VʃV/ < [sj]) and long (/VʃʃV/ < [ks], [stj], [ske], [ski]) alveo-palatal fricatives was maintained.

[26] [kl] also derives from [tl] resulting from syncope: UĔT(Uˇ)LU(M) > *[ˈvɛtlu] > *[ˈvɛklu] > [ˈvɛkkjo] 'old', also attested in the *Appendix Probi* (*capitulum non capiclum* diminutive of *caput* 'head'). Some -TUˇL- forms underwent syncope later, resulting in [tl] which assimilated to [ll]: SPAT(Uˇ)LA(M) > *[ˈspatla] > [ˈspalla] 'shoulder' (Rohlfs 2021a:349).

[27] The *Appendix Probi* also lists *grundio non grunnio* ('grunt') which reflects a type of assimilation that is widespread in the southern and central Italian dialects (Savoia 2015; Rohlfs 2021a:356–361): QUANDO > [ˈkwannu] 'when'.

[28] The prosodic affiliation of glides—as part of the nucleus or the onset or coda—is not universally agreed upon (see Canalis 2018). We remain agnostic as to their treatment despite our use of the terms 'rising diphthongs' (for GV sequences), 'falling diphthongs' (for VG sequences), and 'complex onset' (for CG sequences).

[29] For [e] as the regular old Tuscan first-conjugation second-person singular ending, see Maiden (1996b; 2024a).

[30] For the syllabification of word-internal sC clusters as tauto- or heterosyllabic, see Bertinetto (2004); Svolacchia (2019); and Repetti (2020).

[31] This observation has been used to argue for a heterosyllabic treatment of [s] + consonant clusters: we do not find antepenultimate stress if the penultimate vowel is followed by [s] + consonant because the [s] forms the coda of the penult.

[32] See further Steriade (1987); Bullock (2001); Loporcaro (2005); Sen (2015).

[33] See further D'Imperio and Rosenthall (1999).

[34] When the second word begins with a vowel, in some cases this consonant can reappear: AˇD > [a] 'to', /a anna/ > [adˈanna] 'to Anna', ĔT > [e] 'and', /e altri/ > [edˈaltri] 'and others'.

[35] A similar phenomenon affects very recent consonant-final loans followed by a vowel-initial derivational suffix ([ˈtɔp] > [topˈp-issimo] 'very popular'), but only if the base form has stress on the final syllable (Repetti 2006).

[36] See Absalom and Hajek (1997) and Absalom et al. (2002) for cases in which the vowel is indeed lengthened, blocking RF.

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Chapter 9

Historical morphology

Martin Maiden

9.1 Introduction

In its essential typological characteristics, Italian inflexional morphology is not greatly different from that of Latin.[1] In both languages there is only rarely a 'transparent', one-to-one correspondence between each of the component elements of word-forms and each of the various lexical and grammatical meanings expressed by those word-forms.[2] Word-forms do usually have at least some discernible internal structure, analysable as comprising a 'root (+ thematic vowel) + inflexional ending'. The root is the 'leftmost' element, and bears the lexical meaning. The 'thematic vowel' plays a major role in the division, particularly of verbs, into arbitrary inflexion classes.[3] Material to the 'right' of the root (or of the root + thematic vowel) is the 'inflexional ending', and is the principal domain of exponence of values for the features tense, aspect, mood, person, number, and gender.

The set of features expressed in Italian morphology (tense, aspect, mood, person, number, and gender) also remains essentially that of Latin. However, Italian no longer marks case-distinctions inflexionally (except, vestigially, in pronouns), nor does it distinguish a third ('neuter') value for gender in addition to masculine and feminine; the Latin inflexional marking of passive voice has disappeared and inflexional marking of aspect distinctions has become restricted to the distinction between the preterite ('passato remoto') and the imperfect indicative. As for the *forms* expressing these features, the Italian present indicative, present subjunctive, imperfect indicative, and present imperative continue their Latin ancestors; the Italian preterite continues the Latin present perfective indicative form. The Italian synthetic future tense-forms are not directly inherited from Latin but arose, over a wide area of the Romance-speaking world, as periphrases comprising infinitives + present indicative of HAVE auxiliary, which subsequently became wholly synthetic. There also emerged a parallel set of 'conditional' forms (infinitives + auxiliary past-tense forms of HAVE).[4] Of the Latin non-finite forms, the infinitive, perfective (or 'past') participle, and gerund are continued in Italian.[5]

Broadly, then, much is unchanged. But modern Italian also displays idiosyncratic morphological peculiarities whose origins do not lie (or lie only partially) in direct inheritance from Latin, and it is the history of some of these that I address here.[6]

9.2 Verb

9.2.1 Why do verbs display vocalic and/or consonantal allomorphy in the lexical root?

There are two major sources of root allomorphy. One is 'inheritance', Latin allomorphs simply being continued as allomorphs into Italian: e.g., the differences between It. *dice* 's/he says', *disse* 's/he said', and *detto* 'said' continue those between Lat. DĪCIT, DĪXIT, and DĬCTUM; the other is regular sound change, which produced alternations—of a kind generally absent in Latin—for person, number, mood, and tense. The two kinds of change principally responsible for the latter type were palatalization (affecting root-final consonants) and differentiation of vowel quality dependent on stress (affecting root vowels). However, simply invoking 'inheritance' or 'sound change' falls well short of explaining the facts.

9.2.1.1 Alternations in the preterite (*passato remoto*): why *dissi dicesti*, etc.?

One of the most puzzling and controversial features of Italian morphology involves the so-called 'strong' preterite. At issue are a few dozen verbs (e.g., *fare* 'do', *dire* 'say', *vedere* 'see', *cuocere* 'cook', *crescere* 'grow', *scrivere* 'write', *piangere* 'weep', *stare* 'stand') where the 1SG, 3SG, and 3PL preterite have (i) an idiosyncratic root allomorph and (ii) special unstressed inflexional endings *-i*, *-e*, *-ero*, in a relation of mutual implication. These disparate Italian preterite allomorphs often have direct antecedents in Latin, as exemplified in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Continuation of Latin perfective allomorphs in Italian

Latin		Italian	
PRS.IND (imperfective)	PRS.IND (perfective)	PRS.IND	preterite
FACIT	FECIT	*fa*	*fece*
DICIT	DIXIT	*dice*	*disse*
UĬDET	UĪDIT	*vede*	*vide*
COQUET	COXIT	*cuoce*	*cosse*
SCRIBERE	SCRIPSIT	*scrive*	*scrisse*
PLANGERE	PLANXIT	*piangere*	*pianse*
STARE	STETIT	*sta*	*stette*

The Latin allomorphs occurred in all and only the *perfective* forms of the verb. Of these, only the present indicative perfective and the past subjunctive perfective (or 'pluperfect') continue, respectively, as the Italian preterite and the imperfect subjunctive. Yet in these forms the original root allomorphs have completely disappeared from the Italian imperfect subjunctive, and from the 2SG, 2PL, and 1PL forms of the preterite, so that today they survive only in the 1SG, 3SG, 3PL preterite (Table 9.2).[7]

Table 9.2 The fate of Latin perfective allomorphs in Italian

Latin facere (ipfv. fac-/ pfv. fec-)						
	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRT	FECI	FECISTI	FECIT	FECIMUS	FECISTIS	FECERUNT
PLPF.SBJV	FECISSEM	FECISSES	FECISSET	FECISSEMUS	FECISSETIS	FECISSENT
Italian fare (*fac-/fec-*)						
	1sg	2sg	3sg	1pl	2pl	3pl
prt	féci	facésti	féce	facémmo	facéste	fécero
ipfv.sbjv	facéssi	facéssi	facésse	facéssimo	facéste	facéssero

What is probably involved is analogical elimination of the original perfective alternants in favour of the root allomorph generally found elsewhere in the paradigm, where this analogical change 'snagged', so to speak, on certain forms of the preterite. The arguments for this will be explored shortly,[8] but first we must review a widely favoured alternative line of explanation (e.g., Meyer-Lübke 1972:196f.; Rohlfs 2021a:415f.; 2021b:311; Elson 2014) according to which the relevant pattern of root alternation originated as an accidental result of sound change in a small subset of verbs; that pattern was then propagated analogically to other verbs which had strong preterites. The subset of verbs (allegedly) first affected by the sound change was not, in fact, one that had distinctive perfective root-allomorphs in Latin; rather, it had the same root as the imperfective forms, but with the perfective marker -U- [w] immediately following the root. In early Italo-Romance this [w] regularly triggered lengthening of preceding obstruents, and was, in most cases, later deleted (it survives as [w] after velars and as [v] after [r]). Examples are: HABET~HABUIT > *ha~ebbe* 's/he has~had'; TENET~TENUIT > *tiene~tenne* 's/he holds~held'; PLACET~PLACUIT > *piace~piacque* 's/he pleases~pleased'; SAPIT~SAP(I)UIT > *sa~seppe* 's/he knows~knew'; UULT~UOLUIT > *vuole~volle* 's/he wants~wanted'; PARET~PARUIT > *pare~parve* 's/he seems~seemed'.[9] This much is undisputed; what is highly speculative is an additional claim that the deletion of [w] happened in two stages: first when [w] immediately preceded a stressed vowel and only later when it immediately preceded an unstressed vowel. The first stage allegedly occurred before lengthening of the preceding consonant by [w] took place; the second, in contrast, was ordered chronologically after the lengthening process. As for the position of stress, largely inherited from Latin, it was such that 1SG, 3SG, and 3PL of present perfect indicative—the ancestor of the Italian preterite—had stressed roots and unstressed endings, while all other originally perfective forms had stressed endings.[10] The result was as in Table 9.3.

Table 9.3 Alleged emergence of root allomorphy triggered by [w]

	PRS.PFV.IND					PRT	PST.PFV.SBJV				IPFV.SBJV
1SG	TÉNUI	>	ˈtenwi		>	*ténni*	TENUÍSSEM	>	teˈnissem	>	*tenéssi*
2SG	TENUÍSTI	>	teˈnisti		>	*tenésti*	TENUÍSSES	>	teˈnisses	>	*tenéssi*

	PRS.PFV.IND					PRT	PST.PFV.SBJV				IPFV.SBJV
3SG	TÉNUIT	>	ˈtenwit		>	*ténne*	TENUÍSSET	>	teˈnisset	>	*tenésse*
1PL	(TENUÍMUS)	>	teˈnimus		>	*tenémmo*	TENUISSÉMUS	>	tenisˈsemus	>	*tenéssimo*
2PL	TENUÍSTIS	>	teˈnisti		>	*tenéste*	TENUISSÉTIS	>	tenisˈsetis	>	*tenéste*
3PL	(TÉNUERUNT)	>	ˈtenwerunt		>	*ténnero*	TENUÍSSENT	>	teˈnissent	>	*tenéssero*

In these verbs, the distinctive root allomorph (e.g., *tenn-*) newly created by lengthening before [w] was restricted to certain cells of the preterite, while the allomorph common to all, or much, of the rest of the verb (e.g., *ten-*) occurred everywhere else. The claim is that this pattern—whereby a distinctive preterite allomorph appeared only in those cells—was then extended to other verbs with inherited distinctive preterite allomorphs, e.g., *feci fecesti fece fecemmo feceste fecero*; *fecesse* > *feci facesti fece facemmo faceste fecero*; *facesse*, etc.

The claim of a two-stage deletion of [w], with differential consequences for allomorphy, lacks evidence. The existence of non-verb forms where lengthening by [w] occurs before a stressed vowel, such as *gennaio* < IANUÁRIUS 'January', *mannaia* < MANUÁRIA 'hand axe', *pervinca* < PERUÍNCA 'periwinkle', *fotteva* < FUTUÉBAT 'fucked', old Sienese *volleva* < UOLUÉBAT 'revolved', contradict it.[11] The major contradiction, however, comes from the historical morphology of the verb itself. Quite simply, in the medieval language there are abundant examples where the alternation pattern, otherwise general in strong preterites, is *lacking* precisely in verbs which historically had -U-, so in those very verbs claimed to be the source of the alternation pattern. Here [w] has caused gemination throughout the preterite and the imperfect subjunctive. This effect is observable in a number of old central Italian dialects and particularly in medieval texts from the area of Pisa. Imperfect subjunctive forms such as *vollesse*, *vallesse*, *tennesse*, *sappesse*, while always in a minority with respect to expected *volesse*, *valesse*, *tenesse*, *sapesse*, are nonetheless robustly represented (see Maiden 2018b:228–231). For the modern 'popular' Tuscan of Florence and elsewhere, Rohlfs (2021b:312) mentions arrhizotonic second person forms *ebbésti*, *ebbéste* 'have.PRT.2SG/PL' (cf. It. *avésti*, *avéste*). What we never find, for example, in medieval or modern Tuscan, are such forms as ***dissesse* for *dicesse* 'say', ***misesse* for *mettesse* 'put', etc. These facts are incompatible with the view that our alternation is analogically modelled on the differential effects of -U-deletion, because verbs historically in -U- are those *least likely* to show the relevant alternation. Rather, they suggest that our alternation pattern existed *before* the gemination caused by root-final -U-, and that the type *tenni tenesti tenne*; *tenessi*, etc. emerged on the analogy of that established pattern—not the reverse.

Another reason to reject the 'phonological-analogical' explanation is comparative: a remarkably similar phenomenon has independently occurred in some Ibero-Romance dialects for which the type of phonological explanation alleged to explain the Italian pattern is unavailable. In dialects of Asturias and eastern Galicia, many verbs tend to eliminate the inherited perfective root allomorph from the imperfect subjunctive and from the preterite, but that allomorph often survives just in the preterite and just in those forms that have unstressed endings, as observed for the Montes de Pas by Penny (1969:132–135). If this pattern arises in Ibero-Romance in the course of general analogical elimination of the original perfective alternants, then one needs very good reasons to rule out the possibility that the same mechanisms applied in Italian. This would be hard to do. There is a strong tendency in the early history of Italian (and of all Romance languages) to oust original

perfective allomorphs analogically.[12] Compare modern Italian preterites such as 1SG *preméi* 'pressed', *cedéi* 'yielded', *mietéi* 'reaped', *ricevéi* 'received', 2SG *premésti*, *cedésti*, *mietésti*, *ricevésti* with the Latin perfective allomorphs PRÉSSI PRESSÍSTI, CÉSSI CESSÍSTI, MÉSSUI MESSUÍSTI, RECÉPI, RECEPÍSTI. Maiden (2018b) argues that what we see in Italian and in Ibero-Romance has a common explanation, the elimination of the old perfective allomorphs being a strong general tendency across Romance languages, but one which is sometimes blocked, in particular, by the 3SG form of the preterite. This is because, as Maiden (2018b:251f.) demonstrates, this form would have been by far the most frequently used of all remnant forms of Latin perfective morphology, making it particularly resistant to analogical levelling. That 1SG and 3PL uniquely share with 3SG the 'morpho-prosodic' property of having unstressed inflexional endings may also have favoured the survival of their allomorph alongside the 3SG.[13] Maiden also suggests that another, structural, factor was at work, involving the fact that in the relevant cells of the paradigm there was a distinctive unstressed inflexional ending (*-i -e -ero*). The presence of such an ending was uniquely characteristic of verbs having the special root allomorph; verbs without the perfective root allomorph had *stressed* inflexional endings in the relevant cells of the paradigm: compare *féci féce fécero* with the type continued in Italian as *battéi batté battéro*(*no*) 'I beat (etc.)'. The distribution of these *inflexional* allomorphs (*´-i ´-e ´-ero* vs *-éi -é -éro*(*no*)) was entirely predictable, the unstressed forms being uniquely associated with the special root allomorph. The type *feci fece fecero* persists because analogically replacing the root *fec-* with *fac-* (*fáci fáce fácero*) would have subverted the previously perfect distributional predictability of the inflexional endings, making it no longer possible for speakers to predict which verbs took the unstressed endings and which took the stressed endings.[14] To avoid violating this delicate relationship (which persists to this day) it would have been necessary in the relevant cells to make not just the general change, namely replacement of *fec-* etc. by *fac-*, but a second change to replace the unstressed endings by stressed ones.[15] Replacing the root allomorph in the relevant three cells of the preterite was a bigger, different, morphological operation than elsewhere in the preterite and imperfect subjunctive. In short, the peculiar pattern of the Italian 'strong' preterites probably originates as an analogical levelling which is 'blocked' by the high frequency and associated specific morphological properties of certain cells of the preterite.

9.2.1.2 The U-pattern

Many modern Italian second, third, and fourth conjugation verbs display a shared distributional *pattern* of consonantal allomorphy. This pattern may not be immediately apparent, because the *alternants* may differ from verb to verb. Yet superficially different allomorphy shares a distributional pattern such that one alternant appears in the 1SG present indicative, 3PL present indicative and all (or most) forms of the present subjunctive, while a different one appears in the rest of the paradigm. The relevant set of cells, which has no common, coherent, grammatical meaning, has been given the arbitrary label U-pattern.[16] This pattern actively shapes morphological change throughout the history of the language.

The U-pattern is originally the result of two different sets of sound changes (see, for example, Lausberg 1971, I:309–311, 326–336; Loporcaro 2011:143–148; Maiden 2011:223–231). The first set principally involved palatalization and/or affrication, and lengthening, of consonants immediately preceding yod ([j]): e.g., UALEO/UALEAM > ˈvaljo/ˈvalja > ˈvaʎʎo/ˈvaʎʎa (but modern *valgo/valga*); UENIO/UENIAM > ˈvɛnjo/ˈvɛnja > ˈvɛɲɲo/ˈvɛɲɲa (but modern *vengo/venga*); UIDEO/UIDEAM > ˈvedjo/ˈvedja > ˈveddʒo/ˈveddʒa (but modern *vedo/veda*); SEDEO/SEDEAM > ˈsɛdjo/ˈsɛdja > ˈsɛddʒo/ˈsɛddʒa (but modern *siedo/sieda*); PLACEO/PLACEAM > ˈplakjo/ˈplakja > ˈpjatʃo/ˈpjatʃa (*piaccio/piaccia*). In Tuscan, the

sequence -VrjV- became -VjV-,[17] whence PAREO/PAREAM > ˈparjo/ˈparja > ˈpajo/ˈpaja (*paio/paia*). The forms given in Table 9.4 were prevalent in the *medieval* language.

Table 9.4 Typical old Tuscan 'U-pattern' alternations created by sound change

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	*vaglio* 'am worth'	*vali*	*vale*	*valemo*	*valete*	*vagliono*
PRS.SBJV	*vaglia*	*vagli*	*vaglia*	*vagliamo*	*vagliate*	*vagliano*
PRS.IND	*vegno* 'come'	*vieni*	*viene*	*venimo*	*venite*	*vegnono*
PRS.SBJV	*vegna*	*vegni*	*vegna*	*vegnamo*	*vegnate*	*vegnano*
PRS.IND	*veggio* 'see'	*vedi*	*vede*	*vedemo*	*vedete*	*veggiono*
PRS.SBJV	*veggia*	*veggi*	*veggia*	*veggiamo*	*veggiate*	*veggiano*
PRS.IND	*seggio* 'sit'	*siedi*	*siede*	*sedemo*	*sedete*	*seggiono*
PRS.SBJV	*seggia*	*seggi*	*seggia*	*seggiamo*	*seggiate*	*seggiano*
PRS.IND	*piaccio* 'please'	*piaci*	*piace*	*piacemo*	*piacete*	*piacciono*
PRS.SBJV	*piaccia*	*piacci*	*piaccia*	*piacciamo*	*piacciate*	*piacciano*
PRS.IND	*paio* 'seem'	*pari*	*pare*	*paremo*	*parete*	*paiono*
PRS.SBJV	*paia*	*pai*	*paia*	*paiamo*	*paiate*	*paiano*

The second, slightly later, change involved palatalization and affrication of velar consonants ([k] and [ɡ] usually > [ʧ] and [ʤ]) before the front vowels ([i] or [e]).[18] For example DICO DICIT > ˈdiko ˈdiʧe (*dico dice*); LEGO LEGIT > ˈlɛggo ˈlɛdʤe (*leggo legge*). The old Tuscan outcomes of these early changes were of the kind illustrated in Table 9.5.

Table 9.5 Old Tuscan 'U-pattern' velar-palatal alternations

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	*dico* 'say'	*dici*	*dice*	*dicemo*	*dite*	*dicono*
PRS.SBJV	*dica*	*dichi*	*dica*	*dicamo*	*dicate*	*dicano*
PRS.IND	*leggo* 'read'	*leggi*	*legge*	*leggemo*	*leggete*	*leggono*
PRS.SBJV	*legga*	*legghi*	*legga*	*leggamo*	*leggate*	*leggano*

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	*cresco* 'grow'	*cresci*	*cresce*	*crescemo*	*crescete*	*crescono*
PRS.SBJV	*cresca*	*creschi*	*cresca*	*crescamo*	*crescate*	*crescano*
PRS.IND	*colgo* 'pick'	*cogli*	*coglie*	*cogliemo*	*cogliete*	*colgono*
PRS.SBJV	*colga*	*colghi*	*colga*	*colgamo*	*colgate*	*colgano*

The distributional pattern is continued in the modern language but slightly disrupted because in many verbs the original U-pattern alternant has disappeared from 1PL and 2PL present subjunctive, while the 1PL form of the present indicative is now always identical to that of the present subjunctive. These facts have separate explanations,[19] but the point at issue here is that otherwise the original U-pattern distribution is preserved. What sometimes changes, however, is not the paradigmatic distribution but the nature of the alternant, as shown in Table 9.6 (here omitting 1PL and 2PL).

Table 9.6 'U-pattern' alternations in modern Italian

	1SG	2SG	3SG	3PL
PRS.IND	*valgo*	*vali*	*vale*	*valgono*
PRS.SBJV	*valga*	*valga*	*valga*	*valgano*
PRS.IND	*vengo*	*vieni*	*viene*	*vengono*
PRS.SBJV	*venga*	*venga*	*venga*	*vengano*
PRS.IND	*piaccio*	*piaci*	*piace*	*piacciono*
PRS.SBJV	*piaccia*	*piaccia*	*piaccia*	*piacciano*
PRS.IND	*paio*	*pari*	*pare*	*paiono*
PRS.SBJV	*paia*	*paia*	*paia*	*paiano*
PRS.IND	*dico*	*dici*	*dice*	*dicono*
PRS.SBJV	*dica*	*dica*	*dica*	*dicano*
PRS.IND	*leggo*	*leggi*	*legge*	*leggono*
PRS.SBJV	*legga*	*legga*	*legga*	*leggano*
PRS.IND	*cresco*	*cresci*	*cresce*	*crescono*
PRS.SBJV	*cresca*	*cresca*	*cresca*	*crescano*

	1SG	2SG	3SG	3PL
PRS.IND	*colgo*	*cogli*	*coglie*	*colgono*
PRS.SBJV	*colga*	*colga*	*colga*	*colgano*

In sum, by coincidence two different sound changes originally produced, in a large number of verbs, the same paradigmatic pattern of alternation, distinguishing 1SG present indicative + 3PL present indicative + present subjunctive, on the one hand, from the rest of the inflexional paradigm, on the other.

In the modern language we notice three major differences with respect to the medieval verb. All of these were emergent at the time of the earliest texts, but they initially co-existed with the etymologically expected outcomes. In a few cases, the alternants have completely disappeared by analogical extension of the original non-palatalized alternant. This is the case in the modern forms of *vedere* and *sedere* (*vedo*, *veda*, etc.; *siedo*, *sieda*, etc.). Another, major development is that verbs which would not, on historical grounds, be expected to show 'U-pattern' alternation have acquired it (Table 9.7).

Table 9.7 Historically unexpected alternations

	1SG	2SG	3SG	3PL
PRS.IND	*fuggo* 'flee'	*fuggi*	*fugge*	*fuggono*
PRS.SBJV	*fugga*	*fugga*	*fugga*	*fuggano*
PRS.IND	*pongo* 'put'	*poni*	*pone*	*pongono*
PRS.SBJV	*ponga*	*ponga*	*ponga*	*pongano*
PRS.IND	*traggo* 'pull'	*trai*	*trae*	*traggono*
PRS.SBJV	*tragga*	*tragga*	*tragga*	*traggano*

In the medieval language there was more extensive creation of alternations. For example, *chiudere* 'close', *chiedere* 'ask', *cadere* 'fall', for which no consonantal allomorphy is historically expected, are all attested with alternations such as *chiuggio*, *chiuggia*, etc. vs *chiudi*, etc.; *ch(i)eggio*, *ch(i)eggia*, etc. vs *-chiedi*, etc.; *caggio*, *caggia*, etc. vs *cadi*, etc. Although the etymological forms in [d], without alternation, have reasserted themselves, the alternant forms were found in literary language into the nineteenth century.

The third major adjustment is that original palatal alternants occurring in the 'U-pattern' cells of some verbs have sometimes been analogically replaced by velar consonants. Thus we have *valgo*, *valga* . . . , no longer *vaglio*, *vaglia*; *vengo*, *venga* . . . , no longer *vegno*, *vegna* . . . , etc. Original *veggio*, *veggia* . . . , *seggio*, *seggia* . . . underwent the same fate so that, as late as the nineteenth century, forms such as *veggo*, *vegga* . . . , *seggo*, *segga* . . . were

current. Indeed, the type *seggo*, *segga* . . . , persists in archaic or formal usage today (e.g., *Si segga!* 'Sit!').

The result of some of these changes was to produce alternations for which there was no precedent and no purely phonological explanation: [dʤ]~[d], or [gg]~[d], [gg]~Ø, or [lg]~[ʎʎ] or [ŋg]~[n]. They are new, purely morphological, creations. What they have in common is a shared 'template': the alternants are all distributed according to the pattern originally created by the two palatalizations, the 'U-pattern'. We can see that this abstract morphological pattern, itself devoid of coherent grammatical meaning, is a kind of 'leitmotiv' through the history of the Italian verb. Not only does it provide a pattern for distribution of new types of alternation, but it regulates analogical 'levelling' of the historically inherited alternations, because elimination of an alternant in one of the 'U-pattern' cells entails its elimination from all the others. We almost never find situations in which an originally present alternant has been eliminated, say, from the present subjunctive, but not from the present indicative, or vice versa. The 'U-pattern' cells have acted throughout the history of Italian as a distinctive bloc, so to speak, regulating not just the distribution of emergent novel alternants but also their loss.

9.2.1.3 The 'N-pattern'

Another common pattern of allomorphy distinguishes the singular and third person (singular and plural) forms of the present indicative, the present subjunctive, and the imperative, on the one hand, from all (or most) other forms of the verb paradigm. Again, its extent is obscured by the fact that its alternants take diverse forms. Most commonly it involves vowel allomorphy (Table 9.8).[20]

Table 9.8 'N-pattern' vowel allomorphy

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	*muoio* 'die'	*muori*	*muore*	*moriamo*	*morite*	*muoiono*
IMP		*muori*		*moriamo*	*morite*	
PRS.SBJV	*muoia*	*muoia*	*muoia*	*moriamo*	*moriate*	*muoiano*
PRS.IND	*siedo* 'sit'	*siedi*	*siede*	*sediamo*	*sedete*	*siedono*
IMP		*siedi*		*sediamo*	*sedete*	
PRS.SBJV	*sieda*	*sieda*	*sieda*	*sediamo*	*sediate*	*siedano*
PRS.IND	*odo* 'hear'	*odi*	*ode*	*udiamo*	*udite*	*odono*
IMP		*odi*		*udiamo*	*udite*	
	oda	*oda*	*oda*	*udiamo*	*udiate*	*odano*
PRS.IND	*devo* 'must'	*devi*	*deve*	*dobbiamo*	*dovete*	*devono*
PRS.SBJV	*debba*	*debba*	*debba*	*dobbiamo*	*dobbiate*	*debbano*

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
IPFV.IND (etc.)				*morivo*, *sedevo*, *udivo*, *dovevo*		

This pattern of alternation has the purely arbitrary label 'N-pattern'.[21] What we see here are the effects of regular sound changes, and in particular of the fact that vowels in stressed syllables were often qualitatively differentiated from those in unstressed syllables. In Latin (as in Italian) stress fell on the root in the singular and the third person forms of present indicative, present subjunctive, and imperative, but (usually) not elsewhere. The diphthongs *ie* [jɛ] and *uo* [wɔ] nearly always originated in an early Romance diphthongization affecting the vowels [ɛ] and [ɔ] (cf. Loporcaro 2011:119–125; Maiden 2016a). Since [ɛ] and [ɔ] themselves only occurred in stressed syllables, the diphthongs could only occur in stressed syllables. And since the phenomenon only affected *open* syllables, *closed* syllables are unaffected. This is why, for example, the past participle of *morire* is *morto* ˈmɔrto (not ***muorto*), or verbs such as *tenere* 'hold' or *solere* 'be wont' have a more limited distribution of the diphthong, with [ɛ] or [ɔ] (e.g., *tengo*, *tengono*, *tenga*, etc.; *soglio*, *sogliono*, *soglia*, etc.) in closed syllables. The vowel alternation in *udire* (< AUDIRE) reflects the differential treatment of reflexes of the Latin diphthong [au], such that it became [ɔ] in stressed syllables, but sometimes [u] in unstressed syllables (cf. Rohlfs 2021a:165f.,168), while that found in *dovere* reflects a tendency to round unstressed, but not stressed, front vowels when they are followed by a labial (cf. Rohlfs 2021a:169; Maiden 1995a:44). In the older language, pretonic [e] was often raised to [i] (Rohlfs 2021a:162; Maiden 1995a:43f.), a fact which produced some alternations of the type *getto* (etc.) 'I throw' vs *gittare* (etc.), while under certain circumstances intertonic [u] could be deleted, giving rise to alternations such as *aiuto* (etc.) 'I help' vs *aitare* (etc.).

The modern (or medieval) morphological alternations described so far are the results of sound change. Yet there are numerous other irregular verbs in modern Italian which display the same *pattern* of alternation as that produced by sound change, but not *alternants* produced by sound change. Consider the distribution (Table 9.9) of the alternants *va*(*d*)- and *and*- derived, respectively, from two different Latin verbs UADERE and AMBULARE.[22]

Table 9.9 'N-pattern' distribution of reflexes of uadere and ambulare

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	*vado* 'go'	*vai*	*va*	*andiamo*	*andate*	*vanno*
IMP		*vai*		*andiamo*	*andate*	
PRS.SBJV	*vada*	*vada*	*vada*	*andiamo*	*andiate*	*vadano*
IPFV.IND (etc.)	*andavo*	*andavi*	*andava*	*andavamo*	*andavate*	*andavano*

In fact, we also know (Rohlfs 2021a:280f.; Maiden 1995a:125) that *andare* replaced, in the medieval language, an older situation in which reflexes of Latin UADERE alternated with reflexes of yet another verb, IRE 'go' (e.g., *vado* vs *gimo*), according to the same distributional pattern. We see the same alternation pattern in *uscire* (Table 9.10).

Table 9.10 Distribution of alternants in *uscire*

PRS.IND	*esco* 'go out'	*esci*	*esce*	*usciamo*	*uscite*	*escono*
IMP		*esci*		*usciamo*	*uscite*	
PRS.SBJV	*esca*	*esca*	*esca*	*usciamo*	*usciate*	*escano*
IPFV.IND (etc.)	*uscivo*	*uscivi*	*usciva*	*uscivamo*	*uscivate*	*uscivano*

These vocalic alternants are unique just to this verb, have no purely phonological explanation, and, as argued in Maiden (1995b; 2018a:202–204), reflect a kind of merger of reflexes of the Latin verb EXIRE with those of the (semantically related) noun OSTIUM (> It. *uscio* 'doorway'). Our pattern turns up yet again in a completely different form, namely the distribution of the element *-isc-*, called the 'augment', found in most fourth conjugation verbs (Table 9.11).

Table 9.11 Paradigmatic distribution of the augment

PRS.IND	*finisco* 'finish'	*finisci*	*finisce*	*finiamo*	*finite*	*finiscono*
IMP		*finisci*		*finiamo*	*finite*	
PRS.SBJV	*finisca*	*finisca*	*finisca*	*finiamo*	*finiate*	*finiscano*
IPFV.IND (etc.)	*finivo*	*finivi*	*finiva*	*finivamo*	*finivate*	*finivano*

The augment originally marked 'ingressive' meaning and occurred in Latin without restrictions according to number, person, or tense—quite unlike the modern situation. In early Romance the distinctive meaning of this element was lost, so that the distinction between forms bearing the augment and those without it became effaced. What appears to have happened in this situation (see, e.g., Maiden 2003; 2018a:175–192) is that the co-existence of augmented and augmentless forms of the same verbs was resolved by redistributing the augment according to the same abstract pattern that we see for other verbs.

In sum, the fact that modern Italian has what are, at first sight, a disparate array of irregular verbs all sharing the same pattern of alternation reflects a process in the early history of Italo-Romance (and other Romance languages), such that the abstract pattern of alternation originally created by the effects of sound change formed a kind of 'template' for morphological change in the verb. For further development of these arguments see, e.g., Maiden (2011:241–263; 2016e:712–716; 2018a:167–244).

9.2.2 Why are almost all irregular verbs in the second, third, or fourth conjugations?

It is striking that, in contrast to the other Italian conjugation classes, modern first conjugation verbs seem cleanly devoid of 'irregularity'. Root-allomorphy is characteristic of non-first conjugation verbs (a state of affairs paralleled in many other Romance languages; see Maiden 2018a:277–283): so why do we almost never find it in the first conjugation? Regular stress-related vocalic alternation occurred in the medieval language in the first conjugation as elsewhere, but it had already been subject to analogical 'levelling' (removal in favour of just one of the alternants) in the Middle Ages (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:264). Now, such levelling is not special to first conjugation verbs. All the verb-classes show cases of analogical extension of diphthongal alternants to other parts of their inflexional paradigm: e.g., the imperfect indicatives *suonava* 'sounded'; *vietava* 'forbade'; *mieteva* 'reaped'; *muoveva* 'moved'; *nuoceva* 'harmed'. Sometimes it is the unstressed alternant that ousts an original diphthong: thus *nega* 's/he denies', *segue* 's/he follows', etc. Yet unlike other conjugations, *all* first conjugation verbs have now eliminated allomorphy. Outside the first conjugation, in contrast, only four verbs have definitively lost vocalic alternation: *mietere*, *chiedere*, *seguire*, *coprire*.

How to explain this clearly differential behaviour according to conjugation? The fact that many non-first conjugation verbs are often semantically basic and consequently have very high token frequency of usage (e.g., *volere*, *potere*, *tenere*, *venire*) may help explain why they retain their vocalic allomorphy.[23] Yet this does not help with the first conjugation: if relative frequency of particular lexemes were the relevant factor we would expect to see, contrary to fact, differentiation *within* the first conjugation as well, with higher frequency first conjugation verbs retaining allomorphy and less frequent ones losing it.

It is relevant that the first conjugation has less root-allomorphy than verbs of other conjugation classes, because it never shows alternation of the root-final *consonant*. Unlike other conjugations, first-conjugation verbs never displayed that situation where the root ended in consonant+[j] in some parts of the paradigm but not elsewhere (see §9.2.1.3), so there was never any consonantal allomorphy produced by yod. The second major potential source of consonantal allomorphy, palatalization of velars before front vowels, could have operated in the first conjugation, but it apparently never did: e.g., *pago* 'I pay', *paga* but also present subjunctive *paghi* [ˈpagi]. This may be because, unlike the other conjugations, where front theme-vowels ([e] and [i]) occur extensively following the root (e.g., *leggere* 'read', 3SG.PRS.IND *legge*, 2PL.PRS.IND *leggete*, 3SG.IPFV.IND *leggeva*, 3SG.IPFV.SBJV *leggesse*, GER *leggendo*, etc.), in the first conjugation the only environment in which a front vowel would originally have followed the root was the present subjunctive—a set of six paradigm 'cells' outnumbered by forty-odd other cells in the paradigm whose forms could not have palatalized.[24] Probably under the pressure of the rest of the paradigm, then, expected palatalization failed to occur in the first conjugation present subjunctive. Whatever the reasons for this failure of palatalization (cf. Ledgeway and Maiden 2022b:58–65), what is crucial from the point of view of the history of Italian is that this lack of consonantal allomorphy in the first conjugation is practically pan-Romance in distribution (except for Romanian), and is presumably therefore ancient. What native learners of medieval Tuscan must have inherited, at any rate, was a system in which the first conjugation lacked any kind of root allomorphy, except for stress-related vocalic alternation.

A contributory factor may be the *productivity* of the first conjugation: new verbs are overwhelmingly assigned to it, throughout the history of Italian. Now, 'productivity' on its own cannot explain invariance, but the properties of productivity and invariance may have interacted in a significant way. We may surmise that novel verbs tend to be placed in the first conjugation precisely because that is the class least likely to involve root allomorphy. Moreover, novel verbs borrowed from other languages are unlikely to bring with them any root-allomorphy, so that their assignment to the first conjugation resulted in its becoming crowded with verbs with non-alternant roots. In sum, the historical across-the-board

elimination of root allomorphy from first conjugation verbs seems to reflect and amplify an inherited and inherent characteristic of that conjugation.[25]

There are broader respects in which the history of the first conjugation is one of systematic rejection of patterns of irregularity. One example is that in first-conjugation futures and conditionals, the medieval language occasionally presents syncope of the thematic vowel [e].[26] Thus (see, e.g., Vanelli 2010b:1440) for *liberer**à*** 's/he will free' one may find *liberr**à***, or for *mener**à*** 's/he will lead', *merr**à***, a form which also shows a kind of assimilation of the root-final consonant found in many non-first conjugation verbs (cf. *tene'ra > *ten'ra > *terr**à*** 's/he will hold'). In addition, some verbs in root-final -Cr- underwent a kind of metathesis, such that for expected *entrer**à*** 's/he will enter', *mostrer**à*** 's/he will show' one encounters *enterr**à***, *mosterr**à***. While such syncope and resultant allomorphy may persist in non-first-conjugation verbs (e.g., *tenere* 'hold' *terr**à***, *dolere* 'hurt' *dorr**à***, *venire* 'come' *verr**à***), they are robustly rejected in the later history of the first conjugation.

9.2.3 Why is person never distinguished in singular forms of the present subjunctive?

In the medieval language, the vast majority of 2SG verb forms ended in *-i*. However, reflexes of Latin -AS (found in the 2SG present indicative of the first conjugation, 2SG present subjunctive of non-first-conjugation verbs, and the imperfect indicative) originally yielded *-e*, and many traces of this ending persist in old Tuscan ((*tu*) *cante* 'you sing', *(che tu) vende* 'you (SBJV), *(tu) cantave* 'you sang'), although *-i* had already been analogically extended and had become predominant in these cases as well (cf. Vanelli 2010b:1447). By the sixteenth century, 2SG *-e* is wholly ousted by *-i* (*canti*, *cantavi*). The 2SG present subjunctive also came to end in *-i* (e.g., (*che tu*) *vendi*) in the medieval language (cf. Vanelli 2014:141f.).

The replacement of older 2SG *-e* by the (majority) allomorph *-i* looks like a straightforward implementation of maximum 'iconicity': all second-person singulars tend to end in *-i*. Yet we have to consider the wider paradigmatic context, for 2SG was not the only case in old Tuscan where the inflexional desinence was *-e*. The inherited forms of the 1SG and 3SG and 3PL present subjunctive of the first conjugation also show unstressed *-e*: Lat. CANTEM CANTES CANTET CANTENT > *cante canti cante canteno*. Although these forms in *-e* are still attested in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:296; Vanelli 2010b:1447), they had already been largely replaced by the ending in *-i* that we find in modern Italian: *canti canti canti cantino*. There is simply no regular phonological mechanism by which final unstressed *-e* becomes *-i*.[27] The replacement of *-e* by *-i* at issue here occurs *only* in present-tense forms of the first conjugation, and the change must have a morphological explanation. Rohlfs (2021b:296) identifies what seems the only plausible explanation: 'It is clear that this *i* is of analogical origin, and will be due to the same reasons that gave rise to the ending *-i* in the second person of the indicative'. Rohlfs apparently means that the rule replacing *-e* with *-i* in 2SG is reanalysed as involving replacement of *-e* with *-i wherever in the paradigm there are forms identical to the second person singular*. In short, the innovation is sensitive no longer to the specification 'second person singular', but to a pattern of syncretism which had accidentally arisen in the early Italo-Romance first-conjugation present indicative such that, in the present tense of the first conjugation, the 2SG present indicative was syncretic with the 1SG and 3SG/PL forms of the present subjunctive, as shown in Table 9.12.

Table 9.12 Syncretism in the early Italo-Romance first conjugation present

	1SG	2SG		3SG		3PL	
PRS.IND	*canto* 'sing'	*cante*		*canta*		*cantano*	
PRS.SBJV	*cante*	*canti*		*cante*		*canteno*	

The original process of replacement of 2SG *cante* by 2SG *canti* is reanalysed, rather, as a replacement of the form *cante* by *canti*, yielding the modern paradigm, as shown in Table 9.13.

Table 9.13 Syncretism in the modern Italian first-conjugation present

	1SG	2SG		3SG		3PL	
PRS.IND	*canto*	*canti*		*canta*		*cantano*	
PRS.SBJV	*canti*	*canti*		*canti*		*canti*	NO

If the original change was motivated at least in part by matching of a particular ending *-i* with the meaning 'second-person singular', arguably grounded in universal principles of 'iconic', transparent, matching of one meaning with one form, the ultimate outcome, now grounded in language-specific patterns of syncretism, ends up being 'opaque'. The new pattern also has other 'opacifying' repercussions on the system, involving the 2SG form of the present subjunctive of non-first-conjugation verbs. The relevant ending in Latin was *-AS*, and this regularly developed as *-e*, an ending which persisted in the Middle Ages (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:297). But generally this *-e*, too, came to be replaced by *-i*. The latter survives in the modern language in three verbs whose 2SG imperatives are originally subjunctives: *sii*, *abbi*, *sappi*. The difference between the medieval and the modern language is that today the 2SG present subjunctive has become syncretic with the 1SG and 3SG, losing its distinctive ending. So for earlier 1SG *venda* 'sell' 2SG *vende/vendi* 3SG *venda*, 1SG *dorma* 'sleep' 2SG *dorme/dormi* 3SG *dorma*, etc., we now have 1SG *venda* 2SG *venda* 3SG *venda*, 1SG *dorma* 2SG *dorma* 3SG *dorma*, etc. No historical phonological explanation for this syncretism exists. There is only one possible model for this new pattern of syncretism and that is precisely that described above, of complete syncretism in the singular forms of the *first* conjugation present subjunctive. What we see in non-first-conjugation verbs actually replicates the syncretism of first-conjugation present subjunctives. The plausibility of this scenario is strengthened by what we observe in Tuscan dialects and substandard varieties of modern Italian,[28] namely propagation not just of the first-conjugation syncretic *pattern*, but also of the first-conjugation present subjunctive *endings* in *-i*, into non-first conjugation verbs: e.g., *dormi dormi dormi dormino* for standard *dorma dorma dorma dormano*. In short, what originated as a change tending to maximize iconicity in the marking of second person singular has ended up as the cause of language-specific *syncretism*. The locally idiosyncratic pattern has prevailed over a kind of alignment of *-i* with 2SG which might be considered to reflect a universal tendency to represent one meaning by one form.[29]

9.3 Pronouns

9.3.1 Morphology of clitics

The principal difference between the pronominal systems of Italian and Latin is that in Italian (like other Romance languages) the system has split into 'stressed' and 'clitic' series, a clitic being a 'function word which is not inherently stressed, occupies a fixed position in the clause, cannot be coordinated or contrasted, and cannot occur in isolation or in predicative constructions' (Pescarini 2016:742). Clitics are often further phonologically differentiated from their stressed counterparts: thus alongside stressed 1SG *me*, 2SG *te*, 3SG.REFL *sé* we see the effects of phonological raising of the pretonic vowel in their clitic counterparts *mi*, *ti*, *si*.[30]

The situation for 1PL and 2PL is more intricate. While 2PL *vi* (*ve*) appears historically related to *voi* (< Lat. UOS), in 1PL *ci* (*ce*) we have suppletion in relation to stressed *noi*. The expected unstressed reflexes of NOS and UOS are *no* and *vo*, and these forms are actually attested in early Tuscan (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:154; Cardinaletti 2010:428; Aski and Russi 2015:34–46). But the predominant forms in old Tuscan were already *ne* (much more rarely *ni*) and *vi* (*ve*). First person plural *ci* is also attested from the earliest documents. Crucial to the history of these forms is the fact that *ci*, *ne*, and *vi* also existed as originally *locative* clitic forms, derived respectively from Lat. HINCE 'hence' (or ECCE HIC), INDE 'thence, thereof', and IBI 'there'. Since *ne* and *vi* are not the expected outcomes of NOS and UOS, it has been suggested (Olander 2022 gives an overview) that they originate as the *locative* clitics *ne* and *vi*, their adoption as clitic pronouns being facilitated by their accidental phonological resemblance to the personal pronouns and, at least in the case of *vi*, by the fact that both the locative 'there' and the pronoun 'you' shared distal ([–speaker]) reference. In fact, as persuasively argued by Olander, the most likely explanation of the replacement of *no*, *vo* by *ne*, *ve* is simply the paradigm-internal analogical model of other clitics in *-e*: *me*, *te*, and *se*. The replacement of 1PL *ne* by *ci* probably 'mimics' the accidental identity of 2PL *vi* with the locative clitic *vi* (< IBI 'there'): since 2PL *vi* and locative *vi* were already identical in form and also shared 'distal' deixis, the originally 'proximal' counterpart of locative *vi*, namely *ci* 'here', was reinterpreted as the [+speaker] counterpart of *vi*. The result was the replacement of 1PL *ne* by *ci* and the modern suppletive alternation between stressed *noi* and clitic *ci*.

Standard Italian has (apart from the locative clitics mentioned above) only object clitics.[31] The first and second person forms do not morphologically distinguish direct and indirect object, neither do they distinguish gender. In contrast, the third person forms distinguish direct and indirect object, as well as gender (DO.MSG *lo* (*l'*), DO.FSG *la* (*l'*), DO.MPL *li*, DO.FPL *le*; IO.MSG *gli* (*glie-*), IO.FSG *le*, IO.M/FPL *loro*). These forms all derive from pronominal forms of the Latin demonstrative ILLE 'that one'. The indirect object forms, MSG *gli*, FSG *le*, M/FPL *loro* are, however, problematic. In everyday spoken language *gli* distinguishes neither gender nor number, being also used as the FSG and M/FPL form (although use of *gli* for FSG *le* is regarded as substandard).[32] The form *gli* in all of these functions probably derives directly both from Latin dative singular ILLI and from dative plural ILLIS. Why does *gli*, alone among third person object pronouns, begin with [ʎ], not [l]? The original form, preserved in many modern dialects, was indeed [li], identical to the MPL object pronoun [li] (< Lat. nominative plural ILLI); both indirect object [li] and masculine direct object [li] originally had optional [li] or [ʎi] when followed by a vowel (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:154, 162f.). Direct object plural *gli* persisted in the literary language into the nineteenth century, but eventually the allomorphy seems to have been realigned with the functional difference, *gli* disappearing as the direct object form (possibly under the analogical attraction of the other direct object forms in [l]-), and *gli* generalizing as indirect object marker. A contributory factor may have been

phonological dissimilation in sequences of indirect and direct third person object clitics both beginning with [l]: thus *glielo do* 'I give it to him/her' might have been preferred over *le/lilo do*.[33]

The strangest of third person clitics is indirect object plural *loro*. It is an 'odd-one-out' in various respects.[34] It differs from other clitics in being bisyllabic and having the vowel [o] rather than [i/e] and it has this form because it derives from Latin genitive plural pronoun ILLORUM 'of them', a form which subsequently also required dative function. While its origin is unproblematic, its *morphological* 'strangeness' arguably reflects the fact that it is simply not fully a clitic, as reflected in its aberrant *syntactic* behaviour. Unlike 'real' clitics it can only follow, never precede, its host (*glielo do* 'I give it to him/her', *gliel'ho dato* 'I have given it to him/her' but *lo do loro* 'I give it to them' but *l'ho dato loro* or *l'ho loro dato*),[35] and the claim can be made (cf. Cardinaletti 2010:422–424; Salvi 2016a:63–65; Pescarini 2016:742) that it is, rather, a 'weak' pronoun whose status is intermediate between stressed and clitic pronouns.

9.3.2 The morphology of stressed pronouns

There is little to say about first and second person pronouns. *Io/me* (1SG), *tu/te* (2SG), *noi* 1PL), *voi* (2PL) continue Lat. EGO/ME, TU/TE, NOS, UOS. It is noteworthy that the singular forms preserve the distinct nominative case-forms of Latin as subject pronouns, whereas *me* and *te* are 'oblique' case-forms, used to mark the direct object and after prepositions.[36] Remarkable in modern Italian is the multiplicity of *third* person forms, many of which not only differentiate case (nom. *egli*, *ella* vs obl. *lui*, *lei*) and animacy (*egli*, *ella*, *lui*, *lei*, *loro* are only animate while *esso* is exclusively inanimate), but also vary for register, the forms *egli*, *ella*, *esso*, *essa*, *essi*, *esse* belonging exclusively to elevated and literary registers. Dedicated third person pronouns are a Romance innovation overall (cf. Cappellaro 2016:723). The Latin demonstrative pronoun ILLE (in its various forms) is the origin of all third person forms containing a lateral consonant (*egli*, *ella*, *lui*, *lei*, *loro*; *li*, *la*, *li*, *le*, *loro*, *gli*). In the stressed series, we also find *esso*, *essa*, *essi*, *esse* derived from the Latin pronoun IPSE 'the self-same (one)' (see Cappellaro 2016:733f.).[37] The third person stressed pronouns display allomorphy bordering on suppletion. In older stages of the language one finds *ei* (or *e'*), in addition to *egli*, and both of these are in origin phonological variants of *elli*, which had largely disappeared by the fifteenth century.

The distinction in the singular between *egli* (*ei*, *elli*) and *ella*, on the one hand, and *lui* and *lei*, on the other, was originally one of case (subject vs oblique).[38] The MSG subject pronoun *elli* (< *ˈelli) reflects the analogical influence of the final vowel of the Latin MSG relative pronoun QUI,[39] while its genitive/dative singular form, CUI, prompted the creation of *lui* (< *elˈlui); this form has widely been assumed to be the basis of feminine *lei* (< *elˈlɛi) (but see Adams 2013:459–464). In modern usage, subject *egli* and *ella* survive only in elevated and archaizing registers (cf. Cappellaro 2013:214f.), their functions having been taken over by originally oblique forms *lui* and *lei*—a process at work already, under certain syntactic circumstances, in the thirteenth century (Egerland 2010:405–408).[40] The subject~oblique distinction also existed originally in the plural, the plural subject forms *egli* (*ei*, *e'*, *elli*) and *elle* standing in opposition to oblique *loro* (derived from genitive plural ILLORUM).[41] The plural subject forms were later replaced by *eglino* and *elleno*; these forms are morphologically quite remarkable because they signal plural via a third person plural desinence imported from the *verb*.[42] But in modern usage the case-distinction in the plural is extinct, plural *egli*, *ei*, *e'*, *elle*, *eglino*, *elleno* all having been replaced by stressed *loro*, a process already well under way in the fifteenth century (cf. Loporcaro 2002:67).

9.4 Nouns and adjectives

9.4.1 Number marking

The inflexional morphology of modern Italian nouns and adjectives is relatively simple. Unlike the verb, there is almost no root-allomorphy. Number is almost always expressed via alternation of a word-final unstressed vowel.[43] If that vowel is *-a* in the singular, and the noun's gender is feminine, then the plural has *-e* (*pera~pere* 'pear(s)', *rossa~rosse* 'red'), otherwise, plurals end in *-i* (*poeta~poeti* 'poet(s)', *pero~peri* 'pear tree(s)', *rosso~rossi* 'red', *mese~mesi* 'month(s)', *legge~leggi* 'law(s)', *verde~verdi* 'green'). The origins of these facts are far from straightforward (see, e.g., Maiden 1996b; 2000a:176f.; Faraoni 2018:14–20), but my focus here is on those cases in modern Italian which are exceptions to these general rules. The exceptions fall into three major types: those invariant for number, those (exclusively masculines) with root allomorphy marking number in addition to the inflexional ending, and those with plural endings deviating from the above patterns, a major subclass of which also involves change in *gender* between singular and plural.

9.4.2 Invariance

D'Achille and Thornton (2003:219) find that the proportion of nouns invariant for number rises from under 3 per cent in the thirteenth century to nearly 10 per cent in the late twentieth. This tripling in inflexional invariance marks a significant morphological difference between modern Italian and the medieval language. In some respects, the tendency in the medieval language was actually to reject invariance where it existed: by the thirteenth century some words that had been, for historical reasons,[44] invariant for number (e.g., *la mano~le mano* 'the hand(s)'; cf. Rohlfs 2021b:34f.) were largely reassigned to the alternating type (*la mano~le mani*). The rise of invariance is, however, principally attributable to a rise in words lacking a final unstressed vowel which, thereby, became uninflectible for number.

One medieval source of loss of final unstressed vowels, and consequent invariance, was phonological deletion of the final syllable in nouns ending in *-de*, *-di* (cf. Tekavčić 1980:57f.): e.g., *virtude~virtudi* > *virtù* 'virtue(s)'; *cittade~cittadi* > *città* 'city(-ies)'. Loanwords, virtually all datable from recent centuries, that end in stressed vowels or in consonants, such as *caffè*, *caribù*, *film*, *sport*, further swell the ranks of invariants. The twentieth-century tendency to create acronyms, which often end in a consonant, further contributes: e.g., *la~le Fiat* (from *Federazione italiana automobilistica Torino*). Another major source of modern invariance is loss of the inflexional final vowel as a consequence of truncation of polysyllabic words: e.g., *il cinematografo~i cinematografi* > *il~i cinema* 'the cinema(s)'; *la motocicletta~le motociclette* > *la~le moto* 'the motorcycle(s)'; *la televisione~le televisioni* > *la~le tele* 'the television(s)'. This change, however, creates real exceptions to the above principles of plural formation in modern Italian, because it produces words that *still* end in an unstressed vowel, after truncation, but are also invariant. Only if native speakers realize that such words are the result of a truncation does the general rule hold.[45] But it is doubtful whether most Italians analyse, say, *cinema*, as the result of a synchronic process of truncation of *cinematografo*.[46]

Yet there are other modern words that are invariant despite the fact that they have always ended in an unstressed vowel. Broadly, such invariance seems to reflect the speakers'

perception that the relevant words somehow lie outside the system of nominal inflexional morphology. The invariance of the apparent 'adjectives' *rosa* 'pink', *viola* 'violet, purple', *marrone* 'brown' (e.g., *delle camicie viola* 'some purple shirts', *delle scarpe marrone* 'some brown shoes') is, at least in origin, due to the fact that they are *nouns* ('rose', 'violet', 'chestnut'), not adjectives capable of inflecting for agreement. *Il~i vaglia* 'postal order(s)' is invariant because this word is, in origin, not a noun, but a 3SG present subjunctive form of *valere* 'be worth'. If we have *il~i sosia* 'the look-alike(s)' it is because the word originates as an invariant proper name, *Sosia*, not as an ordinary noun. In some cases there may be a perception that the word, like the concept it expresses, is foreign and therefore lies outside the Italian inflexional system:[47] the invariance of words such as *coyote* or *chimono* 'kimono' (*chimoni* is also found) may be explicable in that way. In invariant foreign words which end in *-a* and are masculine, such as *panda*, *gorilla*, *koala*, *lama* 'lama' and 'llama', *alpaca*, the fact that *-a* is predominantly associated with feminine gender may reinforce a perception that such words are alien to the indigenous inflexional system. The very strong association between singular final *-o* and masculine gender,[48] contradicted by their female meaning, may have rendered *la soprano* or *la virago* inflexionally 'alien', whence their invariance for number (*le soprano*, *le virago*).[49]

Incompatibility with the established inflexional norms of Italian may also explain—if only in part—another major invariant class, namely some exocentric compound nouns of the type verb+noun, noun+noun, or noun+adjective.[50] Their final element is typically an existing word which, when used independently, regularly inflects for number; yet it may, or must, be invariant in the compound. Some masculine compounds which *may* have invariant plurals are listed in Table 9.14.

Table 9.14 Invariance and variance in compound plurals

singular	uninflected plural	*or* inflected plural
aspirapolvere 'vacuum cleaner' (lit. 'breathe-dust')	*aspirapolvere*	*aspirapolveri*
parafango 'mudguard' (lit. 'stop-mud')	*parafango*	*parafanghi*
portacenere 'ashtray' (lit. 'carry-ash')	*portacenere*	*portaceneri*
salvagente 'life jacket' (lit. 'save-people')	*salvagente*	*salvagenti*

In some of these cases invariance may be semantically motivated, because the plural of the second component, as normally used, bears a semantic distinction with respect to its corresponding singular which would be incompatible with the meaning of the compound. *Polvere* 'dust', *fango* 'mud', *cenere* 'ash', *gente* 'people' are mass nouns whose plurals mean something rather different from their singulars: 'different sorts of dust/mud'; 'ashes as mortal remains'; 'peoples'.[51] In other masculine compounds, plural inflexion of the second element is not generally found (Table 9.15).

Table 9.15 Invariance in masculine compound plurals

singular	uninflected plural	not found

singular	uninflected plural	not found
battiscopa 'skirting board' (lit. 'beat-broom')	*battiscopa*	***battiscopi* ***battiscope*
cavalcavia 'flyover' (lit. 'ride-way')	*cavalcavia*	***cavalcavie* ***cavalcavii*
guastafeste 'spoilsport' (lit. 'spoil-parties')	*guastafeste*	***guastafesti*
portafortuna 'good luck charm' (lit. 'bring-luck')	*portafortuna*	***portafortuni* ***portafortune*
portauovo 'eggcup' (lit. 'carry-egg')	*portauovo*	***portauovi*

The invariance of the second component seems to reflect constraints of a purely morphological kind (see further Maiden 2008:382–385): (i) potential variant plurals in alternating *-e* are at best rare,[52] because an alternating plural inflexion in *-e* is exclusively associated with *feminine* plurals and therefore incompatible with the masculine gender of the compound;[53] (ii) plurals in *-i* are not found where the resultant form of the final element is not part of the inflexional paradigm of the final element: for example, the inflexional paradigm of *festa* 'party' comprises only *festa* and *feste*, therefore excluding plural ***guastafesti*, while that of *uovo* 'egg' comprises just *uovo* and *uova*, ruling out ***portauovi*.[54] In contrast, *salvagenti* is morphologically licensed because *gente* 'people' has plural *genti*, whose ending is compatible with masculine gender.

Overall, the rise of invariance in Italian nominal morphology has been determined by properties of the morphological system itself. The dependence of number-marking on the presence of an inflectible word-final unstressed vowel means that words lacking such a vowel are uninflectible, while potential inflexion for number that would violate established correlations between inflexional endings and gender-marking, or would create non-existent inflexional forms of nouns, is avoided.

9.4.3 Common properties of irregular markings of plural

There are a few dozen words (mainly nouns) in Italian which mark number in unexpected and unpredictable ways, namely via root allomorphy or aberrant plural endings. We list these together because, although disparate, many of them share significant properties:

- *ala~ali* 'wing(s)' and *arma~armi* 'weapon(s)' (not ***ale*, ***arme*)
- *bue~buoi* 'ox(en)'
- *dio~dei* 'god(s)'
- *uomo~uomini* 'man~men'
- The type *amico~amici* 'friend(s)', *nemico~nemici* 'enemy(-ies)', *porco~porci* 'pig(s)', *asparago~asparagi* 'asparaguse(s)' with consonantal alternation in the root (not ***amichi*, ***porchi*, ***asparaghi*)
- A group comprising about twenty nouns, all in singular *-o* and plural *-a*, which switch gender between masculine singular and feminine plural, such as *il dito~le dita* 'the

finger(s)'—and likewise *braccio* 'arm', *centinaio* 'hundred', *cervello* 'brain', *fondamento* 'foundation', *grido* 'shout', *labbro* 'lip', *lenzuolo* 'sheet', *membro* 'limb', *midollo* 'marrow', *migliaio* 'thousand', *muro* 'wall', *osso* 'bone', *paio* 'pair', *riso* 'laugh', *sopracciglio* 'eyebrow', *strido* 'shriek', *uovo* 'egg', *urlo* 'yell'.

The significant shared characteristic is that the referents tend to be mentioned in their plural rather than singular forms,[55] because they are typically envisaged as occurring in pairs (wings, arms, lips), sets or groups (oxen, fingers, sheets, pigs, and perhaps friends, enemies, and men), or as a very weakly differentiated mass (eggs, brains, shouts, asparagus). Whatever the specific details of their origins, their diachronic survival and failure to be replaced by a 'regular' plural form, may be due in part to the very high relative frequency of use of their plurals and in some cases to a certain lexical semantic estrangement between singular and plural (cf. the discussion below of *dei*, or the fact that *ossa* tends to denote not separate 'bones', but the set of bones in a body). That some nouns may more frequently be produced in their plural form than in the singular has another occasional diachronic morphological consequence,[56] involving change of inflexion class. Masculine nouns in plural *-i* may have corresponding singulars in the *-o* class (*gatti~gatto* 'cat') or the *-e* class (*cani~cane* 'dog'), but if a masculine is commonly uttered and heard in the plural, speakers may be more familiar with the plural form than the singular and thereby make 'wrong guesses' about the form of the singular: thus singulars such as *sorcio* 'mouse' or *ghiro* 'dormouse' (cf. Lat. SORICEM, GLIREM), or dialectal or regional It. *pescio* 'fish', *dento* 'tooth', *vermo* 'worm' for *pesce*, *verme*, *dente* seem to have emerged (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:14).

Ali 'wings' and *armi* 'weapons' are generally interpreted as remnants of an earlier phase in which some feminine nouns in singular *-a* had alternative singular forms in the *-e* class and, consequently, also plurals in *-i* (cf. Grandgent 1940:131; Ruggieri 1958; Rohlfs 2021b:25; Benincà 2010a:1392): e.g., *persone personi* alongside *persona persone* 'person(s)'. In the case of *armi* and *ali* the plurals, much more frequently used than their singulars,[57] perhaps remained 'stranded' in usage even when putative singulars *arme* and *ale* were rejected in favour of *ala* and *arma*.[58]

9.4.4 Root allomorphy

Types (ii) to (v) all involve something which is overall very rare in Italian noun and adjective morphology: root allomorphy. In Latin, root allomorphy correlated with number was also rare and mainly limited to nominative case-forms of certain third declension nouns. Originally nominative case-forms are not generally continued in Italian, but sometimes survive in nouns denoting human beings, and there traces of Latin number allomorphy may be seen. An example is third declension HOMO~HOMINES where the root alternation of the nominative is retained in *uomo~uomini* (the accusative HOMINEM~HOMINES, and other case-forms, showed no root allomorphy for number). The alternation *bue~buoi* (< BOUEM~BOUES) might have a purely phonological origin (e.g., Rohlfs 2021a:111, 138f.), one which incidentally also accounts for the alternation in possessive adjectives *tuo~tuoi*, *suo~suoi*. Nonetheless, the stolid historical persistence of the alternation probably also owes something to the 'unmarked' status of the plural in this noun. As for the unique alternation found in *dio~dei*, the singular is a regular phonological development of DEUM, while the plural is a learnèd borrowing from Latin DEI. In a culture where there is traditionally only one, male, God, plural gods must be fundamentally other than 'God'. One might argue, then, that *dei* is not so much an irregular plural, but a related but different lexeme with respect to *dio*. The fact remains, though, that in the singular there no longer exists a separate word *deo*, so that one can only say *un dio pagano*.

The only type of consonantal allomorphy to survive in the modern language is that between root-final [k, g] in the singular and [ʧ, ʤ] in the plural.[59] The alternations of *amico~amici*, *matematico~matematici* 'mathematician(s)', *mago~magi* 'wizard(s)', *asparago~asparagi* seem regular outcomes of the historical phonological palatalization of velar consonants before front vowels. Yet the overwhelming majority of words in root-final velars have never been attested with such alternation, and show [k] or [g] in singular and plural alike (e.g., *secco~secchi* 'dry', *carico~carichi* 'load(s)' or 'loaded').[60] Now, Italian masculine plurals are generally believed to derive from Latin *accusatives*, and the masculine accusative plural form of the relevant class ended in -os (e.g., SICCOS 'dry'), an ending different from -i, and one which could not have triggered palatalization. The overwhelming absence of palatalization in these plurals is thus exactly that expected if the starting point were indeed the accusative plural. That the plural ending is today *-i* could simply be a matter of later analogical extension of plural *-i* from other plurals, post-dating the palatalization process. Moreover, the majority of words that do show such alternation are not the result of continuous popular transmission from Latin. Rather, they are of learnèd origin and largely comprise proparoxytones containing the originally erudite suffixes *-ico* (*-aco*) or *-ologo*[61] (*matematico~matematici*, *monaco~monaci* 'monk(s)', etc.; *biologo~biologi*, *archeologo~archeologi*).[62] Such alternations originate in medieval pronunciation of written Latin words such that, for example, written *mathematici* was pronounced [mateˈmatiʧi]. The contrast between the 'learnèd' alternation and the generally non-learnèd origin of the non-alternating forms is seen in *mago~maghi* vs its biblical etymological cognate *Mago~Magi* 'Magus'. Proparoxytones such as *valico~valichi* 'pass, crossing point' or *carico~carichi* 'load' or 'loaded' do not alternate because of their popular origin. Some, almost certainly popular, terms such as *portico~portici* 'portico(es)' or *manico~manici* 'handle(s)', which originally also had non-alternant plurals *portichi*, *manichi* (cf. Benincà 2010a:1398), may owe their modern alternating status to the analogy of the many learnèd proparoxytonic alternant words in *-ico* (see also Faraoni 2018:128f.).

Otherwise, the set of truly popular terms which display the alternation is minuscule: *amico~amici*, *nemico~nemici*, *porco~porci*, and perhaps *asparago~asparagi* and *greco~greci* 'Greek'; to these we might add Tuscan dialect forms such as *bruco~bruci* 'silkworm', *fungo~fungi* 'mushroom' (see Maiden 2000a:172). Now there is evidence that early Italo-Romance dialects may, like early Gallo-Romance, have possessed a vestigial two-case system in which an original nominative form co-existed with an 'oblique' case-form generally derivable from the Latin accusative. Against this background the suggestion developed by Maiden (2000a) and Faraoni (2018), among others, is that words denoting human beings such as *amici*, *nemici* directly continue Latin second declension nominative (and vocative) plurals in -I, and consequently show the effects of palatalization of the velar by that inflexional ending. Given that nouns denoting persons are characteristically subjects of verbs, they frequently figured in their nominative case-forms, a fact that favoured the survival of those forms. That Latin nominative case-forms sometimes survive in Italian names denoting humans (cf. also Smith 2011:283) is supported by the singular forms of words such as *uomo* 'man', *moglie* 'wife', *sarto* 'tailor', *suora* 'sister',[63] which on phonological grounds can only have originated as nominatives (Lat. nominative HÓMO, MÚLIER, SÁRTOR, SÓROR vs accusative HÓMINEM, MULIÉREM, SARTÓREM, SORÓREM). But what of *porci*, *asparagi*, and dialectal *bruci* or *fungi*, which can hardly be explicable in this way? These are nouns whose referents typically occurred in sets or as a mass of entities and therefore had much higher frequency of use in the plural than other nouns, a fact which gave correspondingly higher prominence to their plural forms (nominative as well as accusative) than was normally true. Under this circumstance, the likelihood of a nominative form of the plural surviving became greater than it was for most nouns, and this is probably why some nouns of this type preserve an original nominative plural (see further Maiden 2000a; but cf. Faraoni 2018:7–75).

In sum, velar~palatal alternation is exceptional in Italian plural formation: where it occurs it mainly reflects traditional pronunciations of written Latin words. The rare occurrence of such alternation in words of truly 'popular', non-learnèd, origin, probably reflects particular circumstances favouring survival of old nominative plural forms historically in -I.

9.4.5 The type *il dito~le dita*

The gender alternation between MSG and FPL in nouns of the *il dito~le dita* type is anchored in, and motivated by, their particular inflexional morphology: such nouns have the characteristically masculine ending *-o* in the singular but their plurals have inflexional *-a*,[64] a characteristically feminine ending, albeit usually of singulars. This class originates in Latin second declension *neuter* nouns, such as NOM/ACC.SG OUUM NOM/ACC.PL OUA; NOM/ACC.SG CEREBELLUM NOM/ACC.PL CEREBELLA. The fact that in Latin the singular ending was identical to the masculine (accusative) ending and the plural ending to (singular) first declension feminines prompted reanalysis of such nouns as selecting masculine agreement in the singular and feminine in the plural.[65] Latin had distinct inflexional marking for neuter gender on adjectives and determiners, but no trace of distinctive neuter inflexional morphology survives in modern Italian adjectives and determiners. It is important to note, however, that in old Tuscan (and other early Italo-Romance varieties) there survived occasional remnants of neuter plural agreement, such that noun plurals in *-a* selected agreeing adjectives and determiners in *-a* (see Loporcaro et al. 2014; Loporcaro 2016b:928). For example, *la grave e continua spesa che quella mura richeggiono* 'the heavy and continuous expense that those.$_{N}$ walls require'; compare modern Italian *quelle mura*, where *quelle* is FPL.

In early Italo-Romance, the class of 'alternating gender' nouns spread beyond the original class of second declension neuters, embracing several originally masculine inanimate nouns (Latin neuter nouns were inanimate): one example is originally masculine *dito*.[66] Other examples from the medieval language are feminine plural *anella* 'rings', *carra* 'carts', *vasa* 'vessels', *uscia* 'doorways', *gomita* 'elbows', *passa* 'steps', *letta* 'beds', *mulina* 'mills' (Rohlfs 2021b:35f.).[67] This class has greatly receded (D'Achille and Thornton 2003:220n20; Penello 2010:1392; Gardani 2013:340), although some remnants of such plurals have become 'stranded', and effectively lexicalized, in expressions such as *essere alle calcagna di* 'to be (hot) on (someone's) heels', *fare le fusa* lit. 'make (noise like) spindles', i.e., 'purr'. The *-a* plurals that have survived otherwise generally have two, related, characteristics: their referents typically are conceived of and expressed as pairs, cohesive sets, or masses, and they have in common the property of being difficult to differentiate one from another.

Some words in this class have *only* plurals in *-a*: *centinaia*, *midolla*, *migliaia*, *miglia*, *paia*, *uova*.[68] Most *-a* plurals, however, also have 'regular' masculine forms in *-i*: *braccia* 'arms (of body)'*~bracci* 'arms (of objects)', *budella* 'intestines'*~budelli* 'alleys', *cervella* 'brains (mass)'*~cervelli* 'brains (organs)', *ciglia* 'eyelashes'*~cigli* 'edges', *corna* 'horns'*~corni* 'horn-like objects, horns as musical instruments', *dita* 'fingers'*~diti* 'fingers', *fondamenta* 'foundations (of building)'*~fondamenti* 'bases', *ginocchia* 'knees'*~ginocchi* 'knees', *labbra* 'lips'*~labbri* 'edges (of wound)', *lenzuola* 'sheets, bed linen'*~lenzuoli* 'sheets', *mura* 'walls (perimeter)'*~muri* 'walls', *ossa* '(set of) bones (in body)'*~ossi* 'bones', *urla* 'shouts'*~urli* 'shouts'. These plurals, and the various semantic distinctions between plural *-a* and *-i*, pose notable problems of synchronic morphological analysis. Acquaviva (2008) argues that the *-a* plurals are in effect distinct lexemes from their corresponding singulars, being *pluralia tantum*—words only existing as plurals and having plurality as an inherent part of their lexical meaning. They are united, according to Acquaviva (2008:153–155), by the fact that

the parts making up the denotation are conceptualized as *undifferentiated*, in different ways according to the lexical semantics of the noun.[69]

The analysis of such plurals as autonomous, inherently plural, lexemes is certainly valid for the handful of *-a* plurals that exist only as plurals (*le gesta* 'the (heroic) deeds', *le vestigia* 'the vestiges'). But the analysis is otherwise problematic, as argued at length by Thornton (2013), who sees them not as separate lexemes but as belonging to the same inflexional paradigm as the corresponding singular in *-o*, the variant plurals in *-i* and *-a* thus being examples of 'overabundance' such that the same cell of the inflexional paradigm shows more than one form, one in *-i* and another in *-a*. This analysis seems possible where there is no apparent semantic difference between the *-a* and *-i* plurals, but more problematic in those several cases where the 'collective' meaning associated with the plural in *-a* is clearly partially independent of the meaning of the singular or the *-i* plural, such as *mura* or *ossa*. However that may be, the diachronic survival of the *-a* plurals seems clearly attributable to the fact that, in association with the relevant meanings, they are more frequently used than the corresponding singulars.

9.5 Conclusion

I have presented here the history of certain peculiarities of modern Italian morphology whose origins might arouse particular curiosity. In the verb, we have seen how accidental effects of regular sound change or of interrupted analogical levelling have constituted language-specific 'templates of irregularity' which have guided and constrained subsequent morphological change. Even analogical levellings,[70] arguably motivated by universal principles favouring one-to-one matchings between form and meaning, may actually be determined by language-specific morphological idiosyncrasies. Many of the peculiarities of the pronominal system are shown to depend both on phonological factors and associative interference between forms, as well as the persistence, with functional reanalysis, of forms originally differentiated by case. In the noun and adjective, deviations from general rules of plural formation crucially tend to reflect abnormal semantic relationships between singular and plural forms or learnèd influences which clash with otherwise established morphological norms of plural formation.

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[1] My focus is on inflexional morphology, although aspects of derivational morphology are touched on.

[2] Italian morphology, like that of Latin, is characterized by allomorphy, cumulativeness, extended exponence, 'zero' exponence, and empty morphs. For some examples particularly from Latin morphology see Matthews (1972:56–103); also Matthews (1970:107–110) for an account of the difficulties of a 'morphemic' analysis of an Italian verb-form. For discussion of the general problems in analysing word-forms into component meaning-bearing 'morphemes', see Anderson (2015:17–25).

[3] See further Maiden (2016c:497).

[4] For analysis in a broader Romance perspective, see Esher, Floricic, and Maiden (2020).

[5] For survivals of Latin present participle forms, see, e.g., Maiden (1995a:123). The Latin perfective infinitive was also lost, the Italian infinitive continuing the Latin active imperfective infinitive.

[6] I do not address some phenomena which probably tend to be 'taken for granted' in the modern language but of which it must be said that they are anything but straightforward historically. For example: the origins of the generalized present tense and imperative 1PL ending *-iamo* (cf., e.g., Grandgent 1940:159; Lausberg 1971, II:189f.; Rohlfs 2021b:250, 353; Tekavčić 1980:281f., 284; Maiden 1995a:129); the 2PL ending *-te* which is probably in origin an imperative ending (cf.

Maiden 2007:159–161); or the inflexional endings of the conditional, all ultimately derived from the preterite of *avere* but also, at least in the medieval literary language, interspersed in the 1SG, 3SG, and 3PL with the ending *-ia*(*no*) (cf. Maiden 2001).

[7] In *essere* 'be', originally perfective forms in *f-* survive throughout.

[8] Maiden (2018b) offers a fuller account.

[9] In some verbs, the lengthened consonant is modelled on verbs where lengthening arose from sound change: this is the analogical mechanism by which, e.g., UENIT, CREUIT, STETIT, RUPIT become *venne* 's/he came', *crebbe* 's/he grew', *ruppe* 's/he broke'.

[10] These stress patterns are inherited from Latin, with adjustments in early Romance (in the 1PL and 3PL the stress originally fell on -ú-; see also Rohlfs 2021b:311f.).

[11] For detailed discussion of the status of such examples, see Maiden (2018b:228–234).

[12] Cf. Vanelli (2010b:1444f.); Maiden (2018b:245).

[13] Avoidance of homophony may have played some role: replacing, say, *disse* with *dice* would have created a form identical to that of the present indicative. This idea has been re-proposed by Herce (2022), but it falls short of satisfactorily explaining all the facts (see also Maiden 2000c:147–149). Briefly, the phenomenon occurs too consistently in verbs (e.g., *fare* 'do', *avere* 'have'), or in verb-forms (e.g., third person plural in *-ero*), where there is no risk of homophony.

[14] For deeper theoretical justification, see particularly Maiden (2018a:247–249).

[15] In many cases this has happened (e.g., Lat. RECÉPI > *ricevéi*), but crucially there can be no replacement of root allomorph without replacement of unstressed ending, and vice versa.

[16] The reasons for this label are unimportant. See Maiden (2011:223–241; 2016e:712; 2018a:84–166).

[17] See, e.g., Rohlfs (2021a:400).

[18] But [sk] > [ʃʃ], [lg] > [ʎʎ]; see, e.g., Rohlfs (2021a:377–379).

[19] See, e.g., Lausberg (1971, II:189f.); Rohlfs (2021b:250, 353); Tekavčić (1980:281f., 284). Also Maiden (2010; 2012).

[20] In *sedere*, the diphthong has extended into future and conditional (*siederò*, etc.): Maiden and Smith (2014).

[21] See further Maiden (2011:241–263; 2016e:712–716; 2018a:167–246).

[22] This etymon for *andare* is disputed by some, but the important point here is that its source is a different verb from UADERE.

[23] A further factor is that in these verbs (like all first conjugation verbs) the diphthong is absent from the infinitive, while in many verbs that show levelling it is also present there (*muovere*, *chiedere*, *mietere*).

[24] The second person singular present indicative, today in *-i* and in the medieval language often in *-e*, did not originally end in a front vowel and therefore did not originally become palatalized: see Maiden (1996b).

[25] My concern is how the first conjugation *acquired* this property historically not its modern synchronic status, for discussion of which see Maiden (2018a:282f.).

[26] Intertonic [ar] > [er] in Tuscan (cf. Rohlfs 2021a:175).

[27] But see Nielsen Whitehead (2012:294–302).

[28] In southern Tuscany, parts of Umbria, Lazio, and Corsica: see Rohlfs (2021b:297–299).

[29] For further discussion of this syncretism, motivated in her view by the need to make more transparent the expression of mood, at the expense of the marking of person, see Vanelli (2013b:470; 2014:144). It seems to me that the resultant 'transparency' in mood-marking might explain in part why the *outcome* of the process was accepted, but I suggest that purely morphological factors were what *motivated* the change.

[30] Apparently analogically extended also to post-tonic position: e.g., *vedermi*. Cf. Rohlfs (2021b:151). Also problematic are the origins of the allomorphs *me*, *te*, *se*, and *ce* found before *lo*, *la*, *li*, *le*, or *ne*, as in *Me lo dice* lit. 'me= it= says' vs *Mi dice*

lit. 'me= says' (see Maiden 1995a:175f.). The 3SG indirect object clitic *gli* is not the result of raising but the descendant of Lat. ILLĪ. *Glielo dice* lit. '3.IO=it says' seems to be modelled on *me lo dice*, etc.

[31] On *subject* clitics in modern Tuscan varieties, see Ledgeway (2016a:217).

[32] Feminine singular indirect object *le* has a more complex analogical origin in late Latin (Rohlfs 2021b:154).

[33] For dissimilation in clitic sequences, see also Maiden (2000b) and Pescarini (2016:755).

[34] See also Floricic (2003a) and Palermo (2006).

[35] In the medieval language there was even greater separability from the verb: cf. Cardinaletti (2010); Salvi (2016a:65). Some properties of modern *loro* are shared with 'real' clitics, such as the impossibility of using dative *loro* in isolation (Loporcaro 2002:52).

[36] *Te* tends to replace subject *tu* (in regional northern and central Italian), and does so obligatorily after *e* (*io e te*) as well as in vocative/interjectional sequences such as *povero te!* 'poor you!'.

[37] The stressed third person pronouns have, except MSG *esso*, exclusively [+hum.] reference. Effectively, then, these forms also encode 'humanness' while *esso* has developed purely [–hum.] reference. For discussion, and the status of *esso*, *essa*, *essi*, *esse* in relation to the other third person pronouns, see particularly Cappellaro (2013:214–219).

[38] 'Primarily', because the distinction in the modern language is also syntactic. Subject *egli* does not have the same freedom of syntactic position, and is sometimes described as a 'semi-clitic'. See Cordin and Calabrese (2001:549–606); Vanelli (2003:62–63).

[39] This *-i* also appears in the MSG anaphoric pronouns *questi* and *quegli*.

[40] For grammarians' responses to the encroachment of oblique on subject forms, see Vanelli (2003:59f.).

[41] For the phonological development, cf. Vanelli (2010a:1428f.).

[42] On the origins and diffusion of *-no*, see for example Maiden (1995a:131).

[43] I say little here about inflexional marking of gender. 'Gender' is by definition a matter of agreement (cf. Hockett 1958), and so concerns the form of elements that agree with nouns, namely adjectives, determiners, and pronouns. That said, there is a very strong correlation between the singular ending *-o* and masculine gender, and a weaker one between singular *-a* and feminine gender. Nouns whose plural shows the inflexional ending *-e* are always feminine. Nouns in singular *-e* and plural *-i* give no morphological clue to gender.

[44] Cf. Maiden (1996b; 2000b:177). Also D'Achille and Thornton (2008:477).

[45] This rule is apparently contradicted by *chilo~chili* 'kilo'. But *chilo* is historically not a truncation of *chilogrammo*, but a form borrowed from Fr. *kilo*, to which regular plural formation has applied. Cf. Cortelazzo and Zolli (1979) s.v. *chilo*.

[46] Invariant nouns in final [je], e.g., *la~le serie* 'series' seem to be learnèd formations reflecting the invariance for number (in the nominative) of their Latin source (the type SERIES~SERIES). See Maiden (1995a:101f.) for alternative plurals of the type *le superficie* or *le superfici* 'surface'.

[47] For 'foreignness' in morphological productivity, see Gardani (2013:40f.).

[48] *Mano* 'hand' is the only common exception, but see D'Achille and Thornton (2008).

[49] See D'Achille and Thornton (2008:480) on the tendency for invariance to spread into nouns such as *sabato* 'Saturday' or *autobomba* 'car bomb'. For the history of invariance in the currency unit *euro*, see Gomez Gane (2003) and Thornton (2003:3).

[50] The historical morphology of compounds is still poorly understood (see further Rohlfs 2021b:49f.; Maiden 1995a:183–185). Forza and Scalise (2016:530f.) survey Italian compounding in a wider Romance perspective.

[51] For an exploration of the role of semantic factors in constraining the morphological marking of number in verb+noun compounds, see Pellegrini and Ricca (2019). In their view (Pellegrini and Ricca 2019:102) the existence of plurals such as *portaceneri* is a marker of 'strong [semantic] opacification of the compound'.

[52] Pellegrini and Ricca (2019:111f.) find in a web corpus a masculine plural such as *reggimensole* 'shelf brackets' allegedly a possible plural of masculine singular *reggimensola* alongside invariant plural *reggimensola*. The problem is that there also

exists an attested masculine singular *reggimensole*, so that the existence of a plural *reggimensole* may reflect speakers' knowledge of the existence of that alternative singular form in final *-e*, rather than a real alternation *il reggimensola~i reggimensole*. Their questionnaire data also elicit, for example, masculine *portapenne* 'pen holder' alongside *portapenna*, allegedly both possible plurals of *il portapenna*, but crucially we need also to know what the corresponding *singulars* are for the informants: a masculine singular *portapenne* also exists, for example.

[53] Of course we may have masculine plurals such as *i salvagente*, but here the *-e* does not alternate paradigmatically with a singular inflexion *-a*. The finding by Pellegrini and Ricca (2019:111) that *ficcanaso* lit. 'stick nose', so 'busybody', *may* have a plural *i ficcanasi* when it refers to a male but apparently not when it denotes a female (always *le ficcanaso*) is consistent with the notion that an *-o~-i* alternation is generally incompatible with nouns of feminine gender.

[54] *Paracadute* 'parachute', whose plural is usually invariant, sometimes has *paracaduti*. This may be because although *caduta*, the *noun* meaning 'fall', has only plural *cadute*, *caduti* is a form of the past participle of *cadere* 'to fall'. For a different analysis, see Pellegrini and Ricca (2019:102n5).

[55] Except for many nouns of type (v), discussed later.

[56] For diachronic morphological consequences of 'unmarked' plurals, see Tiersma (1982) and Maiden (2016d:706f.). For a recent discussion of the general issues involved, see Haspelmath and Karjus (2017).

[57] It is relevant that English 'arms', in this sense, seems only ever to be used in the plural.

[58] For a different interpretation, see Gardani (2013:396).

[59] The type *notaio~notari* 'notary(-ies)' found in the medieval language reflects a regular, distinctively Tuscan, sound change (Rohlfs 2021a:400; Benincà 2010a:1401) whereby -VrjV- becomes [j]: singular -ARIUM > *-arju > *-aio*, while plural -ARII > -ari > *-ari*. This alternation has otherwise been eliminated, usually in favour of the singular allomorph (modern *notaio~notai*, but *denaro* 'money' for older *denaio* based on original plural *denari*; *denaio* or its older variant form *danaio* still survives in *salvadanaio* 'piggy bank'). A tendency to palatalize laterals before [i] explains the old *cavallo~cavagli* 'horse(s)' (also modern *ella~egli* 'he~she'; but see also Rohlfs 2021a:326), a type obsolescent by the nineteenth century.

[60] The *h* of these plurals is simply a diacritic indicating that *c* and *g* are not palatals.

[61] *-ologo* plurals also admit non-palatalized variants.

[62] See Faraoni (2018:109–121) for a detailed overview of *-ci* and *-gi* plurals in old Tuscan.

[63] Now 'sister' in the sense of 'nun'.

[64] *Le interiora* 'innards' is a *plurale tantum*, singular *interiore* having a different meaning. Medieval forms such as *nome~nomora* (see Gardani 2013:347) were exceptional and short-lived; for discussion see Maiden (2016d:10).

[65] Sometimes neuter plurals in -A were reanalysed as feminine singulars: e.g., FOLIA > *foglia* 'leaf', ARMA > *arma* 'arm, weapon', PIRA > *pera* 'pear'.

[66] It was most widespread in the thirteenth century (D'Achille and Thornton 2003:220n20).

[67] Old Tuscan had a further type of alternating gender noun with the (unstressed) plural ending *-ora* (e.g., *prato~pratora* 'meadow(s)', *anello~anellora* 'ring(s)'). The origin of this pattern was a small class of Latin third declension nouns such as NOM/ACC.SG TEMPUS 'time' NOM/ACC.PL TEMPORA where TEMPUS and TEMPOR- were allomorphs of the same lexical root. The segment -ORA was, however, reanalysed as an inflexional marker of number, and extended to other inanimate plurals (see Rohlfs 2021b:39; D'Achille and Thornton 2003:222n24; Gardani 2013:330, 342–46). Traces of plurals *nerbora* 'sinews', *ramora* 'branches' survive in adjectives *nerboruto*, *ramoruto* (see Rohlfs 2021b:40; Gardani 2013:343f.).

[68] Acquaviva (2008:126f.) provides a detailed description, on which I here draw heavily. He distinguishes lexemes for which *all* speakers recognize two plurals (e.g., *braccia~bracci*) from those where the availability of a masculine plural in *-i* varies regionally or according to register (e.g., *lenzuola~lenzuoli*).

[69] See also Iacobini and Thornton (2016:193).

[70] The role of such factors in morphological change generally is open to question, indeed. See Fertig (2016).

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Chapter 10

Historical syntax

Adam Noel Ledgeway

10.1 Introduction

It is commonplace in discussions of the history of the Italian language to claim that, in contrast to other European languages such as English or French, the earliest stages of the written language are still largely comprehensible to modern speakers of Italian (cf. also §12.1). According to this view, Italian is considered a conservative variety in which the differences between different synchronic stages of the language are said to be relatively modest (cf. Dardano 2012b:6f.). While there is undoubtedly some truth to this impressionistic view—indeed adolescent Italian school children routinely read and study selections of the writings of Dante, Petrarch, or Boccaccio without any formal training beyond the help provided by modern editions—this should not be taken to imply that medieval and modern Italian share the same grammar (Renzi 2000; Vincent 2000). Indeed, as highlighted by Vincent (2005:39f.), Salvi and Renzi (2010b:8), and Renzi and Salvi (2011:5), superficial appearances can be deceptive, concealing a whole series of more subtle structural differences which can mislead uninitiated readers into assuming that they can read medieval Italian according to the grammatical principles of the modern language (cf. also Chapter 12). Consider the following extract of direct speech from Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

1	Deh!	messer	Guglielmo,	voi	che	avete	e	vedute	ed	udite	molte		
	oh	sir	Guglielmo	you.PL	that	have.2PL	and	see.PTCP.FPL	and	hear.PTCP.FPL	many.F		
	cose,	saprestemi		voi	insegnare		cosa	alcuna	che	mai	piú		
	thing.FPL	know.COND.2PL=me		you.PL	teach.INF		thing.FSG	some.FSG	that	never	more		
	non	fosse	stata	veduta,			la	quale	io	potessi			
	NEG	be.PST.SBJV.3SG	be.PTCP.FSG	see.PTCP.FSG			the.FSG	which.SG	I	can.PST.SBJV.1SG			
	far	dipignere	nella	sala	di	questa	casa?						
	make.INF	paint.INF	in.the	room	of	this	house						

'Now, Messer Guglielmo, you who have seen and heard many things, could you suggest to me something, the like of which has never been seen hitherto, which I might have painted here in the saloon of this house?' (*Dec.* I.8.13)

Putting aside some minor phonetic, lexical, and morphological differences such as /ɲː/ for /ɲʤ/ in *dipignere* 'to paint' (cf. modIt. *dipingere*), the antiquated *udire* (viz. *udite* 'heard') long obsolete outside the most formal registers of the modern language where it is replaced by *sentire*, the obsolete use of *insegnare* meaning 'show, suggest' rather than 'teach', and the use of the regular form of the participle *vedute/-a* 'seen' where the modern language typically employs the irregular *visto*, these four lines reveal major syntactic differences. In some cases these can give rise to genuine misunderstandings. Take the use of post-nominal *alcuna* 'some' in *cosa alcuna* which, if read in terms of the grammar of modern Italian, would be expected to license a negative reading (viz. 'no thing') in conjunction with a preceding negator (cf. formal It. *non c'è/senza ragione alcuna* 'there is no/without reason'). Yet, here it occurs in post-nominal position without a preceding negator and receives a positive reading which in the modern language can only be licensed in pre-nominal position (e.g., *per alcun tempo* 'for some time') or, preferably, by the use of *qualche* 'some' (cf. *qualche cosa* (> *qualcosa*) 'some thing'). In short, the expected differences in polarity and their associated positions are reversed (Zanuttini 2010:577f.; Rati 2020:269). Staying with negation, also of note is the use of *mai più* which, in the modern language, can only be transparently interpreted to mean 'never anymore/again' (e.g., *non fumerò mai più* 'I'll never smoke again'), whereas in (1) it receives the non-compositional reading 'never before' (Squartini 2010a:533). At the same time, this example also reveals another important grammatical divergence from the modern language where the preverbal placement of such negative polarity items does not license a preverbal *non* 'not' (e.g., *mai più (**non) fumerò in vita mia* 'I will

never smoke again in my life'), in contrast to earlier stages of the language which optionally display strict negative concord (Rohlfs 2021c:278; Zanuttini 2010:574; Rati 2020:267f.). On one level, this difference between strict and non-strict negative concord might lead to nothing more than mild bewilderment, but on the other it might cause the modern reader genuine difficulty in processing the polarity of the sentence (viz. 'the like of which has **not** never been seen hitherto'). Similarly misleading for the modern reader, although somewhat alleviated by the initial singular vocative *Messer Guglielmo*, is the use of the second person plural (cf. *voi* 'you', *avete* 'have') as a singular polite form of address (cf. Renzi 2010b:1294–1297) which, with the exception of continental southern regional varieties of Italian (cf. §11.1.6), is expressed today with the grammatically feminine singular third person pronoun *lei* and associated verb and nominal forms (§11.1.2).

Other differences, although not necessarily impeding comprehension, are synchronically opaque and of a magnitude that characterizes the type of parametric variation that distinguishes not only between different modern Romance languages, but also between Romance and other language families. One such example, discussed in §10.2.1, is the formation of the polar question in (1) which involves Germanic-style auxiliary-subject inversion, viz. *voi mi sapreste insegnare* ⇒ *saprestemi voi insegnare* [. . .]*?* (cf. Munaro 2010:1147–1149), standardly interpreted as a reflex of a so-called Verb Second (V2) rule that requires the finite verb in root clauses to occur in the left periphery from where it precedes the preverbal subject in the sentential core. In this respect, the syntax of Boccaccio's prose aligns more readily with Germanic (cf. Eng. *You could suggest to me . . .* ⇒ *Could you suggest to me . . .* ?) than with modern Romance (though not some Raeto-Romance varieties; cf. Haiman and Benincà 1992:150; Anderson 2016:179–181; Salvi 2016a:164f.). Also related to this V2 syntax are two further properties, again explored in greater detail in §§10.2.1–2, which are alien to modern Italian:

i. The first concerns the alternation between proclisis and enclisis of object clitics which in the medieval period are second-position pronouns ultimately distributed in accordance with information structure (cf. Dardano 2012b:7): whenever the finite verb in the

left periphery is preceded by a discourse-salient constituent proclisis obtains, whereas in the absence of such a preverbal constituent the verb occurs in first position forcing the pronoun to appear in enclisis (cf. modern relics such as *vende**si*** lit. 'sell.3SG=REFL (= for sale)'), as illustrated in *saprestemi* in (1) where the preceding vocative, *Messer Guglielmo, voi che . . .* , is assumed in traditional grammar to sit outside the clause proper. This behaviour places the medieval language on par with modern north-western Ibero-Romance varieties such as European Portuguese which retain a largely similar distribution of object clitics to this day (Salvi 1990; Martins 1995; Galves, Moraes, and Ribeiro 2005).

i. The second concerns the so-called pro-drop parameter: in contrast to modern Italian where in the unmarked case pronominal subjects are phonologically null in both root and embedded clauses unless focus or topic-shift requires otherwise, in the medieval language the parameter is largely sensitive to a root-embedded contrast. Typically, null subjects are only available in root clauses where the finite verb is able to occur in the left periphery, but not in embedded contexts where V2 fails to obtain on account of the left periphery already being lexicalized by an overt subordinator. This explains why the first person singular pronoun *io* is overt in the relative clause introduced by *la quale* 'which' in (1), despite not receiving any particular pragmatic salience such as focus.

Another aspect of the syntax in (1) which has changed profoundly between the medieval and modern periods is the distribution of active past participle agreement (cf. §10.3.2). Unlike the modern language, agreement could also be licensed by lexical objects, and not just by clitic pronouns; witness the feminine plural agreement on *vedute* and *udite* controlled by the following nominal *molte cose*. This behaviour therefore places the medieval language on a par with, for example, many modern Occitan dialects (cf. Loporcaro 1998:76–78; 2016a:806f.), with which it appears to share a similar rule, rather than with modern Italian (cf. §20.2.2).

Major morphosyntactic differences like these can be readily multiplied by even the most cursory examination of any early text.

We can briefly recall here the absence of an indefinite partitive article (2a; Rohlfs 2021b:115; Renzi 2010a:346f.; Lauta 2020:385f.); the existence of a series of enclitic possessive determiners alongside the tonic adjectival series (2b; Rohlfs 2021b:124; Giorgi and Giusti 2010:293f.; Giusti 2010a:369; Consales 2020:435–437); the analytic expression of possession (*di* 'of' + oblique pronoun) as an alternative to the possessive adjective (2c; Giusti 2010a:370–372; cf. also §19.3.1); accusative-dative ordering of object clitics, now reversed in the modern language (Rohlfs 2021b:166; Maiden 1998:182, 194–196; Cardinaletti 2010:443–450; Filipponio 2020b:533–536), and obligatory clitic climbing in contrast to its optional nature in the modern language (2d; Cardinaletti 2010:437–441; Dardano 2012b:7; Filipponio 2020b:530–532); expression of the future-in-the-past with the simple conditional where modern Italian requires the analytic form (2e; cf. Maiden 1996a; Ferraresi and Goldbach 2010:1330f.; Squartini 2010a:539f.; Squartini 2010b:927–929; Dardano 2012b:8; Papi 2020:147; see also discussion in §12.4); ambiguous use of the imperfective forms of the passive auxiliary *essere* 'be' with perfective value (2f; Kontzi 1958:12–15; Brambilla Ageno 1964:177–179; Bertuccelli Papi 1981:30; Salvi 2010a:144f.; Squartini 2010a:527; Papi 2020:147–151), an aspectual contrast formally distinguished in the modern language through the use of the analytic form of the auxiliary to mark the perfective reading; and frequent omission of the complementizer/subordinator *che* 'that', not only in irrealis complement clauses, as still obtains today in formal registers, but also in indicative complement clauses and relative clauses (2g; Rohlfs 2021b:193; Maiden 1998:208; Benincà and Cinque 2010:474; Meszler and Samu 2010:777–781; Dardano 2012c:147f.; cf. also §10.2.2). The overall result is an abundance of often profound structural differences between earlier stages of the language and modern Italian which prove just as opaque, and indeed alien, to the modern reader as those encountered when learning a modern foreign language.

2 a Ebbe figliuoli (cf. modIt. *Ebbe* ***dei*** *figli*)
have.PST.PFV.3SG children have.PST.PFV.3SG of.the children

'He had (some) children' (*Nov.* XIX)

b fratel**mo** / **mio** fratello
brother=my my brother

'my brother' (*Dec.* VIII.7.35 / II.6.69)

c per l' amore **di me** è morto il **mio** Signiore (cf. modIt. *per l' amore mio*)
for the love of me be.3SG die.PTCP the my lord for the love my

'for my love my Lord has died' (*LSS* 68)

d bene **il mi** dovei più tosto dire tuo convenentre (cf. modIt. (***me lo***)
well it=me= must.PST.IPFV.2SG more soon say.INF your condition me= it=
*dovevi dir(e)(**melo**)*)
must.PST.IPFV.2SG say.INF(=me=it)

'rather you should have told me your condition' (*Trist. Ricc.* 26.19–20)

e Il maestro affermò che non **farebbe** (cf. modIt. . . . *che non l'*
the master affirm.PST.PFV.3SG that NEG do.COND.3SG that NEG it=
avrebbe ***fatto***)
have.COND.3SG do.PTCP

'The master gave assurance that he would not do it' (*Dec.* 8.9.16)

f a filosofare, come già detto è, è necessario amore
to philosophize.INF as already say.PTCP be.3SG be.3SG necessary love
(cf. modIt. *come* ***è*** ***stato*** *già* *detto*)
as be.3SG be.PTCP already say.PTCP

'as has already been explained, love is intrinsic to philosophizing' (*Conv.* III.13.2)

g [. . .] in quel modo ànno (cf. modIt. *in quel modo* ***che*** *hanno*)
in that way have.3PL in that what that have.3PL

'[. . .] in that manner (that) they have' (*Statuto vinattieri* 113)

In what follows we shall explore a selection of some of the most salient structural differences between modern Italian and the earliest stages of the language to offer a synchronic analysis of a number of the key features of the historical syntax of medieval Tuscan (*c.* late thirteenth century–end of fifteenth century), henceforth simply referred to as 'old Italian'. The decision to limit our attention to the language of the texts of this particular geographical area and chronological period is based on two considerations. The first is philological and linguistic in nature and based on the traditional claim (cf. Migliorini and Griffith 1984:78–116; Renzi and Salvi

2015:138f.; Salvi 2016b:62) that modern Italian ultimately has its roots in the dialect of Florence (though see Tomasin 2013), essentially representing a continuation of a form of medieval Tuscan as embodied most notably in the literary works of Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch. Indeed, by the end of the fifteenth century a form of Tuscan dialect (distinctively Florentine) was beginning to emerge as a model literary language in the various courts and cities across Italy. The second consideration is more practical and reflects the fact that, thanks to the recent publication of detailed treatments such as Salvi and Renzi (2010a), Dardano (2012a; 2020a), and Poletto (2014), we are now able to draw on extensive and illuminating descriptions and analyses of medieval Tuscan which, with the exception of the modern language (cf. Renzi, Salvi, and Cardinaletti 2001), are unparalleled for other periods and indeed for other diatopic varieties of Italy (though cf. Ledgeway 2009b).

10.2 Clausal syntax

10.2.1 Sentential word order and verb second

One of the most striking differences between modern and medieval Italian (and Romance in general, cf. Salvi 2004; Wolfe 2018) is manifested in the often radically differing clausal word order patterns they permit. Consider the old Italian sentences in (3a/4a) and their modern Italian equivalents in (3b/4b).

3 a Maestro mio, GRANDE PROVA ho veduto della tua sapienza. (*Nov.* II)
master my great proof have.1SG see.PTCP of.the your knowledge

b Maestro mio, ho visto UNA GRAN PROVA della tua sapienza. (modIt.)
master my have.1SG see.PTCP a great proof of.the your knowledge
'My master, I have seen great proof of your wisdom'

4 a Un giorno tolse questo re molto oro (*Nov.* VII)
a day take.PST.PFV.3SG this king much gold

b Un giorno questo re prese molto oro (modIt.)
a day this king take.PST.PFV.3SG much gold
'One day this king took much gold'

(3a) and (4a) exemplify a common early Romance structure in which the preverbal position is occupied by some constituent other than the subject, namely the direct object (*grande prova*) and a non-subcategorized adverbial phrase (*un giorno*), respectively. In the former case, the fronted rhematic direct object, which conveys new information constituting an example of informational focus,[1] contrasts sharply with modern Italian where preposing of rhematic constituents is only found under quite restrictive pragmatic conditions to license corrective/contrastive focus (cf. §20.3, §23.4), insofar as rhematic objects conveying informational focus canonically occur in post-verbal position (cf. 3b). Similarly, example (4a) demonstrates how, when the preverbal position is occupied by a constituent distinct from the subject such as a thematic adverbial, then the subject, whenever overtly realized, is generally required to immediately follow the verb, giving rise to a case of verb-subject inversion. Significantly, in this and similar examples of inversion the subject does not simply follow the finite verb but also precedes any other sentential constituents (subcategorized or otherwise), witness the order subject (*questo re*) + direct object (*molto oro*) in (4a). In modern Italian, by contrast, VSO order is ungrammatical and post-verbal subjects generally follow their associated objects and other sentential constituents (viz. VOS), and in such cases are typically associated with rhematic interpretations, whereas the post-verbal subject in (4a) is clearly thematic. Consequently, in the modern Italian translation in (4b) the thematic subject obligatorily occurs in preverbal position, yielding the canonical SVO order of transitive clauses.

Word order patterns such as these have led many linguists to argue that medieval Italian word order was characterized by a Verb Second (V2) constraint,[2] the origins of which can be retraced to late Latin (Ledgeway 2017a). Accordingly, during this V2 stage sentences consist of two principal parts (5a), a sentential core (IP) with fixed S+V+O+Adv order on a par with what is found in modern Italian (§20.1), and a left periphery (CP) to whose C(omplementizer) position the finite verb (below highlighted in bold) raises in root clauses. In turn, this fronting of the verb is often, though not invariably, accompanied by a further movement placing a pragmatically salient constituent to the immediate left of the fronted verb where it receives a (contrastively/informationally) focalized or thematicized interpretation. Thus, alongside V1 structures in which the verb alone fronts to the left periphery on account of the rhematic nature of the polar interrogative (5b), we also frequently find structures in which the verb stands in second position preceded by a fronted pragmatically salient constituent, possibly the subject (5c), but also the direct object (5d), indirect object (5e), prepositional complement (5f), adverb (5g), or nominal/clausal adjunct (5h–i).[3]

5 a [$_{CP}$ (Theme/Focus) V [$_{IP}$ S ~~V~~ O Adv]]

b [$_{CP}$ **conoscete** [$_{IP}$ voi ~~conoscete~~ questo?]]
know.2PL you.PL this

'do you recognize this?' (*Dec.* III.7.62)

c [$_{CP}$ la donna sua si **fa** [$_{IP}$ ~~la donna sua si fa~~ venire un garzone]]
the lady his REFL=make.3SG come.INF a boy

'his wife brings a boy into the house' (*Dec.* V.10.1)

d [$_{CP}$ Queste ti **doniam** [$_{IP}$ noi ~~ti doniamo queste~~ per dote della donna]]
these you.SG= give.1PL we for dowry of.the lady

'We give them to you for your wife's dowry' (*Dec.* X.7.46)

e [$_{CP}$ alla donna **rispose** [$_{IP}$ l' un di loro ~~rispose alla donna~~: . . .]]
to.the lady reply.PST.PFV.3SG the one of them

'one of them said to the lady: [. . .]' (*Dec.* X.9.32)

f [$_{CP}$ DI CIPRI **vegniamo** [$_{IP}$ ~~vegniamo di Cipri~~]]
of Cyprus come.1PL

''tis from Cyprus we come' (*Dec.* X.9.18)

g [$_{CP}$ ORDINATAMENTE **volle** [$_{IP}$ ~~volle~~ sapere ~~ordinatamente~~ come . . .]]
gladly want.PST.PFV.3SG know.INF how

'he would fain have from her an account of how [. . .]' (*Dec.* V.3.41)

h [$_{CP}$ SENZA LE VOSTRE PAROLE m' **hanno** [$_{IP}$ gli effetti ~~m'hanno~~ assai dimostrata
without the your words me=have.3PL the effects much show.PTCP
della vostra benivolenzia ~~senza le vostre parole~~]]
of.the your good.will

'even without your words, your actions have already done enough to prove your goodwill towards me' (*Dec.* X.975)

i [$_{CP}$ Fatto questo, **fece** [$_{IP}$ Gualtieri ~~fece~~ tutti i suoi amici della contrada
do.PTCP this make.PST.PFV.3SG Gualtieri all the his friends of.the district
adunare ~~fatto questo~~]]
assemble.INF

'Having done this, Gaultieri assembled all the friends he had in those parts' (*Dec.* X.10.10)

In embedded clauses the left periphery typically hosts an overt Comp(lementizer) or subordinator and the finite verb is consequently forced to remain within the sentential core, yielding the order S+V+O+Adv (6a), as illustrated in (6b).[4]

6 a …[$_{CP}$ Comp [$_{IP}$ S V O Adv]]

b Io voglio [$_{CP}$ che [$_{IP}$ noi gli **traiamo** quelle brache del tutto]]
I want.1SG that we 3MSG.DAT= draw.1PL those breeches of.the all

'I want us to pull off those breeches of his altogether' (*Dec.* VIII.5.10)

V2 is not, therefore, to be interpreted as a simple descriptive statement about superficial linearizations, but should be understood in a more technical sense as a syntactic constraint which can be decomposed into two operations—(i) fronting of the finite verb to the vacant complementizer position, and (ii) fronting of a salient constituent—only the first of which is obligatory and can be understood to represent the core of the V2 constraint (cf. Holmberg 2015). Consequently, whether the verb superficially occurs in first (5b) or second (5c–i) position, the V2 generalization consistently holds, insofar as the finite verb invariably lexicalizes a position within the left periphery. Apart from the root-embedded clause asymmetry illustrated in (5)–(6), the presence of a V2 rule is further revealed by verb-subject inversion, not just the simple type already reviewed above in relation to (4a; cf. also 5b, d, e, i), but also the Germanic type illustrated in (5h) where the *in situ* subject occurs sandwiched between a finite auxiliary/functional predicate raised to the left periphery and its associated non-finite lexical verb in the sentential core. With the exception of some very learnèd, formal constructions such as Aux-to-Comp (Rizzi 1981; 1982; cf. §21.3.3.5), Germanic-style inversion is otherwise ungrammatical in modern Italian.

Another overt reflex of the V2 constraint can be seen in examples such as (5d–e) where a thematic complement of the verb has been fronted, but is not picked up by a resumptive clitic on the verb (Benincà 2010b:48f.; Lauta 2012:77; Poletto 2014:17, 33). This highlights how V2-driven fronting is very different from the type of topicalization found in modern Italian where left-dislocated direct and indirect objects obligatorily and optionally co-occur, respectively, with a resumptive clitic (Benincà 2001a:43), e.g., modIt. *Queste(,) noi te **(**le**) diamo . . ., alla donna(,) (**le**) rispose che. . . .* That is not to say that old Italian did not also have this type of topical dislocation structure, the distribution of which can be readily accommodated if we conceive of the left periphery in (5a) in terms of two distinct sub-spaces along the lines of (7).

7 [$_{TopP}$ HT, Circum., (Cl)LD [$_{CP}$ Theme/Focus V_{finite} [$_{IP}$ ~~V_{finite}~~ [$_{VP}$ (S) V (XP . . .)]]]]

As already noted, immediately above the sentential core (IP) we can first identify within the left periphery the C-domain—we use CP here as a syncretic label for the lower projections typically labelled as FinP and FocP in the literature—an area which hosts the raised finite verb in the vacant C(omplementizer) position and a thematicized or focalized constituent in its associated specifier position. In turn, CP is preceded by an extra-sentential topicalization space—here labelled TopP—specialized in hosting hanging topics (HT), scene-setting and circumstantial elements (Circum.), and (clitic left-)dislocated constituents ((Cl)LDs).[5] Now, CP, which only provides for one specifier position, is to be equated with the position targeted by fronted constituents as part of the V2 rule triggered by the prior movement of the finite verb to C, whereas the hosting of one or more constituents within the topicalization space (TopP) is strictly interpreted as independent of the V2 constraint. This explains why alongside the superficially V1 and V2 structures in (5b) and (5c–i), outputs of the V2 rule proper, the finite verb may also frequently surface in third (8a), fourth (8b), or fifth (8c) position (or even beyond), if the extra-sentential space hosts various base-generated topical constituents (cf. Dardano 2020b:33–35).

8 a E [$_{TopP}$ [oltre a queste], [$_{CP}$ [MOLTE ALTRE COSE] disse [$_{IP}$ ~~disse molte altre~~
and beyond to these many other things say.PST.PFV.3SG
~~cose~~ della sua lealtà]]]
of.the his loyalty

'And much besides he told of his loyalty' (*Dec.* I.1.86)

b [$_{TopP}$ [ora] [per le tue parole] [$_{CP}$ [MOLTO MAGGIORMENTE] il conosco [$_{IP}$ ~~il~~
now for the your words very more him= know.1SG
~~conosco molto maggiormente~~]]]

'I have now yet ampler assurance through your own words' (*Dec.* III.5.19)

c [$_{TopP}$ [Ragunata adunque una buona brigata tra di giovani fiorentini che
assemble.PTCP thus a good company among of young Florentines that

per la villa erano di lavoratori], [la mattina vegnente], [dinanzi alla
for the village be.PST.IPFV.3PL of workers the morning coming before to.the
chiesa intorno all' olmo] [$_{CP}$ [Bruno e Buffalmacco] vennono [$_{IP}$ ~~vennono~~
church around to.the elm Bruno and Buffalmacco come.PST.PFV.3PL
~~Bruno e Buffalmacco~~ con una scatola di galle]]]
with a box of pills

'On the following day, a large company of young men from Florence, who happened to be in the village, and of husbandmen, being assembled in front of the church around the elm, Bruno and Buffalmacco came bearing a box containing the pills' (*Dec.* VIII.6.41)

In summary, in contrast to modern Italian where word order is largely grammatically constrained (cf. §20.1), the word order of old Italian is, as in Latin which early texts often attempt to emulate, much more discourse-driven, combining a grammatically fixed word order in the sentential core (most visible in embedded contexts), which has remained substantially unchanged in the history of Italian, with a free, though pragmatically conditioned, word order in the left periphery (Ledgeway 2011b:727; 2012a:65–68; Lauta 2012:70).

10.2.1.1 Clitic placement: the proclisis-enclisis alternation

Our analysis of old Italian word order in terms of V2 combined with the fine structure of the left periphery proposed in (7) also provides an elegant explanation for the distribution of the proclisis-enclisis alternation of object clitic pronouns in old Italian. As extensively argued in Salvi (2004), the position of clitic pronouns in old Italian serves as an important diagnostic in understanding word order since, as place-holders which demarcate the left edge of the sentential core (IP), clitic pronouns can be used to pinpoint the position of the finite

verb. In particular, we assume that clitic pronouns raise from within the VP to surface at the left edge of the IP as weak (viz. phrasal) pronouns from where they follow the finite verb raised to C under V2.[6] However, these pronouns may also raise (as heads) from this position in the sentential core to cliticize onto the fronted verb. On this view, enclisis is to be interpreted as the result of purely phonological cliticization of a phrasal (viz. weak) pronoun to the finite verb to its left (9a), whereas proclisis obtains as the result of syntactic cliticization of a pronominal head (viz. clitic) onto the finite verb fronted to CP (9b).

9 a $[_{TopP}$ (XP…) $[_{CP}$ V $[_{IP}$ $[_{DP}$ =**Cl**] ∀ $[_{VP}$ (S) ∀ (XP…)]]]] (enclisis)
b $[_{TopP}$ (XP…) $[_{CP}$ [Theme/Focus] $[_{D}$ **Cl**=] V $[_{IP}$ $[_{DP}$ ~~Cl~~] ∀ $[_{VP}$ (S) ∀ (XP…)]]]] (proclisis)

Armed with these assumptions we can now straightforwardly interpret proclisis-enclisis alternations as a concomitant of V2. In particular, in the presence of a fronted constituent within CP all pronouns (highlighted in bold in our simplified structures below) invariably occur proclitic on the verb. This is exemplified in (10) where the fronted objects are a rhematic predicative complement, viz. contrastive focus (10a), and a thematic direct object without clitic resumption (10b), which were independently argued in §10.2.1 to involve fronting to CP driven by V2.

10 a $[_{TopP}$ $[_{CP}$ [CENTO ANNI] **gli** pareva $[_{IP}$ ~~**gli pareva**~~ ciascuna ora
hundred years 3MSG.DAT= seem.PST.IPFV.3SG each hour
~~cento anni~~]]]
'he counted each hour as a hundred years' (*Dec.* VIII.10.19)

b $[_{TopP}$ $[_{CP}$ [Questo peccato] **gli** fece $[_{IP}$ ~~**gli fece**~~ il vescovo
this sin 3MSG.DAT= make.PST.PFV.3SG the bishop
piagnere quaranta dí]]]
cry.INF forty days
'The bishop caused him to bewail his transgression forty days' (*Dec.* VIII.4.37)

By contrast, when CP remains empty as happens in rhematic declarative clauses (11a) and polar interrogatives (11b), even when the topicalization space hosts fronted elements such as the circumstantial gerundival clauses in (11c) and the scene-setting temporal adverb in (11d), all pronouns obligatorily appear enclitic to their associated verb:

11 a (io non vi volli star piú) e [$_{TopP}$ __ [$_{CP}$ __ son [$_{IP}$ **-mene**
I NEG there= want.PST.PFV.1SG stay.INF more and be.1SG me=thence
~~son~~ venuto]]]
come.PTCP

'(I was minded to stay there no longer) and so I came away' (*Dec.* III.9.9)

b [$_{TopP}$ __ [$_{CP}$ __ Hai [$_{IP}$ **-ti** ~~hai~~ sentita sta notte cosa niuna?]]]
have.2SG =you.SG feel.PTCP this night thing none

'Hadst thou no pain during the night?' (*Dec.* IX.3.8)

c [$_{TopP}$ [non vedendone alcuno ed essendo la donna gravida], [$_{CP}$ __ penso
NEG see.GER=of.it none and be.GER the lady pregnant think.PST.PFV.3SG
[$_{IP}$ **-ssi** ~~pens~~ò di volere suo compar divenire]]]
=self of want.INF his godfather become.INF

'seeing no way, and the lady being pregnant, he cast about how he might become her child's godfather' (*Dec.* VII.3.4)

d E [$_{TopP}$ istamane [$_{CP}$ __ diceste [$_{IP}$ **-l** ~~diceste~~ voi?]]]
this.morning say.PST.PFV.2PL =it you.PL

'And did you say it this morning?' (*Dec.* II.2.9)

These facts find a straightforward explanation in terms of the traditional Tobler-Mussafia Law,[7] one of whose principal generalizations states that enclisis obtains whenever the verb occurs in clause-initial position. Thus, in the case of fronting to CP, proclisis invariably obtains since the verb (raised to C) occurs in second position preceded by a fronted constituent in its specifier, allowing the pronoun to incorporate into the raised verb (12a). When, however, no constituent is fronted to CP, only enclisis is possible, even if the topicalization space hosts one or more dislocated constituents (12b): the verb now raised to C technically occurs in clause-initial position, inasmuch as elements contained within the extra-sentential topicalization space prove invisible to the Tobler-Mussafia generalization which only makes reference to the CP-layer in computing second-position effects.

12 a XP Cl=V: [$_{TopP}$ (YP) . . . [$_{CP}$ [XP] **Cl=V** [$_{IP}$ ~~Cl~~ ~~V~~ [$_{VP}$ (S) ~~V~~ . . .]]]] (proclisis)
b (YP) # V=Cl: [$_{TopP}$ (YP) . . . [$_{CP}$ [Ø] V [$_{IP}$ =**Cl** ~~V~~ [$_{VP}$ (S) ~~V~~ . . .]]]] (enclisis)

In short, we interpret the observed proclisis-enclisis alternation as a direct effect of V2 fed by the finite verb raising to C which creates either a V2 structure and proclisis in the presence of constituent fronting to CP (12a), or a V1 structure and enclisis in the absence of fronting to CP (12b). This demonstrates that clitic placement in old Italian proves sensitive to the placement of the finite verb and any

associated fronted constituents within the lower left periphery, whereas in varieties such as modern Italian there is no generalized movement of the finite verb to the left periphery (no V2) and generalized proclisis obtains (13).

13 Qualcuno / pro lo farà(**llo). (modIt.)
someone it= do.FUT.3SG(=it)
'Someone / S/he will do it.'

10.2.1.2 Distribution of null subjects

The distribution of null and overt pronominal subjects in old Italian (and early Gallo-Romance) has traditionally been argued to provide a robust cue for a V2 syntax.[8] Beginning with root clauses, these readily license null subjects in conjunction with topical referents, typically those already mentioned in the preceding discourse (14a–b).

14 a La qual cosa Rinaldo$_i$ vedendo, turbato forte, appena del correr loro
the which thing Rinaldo see.GER shaken strongly hardly of.the run.INF them
addosso e d' uccidergli [Ø$_i$] si ritenne: e, [...]
on and of kill.INF=them REFL= hold.back.PST.PFV.3SG and
seguitando l' impeto della sua ira [Ø$_i$] l' averebbe fatto.
follow.GER the impetus of.the his ire it= have.COND.3SG do.PTCP

'Rinaldo seeing this, very angry, could barely refrain from falling upon them and killing them on the spot; and, [...] giving way to the vehemence of his anger he would have done so.' (*Dec.* VI.7.6)

b L' abate$_i$, per potersi più pienamente informare del fallo commesso
the abbot for be.able.INF=REFL more fully inform.INF of.the error committed
da costui$_j$, avvisando che questi$_j$ accorto non se ne fosse
by this.one note.GER that latter realize.PTCP NEG REFL= thereof= be.PST.SBJV.3SG
che egli$_j$ fosse stato da lui$_i$ veduto, [Ø$_i$] fu lieto di tale
that he be.PST.SBJV.3SG be.PTCP by him see.PTCP be.PST.PFV.3SG happy of such
accidente e volentier [Ø$_i$] prese la chiave e similmente [Ø$_i$] li$_j$
event and willingly take.PST.PFV.3SG the key and similarly 3MSG.DAT=
diè licenzia
give.PST.PFV.3SG leave

'The abbot, desiring to have better cognizance of the offence committed by him [viz. the monk], and not dreaming that the latter knew that he had been detected, was pleased with the turn matters had taken, and received the key gladly, at the same time granted him leave.' (*Dec.* I.4.12)

On the other hand, overt pronominal subjects only occur to signal a change of topic (15a) or to establish a contrast with another topical referent in the discourse (15b).

15 a Antigono$_i$ incontanente riconobbe costei$_j$ essere Alatiel figliuola del
Antigono at.once recognize.PST.PFV.3SG her be.INF Alatiel daughter of.the
soldano [...] e [Ø$_i$] vollele$_j$ fare la debita reverenza; ella$_j$
soldan and want.PST.PFV.3SG=3FSG.DAT do.INF the due homage she
nol sostenne [...] La qual cosa da Antigono$_i$ fatta, egli$_i$
NEG=it sustain.PST.PFV.3SG the which thing from Antigono done he
reverentemente la$_j$ domandò come [...]
reverently her= ask.PST.PFV.3SG how

'Antigono at once recognized Alatiel as the Soldan's daughter [...] and wanted to pay her due homage; but she would not suffer it [...] Antigono having done so, he respectfully asked her how [...]' (*Dec.* II.7.95–96)

b **tu** ti starai cheto e **io** gli parlerò
you.SG you.SG= stay.FUT.2SG quiet and I 3MSG.DAT= speak.FUT.1SG

'you will keep quiet and I will speak to him' (*Dec.* 8.7.31)

Embedded clauses, by contrast, behave very differently in that they predominantly display overt pronominal subjects,[9] even when these are coreferential with the subject of the preceding clause and not interpreted as emphatic or contrastively focused (16a–c). Particularly revealing are examples such as (16a) where, in the final embedded clause, the subject pronoun *io* 'I' is even doubled since the first occurrence is required as part of this unmarked grammatical rule and as such has no effect on pragmatic interpretation, with the result that contrastive focus ('I myself') can only be expressed by inserting a second occurrence of the pronoun with genuine pragmatic content. The lack of pragmatic import of such pronouns is further highlighted by (16b) where, in the second embedded clause with impersonal *parere* 'seem', the grammatical requirement for a phonologically overt pronoun is such that even non-referential (viz. expletive) pronouns are given phonological content in embedded clauses, hence the appearance of *egli* 'it' (cf. modIt. (*sapevo che) (*****egli****/*****esso****) vi era parso che* . . . '(I knew that) **it** had seemed to you that . . .').[10] In all cases, the result is a structure which would be judged ungrammatical in modern Italian where the presence of an overt pronoun in the same contexts typically signals switch reference. Indeed, sentences like those in (16a–c) share more in common with non-pro-drop languages such as English than with textbook examples of pro-drop languages such as modern Italian (cf. modIt. *Vi so dire che, quando* ***lei*** *va fuori, (*****lei****) si fa notare, benché (*****lei****) sia normalmente riservata; ma non tanto tempo fa (*****lei****) vi passò davanti alla porta*).

16 b Oh lodato sia Iddio, ché **io** veggio che **io** sto meglio che
oh praise.PTCP be.SBJV.3SG God for I see.1SG that I stand.1SG better that
non stai **tu**, ché **io** non ho cotesto diavolo **io**.
NEG stand.2SG you.SG for I NEG have.1SG that devil I

'God be praised, for I see that I fare better than you, in that I myself have do not have that devilish thing.' (*Dec.* III.10.15)

b se **io** non udissi dire a voi che **egli**
if I NEG hear.PST.SBJV.1SG say.INF to you.PL that it.M
vi fosse paruto che **io** facessi quello che **io** so
you.PL= be.PST.SBJV.3SG seem.PTCP that I do.PST.SBJV.1SG that that I know.1SG
certissimamente che **io** non pensai, non che **io** facessi mai
most.certainly that I NEG think.PST.PFV.1SG NEG that I do.PST.SBJV.1SG never

'if I had not heard you say that it appeared to yourself that I did what I know most certainly I never thought, much less did' (*Dec.* VII.9.73)

c E sovvi dire che, quando **ella** va da torno, **ella** si fa
and know.1SG=you.PL say.INF that when she go.3SG from around she REFL= do.3SG
ben sentire, benché **ella** stea il piú rinchiusa: ma non ha per
well feel.INF although she stay.SBJV.3SG the more withdrawn but NEG have.3SG for
ciò molto che **ella** vi passò innanzi all' uscio
that much that she you.PL= pass.PST.PFV.3SG before to.the door

'And I may tell you that, when she goes abroad, she makes her presence very sensibly felt, albeit for the most part she keeps herself hidden away: however, 'tis no great while since she passed by your door' (*Dec.* VIII.9.75)

Old Italian thus exhibits an asymmetry in the licensing of null and overt subject pronouns in accordance with the root vs embedded opposition. Ultimately, this asymmetry can be interpreted as a reflex of the asymmetric V2 syntax of old Italian and the different positions lexicalized by the finite verb: when the verb raises in root clauses to the vacant complementizer position in the CP layer, null subjects are freely licensed (17a), whereas in embedded clauses, where the finite verb lexicalizes a position within the sentential core, pronominal subjects must be phonologically expressed (17b), although not interpreted as emphatic or contrastively focused. This asymmetrical distribution leads us to conclude that null subjects in old Italian (and in medieval Gallo-Romance in general) were not licensed exclusively, if at all, by rich verb inflexion for person and number, but, by a feature which the finite verb can only acquire by raising to the vacant C position, presumably the locus of finiteness in medieval Italian.

17 a ... [$_{CP}$ (Theme/Focus) V [$_{IP}$ (**io**/) **Ø** ~~V~~...]] [±null subject]

b ... [$_{CP}$ che [$_{IP}$ **io**/****Ø** V...]] [–null subject]

10.2.1.3 Generalized verb second

Although space prevents us from exploring the topic in detail, it has been proposed that the essence of the V2 rule just seen above for the clause can be extended to all areas of the grammar of old Italian (cf. Salvi 2011; Poletto 2010c:72–75; 2014; Renzi and Salvi 2015:147; Dardano 2020b:19f.). Consider, for example, the non-finite participial and infinitival verb forms in (18a–b) where we see that, in addition to the effects of V2 at the clausal level which result in fronting of the indirect and direct objects (*a cui*, *Il mio padre*) before the fronted functional predicates *ho* and *posso* and Germanic-style inversion of the subject *io*, constituents of the verb phrase may also raise to a lower VP-related left periphery, here labelled LP (cf. §20.3), to surface in front of the non-finite verb (itself argued to raise to the head of a lower left periphery though not indicated below). The result is a parallel distribution of V2 syntax at the level of the clause and the verbal group.

18 a A CUI ho io ~~ho~~ [$_{LP}$ COTANTI ANNI [$_{VP}$ ~~io~~ portato cotanto amore ~~a cui~~
to whom have.1SG I so.many years carry.PTCP so.much love
~~cotanti anni~~]]?

'To whom have I borne so much love these many years?' (*Dec.* III.6.35)

b Il mio padre—disse Giannotto— posso io ~~posso~~ [$_{LP}$ omai SICURAMENTE
the my father say.PST.PFV.3SG Giannotto can.1SG I now safely
[$_{VP}$ ~~io~~ manifestare ~~il mio padre omai sicuramente~~]]
disclose.INF

'"My father's name", answered Giannotto, "I may now safely make known"' (*Dec.* II.6.46)

Assuming this analysis to be along the right lines, similar left peripheries can be generalized to all categories to explain surface structures such as those below in which a complement or modifier is variously extracted and raised to the left of a nominal (19a), quantifier (19b), adjectival (19c), (stative-resultative) participial (19d), adverbial (19e), or prepositional (19f) head, producing so-called scrambled orders which are impossible in modern Italian (Ledgeway 2018).

19 a sperando che [. . .] [LP di ciò [NP **merito** ~~di ciò~~ ci debba seguire] (cf. [. . .] per
hope.GER that of that reward us= must.SBJV.3SG follow.INF for
[NP **merito** di ciò])
reward of that

'in the hope that [. . .] we may come by our reward thereof / for reward thereof'
(*Dec.* X.9.4 / XIII.7.48)

b Udistú [. . .] [LP COSA [QP **niuna** ~~cosa~~ della quale tu dubiti [. . .]]]?—[. . .]
hear.PST.PFV.2SG=you.SG thing none of.the which you.SG doubt.2SG
di [QP **niuna** cosa che io udissi] dubito
of none thing that I hear.PST.SBJV.1SG doubt.1SG

'Did you hear [. . .] anything about which you have any doubts [. . .]? —[. . .] I doubt nothing of what I heard' (*Dec.* I.6.14–15)

c mai io non sarò [LP di tal maritaggio [AP **contento** ~~di tal maritaggio~~]]
never I NEG be.FUT.1SG of such marriage happy.MSG
(cf. Ricciardo, [AP **contento** di questo] [. . .])
Ricciardo happy.MSG of this

'I shall never be happy with such a marriage / Ricciardo, happy with this [. . .]'
(*Dec.* III.9.24 / III.6.22)

d Coloro sono [LP DI NERO [PtcpP **vestiti** ~~di nero~~]] (cf. un maestro Simone [. . .]
those be.3PL of black dress.PTCP.MPL a master Simone
[PtcpP **vestito** DI SCARLATTO])
dress.PTCP.MSG of scarlet

'They are dressed in black / Master Simone [. . .] dressed in scarlet' (*Dec.* III.7.11 / VIII.9.5)

e [AP [LP DIMESTICO [AdvP **assai**] ~~dimestico~~]] ed amico di costoro esser gli
familiar very and friend of those be.INF 3MSG.DAT=
parve (cf. con [AP [**assai**] belle e leggiadre] parole)
seem.PSTPFV.3SG with very beautiful and elegant words

'he seemed to him sufficiently familiar and friendly to them / in very civil and pleasant terms'
(*Dec.* IV.3.12 / I.10.14)

f un giovane [. . .] di paese non guari [LP al suo [PP **lontano** ~~al suo~~]] (cf. un bosco
a youth of country NEG very to.the his far a wood
[. . .] non guari [AP **lontano** alla lor casa])
NEG very far to.the their house

'a young man [. . .] of a country not very distant from his own / a wood [. . .] not very far from their house' (*Dec.* X.3.7 / IX.7.5)

10.2.2 Complementizers

In (7) the clausal left periphery was decomposed into two layers: (i) a lower intra-sentential layer (CP) hosting a position lexicalized by complementizers in embedded contexts and by the finite verb in root clauses under V2, with associated modifier position optionally targeted by a fronted theme/focus; and (ii) a higher extra-sentential layer (TopP) hosting various topicalized constituents (hanging topics, clitic left dislocations) and frame-related elements (scene-setting/circumstantial adverbials). While this structural representation makes the correct prediction that in embedded clauses we should find the order Topic + complementizer (20a), it fails to predict the even more frequent order complementizer + Topic (20b).

20 a nel Consiglio di Roma si provide, la risposta della domanda de'
in.the council of Rome REFL= decide.PST.PFV.3SG the reply of.the question of.the
Greci, che si dovesse fare per Socrate filosofo
Greeks that self= must.PST.SBJV.3SG do.INF for Socrates philosopher

'The Roman Council decided that the reply to the Greeks' question should be made by the philosopher Socrates' (*Nov.* LXI)

b Io non posso consigliare che, invecchiando, la natura non muti in debolezza
I NEG can.1SG advise.INF that age.GER the nature NEG change.SBJV.3SG in weakness

'I cannot do other than tell you that, when the nature of man grows old, the good natural heat changes into weakness' (*Nov.* LXVIII)

Evidence like this has led researchers (cf. Rizzi 1997; Benincà and Poletto 2004) to hypothesize that the two layers of the left periphery are closed off not only downwards by a complementizer position (termed *Fin* in the technical literature), but also upwards by a higher complementizer position (termed *Force*), as illustrated in (21).

21 $[_{\text{TopP}}$ ***che***$_{\text{Force}}$ + HT, Circum., (Cl)LD $[_{\text{CP}}$ (Theme/Focus) ***che***$_{\text{Fin}}$ $[_{\text{IP}} \ldots]]]$

Additional compelling evidence for these two complementizer positions comes from so-called recomplementation structures (cf. also §12.5) where both complementizer positions are simultaneously lexicalized around a topical constituent (Wanner 1998; Ledgeway 2012a:169–173; Vincent 2006; 2019:327–330; Meszler and Samu 2010:772–777; Dardano 2012c:147f., 188–190; Munaro 2016).

22 a I savi strologi providero che s' elli non stesse anni
the wise astrologers foresee.PST.PFV.3SG that if he NEG stay.PST.SBJV.3SG years
diece che non vedesse il sole, che perderebbe lo vedere
ten that NEG see.PST.SBJV.3SG the sun that lose.COND.3SG the sight

'The wise astrologers counselled that he should be kept for ten years without ever seeing the sun otherwise he would lose his sight' (*Nov.* XIV)

b E però dice Stazio [...] che quando Adrasto, rege delli Argi,
and therefore say.3SG Statius that when Adrastus king of.the Argives
vide Polinice coverto d' un cuoio di leone [...], che esso
see.PST.PFV.3SG Polynices covered of a skin of lion that he
divenne stupido
become.PST.PFV.3SG astonished

'And therefore Statius recounts [...] that when Adrastus, king of the Argives, saw Polynices clad in a lion's skin [...], he was awestruck' (*Conv.* IV.25.6)

c divennero sì copiosi in dire che, per l' abondanza del molto parlare
become.PST.PFV.3PL so copious in speech that for the abundance of.the much speech
sanza condimento di senno, che cuminciaro a mettere sedizione e
without basis of sense that begin.PST.PFV.3PL to put.INF sedition and
distruggimento nelle cittadi
destruction in.the cities

'and they became so profuse in speech that, because of their abundance of speech without any leavening of sense, they began to sow sedition and destruction in the cities' (*Rett.* 28, 3–6)

However, this does not exhaust all the possibilities found in old Italian, in that alongside the options in (20a–b) and (22), both complementizer positions may also remain lexically unrealized (23a–b; Rohlfs 2021c:200; Meszler and Samu 2010:777–781; Dardano 2012c:147f.). Also in the absence of topicalized constituents, the complementizer may remain phonologically null, irrespective of whether it introduces an indicative (23c) or subjunctive (23d) complement.

23 a convenne Ø, quegli che sanza lite potea passare per uno, Ø
suit.PST.PFV.3SG he that without quarrel can.PST.IPFV.3SG pass.INF for one
pagasse quatro
pay.PST.SBJV.3SG four
'he who could have passed on without a quarrel for one had to pay four' (*Nov.* LIII)

b prego umilemente Ø a lei Ø tu guidi / li spiriti fuggiti del mio core
pray.1SG humbly to her you.SG guide.2SG the spirits fled from.the my heart
'I humbly beg that you guide to her / the spirits that have fled my heart' (Cavalcanti, *Rime* pp. 116–117, 47–48)

c disse al vescovo, Ø gli mancavano alcuni colori
say.PST.PFV.3SG to.the bishop 3MSG.DAT= lack.PST.IPFV.3PL some colours
'he told the bishop that he was missing some colours' (*Trecent.* CLXI)

d ordinò Ø si desse la croce per tutta Cristianità
order.PST.PFV.3SG REFL= give.PST.SBJV.3SG the cross for all Christianity
'he ordered and the cross should be given for the whole of Christendom' (*Nuova Cronica* VIII.43)

Following in part Meszler and Samu (2010:772; cf. also Renzi and Salvi 2015:152f.), the various options available to old and modern Italian are summarized in (24). In particular, old Italian allows all six theoretical options, whereas in modern Italian these have been reduced to just two, one of which (viz. 24f) is predominantly restricted to formal registers.

24	a	$[_{TopP}$	Ø	Topic	$[_{CP}$	che	$[_{IP}$	SVO . . .]]] (OIt.; cf. 20a)
	b	$[_{TopP}$	che	Topic	$[_{CP}$	Ø	$[_{IP}$	SVO . . .]]] (OIt. / modIt.; cf. 20b)
	c	$[_{TopP}$	che	Topic	$[_{CP}$	che	$[_{IP}$	SVO . . .]]] (OIt.; cf. 22)
	d	$[_{TopP}$	Ø	Topic	$[_{CP}$	Ø	$[_{IP}$	SVO . . .]]] (OIt.; cf. 23a–b)
	e	$[_{TopP/CP}$	$Ø_{IND}$				$[_{IP}$	SVO . . .]]] (OIt.; cf. 23c)
	f	$[_{TopP/CP}$	$Ø_{SBJV}$				$[_{IP}$	SVO . . .]]] (OIt. / modIt.; cf. 23d)

10.2.2.1 Embedded V2

V2 was shown above to follow an asymmetric distribution in old Italian: in root clauses the finite verb raises to the lower left-peripheral CP layer yielding the surface order (XP) V (S) O . . . , whereas in embedded clauses verb-fronting to CP is blocked, causing the finite verb to surface in the sentential core yielding the fixed SVO order, with concomitant overt realization of pronominal subjects (cf. §10.2.1.2). Although this is the case in most instances, this does not imply that V2 is invariably excluded in embedded contexts (Benincà

2010b:36–38; Dardano 2020b:18f.). Indeed, many examples of embedded V2, albeit often constrained by various syntactic and pragmatic factors, have been noted in the early Romance (and Germanic) literature on V2 (Vikner 1995:ch. 4; Salvi 2004:68–74). For instance, Benincà (1996:72) observes that '[i]n dependent complement sentences [. . .] the accessibility of CP appears more restricted than in main clauses, but only in quantity, not in quality'. Such cases can be unambiguously identified in that they deviate from the otherwise predominant embedded SVO pattern, displaying an immediately preverbal constituent other than the subject, and the subject, if overtly realized, is found immediately after the finite verb as a reflex of the regular inversion structure (25a–b). However, as expected, in most cases the subject, when pronominal, is null (25c–d) on a par with canonical V2 declarative clauses, but in contrast to canonical embedded clauses (cf. §10.2.1.2).

25 a Donna, tu ti fatichi invano, per ciò che QUA ENTRO **non potrai**
lady you.SG you.SG= toil.2SG in.vain for that that here inside NEG can.FUT.2SG
tu tornare
you.SG return.INF

'Wife, all your efforts are in vain, for you cannot come in here again' (*Dec.* VII.4.12)

b con ciò fosse cosa che QUIVI DOVE ERANO **non avevano**
with that be.PST.SBJV.3SG thing that there where be.PST.IPFV.3PL NEG have.PST.IPFV.3PL
essi a fare piú che tutti gli altri cittadini
they to do.INF more that all the other citizens

'seeing that there where they were they had no more to do than all the other citizens' (*Dec.* VI.9.13)

c egli non vuole che alla moglie il **dicano**
he NEG want.3SG that to.the wife it= say.SBJV.3PL

'he does not want them to tell his wife' (*Dec.* VIII.1)

d il pregò che MESSE **dicesse** per l' anima de' morti suoi
him= pray.PST.PFV.3SG that masses say.PST.SBJV.3SG for the soul of.the dead hers

'she besought him to say masses for the souls of her dead kinsfolk' (*Dec.* III.3.16)

We can also find examples of embedded V3 (26a), V4 (26b), and beyond (26c) if the higher topicalization layer of the left periphery also contains one or more topical constituents.

26 a e veduto che Calandrino la sua **aveva** sputata
and see.PTCP that Calandrino the his have.PST.IPFV.3SG spit.PTCP
'and seeing that Calandrino had spat out his' (*Dec.* VIII.6.46)

b il vi dirò, con questo patto, che voi per la croce A MONTESONE
it= you.PL= say.FUT.1SG with this pact that you.PL for the cross at Montesone
mi giurerete [...]
me= swear.FUT2PL
'I will tell you, on condition that you swear by the cross at Montesone [...]' (*Dec.* VIII.9.15)

c [...] per che egli poi, avutala cara, PER MOGLIE la **tenne**
for that he after have.PTCP=her dear for wife her= keep.PST.PFV.3SG
'[...] for which cause he afterwards, taking her into favour, entreated her as his wife' (*Dec.* III.9.1)

Given the enriched structure of the left periphery in (21), replete with at least two distinct complementizer positions in addition to various topic and focus positions sandwiched between them, embedded V2 structures (whether involving superficial V2 or V3> orders) now find an empirically and theoretically straightforward explanation. In particular, embedded V2 structures can quite simply be accommodated by assuming that the complementizer/subordinator lexicalizes the highest complementizer position in the left periphery immediately above the topicalization space, while the finite verb raises to the lowest complementizer position in the lower CP layer along the lines of (27).

27 $[_{\text{TopP}}$ *che* + HT, Circum., (Cl)LD $[_{\text{CP}}$ (Theme/Focus) V_{Fin} $[_{\text{IP}}$ (S) ~~V~~O ...]]]

In this light, the typology of complementizer options examined above in (24) can be further expanded to include embedded V2, as illustrated in (28). In particular, the examples of embedded V2 in (25)–(26) can now be naturally reinterpreted as a structural variant of recomplementation (cf. 22a–c, 24c), only differing from the latter in that the lower complementizer position is lexicalized by the fronted verb, rather than by the complementizer *che* 'that' which, in turn, introduces a canonical non-V2 embedded SV(O) structure. The relevant distinction thus lies in the differential lexicalization of the lower C(omplementizer) position which can be realized either through insertion of a complementizer (⇒ recomplementation; 28a) or by fronting of the finite verb (⇒ embedded V2; 28b).

28 a $[_{\text{TopP}}$ **che** Topic $[_{\text{CP}}$ **che** $[_{\text{IP}}$ SVO ...]]] (OIt.; cf. 21)
b $[_{\text{TopP}}$ **che** Topic $[_{\text{CP}}$ (Theme/Focus) **V** $[_{\text{IP}}$ S~~V~~O ...]]] (OIt.; cf. 25–26)

10.3 Sentential core

10.3.1 Auxiliary selection

Auxiliary selection has not changed greatly in the passage from old to modern Italian, insofar as both display a robust active-stative alignment. Accordingly, on a par with modern Italian (§20.2.1), in old Italian verbs with AGENT or EXPERIENCER subjects, namely transitives (29a) and unergatives (29b), select *avere* 'have', while verbs with UNDERGOER subjects, unaccusatives (30a),[11] passives (30b), and impersonals (30c), select *essere* 'be' (Jezek 2010:120; Dardano 2020c:69; Filipponio 2020a:196–198). Meteorological verbs (30d) are included in this latter class since their argument structure also fails to include the projection of an external argument (viz. AGENT/EXPERIENCER subject).

29 a Poi li **ho** chiamati ad udire
after them.M= have.1SG call.PTCP.MPL to hear.INF
'After calling them to hear what I have to say' (*Conv.* II.6.3)

b li malvagi e ingannati uomini [...] **hanno** infino a ora iniquamente parlato
the.MPL evil.MPL and misguided.MPL men.M have.3PL until to now perversely speak.PTCP.MSG
'the evil and misguided men [...] have until now spoken perversely' (*Conv.* II.5.1 IV.16.1)

30 a E li ciechi [...] **sono** caduti ne la fossa de la falsa oppinione
and the.MPL blind.MPL be.3PL fall.PTCP.MPL in the ditch of the false opinion
'And the blind [...] have fallen into the ditch of false opinion' (*Conv.* I.11.5)

b essi **furono** transmutati d' ebreo in greco
they.M be.PST.PFV.3PL translate.PTCP.MPL from Hebrew in Greek
'they were translated from Hebrew into Greek' (*Conv.* I.7.16)

c quando detto li **fu** che [...]
when say.PTCP.MSG 3MSG.DAT= be.PST.PFV.3SG that
'when it was said to him that [...]' (*Conv.* II.5.4)

d **essendo** piovuto nel Mugello, la Sieve cominciò a crescere
be.GER rain.PTCP.MSG in.the Mugello the Sieve begin.PST.PFV.3SG to grow.INF
'it having rained in the Mugello, the Sieve began to rise' (*Trecent.* CIII)

However, a major difference from the modern Italian pattern is found with reflexive predicates (La Fauci 2004; 2011; Jezek 2010:121f.; Renzi and Salvi 2015:150f.; Dardano 2020c:70). Whereas in the modern language all classes of reflexive predicate invariably select *essere* irrespective of the semantic nature of the surface subject, the situation is more nuanced in old Italian, reflecting a more consistent marking of the active-stative split that extends across reflexives. In particular, inherent (31a) and middle (31b) reflexives whose subject is an UNDERGOER consistently select *essere*, thus placing them on a par with non-reflexive unaccusatives (cf. 30a–d), whereas transitive reflexives, which are otherwise canonical transitive structures with an AGENT subject whose reflexive pronoun corresponds either to a genuine argument—direct object (32a), indirect object (32b), reciprocal (32c)—or a marker of inalienable possession (32d) or the antipassive (32e), naturally align with *avere*.

31 a Calcas s' **era** di quella fuggito
Calchas REFL= be.PST.IPFV.3SG from that flee.PTCP.MSG
'Calchas had fled from that [city]' (*Fil.* I.10)

b vidono che 'l fuoco s' **era** bene appreso
see.PST.PFV.3PL that the.MSG fire.M REFL= be.PST.IPFV.3SG well ignite.PTCP.MSG
'they saw that the fire had taken well' (*LSS* 54)

32 a lo mio cuore [...] sì vilmente s' **avea** lasciato possedere
the.MSG my.M heart so basely REFL= have.PST.IPFV.3SG leave.PTCP.MSG possess.INF
'my heart [...] had allowed itself to be so basely possessed' (*VN* 39.2)

b ella istessa s' **avea** data la morte
she self.FSG REFL= have.PST.IPFV.3SG give.PTCP.FSG the.FSG death.F
'she had taken her own life on account of the pain' (*Orosio* V.24, p. 343)

c **Avendosi** adunque questa promession fatta
have.GER=REFL now this.F promise.F make.PTCP.FSG
'After they had made this promise to each other' (*Dec.* VII.10.10)

d Messer lo geloso s' **avea** messe alcune
mister the.MSG jealous.MSG REFL= have.PST.IPFV.3SG put.PTCP.FPL some.FPL
petruzze in bocca
pebble.FPL in mouth
'The jealous husband had put some pebbles in his mouth' (*Dec.* VII.5.23)

e e' s' **avea** pensato fare cose incredibili
he REFL= have.PST.IPFV.3SG think.PTCP.MSG do.INF things incredible
'he had thought about doing incredible things' (*Trecent.* CLXXVII)

This distinction between unaccusative (viz. inherent, middle) reflexives on the one hand and argumental reflexives on the other does not only surface in the choice of auxiliary, but also in the relative optionality of the reflexive clitic: while the clitic is obligatory in conjunction with *avere* in cases such as (32a–e), it proves optional with unaccusative reflexives in compound paradigms such as (31a–b) where the punctual and resultative-stative interpretations may fall together semantically and formally (cf. *mi sono pentito* lit. 'me= be.1SG repent.PTCP (= I have repented)', hence *sono pentito* 'I am repented'). This is demonstrated by the near minimal pair in (33).

33 a [...] che contra lui **s'** **era** levato
who against him REFL= be.PST.IPFV.3SG raise.PTCP.MSG
'[...] who had raised up against him' (*Orosio* VII.29, p. 476)

b il sole [...], il quale **era** con vento levato
the.MSG sun.M the.MSG which.SG be.PST.IPFV.3SG with wind raise.PTCP.MSG
'the sun [...], which with the wind had risen' (*Orosio* V.15, p. 312)

Within the class of transitive reflexives, the distinction between argumental (cf. 32a–c) and non-argumental (cf. 32d–e) reflexives can also be optionally marked off by the choice of auxiliary (cf. Rindler-Schjerve and Kratshmer 1990; Filipponio 2020a:190f.): while selection of *avere* remains stable with the latter subclass, cases of *essere* can be found alongside *avere* with argumental reflexives (34a–b). Indeed, the distribution of *avere* remains most resilient

with non-argumental reflexives, which continue to co-occur with *avere* until the seventeenth century (35a–b; Rohlfs 2021c:124f.), by which time argumental reflexives had already long switched to *essere*, the sole auxiliary employed in modern Italian with all reflexives.

34 a E cosí si **furono** accordati
and thus REFL= be.PST.PFV.3PL agree.PTCP.MPL
'And in this way they agreed with each other' (*Trecent.* CXIX)

b son giovani che lungamente si **sono** amati insieme
be.3PL young.PL that longly REFL= be.3PL love.PTCP.MPL together
'they are young folk who have long loved each other' (*Dec.* V.6.40)

35 a una fantasia che t' **hai** posta in capo (16th-c. It.)
a.F idea.F that you.SG= have.2SG put.PTCP.FSG in head
'a mad idea that you have got into your head' (*Cort.* II.28)

b egli s' **aveva** portato la sera un uovo al letto (16th-c. It.)
he REFL=have.PST.PFV.3SG bring.PTCP.MSG the evening an egg to.the bed
'he had taken an egg with him to bed in the evening' (*Novelle* V)

10.3.2 Participle agreement

As in the modern language (cf. §20.2.2), the distribution of participle agreement in old Italian follows an active-stative alignment, albeit showing a less restrictive set of agreement controllers (Lucchesi 1962–1963; Egerland 1996; Loporcaro 1998:194–199; Salvi 2010b:561–566; Filipponio 2020a:178–187, 190–198). This is already clear from the examples of auxiliary distribution in §10.3.1 where agreement of the participle is controlled by UNDERGOERS, viz. direct objects (cf. 29a, 32a–d) or unaccusative (reflexive) subjects (cf. 30a–b, 31a–b, 33a–b), but not by AGENTS, viz. transitive/unergative subjects (cf. 29a–b, 32c–d). While the distribution of agreement with unaccusative subjects proves relatively straightforward and largely similar to modern Italian (Filipponio 2020a:180f.)—though see §10.1.3.3—the patterns of variation concerning object-controlled agreement are subject to various parameters of a morphosyntactic, lexical, textual, diachronic, and pragmatic nature.

Beginning with morphosyntactic parameters, one major dimension of variation concerns the split between lexical objects (including tonic pronominals) and pronominal clitic objects. In the modern language only members of the latter lexically closed class are potential agreement controllers,[12] whereas in old Italian participle agreement could be controlled by both lexical and clitic objects (36). The former also includes lexical objects of non-argumental transitive reflexives (cf. 32d) where in the modern language, with the exception of some archaicizing literary uses (Loporcaro 1998:88), the overwhelming tendency is for agreement with the subject, perhaps to be partly understood in relation to the diachronic switch from auxiliary *avere* to *essere*.

36 andò investigando chi fossono quelli che gli
go.PST.PFV.3SG investigate.GER who be.PST.SBJV.3PL those that 3MSG.DAT=
aveano **venduta** **quell' oca** [...] consumò quasi tutta la
have.PST.IPFV.3PL sell.PTCP.FSG that goose.F consume.PST.PFV.3SG almost all the
mattina [...] in andare investigando, e chi l' avesse **venduta**
morning in go.INF investigate.GER and who it= have.PST.SBJV.3SG sell.PTCP.FSG

'he investigated the identity of those who had sold him that goose [...] he spent almost the whole morning investigating, and who had sold it' (*Trecent.* CLXXXV)

With neither class, however, is agreement systematic. Of the two agreement is more robust with object clitics (Filipponio 2020a:183), irrespective of the proclitic-enclitic alternation (§10.2.1.1). As in modern Italian, third-person clitics always trigger agreement (37a–b),[13] a pattern also extended to partitive *ne* 'thereof' (37c), whereas first- and second-person clitics show occasional weakening of this rule (Salvi 2010b:563). Consequently, alongside the expected agreement cases such as (38a), examples of non-agreement such as (38b) are also occasionally found, anticipating a person-based split which has largely generalized in the modern language where today non-agreement with first- and second-person clitics increasingly represents the unmarked option (cf. §20.2.2).

37 a e avevala per gielosia **serrata** dentro della torre
and have.PST.IPFV.3SG=her for jealousy lock.PTCP.FSG inside of.the tower
'and out of jealousy he had locked her away inside the tower' (*LSS* 79)

b certi patti e ordini [...] a cui **s'** erano **dati**
certain pacts and orders to which REFL= be.PST.PFV.3PL give.PTCP.MPL
'certain pacts and orders which they had accepted' (*Nuova Cronica* XII.8)

c pesci [...] avendone **presi** alcuni
fish.MPL have.GER=thereof take.PTCP.MPL some.MPL
'fish [...] having caught some' (*Dec.* VI. Concl. 32)

38 a Il Signore di tutta la grazia **n'** ha **chiamati** ne la sua gloria eternale
the lord of all the grace us= have.3SG call.PTCP.MPL in the his glory eternal
'The Lord of all grace has summoned us in his eternal glory' (*Libro de' Vizî* VII)

b Tuo padre [...] che **n'** ha **offeso** tanto
your.SG father that us= have.3SG offend.PTCP.MSG so.much
'Your father who has offended us greatly' (*Fil.* I.13)

The greater retention of agreement with clitic objects over lexical objects also highlights another dimension of variation, namely, word order, inasmuch as clitics invariably have to leave their underlying object position to surface adjacent to the auxiliary, passing, as has often been argued in the theoretical literature (cf. Kayne 1989), through the participle thereby triggering the observed agreement. This same intuition also explains the widely noted generalization that agreement with lexical objects proves almost systematic when 'scrambled' (cf. §10.2.1.3) to the left of the participle (39a), but apparently optional with *in situ* objects (39b–c; cf. Lucchesi 1962–1963:214f.; Egerland 1996:37–68; Loporcaro 1998:19f.; Salvi 2010b:564f.; Filipponio 2020a:184f.).

39 a noi avemo **guardie** **ordinate** di gran podere e di gran conoscenza
we have.1PL guard.FPL order.PTCP.FPL of great power and of great knowledge
'we have marshalled guards of great power and knowledge' (*Nov.* LXIV)

b mio padre ha **offerti** **duomila** **marchi**
my father have.3SG offer.PTCP.MPL two.thousand mark.MPL
'my father has offered two thousand marks' (*Nov.* XVIII)

c et ha **preso** li **marchi**
and have.3SG take.PTCP.MSG the.MPL mark.MPL
'and he took the marks' (*Nov.* III)

This same principle of linearization also provides a significant insight into the observation why agreement proves once again much more robust (Lucchesi 1962–1963:220; Egerland 1996:61–63; Filipponio 2020a:183), when the object is fronted over the participle under relativization or interrogation (41a), although once again examples of non-agreement also occur (41b).

41 a **la** **gran** **perdita** **ch'** **avea** **fatta** **nell'** **altra** **battaglia**
the.FSG great loss.F that have.PST.PFV.3SG do.PTCP.FSG in.the other battle
'the great loss that he had suffered in the other battle' (*Libro de' Vizî* XLVII)

b **molti** **benefici** **ch'** **avea** **già** **ricevuto**
many.MPL benefit.MPL that have.PST.PFV.3SG already receive.PTCP.MSG
'many benefits which he had already received' (*Libro de' Vizî* XLI)

Turning now to lexical parameters, some of the morphosyntactic parameters reviewed above can often be overridden when the participle belongs to a small class of high frequency verbs. For example, Lucchesi (1962–1963:233) notes that the agreement generally licensed by fronted objects can often fail in conjunction with the participles *fatto* 'done', *dato* 'given', *avuto* 'had', *veduto* 'seen', and *detto* 'said'. While all five participles clearly display lexical uses, they also frequently function as functional predicates (causative *fatto*, perception *veduto*, modal/copular *avuto*) and/or light verbs, which might explain, at least in part, their failure to show systematic agreement. In the former case, the object is underlyingly selected by the following lexical infinitive and hence not a 'genuine' complement of the functional participle. Similarly, *qua* light verbs the surface object is not a canonical object of the verb but, rather, part of a denominal lexicalization forming what Folli and Harley (2013) call a complex predicate, e.g., *dare* 'give' + *consiglio/fine/ordine* 'advice/end/order' = *consigliare/finire/ordinare* 'to advise/finish/order', *fare* 'do' + *finta/coraggio/festa* 'pretence/courage/party' = *fingere/incoraggiare/festeggiare* 'to pretend/encourage/party'.

Another notable lexical factor is the behaviour of the grammatically feminine singular noun *cosa* 'thing.F' (Filipponio 2020a:182, 184). On account of its frequent semantically neutral reading '(a) thing (= something)', especially in the syntagm *tutta/ogni cosa* lit. 'all.FSG/each thing.F', in all respects equivalent to *tutto* 'all, everything', it often fails to license agreement on the

participle (42a), a behaviour which often extends to other syntagmatic collocations containing *cosa* (42b).

42 a Papa Bonifazio, che **ogni cosa** avea **sentito**
Pope Boniface that each thing.F have.PST.IPFV.3SG hear.PTCP.MSG
'Pope Boniface, who had heard everything' (*Trecent.* XXIX)

b **Tutte quelle cose** c' **ànno desiderato** gli occhi tui
all.FPL this.FPL thing.FPL that have.3PL desire.PTCP.MSG the eyes your
'All those things which your eyes have desired' (*Albertano* II.38.129)

Textual factors are also occasionally reported to influence the distribution of agreement (Lucchesi 1962–1963:256; 260; Salvi 2010b:565; Filipponio 2020a:185). For example, agreement with a preposed nominal is systematic in Dante (43a) and Boccaccio (43b), but variable in Petrarch (43c).

43 a ma prima avea ciascun **la lingua stretta** / coi denti
but first have.PST.IPFV.3SG each the.FSG tongue.F squeeze.PTCP.FSG with.the teeth
'each had first thrust out his tongue between his teeth' (*Inf.* XXI.137)

b avendo esso **la sua borsa mostrata**
have.GER he the.FSG his.FSG purse.F show.PTCP.FSG
'after he had shown his purse' (*Dec.* II.5.4)

c Piacemi aver **vostre questioni udite** / io ò
please.3SG=me have.INF your.PL.FPL question.FPL hear.PTCP.FPL I have.1SG
danni et inganni assai sofferto
damage.MPL and trick.MPL much suffer.PTCP.MSG
'I am pleased to have heard your pleas / I have suffered fallacy and harm' (*Canz.* 48.156 / *TT.* IX.87)

However, these textual differences cannot necessarily be separated from diachronic parameters of variation and the observation that, while agreement with lexical (*in situ*) objects is the norm until the mid-fourteenth century (Lucchesi 1962–1963:253–67; Egerland 1996:37–68; Filipponio 2020a:185) representing 83 per cent of all cases in Egerland's corpus, from 1360 onwards the situation is reversed and agreement becomes very much the exception rather than the norm (*c.* 26 per cent of cases in Egerland's corpus), a situation that persists until at least the middle of the sixteenth century (Loporcaro 1998:197).

The apparent optionality of agreement with *in situ* objects does not necessarily represent in all cases genuine optionality. Rather, as convincingly shown by De Cia, Ciconte, and Bentley (2022),

variability in agreement with an *in situ* object can be understood in terms of pragmatic factors and, in particular, the topicality or otherwise of the object. More specifically, participle agreement only obtains if the *in situ* object receives a givenness (44a) or aboutness/shift (44b) topical interpretation, but is absent under all other discourse-pragmatic conditions such as when the direct object occurs in narrow focus (44c).

44 a perché mi sottrai tu **i cavalieri miei** e ragunili a te? Al
why me= steal.2SG you.SG the.MPL knight.MPL my.MPL and gather.2SG to you to.the
quale disse Paulo: Non solamente de la tua corte ho
which say.PST.PFV.3SG Paulo NEG only of the your.SG court have.1SG
raccolti cavalieri, ma [...]
assemble.PTCP.MPL knight.MPL but

'why do you steal my knights and turn them to your cause? To which Paulo replied: I have taken knights not only from your court, but [...]' (*Leg.* II, 85, 16–21, p. 739)

b e giunto là [...] si ritornò a Parma. Dove, tirando un dì
and arrive.PTCP.MSG there REFL= return.PST.PFV.3SG to Parma where pull.GER a day
il prete da parte, li disse che a Carrara avea
the priest from side 3MSG.DAT= say.PST.PFV.3SG that at Carrara have.PST.PFV.3SG
trovata una giovane, la quale da lui s' era partita,
find.PTCP.FSG a.FSG youth.F the which from him REFL= be.PST.PFV.3SG leave.PTCP.FSG
e che [...]
and that

'once he arrived there, he returned to Parma, where, one day, he pulled the priest aside and told him that he had found a young woman in Carrara, who had parted from him, and whom [...]' (*Trecent.* CCXXIX)

c E il re disse: – Non temere; chi hai tu veduto?
and te king say.PST.PFV.3SG NEG fear.INF who have.2SG you.SG see.PTCP.MSG
– Ed ella disse: io ho **veduto gli dii**, ascendenti
and she say.PST.PFV.3SG I have.1SG see.PTCP.MSG the.MPL god.MPL ascend.PRS.PTCP.3PL
della terra.
from.the earth

'And the king said: – Fear not; whom did you see? – And she said: – I have seen the gods ascending from the earth.' (*Bibbia* III.28.11–13)

In (44a) *i cavalieri miei* is introduced in the previous discourse and hence forms part of the shared information between speaker and addressee, so that when it returns in Paolo's reply it is overtly picked up by participle agreement which serves to signal the topical interpretation of the object as given. In (44b), by contrast, *una giovane* has not been introduced in the previous discourse but represents a newly introduced topic that functions as the aboutness

topic of the following discourse, marking a shift in topic continuity which is overtly signalled again by participle agreement. In (47c), by contrast, the object of the participle *veduto* 'seen' occurs in narrow focus as the answer to the preceding *wh*-question and, as a non-topical constituent, is unable to be picked up by participle agreement. Significantly, the distribution of *in situ* agreement and apparent cases of what have traditionally been analysed as free variation can now be profitably reinterpreted as the reflex of a pragmatic distinction which formally discriminates between topical and non-topical readings.

10.3.3 Subject-verb agreement

In accordance with a pattern still attested in many modern Tuscan varieties (Rohlfs 2021c:19f.; Nocentini 1999; Ledgeway 2016a:227), in old Italian third-person subject-verb agreement is sensitive to syntactic configuration and, in turn, to pragmatic distinctions which, not by chance, largely parallel those just considered in §10.3.2 in relation to participle agreement with *in situ* objects (Salvi 2010a:169; 2010b:557f.; Filipponio 2020a:177f.). Whereas canonical preverbal subjects routinely control verb agreement (45a–b), default third-person singular agreement is frequently found with post-verbal subjects (46b), as well as with preverbal (left-peripheral) focalized subjects (45c). This latter example also highlights how default agreement cannot be framed solely in terms of grammatical number (viz. singular), but must also make reference to grammatical gender: although the finite verb *era* is singular in apparent agreement with the feminine singular focal subject *(della) vergognia*, failure of agreement is manifested in the default masculine singular form of the passive participles *stato fatto*.

45 a lo cerchio de la quale **li** **astrologi** **chiamano** epiciclo
the circle of the which the astrologers call.3PL epicycle
'whose circle the astrologers call an epicycle' (*Conv.* II.3.16)

b già **le** **quattro** **ancelle** **eran** del giorno / **rimase** a dietro
already the four maidens be.PST.IPFV.3PL of.the day remain.PTCP.FPL to behind
'the four handmaidens of the day were already left behind' (*Purg.* XXII.128)

c [...] della **vergongnia** che lli era **stato** **fatto**
of.the shame.FSG that him.DAT= was.PST.IPFV.3SG be.PTCP.MSG do.PTCP.MSG
'[...] of the disgrace which had been done unto him' (*Cron.fior.* apud Salvi 2010b:558)

46 a Molte fïate già **pianser** li figli
many times already cry.PST.PFV.3PL the children
'Many a time, before now, the children have grieved' (*Par.* VI.109)

b si **convertio** alla fede di Cristo **lxx$^{m.}$** **huomini**
REFL= convert.PST.PFV.3SG to.the faith of Christ 70,000 men
'Seventy thousand men converted to the faith of Christ.' (*Cron.fior.* 115.20–21)

c non son **rimase** acerbe né mature / **le** **membra** **mie** di là
NEG be.3PL remain.PTCP.FPL unripe nor ripe the limbs my from there
'my limbs have not remained over there, green or ripe in age' (*Purg.* XXVI.55–56)

The contrasts in the examples in (45)–(46) reveal that the relevant agreement facts cannot be explained solely in structural terms, but also involve pragmatic considerations. Preverbal subjects of both transitives/unergatives (45a) and unaccusatives (45b) may exhibit full agreement, but the contrast between (46a–b) highlights that default agreement only arises with post-verbal subjects of unaccusatives (46b), but not transitives/unergatives (46a). Consequently, on the one hand we are led to conclude that the relevant distinction is structural, since default agreement appears to be tied to the post-verbal position and to a transitive/unergative-unaccusative split, ultimately to be interpreted in terms of the specific post-verbal position occupied by unaccusative subjects. On the other, the evidence of (46c) in which a post-verbal unaccusative subject licenses full agreement in contrast to (46b) reveals that structural factors alone are not the whole story, especially since we have seen that focalized preverbal unaccusative subjects (45c) can also yield default agreement. Rather, the relevant structural constraints can in part be derived from pragmatic considerations inasmuch as, unlike transitive/unergative subjects, the subjects of

unaccusatives are typically introduced into the discourse in post-verbal position as new referents. On this view, the failure of full agreement with a focalized preverbal unaccusative subject (cf. 45c) and a rhematic post-verbal unaccusative subject (cf. 46b) now fall together as examples of focal unaccusative subjects, whereas examples of topical preverbal (cf. 45b) and post-verbal (46c) unaccusative subjects uniformly display full agreement. In short, we see a combination of structural and pragmatic factors: (i) structurally, default agreement is linked to the (underlying) post-verbal position of unaccusative subjects identifiable with the complement position of the verb, which is not available to transitive/unergative subjects which are generated as external arguments outside the lexical VP proper; (ii) pragmatically, only focal unaccusative subjects, whether they occur *in situ* or undergo focus fronting, yield default agreement, while topical ones license full agreement, a pattern which parallels the distribution of participle agreement with *in situ* objects.

This also explains why the verb in the passive (47a), passive *si* construction (47b), and existentials (47c) also frequently shows default agreement in conjunction with a post-verbal UNDERGOER subject, inasmuch as the relevant nominal is typically rhematic and hence non-topical in nature (Salvi 2010a:148, 152, 169, 174; Dardano 2020c:62–69; Filipponio 2020a:195–200).

47 a **Fu** **fatto** **beffe** di loro da quelli che […]
be.PST.PFV.3SG do.PTCP.MSG prank.FPL of them by those that
'He was mocked by those that […]' (*Trecent.* CLIX))

b Qui **si** **fa** **molti** **arnesi**
here REFL= do.3SG many.M tool.MPL
'Here many tools are produced' (*Milione* 140)

c Ed **evvi** dentro **Ispagna** e **Normandia, Inghilterra, Brettagna, Scozia**
and be.3SG=LOC inside Spain and Normandy England Britain Scotland
'And inside there are Spain, Normandy, English, Britain, Scotland' (*Libro* VIII, pp. 39–40)

Given the facts above, it is tempting to analyse the examples of default agreement as impersonal constructions introduced by a null expletive pronominal (cf. Eng. *it, there*) in subject position which is responsible for the observed third-person masculine singular agreement found on the verb. This finds direct support in the observation that the expletive pronominal can also be overt, viz.

egli/e'/elli 'he, it.M' (Rohlfs 2021b:144; Salvi 2010a:170–172; Filipponio 2020b:512f.), especially in embedded contexts (cf. §10.2.1.2) and increasingly from the fourteenth century (Salvi 2010a:170), as illustrated by the following unaccusative (48a), impersonal (48b), passive (48c), passive *si* (48d), existential (48e) examples.

48 a egli è suto bel tempo
it.M be.3SG be.PTCP.MSG fine.MSG weather.M
'it was good weather' (*LSS* 58)

b egli è gran peccato che [...]
it.M be.3SG great sin that
'It is a great pity that [...]' (*Dec.* IX.6.26)

c poi ch' elli fue dato loro copia di parlare
after that it.M be.PST.PFV.3SG give.PTCP.MSG them.OBL copy.FSG of speak.INF
'after they were given the possibility of speaking' (Lancia, *Eneide* I, 170)

d E' si disse che [...]
it.M REFL= say.PST.PFV.3SG that
'It was said that [...]' (*Cron. fior.* 142.17–18)

e E' fue un signore ch' [...]
it.M be.3PST.PFV.3SG a lord that
'There was a lord who [...]' (*Nov.* LXXIX)

10.4 Nominal group

10.4.1 Indefinite article

An area of significant diachronic variation between old and modern Italian lies in the numerous dimensions of variation characterizing the nominal group (Giorgi and Giusti 2010; Picchiorri 2020), many of which can be captured in terms of the functional categories and associated functional structure that make up the nominal group. An obvious place to start is Quintilian's oft-quoted remark 'noster sermo articulos non desiderat' ('our language has no need of articles'),

highlighting a salient typological difference between Latin and Greek in nominal functional structure of a parametric nature. Effectively, Quintilian's observation distinguishes between languages that lack articles such as Latin, which fail to grammaticalize definiteness overtly in the syntax through the lexicalization of the D(eterminer) position with a definite article (cf. Bošković 2008; Ledgeway 2012a:89–96), and Romance varieties which, from around the eighth century (Ledgeway 2012a:96), grammaticalized the marking of definiteness on D through a weakened form of the Latin distal demonstrative ILLE 'that'. In accordance with the cross-linguistic generalization that marking of indefiniteness is dependent on the prior availability of marking for definiteness (Keenan 2011; Longobardi 2012:308–15), we can derive the fact that, despite presenting a definite article, the earliest Italian texts often fail to fully grammaticalize the [±count] distinction on D.[14] Indeed, systematic usage of the indefinite article, which continues a weakened form of the Latin numeral for 'one' (< UNUM/-AM), does not become firmly established until around the fourteenth century (Maiden 1995a:121; Ledgeway 2012a:82–89). Before then bare nominals are often employed for non-particularized referents (49a), whereas the indefinite article is reserved for particularized new referents (49b), undoubtedly a residue of its origin as a numeral (Parry and Lombardi 2007:91f.). In the modern language, by contrast, indefinite nominals, whether particularized or not, require the article in all cases (cf. modIt. *Dammi* ***un*** *cavallo da cavalcare . . .*).

49 a «Che vuoli tu ch' io ti doni […]?» – «Donami **cavallo da**
what want.2SG you.SG that I you.SG= give.SBJV.1SG give.IMP.2SG=me horse to
cavalcare e **somiere** […]»
ride.INF and beast.of.burden

'"What is it that you want […]?" – "Give me a horse to ride and a beast of burden […]"' (*Nov.* III)

b Or avenne ch' entrò in una barca con **un suo cavallo** e
now happen.PST.PFV.3SG that enter.PST.PFV.3SG in a boat with a his horse and
con **un suo fante**
with a his servant

'Now it happened that he entered into a boat with a horse and a servant of his' (*Nov.* LXXVII)

Such data show that, in contrast to modern Italian, the principal formal opposition in the old Italian determiner system is not so much between definite *lo* and indefinite *uno* but, rather, between definite *lo* and indefinite Ø (Lauta 2020:155, 160f.). However, besides the early opposition between zero and the indefinite article

in introducing non-particularized and particularized rhematic NPs, respectively, early texts also display other rival quantifiers in these functions (cf. Stark 2002; Renzi 2010a:325; Lauta 2020:380–382). Alongside zero, non-particularized rhematic NPs were frequently introduced by (ALIQUEM + UNUM/-AM 'some' + 'one' >) *alcuno* 'some (or other)' (50a), whereas particularized rhematic NPs could be introduced by a reflex of *(un) certo* '(a) certain' as an alternative to the simple form of the indefinite article (50b). In terms of information structure, non-specific indefinite NPs marked by *alcuno* (or zero) tend to be backgrounded in the narrative discourse, occurring most frequently in subordinate clauses with irrealis or negated verbs (Stark 2002:323–326), whereas indefinite NPs with specific interpretation marked by *(un) certo* are foregrounded, typically surfacing in main clauses with realis and affirmative verb forms, witness the following contrasts.

50 a quando qui mi viene alle mani **alcuna giovanetta** che mi piaccia
when here me= come.3SG to.the hands some girl that me= please.3SG
'whenever a girl to my liking comes my way' (*Dec.* II.9.5)

b io ti farò fare **una certa bevanda stillata molto buona** e
I you.SG= do.FUT.1SG do.INF a certain drink distilled very good and
molto piacevole a bere
very pleasant to drink.INF
'I will have a very good and palatable drink distilled for you' (*Dec.* IX.3.28)

10.4.2 Definite article

Although in later stages of the language that grammaticalize both the definite and indefinite articles the definite article displays considerable attenuation of its original deictic force, coming to encode in modern Italian shared cognition between speaker(s) and addressee(s) such that the article is required with unique, abstract, and generic referents, in old Italian it still retained considerable identifying force. Consequently, in early texts the definite article is frequently excluded with unique, abstract, and generic referents (Parry and Lombardi 2007:83f.; Renzi 2010a:318f., 329f., 335–337). While the article is optional when the nominal occurs in preverbal subject position (51a–b), it is predominantly absent when the

nominal occurs in complement position (51b), including post-verbal unaccusative subjects (51c), and even more systematically so when the complement of a preposition (51d; Lauta 2020:361).

51 a **giustizia** è perpetua e ferma volontade d' animoche dae a
justice be.3SG perpetual and steady desire of spirit that give.3SG to
ciascuno sua ragione
each its reason

'justice is the constant and firm will to give everybody what is due to them' (*Rett.* 20.9)

b **la** **povertá** non toglie **gentilezza** ad alcuno
the poverty NEG remove.3SG kindness to one

'poverty deprives no man of kindness' (*Dec.* IV.1.43)

c qui si non apare mai **sole** né **luna** né **stella**; sempre mai
here so NEG appear.3SG never sun nor moon nor star always never
v' è **notte**
LOC= be.3SG night

'at all times there is darkness, for the sun is not ever seen there nor moon nor star' (*Milione* 205)

d sarem fuor di **speranza** et fuor d' **errore**
be.FUT.1PL out of hope and out of error

'we shall be out of hope and out of woe' (*Canz.* 209.8)

This difference between earlier and later stages of Italian can be captured in terms of a microparametric opposition between weak and strong D languages (Guardiano and Longobardi 2005). Old Italian thus qualifies as a weak D language in that it did not require overt association in the syntax between N and D, hence uniqueness, kind-reference, and genericity are not explicitly lexicalized on D, as illustrated by the absence of the article in (51).[15] This also naturally extends to proper names (Renzi 2010a:326–330; Lauta 2020:362–364), where the article is not generally required with toponyms (52a) and anthroponyms (52b). In strong D languages such as modern Italian, by contrast, uniqueness, kind-reference, and genericity are licensed through explicit association of N and D in the syntax requiring the use of an expletive article in the equivalent sentences of (51a–c), though not in (51d) where following prepositions modern Italian largely preserves the old Italian pattern. Proper names, however, display a mixed behaviour in accordance with a degree of diatopic and diastratic microvariation in relation to the 'strong' D setting: while toponyms denoting large geographical expanses

require the article (53a), anthroponyms do not take the article in the standard language (53b). However, a major divergence from this pattern is found in most spoken varieties of Tuscan and northern regional Italian (53c) where we find a gender split between feminine and masculine first names which occur with and without the article, respectively.

52 a tornando di **Spagna** in **Italia**, passò le montagne d' **Apennino**
return.GER from Spain in Italy pass.PST.PFV.3SG the mountains of Apennine
'on his return from Spain to Italy, he crossed the Apennine mountains' (*Nuova Cronica* II.6)

b [...] granchio; delle quali tanaglie e **Peruccia** e **Mauro** ebbono
crab of.the which claws and Peruccia and Mauro have.PST.PFV.3PL
gran paura
great fearaura
'crab, whose claws both Peruccia and Mauro greatly feared' (*Trecent.* CCVIII)

53 a Tornando **da******(lla)** **Spagna** in Italia passò ****(gli)** **Appennini**. (modIt.)
return.GER from.the Spain in Italy pass.PST.PFV.3SG the Apennines

b (****La**) **Piera** e (****il**) **Mauro** si sono bisticciati. (modIt.)

c ****(La)** **Piera** e (****il**) **Mauro** si sono bisticciati. (N-CRIt.)
the Piera and the Mauro REFL= be.3PL bicker.PTCP.MPL
'Piera and Mauro have fallen out.'

10.4.3 Adjectival placement

As a strong D language, modern Italian also displays cases where, in the absence of a determiner, the noun itself may lexicalize the D(eterminer) area, involving so-called N(-to-D)-raising. Particularly instructive in this respect are adjective-noun orders (cf. Vincent 1986; 2007:57–61; Ledgeway 2012a:50–57; Giusti 2016:545–549). Oversimplifying greatly (though see §12.5, §19.3.2), in modern Italian pre-nominal and post-nominal adjective positions typically correlate with non-contrastive and contrastive readings, respectively (54).

54 le **bianche** scogliere di Dover / i capelli **bianchi** di Antonio
the white cliffs of Dover the hairs white of Antonio
'the white cliffs of Dover / Antonio's grey hair'

In old Italian, by contrast, the distribution of adjectives was quite different (cf. also §12.5), insofar as contrastive readings were not

necessarily associated with the post-nominal position as in modern Italian, but could equally be licensed in pre-nominal position (Vincent 2007; Giusti 2010b:585, 599–609; Ledgeway 2012a:51, 56; Bianco and Russo 2020:317, 313f.). This is illustrated in the following near minimal pairs, where the adjective in each case invariably gives rise to a contrastive reading irrespective of its pre- or post-nominal position.

55 a si dice una **bianca** massa, perché li grani […] / E sì come d' una
REFL= say.3SG a white heap because the grains and thus as of a
massa **bianca** di grano […]
heap white of grain
'so a heap is called white because the grains […]/ Just as in a white heap of grain […]' (*Conv.* IV.29.9 / IV.29.11)

b ne seguirá […] **mortal** nimistá / appena seco poteva
therefrom= follow.FUT.3SG mortal enmity hardly with.self can.PST.IPFV.3SG
credere, lei essere cosa **mortale**
believe.INF her be.INF thing mortal
'the consequence will be mortal enmity / he was scarcely able to believe that she was of mortal mould' (*Dec.* III.6.45 / II.7.49)

c Buonanno […] fu uno **fiorentino** mercatante di spezieria /
Buonanno be.PST.PFV.3SG a Florentine merchant of spices
fu uno dipintore **fiorentino**
be.PST.PFV.3SG a painter Florentine
'Buonanno […] was a Florentine merchant of spices / there was a Florentine painter'
(*Trecent.* CXXXVIII / CLXI)

The differences between modern and old Italian illustrated in (54)–(55) can be understood in terms of a change in the different extent of N(oun)-raising within the nominal group. In particular, different adjectival positions can be interpreted as the surface reflex of the head noun variously moving across a universally fixed series of adjectival classes situated immediately above the NP within the functional structure of the DP (cf. Cinque 1994; 2010; Giusti 2016:545). Assuming therefore the simplified structure in (56a) in which AP_1 and AP_2 can be broadly understood as the functional 'areas' in which the various subclasses of non-contrastive and contrastive adjectives, respectively, are generated, we can formally capture in a highly simple manner the differences between modern and old Italian. In the latter we can explain the frequent pre-nominal position of contrastive (together with non-contrastive) adjectives by assuming that N-raising is only optional and, when it does occur, is low: either the nominal remains *in situ* within the NP from where it

is preceded by both non-contrastive and contrastive adjectives (56b), or it surfaces in a lower position outside of the NP where it precedes contrastive adjectives, but not non-contrastive adjectives (56c). This follows from our observation above (§10.4.1) that Italian was originally a weak D language which did not require overt association in the syntax between N and D, namely high N(-to-D)-raising, thereby yielding the observed adjective-noun orders. In modern Italian, by contrast, the nominal head typically surfaces in the higher adjectival field (viz. AP_1), from where it precedes contrastive adjectives but follows those with a non-contrastive reading (56d), but may also occur above the highest adjectival projection (AP_1) from where it precedes both non-contrastive and contrastive adjectives (56e). Again this behaviour is in line with our observation that modern Italian is a strong D language, requiring overt association between N and D in the syntax through placement of the nominal outside of the NP to lexicalize a position high in the D area.

56	a	[$_{DP}$		(N)	[$_{AP1}$	Adj$_{Non\text{-}contr.}$(N)		[$_{AP2}$	Adj$_{Contr.}$		[$_{NP}$ N]]]]
	b	[$_{DP}$			[$_{AP1}$	[buone]		[$_{AP2}$	[e	dilicate]	[$_{NP}$ **vivande**]]]] (*Dec.* III.Intro.14)
	c	[$_{DP}$			[$_{AP1}$	[buone]	**vivande**	[$_{AP2}$	[e	dilichate]	[$_{NP}$ ~~vivande~~]]]] (*Testi fior.* 189.20)
	d	[$_{DP}$ i			[$_{AP1}$	[buoni]	**cibi**	[$_{AP2}$	[	delicati]	[$_{NP}$ ~~cibi~~]]]] (modIt.)
	e	[$_{DP}$ i	**cibi**		[$_{AP1}$	[buoni]	~~cibi~~	[$_{AP2}$	[	delicati]	[$_{NP}$ ~~cibi~~]]]] (modIt.)
		the	foods			good	foods		and	delicate	foods
		'(the) good (and) delicate dishes'									

In summary, we observe a diachronic tendency in line with the weak-strong D distinction for Italian nouns to climb progressively higher within the nominal functional structure, the result of which is the loss of pre-nominal placement of contrastive adjectives and the establishment of a structural opposition between contrastive and non-contrastive adjectival readings through surface linear order.

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[1] Henceforth we indicate (informational/corrective) focus with small caps and thematic/topical constituents with underlining.

[2] See, among others, Vanelli, Renzi, and Benincà (1985), Vanelli (1986, 1999), Benincà (1995; 2006; 2013), Salvi (2000; 2004; 2012), Benincà and Poletto (2010), Poletto (2014), Wolfe (2018).

[3] Below and in what follows we indicate the base and intermediate positions of displaced elements with strikethrough. For internal textual consistency we also limit our exemplification of V2 to Boccaccio's *Decameron*, although all generalizations equally hold of other medieval texts.

[4] Cf. Benincà (2010b:27–30), Dardano (2020b:35–38). However, cases of embedded V2, although much rarer, do occur and will be discussed in §10.2.2.1.

[5] In the technical literature, the hierarchical positions filled by these pragmatic relations are in turn identified with the specifier positions of corresponding functional projections such as FrameP, SceneP, and TopP.

[6] Incidentally, this explains our observation in §10.1 that clitic climbing is obligatory in old Italian (cf. 2d).

[7] See Tobler (1875), Mussafia (1886), Benincà (1995; 2006; 2013), Salvi (1990; 2004:ch. 4; 2016c:1006f.), Benincà and Poletto (2010:54–58), Renzi and Salvi (2015:147–149), Filipponio (2020b:522–528).

[8] Vanelli, Renzi, and Benincà (1985), Benincà (2010b:42–44), Lauta (2012:75f.), Ledgeway (2012a:66f), Poletto (2014:12, 34), Filipponio (2020b:518f.). On Gallo-Romance, see Adams (1987), Hirschbühler and Junker (1988), Dufter (2010).

[9] In contrast to Gallo-Romance varieties, this is a very strong tendency, rather than an absolute rule (Salvi 2004:30f.), which is also subject to inter-textual variation (Palermo 1997).

[10] Indeed, it is telling that the rare examples of meteorological verbs with an overt subject noted in Lauta (2012:71f.) all involve embedded contexts (cf. i.a). Although examples of overt non-referential (viz. expletive) subjects with other types of impersonal construction are optionally found in root clauses (i.b; cf. Salvi 2010a:170–172; Dardano 2012c:149f.), these are likely to be motived both by a reanalysis and extension of the embedded pattern and by a tendency to maintain superficial V2 word order (cf. §10.3.3). On this latter view, the overt pronoun simply functions as a place-holder which overtly lexicalizes the vacant Theme/Focus position in the left periphery before the fronted verb, as demonstrated by the fact that (i) it is in complementary distribution with a genuinely fronted constituent—namely, either *Egli è vero che* . . . 'It is true that . . .' or *Vero è ~~vero~~ che* . . . 'True is that . . .', but not ***Egli vero*/***Vero egli è ~~vero~~ che* . . . ; and (ii) it never occurs in post-verbal position within the sentential core whenever the left periphery hosts a genuinely fronted constituent, namely *Vero è (**egli) ~~vero~~ che*. . . .

i a […] per ciò che **egli** fa freddo
for that that it.M make.3SG cold
'[…] because it is cold weather' (*Dec.* VIII.9.89)

b **egli** è vero, che […] / ed è vero che […]
it.M be.3SG true that and be.3SG true that
'it is true that […]' (*Trecent.* CXVI / LXXIX)

[11] Some intransitives which behave as unergatives in modern Italian, and hence aligned with *avere* (e.g., *dimorare* 'dwell, live', *camminare* 'walk', *vivere* 'live'), are treated, sometimes only optionally, as unaccusatives in old Italian and therefore may select *essere* and show participle agreement with their subject (cf. Jezek 2010:121f.; Dardano 2020c:69f.).

[12] Occasional examples of agreement controlled by a following lexical object in the formal registers of modern Italian are, as noted by Loporcaro (1998:80), nothing more than a 'syntactic archaicism'. Similar arguments apply to the equally rare and marked modern examples of agreement with relativized objects (Hall 1958:99).

[13] Examples without agreement such as (i.a–b) are truly exceptional.

i a I' l' ò più volte […] / **veduto** viva
I her= have.1SG more times see.PTCP.MSG alive
'I've often […] seen her alive' (*Canz.* 129.40–42)

b Questi due cavalieri s' **aveano** lungamente amato
these.M two knight.MPL REFL= have.PST.IPFV.3PL longly love.PTCP.MSG
'These two knights had long loved each another' (*Nov.* XXXIII)

[14] On the lack of an indefinite partitive article in old Italian, see §10.1.

[15] This also explains the apparent optionality in the use of the definite article with pre-nominal possessives in old Italian (Giusti 2010a:366–368; Consales 2020:447–456; Lauta 2020:366–368).

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Chapter 11

Address systems and their history

Lorenzo Renzi

11.1 Speech act model

When we speak we address one or more individuals. The speaker and the addressee represent two points of reference in the theory of speech acts first established by Karl Bühler (1934) and subsequently developed by Roman Jakobson. Slightly adapting the latter's model (Jakobson 1993:185), Figure 11.1 provides an overview for Italian including the deictic pronouns used for the speaker and the addressee (the basic forms appear in bold type while the forms in italics present various restrictions to be described below).

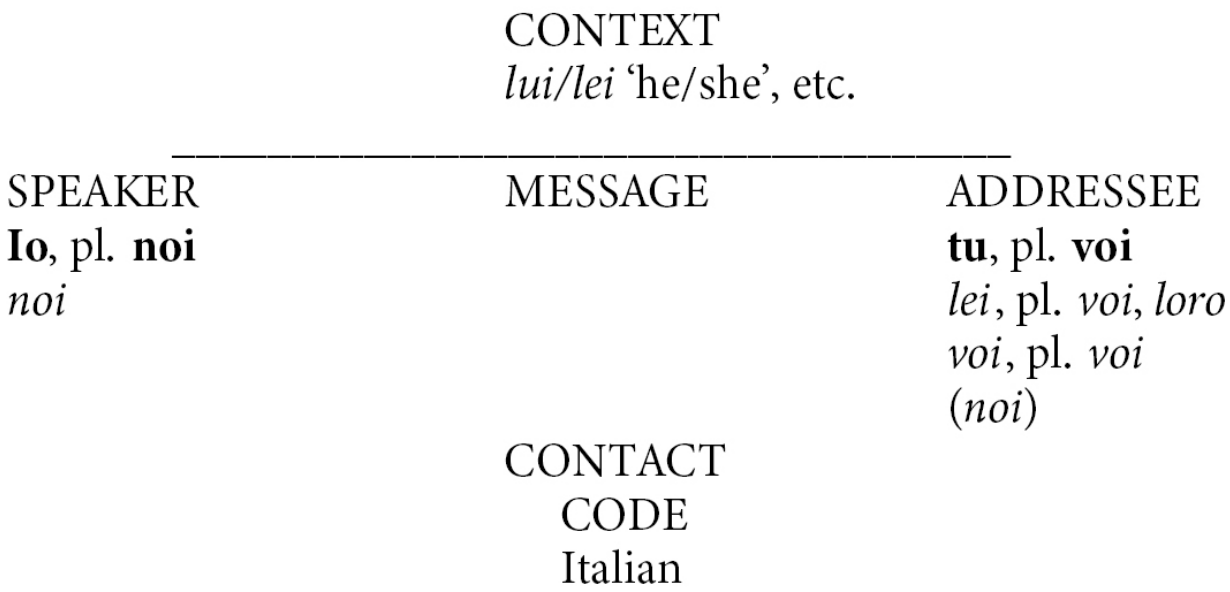


Figure 11.1 Speech act model.

When addressing others, the speaker refers to themself with the pronoun *io* 'I' and to the addressee with the pronoun *tu* 'you' if singular or *voi* if plural. For various reasons the speaker can, or must in certain situations, make their identity explicit and more frequently that of the person(s) who they want to listen to them. This can be achieved by using the person's name, an expression referring to their social status or profession, or some other such epithet (see the discussion of the vocative in §11.6). These generalities hold across all languages, but of course vary in terms of how they are realized in individual languages. As in many other languages and indicated in Figure 11.1, these pronouns must, or in certain cases can, be replaced by others, as we shall presently see.

In addressing someone, we may utter, for example, a sentence such as (1a). But in other cases the speaker will refer to the singular addressee, not through the use of *tu* with second person singular verb form, but *lei* (lit. 'she'),[1] the pronoun of polite address (1b) with third person singular verb form, or just through the associated third person verb forms (1c).

1 a **Tu,** prendi questo libro!
you.NOM.SG take.IMP.2SG this book
'You, take this book!'

b **Lei,** prenda questo libro!
you.SG.POL take.SBJV.SG this book
'You, take this book!'

c Antonia / Antonio, **prenda** questo libro!
Antonia Antonio take.SBJV.SG this book
'Antonia/Antonio, take this book!'

d (Antonia, Antonio, **tu** / **lei**) è mai stata / stato a Londra?
Antonia Antonio you.NOM.SG you.SG.POL be.3SG ever been.FSG been.MSG to London
'(Antonia, Antonio), have you ever been to London?'

The question of agreement in (1d) will be discussed in §11.3. The use of *tu* and *lei* in relation to social rather than linguistic norms is discussed in the sections below. For detailed treatments of both pronouns, see, among others, Serianni (1988); Sgroi (1992); and Renzi (1993; 2001c).

11.1.1 Personal pronouns

As noted, the basic address system of modern Italian involves the use of different personal pronouns. In current usage one talks of *dare del tu*, *dare del lei*, and *dare del voi* (lit. 'to give of the *tu, lei*, and *voi*' for 'to address with *tu*, *lei*, and *voi*'), and quite simply of *tu*, *lei*, and *voi* as the pronouns of address. However, given that Italian is a pro-drop language, where overt expression of the pronoun is not always obligatory (cf. §10.2.1.2), the pronoun does not occur in some utterances (cf. 1c–d). Moreover, the subject pronoun is never used in the imperative where, at most, it can occur outside of the clause proper, typically separated by a pause as illustrated by the use of the comma in (1a–b). The identity of the pronoun of address being used can therefore be deduced from the corresponding verb form employed: the second person singular is found in conjunction with the pronoun *tu*, the (feminine) third person singular with the pronoun of polite address *lei* (which also functions as the deictic and anaphoric pronoun 'she'), and the second person plural with the pronoun *voi* (which can be used as a singular pronoun of polite address or, in the plural, as a pronoun of either polite or familiar address; cf. §11.1.7).

2	a	Guarda	un	po'	**(tu)!**
		watch.IMP.2SG	a	little	you.NOM.SG
	b	Guardi	un	po'	**(lei)!**
		watch.SBJV.3SG	a	little	you.SG.POL
	c	Guardate	un	po'	**(voi)!**
		watch.IMP.2PL	a	little	you.SG.POL~PL(.POL)
		'Just take a look!'			

The grammatically third person pronoun *lei* can also be referenced through the possessive adjective/pronoun *suo* and associated forms (3a–b), and similarly for the second person singular *tu* and grammatically second person plural *voi* through the possessives *tuo* (3c) and *vostro* (3d), respectively.

3	a	Ecco	la	**sua**	(sciarpa)
		behold	the	3.POSS.FSG	scarf
		'Here's your scarf'			

b	Prenda	il	**suo**	(fazzoletto)!
	take.SBJV.3SG	the	3.POSS.MSG	handkerchief
c	Prendi	il	**tuo**	(fazzoletto)!
	take.IMP.2SG	the	2SG.POSS.MSG	handkerchief
d	Prendete	il	**vostro**	(fazzoletto)!
	take.IMP.2PL	the	2PL.POSS.MSG	handkerchief

'Take your handkerchief!'

Analogously, the polite pronoun of address can also be referenced by the grammatically feminine singular direct and indirect object pronouns *la* and *le*, respectively (4a), which contrast with the pronominal clitic forms *ti* and *vi* that reference the pronouns *tu* and *voi* (4b), respectively.

4	a	**La**		vedo	bene /	**Le**		dico	questo.
		PRO.ACC.FSG=		see.1SG	well	PRO.DAT.FSG=		say.1SG	this
	b	**Ti**	/ **Vi**	vedo	bene	/ **Ti**	/ **Vi**	dico	questo.
		you.SG=	you.PL=	see.1SG	well	you.SG=	you.PL=	say.1SG	this

'You look well / I'm telling you this.'

The address system also includes the vocative, which is discussed in §11.6.

11.1.2 Socially determined alternations: distance/familiarity, superiority/inferiority

Alternative forms of address in place of *tu* such as *lei* and, to a lesser extent *voi*, mark distance between the discourse participants,[2] whereas the basic form of address *tu* encodes familiarity. Distance may involve a relationship of superiority or inferiority (based on, for example, social status or rank) between speakers, in which case it is said to be non-reciprocal, with the participant of lower rank addressing their superior with *lei* and being addressed, in turn, by the latter with *tu*. When, however, both participants address each other with *lei*, we have a reciprocal use of the pronoun. Reciprocity of use in the distribution of the pronoun, whether *lei* or *tu*, represents a fundamental parameter of the address system (cf. §11.2).

We speak of reciprocal *tu* when both participants address each other with *tu*. This usage is found within families, despite differences

in age and status between parents and their children, between grandparents and their grandchildren, and generally also between uncles and aunts and their nephews and nieces (5). Arguably, the typical personal and emotional relationships involved are such that familiarity overrides differences in distance, rendering the dichotomy between superiority and inferiority irrelevant. Differences in roles are marked lexically through such terms as *papà* 'dad' (or *babbo*, in Tuscany, Emilia, and Sardinia), *mamma* 'mum' (*mammà* in Campania), *nonno/nonna* 'grandfather/-mother', *zio/zia* 'uncle/aunt', on the one hand, and through the use of a proper or pet name on the other (but not through the use of such terms as *figlio* 'son', *figlia* 'daughter', *nipote* 'nephew, niece').

5 —**Papà/Zio,** senti — dimmi, **Anna/Annetta!**
dad/uncle listen.IMP.2SG tell.IMP.2SG=me Anna/Anna.DIM
'"Dad/Uncle, listen". "Tell me, Anna/little Anna!"

The non-reciprocal use of *voi* by children to their parents and by spouses to their parents-in-law (cf. §11.4), who were themselves addressed with *tu*, was still in use in northern Italy, in traditional social settings, until about two generations ago, but has disappeared today. However, it continues to the present day in parts of central and southern Italy, at least in some more traditional social settings.

Reciprocal *tu* is used among the youth in their peer groups, including among students of a similar age, among fellow sports men and women and comrades in arms, and work colleagues of similar rank. Alternatively, the use of *tu* can be the result of a deliberate choice (cf. §11.2.1). Otherwise, outside the family (see above), the younger of the interlocutors, or the one in a hierarchically inferior position, addresses their elder (or the person in the hierarchically superior position) with *lei* and they, in turn, can reply with *tu*, thereby highlighting age-based or social distance, or with *lei*, thereby confirming the distance between the two (possibly implying that one day they might transition to a reciprocal use of *tu*).

Usually in informal interactions among strangers reciprocal *lei* is the norm since it is the expected form of address when two people meet for the first time, and may persist unless a personal relationship develops over time between the two in which case there is a shift to *tu* (§11.2.1). If, however, the context of the meeting, e.g., within the workplace, makes it immediately clear that the two participants enjoy different statuses, e.g., employee and manager,

then they can address each other with non-reciprocal *lei* and *tu* in accordance with their respective hierarchically inferior and superior roles, or with reciprocal *lei* if the participant occupying the hierarchically superior role so decides.

When the addressee involves more than one person, then *voi* with a second person plural verb form is employed irrespective of distance and familiarity, as shown in (6a–b).

6 a (Ragazzi, / Signori, / Giovanni e Giacomo,) **siete** mai stati a Londra?
boys gentlemen Giovanni and Giacomo be.2PL ever been.MPL to London
'(Boys/Gentlemen/Giovanni and Giacomo,) have you ever been to London?'

b (Zie, / Signore, / Marta e Maria,) **siete** mai state a Londra?
aunties ladies Marta and Maria be.2PL ever been.FPL to London
'(Aunties/Ladies/Mart and Maria,) have you ever been to London?'

In extremely formal speech we can also find *loro* (lit. 'they') as the plural of the pronoun of polite address *lei*.

7 a Questo libro, lo prendano **loro**!
this book it= take.SBJV.3PL you.PL.POL

b **Loro** prendano questo libro!
you.PL.POL take.SBJV.3PL this book
'Please take this book!'

c Signori / Signore, **loro** sono mai **stati/-e** a Londra?
gentlemen ladies you.PL.POL be.3PL ever been.MPL/FPL to London
'Gentlemen/Ladies, have you ever been to London?'

Although these forms exist in theory, today they are generally avoided even in the most formal of registers.

11.1.3 Non-pronominal forms for addressee and speaker

Formal address can also be achieved through the use of non-pronominal forms. In such cases, which are not very common except in formal contexts, what would be the vocative in other contexts now corresponds to an NP in subject (8a–c) or other argument (8d) function, while the verb occurs in the subjunctive with an exhortative reading or in the present indicative of *potere* 'can' if the intention is to extend an invitation to the addressee.

8 a Il signore / La signora si accomodi / può accomodarsi!
the gentleman the lady REFL= seat.SBJV.3SG can.3SG seat.INF=REFL

b I signori / Le signore si accomodino / possono accomodarsi!
the gentlemen the ladies REFL= seat.SBJV.3PL can.3PL seat.INF=REFL

'Take a seat / Please take a seat!' (said, for example, to customer(s) or patient(s) in a waiting room)

c I signori / Le signore, avranno osservato che…
the gentleman the ladies have.FUT.3PL observed that

'You will have seen that…'

d Posso servire il primo alla signora?
can.1SG serve.INF the first.course to.the lady

'Can I serve you your first course?' (waiter to customer)

Even the speaker can refer to themselves in the third person (9), a usage which is particularly frequent when speaking to children (cf. §11.1.4).

9 Il tuo vecchio amico ti darà una mano anche questa volta
the your.SG old friend you.SG= give.FUT.3SG a hand also this time

'Your old friend (=I) will also give you a hand on this occasion.'

11.1.4 Address forms in childhood

In acquiring its language, the child progressively learns to use deixis. At first it only uses a single form of the verb and for a certain period of time it refers to itself with a simplified form of its name, or as *il/la bambino/-a* 'the.M/F child.M/F' or similar. In the meantime the child's parents and other people it is in contact with refer to themselves in the first person, but often also in the third person through the use of NPs such as *(la) mamma* '(the) mum', *(il) papà* '(the) dad', *(il) nonno* '(the) grandfather', *la zia* 'the auntie'. At this stage the expression of deictic distinctions is unknown to the child and underutilized by adults. Subsequently, however, the child quickly adopts a universal use of the pronoun *tu* (and associated inflexional forms). At about the age of six, or sometimes even later, the child learns to use *lei* when addressing strangers of a higher status, beginning with teachers, although some children and even adolescents continue to exclusively use *tu* for a lot longer.

As noted above, when talking to children even adults often avoid deictic pronouns preferring to use such forms as *mamma* 'mum' and *papà* 'dad' instead of *io* 'I'. This is a feature of so-called baby talk (for which there is no corresponding term in Italian), the language used by adults who playfully and affectionately adapt their language to that of the child. Thus, a grandfather might say something like (10a) alongside (10b).

10 a	Vieni	dal	**nonno**,	bello!	
	come.IMP.2SG	by.the	grandfather	handsome.MSG	
	'Come to grandad, darling!'				
b	Vieni	da **me**	(che sono	il nonno),	bello!
	come.IMP.2SG	by me	that be.1SG	the grandfather	handsome.MSG
	'Come to me (, your grandad), darling!'				

In interactions within the family in which there is at least one child, parents and grandparents refer to themselves from the child's perspective, a case of teknonymy. Thus, in talking to her daughter/granddaughter the mother/grandmother may produce an utterance such as (11a), but not (11b).

11 a	Oggi,	Annetta,	vai	a	scuola	con	**mamma** / (la)		**nonna.**
	today	Annetta	go.2SG	to	school	with	mum	(the)	grandmother
	'Today, Annetta, mum / granny will take you to school.'								
b**	Oggi,	Annetta,	vai	a	scuola	**con**	**mio**	**marito** /	**mia** **mamma.**
	today	Annetta	go.2SG	to	school	with	my	husband	my mother

The same logic applies in conversation when talking about the child even when the latter is not present.

12	Oggi	Annetta	va	a	scuola	col	**papà**	e	va	a	prenderla	il
	today	Annetta	go.3SG	to	school	with.the	dad	and	go.3SG	to	take.INF=her	the
	nonno	quando	esce,	io	sono	sempre	occupata.					
	grandfather	when	exit.3SG	I	be.1SG	still	busy					
	'Today dad will take Annette to school and grandad will pick her up, as I'm still busy.' (said by the mother talking about her child)											

As a teknonymic device, parents may also refer to each other from the child's perspective as *papà* 'dad' and *mamma* 'mum' and, by extension, to their own parents as *nonno/-a* 'grandfather/-mother', and their own siblings as *zio/-a* 'uncle/aunt', etc., even when the child is not present.

11.1.5 Different values of *noi*

The deictic expression *noi* 'we' is not the plural of *io* 'I', insofar as it does not designate 'I' + 'I', + 'I', etc., but, rather, designates the speaker together with the addressee (inclusive reading) or the speaker and one or more third parties (exclusive reading). In the special uses to be studied below it substitutes for 'you'.

11.1.5.1 Participatory *noi*

When addressing another person, the speaker may use *noi*, as shown in (13)–(14).

13 a Allora, come **andiamo?**
then how go.1PL
'So, how are you?'

b **Abbiamo** **fatto** la **nostra** passeggiatina, adesso **andiamo** a dormire.
have.1PL done the our stroll.DIM now go.1PL to sleep.INF
'You've been for your little walk, now it's time for you to have a sleep.'

14 a Non **esageriamo!**
NEG exaggerate.1PL
'Don't exaggerate!'

b Non **facciamo** sciocchezze!
NEG do.1PL stupidities
'Don't be silly!'

(13a), for example, is equivalent to *Allora, come stai?* 'So, how are you?' with second person singular verb *stai*. This use of *noi* can also be used when addressing two or more people, hence equivalent to *Allora, come state?* (with 2PL *state*).

These uses are only possible between a superior and one or more people of lower rank, social status, or age. The utterances in (13a–b) can be used, for example, by an adult to one or more children or by a doctor to one or more patients. Through the use of the first person plural, the speaker associates themself personally with the addressee(s), almost merging with them. The effect is one of participation expressing a general sense of fondness. In (14a–b), by contrast, the examples express a reprimand in which the use of the

first person plural, although precluding a direct deictic relationship and still involving the speaker to some extent, gives rise to an attenuation effect (Pasquali 1964a).

11.1.5.2 *Noi* expressing the speaker

Although less frequent than in the case of the addressee, the speaker can also be expressed by *noi* in the following uses:

- Metonymic *noi*:

15 **Tracciamo** una linea che congiunga due vertici di un triangolo.
trace.1PL a line that join.SBJV.SG two vertices of a triangle
'Let's draw a line joining two vertices of a triangle.' (said, for example, in a geometry lesson)

- Authorial *noi*:

16 [...] data questa situazione, **divideremo** la trattazione in due parti
given this situation divide.FUT.1PL the treatment in two parts
'[...] given this situation, we will divide the discussion into two parts' (Renzi 1996:260)

- *Noi* of modesty (see Cignetti 2011):

17 Lei ha fatto una cosa importante. Anche **noi** nel **nostro** piccolo,
you.SG.POL have.3SG done a thing important also we in.the our small
abbiamo provato a fare una cosina
have.1PL tried to do.INF a thing.DIM
'You did something important. I too in my own little way have tried to make a small contribution.'

This usage is frequent in Sicily and in other parts of central-southern Italy, but is totally unknown in northern Italy.

- Majestic *noi*:

18 [...] con la presente lettera **indiciamo** e **promulghiamo** [...] un universale
with the present letter announce.1PL and promulgate.1PL a universal
e grande Giubileo
and great Jubilee
'[...] I hereby give notice and proclaim [...] that there will be a world wide great Jubilee' (*Iubilaeum Maximum Bull*, papal bull of Pope Pius XII, 26 May 1949; https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/it/bulls/documents/hf_p-xii_bull_19490526_iubilaeum-maximum.html, accessed 18 April 2023)

- Literary (especially poetic) *noi* (today no longer in use):

19	A	**noi**	prescrisse /	il	fato	illacrimata	sepoltura
	to	us	prescribe.PST.PFV.3SG	the	fate	unwept	burial

'for us fate prescribed an unmourned burial' (U. Foscolo, *A Zacinto*, 1803)

11.1.6 *Voi*

The singular use of *voi* has progressively disappeared from most parts of Italy (North, Tuscany) where it is replaced by *lei*. One of its last residual uses was found in the family, where it was used by younger family members in addressing superiors, namely by children to their parents and sons- and daughters-in-law to their parents-in-law, as is still the case today in parts of the Centre-South, who were, in turn, addressed with *tu*. Where *voi* continues in the Centre-South (Ledgeway 2015:105–108), some speakers may use it alongside *lei* as a less formal variant almost occupying the middle ground between *tu* and *lei*. See Niculescu (1974) and Renzi (1993), who also provide a general overview of address systems in the dialects of Italy, for which Rohlfs (2021b:181f.) still remains a fundamental point of reference.

11.2 Reciprocal and asymmetrical uses of the pronouns *tu* and *lei*

The reciprocal use of *tu* and *lei* requires the interlocutors to perceive their relationship as one involving equality. This criterion is neither unambiguous nor rigid, but requires both parties to accept such equality. It is certainly possible, for example, that somebody occupying a higher rank in a working environment or who is invested with some additional authority, even if only temporary, will address another with *tu* if, confident in their professional or temporary authority, they consider the latter to be their inferior. But this can cause the interlocutor to react negatively, giving rise to a social, not a linguistic, mishap. The writer Vitaliano Trevisan reports such an episode that he witnessed in a hotel in the outskirts of Vicenza

around the year 2000 or shortly afterwards involving a guest who was '[. . .] ill-mannered, with an unpleasant tendency to address all the staff with *tu*, whether they were young or old [. . .]' (Trevisan 2016:621). As one of the members of staff, Trevisan had to exercise some quite considerable self-control to refrain from replying with a stream of abuse.

In other cases, being addressed with *tu* can be positively interpreted by the person of lower rank as a sign of familiarity and trust, even if not reciprocal, and may even have been instigated by them:

20	Professore,	mi	dia	del	**tu!**
	teacher	me=	give.SBJV.SG	of.the	*tu*

'Sir, please address me with *tu*!' (said by an IT technician to a lecturer and personally witnessed by the present author. The request was accepted, yielding a case of non-reciprocal *tu*)

In conclusion, there is no single characterization for the use of *tu*: in terms of emotional closeness or distance it is neutral whenever its use is determined by social rules or tradition such as between colleagues or family members, only acquiring connotations of liking and affection when it represents a deliberate choice in contrast to the distance signalled by the use of *lei*. In turn, the choice between *tu* or *lei* often represents a serious interpersonal problem, a source of uncertainty and embarrassment. To avoid choosing between the two, some speakers avoid addressing their interlocutor directly, which in the long term requires some not inconsiderable effort on the part of the speaker.

Immigrants, when learning Italian, often indiscriminately address everyone with *tu*. Italians generally reply with *tu*, or indeed are the first to instigate its use, thereby giving rise to a reciprocal use of *tu* which neither involves a sense of equality nor a choice based on emotional grounds. As a form of address, *lei* (and its associated inflexional forms) are not easily mastered by foreigners. For example, even after prolonged stays in Italy or moving there permanently, many Romanians and Romanian-speaking Moldovans, even if highly educated, still use *voi* as a marker of distance, which in most cases they cannot possibly have heard being used by the local Italian population, whereas the least educated among them also use *tu*. By contrast, *lei* is rare if not entirely absent from their repertoire.

Those with English as their native language are generally insensitive to the differences between *tu* and *lei*, and are often eager

to shift to *tu* as soon as possible without understanding the general importance that Italians attach to this choice. When speaking Italian, the Spanish make greater use of *tu* than Italians in accordance with their native speech habits (e.g., as happens when students address their teachers), whereas native European Francophones and Germanophones tend to use it less.

11.2.1 *Diamoci del tu!*

In modern Italian the use of *tu* or *lei* is stable, inasmuch as the same people cannot usually alternate between both forms, not even in different situations. However, until perhaps a hundred years ago a person in a position of higher rank or social standing could shift from the use of formal singular *voi* to *tu*, as happens between the headmaster's wife Signora Geltrude and her colleague Giannino Stoppani in (21a–b) taken from Luigi Bertelli's early twentieth-century *Giornalino di Gianburrasca* (1907–1908) set in middle-class Florence.[3]

21 a In nome di Dio, Stoppani, cosa **fate** costassù [...] Ma che **dici**, sei
in name of God Stoppani what do.2PL up.there but what say.2SG be.2SG
impazzito? [...] **Scendi**, via! non **capisci**
went.mad descend.2SG away NEG understand.2SG

'In the name of God, Stoppani, what are you doing up there? [...] What are you saying, have you gone mad? [...] Come down, c'mon! You don't understand' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:196)

b **Voi**, Giovanni Stoppani, la notte del 13 al 14 **siete** uscito verso la
you Giovanni Stoppani the night of.the 13 to.the 14 be.2PL exited towards the
mezzanotte. [...] **Hai** capito che **devi** rispondere, eh? Pezzo di canaglia!
midnight have.2SG understood that must.2SG reply.INF hey piece of rogue

'You, Giovanni Stoppani, on the night between the 13th and 14th you went out about midnight [...] Have you understood that you need to reply? You awful scoundrel!' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:251)

Today the only shift possible is in the case of growing familiarity between speakers who may transition from *lei* to *tu*. But this shift does not usually happen unless explicitly suggested by the person of higher professional or social standing with such expressions as those in (22a–c).

22 a Senti, ci diamo del **tu**?
listen.IMP.2SG us= give.1PL of.the *tu*

'Listen, shall we start using *tu* with each?'

b Posso darti del **tu**, pregandoti di restituirmelo per favore?
can.1SG give.INF=you.2SG of.the *tu* praying.=you.SG of return.INF=me=it for favour

'Can I please address you with *tu*, asking you to do the same to me?'

c Ma dai, basta con questo **lei**, diamoci del **tu**!
but c'mon suffice.3SG with this *lei* give.IMP.1PL=us of.the *tu*

'C'mon, I've had enough of this *lei*, let's start using *tu* with each other!'

A shift from *lei* to *tu* in an argument is interpreted by the addressee and any by standers as an indication of hostility, the beginning of a breakdown in their relationship.

23 Come, cosa **ha** detto? . . . **Senti** un po' (mascalzone) . . .
how what have.3SG said listen.IMP.2SG a little rogue

'What? What did you say? . . . Listen here (you scoundrel) . . .'

11.3 Agreement patterns with *lei*

Adjectives that reference a person addressed with *lei* do not display agreement with the grammatically feminine singular *lei* but, rather, agree in accordance with the gender of the referent.

24 **Lei**, signor Rossi / signora Rossi, è gentilissimo/-a; **lei**, signor
you.SG.POL Mr Rossi Mrs Rossi be.3SG very.kind.MSG/FSG you.SG.POL Mr
Rossi / signora Rossi non è cambiato/-a per niente.
Rossi Mrs Rossi NEG be.3SG changed.MSG/FSG for nothing

'You, Mr/Mrs Rossi, are very intelligent; you, Mr/Mrs Rossi, you haven't changed at all.'

However, when the referent is pronominalized by a clitic pronoun, the latter always occurs in the feminine singular form even when referencing a male referent (25a, b; cf. also 4a above). Moreover, in analytic perfect constructions comprising auxiliary *avere* and the past participle, the participle shows feminine agreement with the clitic direct object (*la* (*l'*)) for *lei*, even when the referent is male (25c). This rule is not always observed, however, in non-standard usage (see Gaglia 2023).

25 a Avvocato, la vedo volentieri!
lawyer PRO.ACC.FSG= see.1SG willingly
'Sir, I'm happy to see you.'

b Le posso dare questo biglettino?
PRO.DAT.FSG= can.1SG give.INF this note.DIM
'Can I leave you this business card?'

c L' ho vista a Napoli, signore.
PRO.ACC.FSG= have.1SG see.PTCP.FSG in Naples sir
'I have seen you in Naples, sir.'

In popular substandard usage, however, male referents can also be referenced by the corresponding masculine singular pronominal forms, namely ?*Avvocato* ***lo*** *vedo* . . . and ?***Gli*** *posso dare* . . . (see also example 27b below).

11.4 Diachrony

Italian inherited from Latin the second person singular pronoun *tu* and associated inflexional forms. The use of polite *voi* also continues the reverential use of UOS in medieval Latin which, parallel to Lat. NOS 'we', may serve to emphasize the importance of the addressee (Pasquali 1964b). I do not believe, however, that the origin of the reverential plural use of Lat. NOS is to be retraced to a usage of sovereign rulers speaking not only in their own name but on behalf of their court, nor that the reverential usage of Lat. UOS and, in turn, It. *voi* represents an extension of this usage.

Some dialects of central-southern Italy (see Rohlfs 1968:§477) have not adopted reflexes of UOS as a polite pronoun of address but, rather, have retained the classical Latin use of *tu* as the sole pronoun of singular address, a usage which may sometimes be heard also in the regional Italian of the same areas. Consequently, reverence is not marked through the pronoun but shifts to an accompanying vocative expression containing a title such as *signoria* 'lordship', *eccellenza* 'excellence'. However, in these same dialects vocative forms such as *signorì* (< *signoria* 'lordship') can also be used in conjunction with

voi (Rohlfs 1968:182), a usage which is also found in the regional varieties of Italian of the same area.

The city of Rome also belonged historically to those areas where singular address was indiscriminately expressed by the pronoun *tu* and associated inflexional forms. In his *Commedia*, Dante reproaches his contemporary Romans for often forgetting to use *voi* (*Par*. XVI, 10–12). Indeed, the *Cronica dell'anonimo romano* (1357–1358) exhibits a mixed usage of *voi* and *tu* as pronouns of singular address, which can be interpreted as a reflex of the uncertainty still surrounding the use of singular *voi* (Renzi 2002). At this time in Italy the use of *voi* seems to be a form typical among the nobility, although its usage is still characterized by a lot of uncertainty since in socially and culturally more evolved cities such as fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Florence the aristocracy were no longer dominant, but now replaced by the new rapidly expanding middle classes, who continued to express themselves in aristocratic cultural forms often of French origin (which brought with them the use of *voi* corresponding to OFr./OOcc. *vos*). Thus, for example, in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscan tensons fellow poets alternate between the pronouns *tu* and *voi* for no apparent reason (Pasquali 1964b).

Also the model of classical Latin, which only had the singular *tu*, means that it is not always clear in medieval literary texts, and partly in later texts too, whether the alternation between *voi* and *tu* effectively corresponds to a distinction between high and low usage: while *voi* represents high usage, *tu* can represent both popular (viz. low) as well as high usage in accordance with the Latin model.

Turning now to *lei* (Migliorini 1957e), this third person singular form was adopted in Tuscan-Italian usage and in the vernaculars of other cities, and above all in the various courts, during the Renaissance (fifteenth–sixteenth centuries). The original pronominal form in subject function was the feminine singular *ella* (today obsolete in everyday spoken and written usage, even in bureaucratic prose where it was once common), but was progressively replaced by the erstwhile purely oblique feminine singular form *lei*. Originally, the pronoun referred anaphorically to a grammatically feminine singular formal title such as *l'eccellenza* lit. 'the.FSG excellence.F', *la magnificenza* lit. 'the.FSG mangificence.F',

and *la signoria tua (vostra)* lit. 'the.FSG lordship.F your.FSG (your.FSG)', as exemplified in (26).

26	Illustre	Signore,	niuno	altro	obligo	mi	tiene	la	S<ignorIa>	V<ostra>	se
	illustrious	lord	no	other	obbligation	me=	hold.3SG	the	lordship	your.PL	if
	non	quello,	che	per	**sua**	cortesia	la	mia	vuol	tenere.	Io	son	ben
	NEG	that.one	that	for	3.POSS.FSG	courtesy	the	mine	want.3SG	hold.INF	I	be.1SG	well
	doppiamente	astretta	ad	amarla	&	onorarla,			sì	per	il	meritar
	doubly	obliged	to	love.INF=PRO.FSG	and	honour.INF=PROF.FSG			so	for	the	deserving
	suo,	come	per	il	buono	&	gentile	animo	che	in	**lei**	scorgo
	3.POSS.MSG	as	for	the	good	and	kind	spirit	that	in	PRO.FSG	perceive.1SG

'Illustrious Lord, I have no other duty towards Your Lordship than to serve you for your favour. I am indeed doubly obliged to love and honour you on account of both your own merit and the good and kind disposition that I can see in you.' (Violante Gambara Valente addressing Scipio Costanzo, from Mantua 29.6.1543, cit. in Renzi 1996:263)

Ella is disappearing from high registers of the language, where its usage today is very limited (cf. §9.3.2). With time the correlation between *ella/lei* and *vostra signoria* 'your lordship' was lost so that the former, which were originally anaphoric, now became deictic. At this point, in accordance with the distance parameter, the speaker now addresses their interlocutor with the pronoun *lei*, and no longer with *voi*, which however does not disappear immediately but continues to be used in specific deictic uses (see below).

Once *lei* lost its anaphoric relationship to *(vostra) signoria*, there was a tendency for the address system to develop new distinctions with the introduction of the masculine singular *lui* for addressing males, leaving *lei* for female addressees. This is also what happened in many dialects of northern Italy such as Lombard, Venetan, and Emilian (Rohlfs 1968:§478), as well as in the substandard varieties of Italian in these same regions. However, standard Italian employs *lei* and associated pronominal forms for both masculine and feminine referents (27a), although masculine singular *lui* and associated pronominal forms (27b) are spontaneously found in popular substandard usage (though by no means restricted to such registers) and especially in Tuscany.

27 a	**Le**	dico,	**Le**	domando,	Non	**la**	vedo.
	PRO.DAT.FSG=	say.1SG	PRO.DAT.FSG=	ask.1SG	NEG	PRO.ACC.FSG=	say.1SG
b	?**Gli**	dico,	**Gli**	domando,	Non	**lo**	vedo.
	PRO.DAT.MSG=	say.1SG	PRO.DAT.MSG=	ask.1SG	NEG	PRO.ACC.MSG=	say.1SG

'I tell you, I ask you, I can't see you.'

The use of polite plural *loro* is very restricted and is generally replaced by *voi*, even in situations where the speaker would address the individuals with the singular polite pronoun *lei*.

28 **Venite,** accomodatevi! **Lei** si sieda qui, **lei**
come.IMP.2PL seat.IMP.2PL=yourselves you.SG.POL self= seat.SBJV.3SG here you.SG.POL
venga pure qui!
come.SBJV.SG also here

'Come, please take a seat! You please sit here, you please come here too!'

As already noted, when *ella/lei* became established as pronouns of polite address, *voi* did not suddenly disappear but continued to occupy an intermediate position, more respectful than *tu* but less distant than *lei* (cf. §11.1.6). There thus emerged a pronominal scale which, starting from the most formal, can be arranged as follows: *lei*, *voi*, *tu*. Today, this scale is in the process of being simplified into a binary system *lei/tu*, giving rise to changes which, to a large extent, can be directly observed in nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels. For example, in the 1840 edition of *I promessi sposi* Renzo addresses Don Abbondio with *lei* who, in turn, replies using *voi* or, sometimes, with *tu* (for a discussion of the forms of address in *I promessi sposi*, see Serianni 1988:224f.; cf. also examples 44–45 below). In the *Giornalino di Gianburrasca* (1907–1908) set in a middle-class Florentine environment (cf. 21a–b above), we variously find *tu*, *voi*, and *lei* (or, as in example 31a below, its associated subject clitic form *la*, a usage typical of some Tuscan varieties). As happens today, in addressing those of higher rank *lei* is used, as can be seen in example (29) where the young boy Giannino addresses Signora Geltrude, the wife of the headmaster of the boarding school in which he lives and studies, with *lei*.

29 Guardi… a meno che non mi dia la minestra speciale che fanno
look.SBJV.SG to less that NEGme= give.SBJV.SG the soup special that make.3PL
per **lei** e per il signor Direttore
for you.SG.POL and for the Mr headmaster

'Look… unless you give me the special soup that they make for you and your husband the Headmaster' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:197)

Lei is also used among members of the upper middle classes, as in the following example where the doctor examines Giannino in the presence of his mother.

30 —Non **si** **spaventi**… **suo** figlio ha la pelle dura
NEG self= frighten.SBJV.SG 3.POSS.MSG son have.3SG the skin hard

'Don't be afraid… your son is resilient' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:64)

Lei is also the form used by those in socially inferior positions when addressing a superior, as exemplified in (31a) between the caretaker and the headmaster, but also between the caretaker and Giannino in (31b) who, although not even an adolescent yet, is already considered to be a member of the upper middle classes. However, when someone sees in Giannino just the young child, he is then addressed with *tu* (31c).

31 a —**La** mi scusi, signor Direttore, ma **le** par
SCL.FSG me= excuse.SBJV.SG Mr headmaster but PRO.DAT.FSG= seem.3SG
possibile che si faccia tutto questo?
possible that self= do.SBJV.SG all this

'Forgive me, Headmaster, but do you think it's possible that we could do all of this?' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:198)

b —Stia pronto, **suo** padre è arrivato
be.SBJV.SG ready 3.POSS.MSG father be.3SG arrived

'Get ready, your father has arrived' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:257)

c Ah ci **sei** salito ora, eh? E codesto muso da spazzacamino quando
ah there= be.2SG ascended now hey and that face of chimney.sweep when
te lo sei fatto?
you.SG= it= be.2SG done

'Ah, now you've got on board, hey? And how long have you had a face like a chimneysweep?' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:37)

Those enjoying higher rank address those in lower-ranked positions with *tu*, witness the interventions between Geltrude and the cook in (32a) and between Giannino and the peasant farmer Angiolino in (32b). However, when the latter addresses the boy, he uses *lei* and calls him *s(ign)or(e)* 'sir, master' (32c).

32 a —**Domanda**gli se posso rivolgergli la parola...
ask.IMP.2SG=DAT.3MSG= if can.1SG address.INF=DAT.3MSG the word
Domandagli se vuol parlare con me
ask.IMP.2SG=DAT.3MSG if want.3SG speak.INF with me

'Ask him if I can speak to him... Ask him if he wants to speak with me' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:224)

b Ma **sai** che un elefante è grande come questa casa?
but know.2SG that an elephant be.3SG big as this house

'Do you know that an elephant is as big as this house?' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:46)

c O che è ella, codesta cosa buffa che ha detto **lei**, sor
Q what be.3SG it this thing funny that have.3SG said you.SG.POL sir
Giannino?
Giannino

'What is it, this funny thing that you said, Master Giannino?' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:46)

In the plural the reverential pronoun is *loro*, as seen in (33).

33 giacché il viaggiare nelle garette costa così caro, **procurino** che ci
since the travelling in.the brake.cabins cost.3SG so dear try.SBJV.3PL that there
sieno i finestrini col vetro!
be.SBJV.3PL the windows with.the glass

'since travelling in the brake cabin on the train costs so much, make sure that it at least has glass windows!' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:37)

The author reproduces quite faithfully, so it would seem, early twentieth-century Florentine usage, albeit with some perhaps lingering uses of *voi*, which was already on the way out in favour of *tu*, since it often alternates with *tu* in exchanges among the same interlocutors and in the same situations. For example, Signora Geltrude sometimes addresses her husband, the headmaster Stanislao, with *voi*, even when insulting him, but more frequently uses *tu*. Similar oscillations are observed in an episode involving a séance, when those present address the late ancestor with both *voi* and *tu*. From this it can probably be safely concluded that *voi* was giving way to *tu* in those remaining residual contexts of usage as the use of *lei* strongly increased, particularly in Florence. We are possibly on the brink of a shift to today's system with a reduced opposition between *tu* and *lei*.

A somewhat more conservative situation is found in the novel *Rubè* by G. A. Borgese, a Sicilian by birth who had travelled widely in Italy, although it was written some years later (in 1920). The setting of the novel shifts between Sicily, Rome, Milan, and Lago Maggiore and the author provides numerous examples of the singular use of *voi* alongside *lei*. For example, in (34) the mistress of the house addresses the maid with *voi*.

34 —Annarosa, **portate** il rosolio con due bicchierini
Annarosa bring.IMP.2PL the rosolio with two glasses.DIM

'Annarosa, bring the rosolio liqueur and two small glasses' (Borgese 1982:306)

The author often comments on the various address forms used by the characters, as can be seen in (35a) where the priest changes pronouns when speaking to the middle-class protagonist, and subsequently in (35b) where the same priest, Father Mariani, operates a pronominal shift in the opposite direction.

35 a il giorno dopo il Sacerdote era di umore come la barba, e smesso
the day after the priest be.PST.IPFV.3SG of mood as the beard and finished
il **voi** restituì il **lei** all' antagonista
the *voi* return.PST.PFV.3SG the *lei* to.the antagonist

'the following day the Priest was in a bad mood, and having ceased to address his rival with *voi* began to address him equally with *lei*.' (Borgese 1982:298)

b aveva abbandonato naturalmente il **lei** di società, tornando per abitudine
have.PST.IPFV.3SG abandoned naturally the *lei* of society returning for habit
al **voi** del confessionale
to.the *voi* of.the confessional

'[Father Mariani] had naturally stopped using the *lei* of polite society, returning out of habit to the use of *voi* typical of the confessional' (Borgese 1982:306)

From such examples and the context, it can be seen that *lei* is formal and used to address superiors, whereas *voi* is employed when addressing those of lower social standing and status, or as a form to encode greater familiarity, witness its use by the priest in the confessional. In the former case the use of *lei* is non-reciprocal, whereas in the latter case the use of *voi* is reciprocal. *Voi* is also used in the following example where a carabiniere suspects Rubè of having committed murder.

36 un carabiniere in grigioverde, scrollandolo per la spalla, gli
a carabinere in grey.green shake.GER=him for the shoulder 3.DAT.MSG=
disse: "L' **avete** uccisa?"
say.PST.PFV.3SG her= have.2PL kill.PTCP.FSG

'a carabiniere dressed in grey-green, shaking him by the shoulders, said to him "Did you kill her?" ' (Borgese 1982:284)

In 1938 the Fascist regime attempted to enforce through legislation the use of *voi* in place of the grammatically third person singular *lei* which it deemed to be of foreign (viz. Spanish) origin (cf. grammatically third person singular Sp. *usted*), just as it had proposed to replace the handshake with the Roman salute and to introduce the use of the Roman step (similar to the Russian goose

step) in the armed forces (Raffaelli 1993; Alinei 2002). This was an attempt to restore *voi* as a polite form of address and to arrest its decline which, for some time, had led to its association with low registers and in many cases even to its disappearance. The pronominal system aspired to by the Fascist regime was supposed to recall that of the classical Roman world (hence the use of *tu*), but also to encode hierarchical distance. However, this latter goal was difficult to achieve by reducing the number of available pronominal forms. Sergio Raffaelli (1993) retraced the early troubled episodes in the promotion of *voi* first to the language used by the machinery of Fascist propaganda and then to the language of official administration of the state and the army. The innovation proved quite popular, so much so that, after the fall of the regime, the use of *voi* as a polite form of address was perceived by many as a 'Fascist usage'. Consequently, this case of linguistic doctrine paradoxically contributed to the decline of *voi* and, at the same time, to the expansion of *lei* which had already been underway for some time.

However, singular *voi* is still in use in some specific spheres such as film, where it is employed not only in the staging of historical episodes and dramas (such as those set in the Middle Ages and other early periods), but also in the dubbing of English- or French-language films (thereby reproducing by inertia the use of Eng. *you* and Fr. *vous*). Even today there are still certain settings in which *voi* can still be occasionally heard, thereby contravening, for no apparent reason, established usage. While in real-life situations speakers are very sensitive to the use of *lei* and *tu*, variously provoking offence or joy in their interlocutor in accordance with their choice of pronoun (cf. §11.2), when watching a film they are completely indifferent to, and unaware of, the form of address used, to the extent that at the end of the film they are unable to say which form was used, as the present author can confirm from personal experience.

11.5 The psychological roots of the address system

Having examined the development of the address system in §11.4 above, we are now in a position to discuss the structural organization of current address system and to account, at least in part, for many of its peculiarities and indeed at times oddities.

The act of speaking requires the speaker to address another individual directly, usually involving the pronoun *tu*. This form of direct address may be perceived as brusque or even aggressive, or at the very least as excessively familiar. Of course, the potential for aggressiveness can be avoided in various ways, including, for example, by the use of polite formulae (e.g., *per favore* 'please', *scusa* 'forgive me') and appropriate gestures or expressions made with the face and the body. However, many languages make available verbal means like those we have seen in Italian which avoid direct verbal contact between speaker and addressee. These include the use of reverential vocative forms such as *signoria* 'lordship', *eccellenza* 'excellence' which, as noted above, in many varieties allow the interlocutors to continue to use *tu* while marking politeness through lexical means. At least theoretically, *lei* also avoids direct contact with the addressee since the speaker speaks to them as if they were not present, namely as a third person only present in the context (cf. Fig. 11.1). While it is true that today we can say ***Lei*** *mi* ***ha*** *imbrogliato* 'You have tricked me', even pointing at the addressee as part of a hostile gesture, a sudden and unexpected shift to *tu* and associated inflexional forms (viz. *(**Tu**) mi **hai** imbrogliato*) would prove even more disrespectful.

The same reasoning, even if less compelling, also holds for the various uses of *noi* 'we' as an alternative to *io* 'I' noted in §11.5.2. By using *noi* instead of *io*, the speaker avoids making excessive reference to their own person by alternating between both forms, which has the effect of weakening reference to the speaker while appearing to be more respectful and considerate towards the addressee (the *io* of modesty). However, *noi* can also appear to suggest an increase in the plurality of *io*, and therefore also a strengthening of its force (majestic *noi*). It is not clear whether authorial *noi* should be related to the former or latter uses of *noi*, but what is certain is that it is less peremptory and dogmatic than *io*. An NP such as *la mia persona* 'my person', which is equivalent to *io* 'I', although conveying a degree of formality, softens the peremptory tone associated with *io* (Renzi 2001c:350–364).

11.6 The vocative

In order to address one or more persons (or pets), or to recall their attention, the speaker may use an NP in vocative function or as an address call (see Mazzoleni 2001b; 2011; Lorenzetti 2010a). The vocative can be used to introduce an imperative (37a–b), but not necessarily (39). An NP used in vocative function may be structurally complex and presents various restrictions in contrast to other functional uses, as detailed below.

The vocative may consist of a proper (37a) or common (37b) noun and may in certain cases co-occur with a possessive (37a vs 37b).

37 a **Nora (mia), dimmi una cosa!**
Nora my say.IMP.2SG=me a thing
'Nora (my friend/darling…), tell me something!'

b **Dottoressa (?mia) / dottore (?mio), mi dica!**
doctor.F my.FSG doctor.M my.MSG me= say.SBJV.SG
'Doctor, please tell me!'

The adjective *caro* 'dear(est)', if employed, must follow the possessive.

38 **(?Cara) Mia cara Nora!**
dear my dear Nora
'My dear(est) Nora!'

The adjectives *egregio* 'distinguished', *stimato* 'esteemed', and *gentile* 'kind', all used with the meaning 'Dear [X]' in epistolary address, precede their associated head noun.

39 **Egregia / Stimata / Gentilissima amministrazione, […]**
distinguished esteemed very.kind administration
'Dear Management, […]'

Pronouns used in vocative function stand outside the clause proper and are separated by a pause indicated in orthography with a comma (40a; cf. also 1a–b). There is no limit on the number of pronominal (40b) or nominal (40c) vocatives that the speaker may use.

40 a **Tu,** vieni qua!; **Lei,** venga qua!; **Voi,** venite qua!
you.NOM.SG come.IMP.2SG here you.SG.POL come.SBJV.SG here you.PL come.IMP.2PL here

'You, come here!'

b **Tu,** e **tu,**... e **lei,** e **voi,** venite qua!
you.NOM.SG and you.SG and you.SG.POL and you.PL come.IMP.2PL here

'You, and you ... and you, and you, come here!' (said while progressively pointing at or signalling to the various individuals involved)

c **Adamo, Martino, Lorenzo, Laura,** venite qua!
Adamo Martino Lorenzo Laura come.IMP.2PL here

'Adamo, Martino, Lorenzo, Laura, come here!'

The vocative may occupy various positions within the clause, as illustrated in (41) where the final order illustrated places *tu* in contrastive/corrective focus (e.g., 'YOU, not him, not me').

41 **Tu,** vieni qua!; Vieni qua, **tu!**; Vieni **tu,** qua!
you.SG come.IMP.2SG here come.IMP.2SG here you.SG come.IMP.2SG you.SG here

'You, come here!; Come here, you!; YOU come here!'

As we have already seen, pronouns in vocative function occur in the subject form. In northern Italy, Tuscany, and also in Rome in substandard usage the second person singular form continues the erstwhile oblique form *te* (cf. standard *tu* in examples 40a–b, 41 above), which in these varieties also functions as a nominative.

42 **Te,** vieni qua!
you.NOM~OBL.SG come.IMP.2SG here

'You, come here!'

In central-southern Italy, first names, surnames, titles, and common nouns in vocative function undergo apocopation of all material following the stressed vowel (Renzi 1993:383; Schmid 1976; Loporcaro and Faraone 2021; Ledgeway 2024:§4). Although such forms are originally a feature of the local dialects, they are also found in the Italian of the same areas in spontaneous usage.

44 "Che dite mai, la mia povera giovine?"
what say.2PL ever the my poor young.one

'What on earth are you saying, my dear young lady?' (Manzoni, *I promessi sposi*, ch. 24, 14)

11.6.1 Vocatives accompanied by a determiner

Although NPs in vocative function typically occur without a determiner, the definite article occurs frequently in *I promessi sposi*, most probably under the combined influence of French and Lombard dialect.

45 Passato quel pezzo, sentì gridare: '**o quell'uomo!**' e guardando da quella parte, vide poco lontano, a un terrazzino d'una casuccia isolata, una povera donna, con una nidiata di bambini intorno; la quale, seguitandolo a chiamare, gli fece cenno anche con la mano. Ci andò di corsa; e quando fu vicino, '**o quel giovine**,' disse quella donna: 'per i vostri poveri morti, fate la carità d'andare a avvertire il commissario che siamo qui dimenticati.'

'Having passed this part, he heard someone call out to him "**Oh sir**" [lit. oh that man] and turning his eyes upwards, he saw, not far off, on the balcony of a small isolated house, a poor woman, surrounded by a group of children, who, while continuing to call out to him, beckoned to him to approach. He ran over and when he was near, "**Oh young man**," [lit. oh that young.man] said the woman, "in the name of the friends you've lost, do me the kindness to go to the commissary and tell him that we are forgotten here."' (Manzoni, *I promessi sposi*, ch. 34, 18–19)

The demonstrative can also occur in place of the article, as illustrated in the following example where the poor lady's use of *voi* in addressing Renzo is also worthy of note (cf. *fate* 'do.2PL'):

46 **Onestà**, fedeltà alla parola data, esistete ancora, dove siete andate a finire?
honesty fidelity to.the word given exist.2PL still where be.2PL gone to go.INF

'Honesty, loyalty to the given word, do you still exist, what happened to you?'

47 a O cara **speranza**,
quel giorno sapremo anche noi
che sei la vita e sei il nulla

'O beloved **hope** / that day we will know, we too, / that you are life and that you are nothing' (*Verrà la morte e avrà i tuoi occhi*, Pavese 1955:29)

b Dimmi, **bellezza** / **amore** / **tesoro** / **stella** [...]!
tell.IMP.2SG=me beauty love treasure start

'Tell me, my beauty / my love / my treasure / my star [...]!'

11.6.2 Content of the vocative NP

Besides first names of persons (or animals), surnames, titles, or even a combination of these, the head of a vocative NP can also contain an

inanimate abstract noun, either because the speaker is addressing an abstract entity as if personifying it (46), or because they wish to refer to the person they are addressing by means of a lifeless metaphor (47a–b), a case of *catachresis*.

48 a Dove sei tu, **luce**, è il mattino
where be.2SG you.SG light be.3SG the morning
'Wherever you are, light, it's morning' (*I mattini passano chiari*, v. 10, Pavese 1955:36)

b Risponderai parole –
viso di primavera,
farai gesti anche tu.
'You will reply words / – **face of springtime** – / you, too, will gesture' (*The cats will know*, vv. 20–23, Pavese 1955:40)

However, especially in poetry, we can find other forms of address containing a noun used figuratively, as exemplified in (48a–b) where the poet, here Cesare Pavese, addresses a lady with whom he has fallen in love with the nouns *luce* 'light' and *viso* 'face' (cases of metaphor and synecdoche, respectively).

49 Ahi **Pisa**, vituperio de le genti
del bel paese là dove 'l sì suona,
poi che i vicini a te punir son lenti,
muovasi la Capraia e la Gorgona,
e faccian siepe ad Arno in su la foce,
sì ch'elli anneghi in **te** ogne persona!

'Ah, **Pisa**, foul reproach of those that dwell / in that fair country where the *sì* is heard; / since slow thy neighbours are to punish thee, / then let Caprara and Gorgona move, / and make a hedge across the Arno's mouth, / that every person in **thee** may be drowned!' (Dante, *Commedia*, *Inf.* XXXIII, vv. 79–82)

50 ahi **dura terra**, perché non t'apristi?
'Ah, why, **hard earth, didst thou** not open up?' (Dante, *Commedia*, *Inf.* XXIII, v. 66)

51 **Chiare, fresche et dolci acque**,
ove le belle membra
pose colei che sola a me par donna;
gentil ramo ove piacque
(con sospir' mi rimembra)
a lei di fare al bel fiancho colonna;
herba et fior' che la gonna
leggiadra ricoverse
co l'angelico seno;
aere sacro, sereno,
ove Amor co' begli occhi il cor m'aperse:
date udïenza insieme
a le dolenti mie parole extreme.

'**Clear, sweet fresh water** / where she, the only one who seemed / woman to me, rested her beautiful limbs: /**gentle branch** where it pleased her / (with sighs, I remember it) / to make a pillar for her lovely flank: / **grass and flowers** which her dress / lightly covered, / as it did the angelic breast: / **serene, and sacred air**, / where Love pierced my heart with eyes of beauty: / listen together / to my last sad words.' (Petrarch, *Il Canzoniere*, CXXVI)

Again predominantly in poetry, vocative address forms may also involve non-personal referents such as cities (49), death (50), and water and other natural elements (51). Although the verse examples from Dante and Petrarch reported below are in old Florentine, the earliest phase of Italian, they can equally be rendered in modern Italian with just a few minor adjustments. All these vocative examples can probably be translated more or less literally into any

language. The pronouns used are either singular *tu* (cf. 2SG oblique *te* in 49 and *t'apristi* 'you.SG= open.PST.PFV.2SG' in 50) or plural *voi* (cf. 2PL imperative *date (udienza)* 'give (hearing)' in 51).

52 **Taci, anima** stanca di godere
e di soffrire (all' uno e all' altro
vai rassegnata).
Nessuna voce **tua** odo se ascolto:

In the following poem the author, Camillo Sbarbato (1988–1967), addresses his own soul, an example of synecdoche (part for whole). In line 1 *anima* 'soul' functions as a vocative and is picked up subsequently through the second person singular possessive *tua* (line 4), the second person singular verb forms *vai* 'go' and *giaci* 'lie' (lines 3 and 8), and finally through the vocative expression *mia anima* 'my soul' (in place of the more usual *anima mia* 'soul my') in line 12.

non di rimpianto per la miserabile
giovinezza, non d'ira o di speranza,
e neppure di tedio.
Giaci come
il corpo, ammutolita, tutta piena
d'una rassegnazione disperata.
Noi non ci stupiremmo,
non è vero, **mia anima**, se il cuore
si fermasse, sospeso se ci fosse
il fiato . . .

'**You are still, my soul**, from joy and sorrow / spent (to one and the other resigned). / **Your** voice I do not hear when I listen: neither of / regret for my miserable youth, nor of anger / or of hope, not even of weariness. / Like a body / **you lie**, speechless, teeming with desperate / resignation. / We would not be surprised, / would we, **my soul**, if our heart should stop, / suspended if there be breath . . . (Sbarbaro, *Pianissimo*, 1914)

53 a ti riapro prima d' andare a letto, **giornalino** **mio** [...]
you.SG= reopen.1SG before of go.INF to bed diary.DIM my

'I'll open you again before going to bed, my dear diary [...]' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:9)

b oh **mio** **caro** come stai? Oh **poveretto**, guarda un po': hai una
oh my dear how be.2SG oh poor.DIM look.IMP.2SG a little have.2SG a
fogliolina rotta
leaf.DIM broken

'Oh my dear how are you? Oh poor thing, look at this: one of your little leaves is broken' (*Giornalino di Gianburrasca*, Bertelli 1912:40; Gianburrasca's aunt speaking to a plant)

c **Caro** **diario**
'Dear diary' (title of a 1993 film directed by Nanni Moretti)

Finally, the speaker may choose to address an object and speak to it directly, as in examples (53a–c).

54 Su, dai apri questa maledetta porta!
c'mon c'mon open.IMP.2SG this cursed door

'C'mon, c'mon, open this damn door!' (talking to a key which, when placed in the lock, fails to open the door)

The vocative NP can also be omitted when its content is readily recoverable from the context:

55 a Buon Dio, aiutaci!
good God help.IMP.2SG=us
'Good God, help us!'

A form such as *buon Dio* 'good God' can be ambiguous between a vocative and an exclamative, its ultimate interpretation being determined by the wider clause: a vocative in (55a), but an exclamative in (55b).

b Buon Dio, non credevo che facesse così male!
good God NEG believe.PST.PFV.1SG that do.PST.SBJV.3SG so badly

'Jesus Christ, I didn't think it would hurt as much as that!'

56 a **a** **Romolè**…, e t' ho promesso che torno!
a.VOC Romoletto.VOC and you.SG= have.1SG promised that return.1SG

'Romoletto, … and I promise you that I'll be back' (https://www.tripadvisor.it/ShowUserReviews-g799533-d1867670-r201176175-Cantina_Romoletto-Monte_Porzio_Catone_Province_of_Rome_Lazio.html; last accessed 17 April 2023)

b **O'** nanni, dimmi, icché tu- vvòi te?
o.VOC child tell.IMP.2SG=me what SCL.2sg= want.2SG you.SG

'My child, tell me, what do you want?' (Andreini et al. 2008, s.v. *nanni* 'bambino')

c **Oh** nanni, ma che ci sta' 'umpò' fermo
o.VOC child but that there= be.2SG a.little still

'Hey my child, will you keep still for a while?!' (Andreini et al. 2008, s.v. *nanni* 'bambino')

11.6.3 Vocative particles

The vocative can be formally distinguished from the nominative by the use of an introductory vocative particle. However, these are only found in certain parts of Italy where their form varies from area to area, e.g., *a* in Rome (56a; cf. D'Achille 1995; Loporcaro and Faraoni 2021), *o* in Florence (56b–c); in most parts of Italy, however, such particles are not found.

57 Degli Achivi era Crise alle veloci
Prore venuto a riscattar la figlia
Con molto prezzo […]
O Atridi, ei disse, **o** coturnati Achei,

'Chryses had come to the swift ships of the Achaeans / to redeem his daughter / with costly gifts […] / **O** sons of Atreus, **o** well-grieved Achaeans,' (V. Monti 1800, *L'Iliade*, canto I, vv. 25–17, 21)

58 **O** mia patria, sì bella e perduta!

'**O** my fatherland, so beautiful and forsaken!' (T. Solera 1842 text of *Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate*, libretto of Verdi's *Nabucco*)

59 **O** tu che dormi là su la fiorita
Collina tosca, e ti sta il padre a canto […]

'**O** thou who 'neath the flower-clad Tuscan hill / Dost slumber, by whose side our father lies […]' (G. Carducci 1870, *Funere mersit acerbo*).

The use of *o* or *oh* as an introductory vocative particle was also found in the nineteenth-century literary language (cf. also 45), as the following representative examples illustrate:

60 a (Stefania,) stai attenta, **papà**! (Sic. reg. It.)
Stefania be.IMP.2SG careful dad

b (Stefania,) stai attenta, il **papà**! (C-SRIt.)
Stefania be.IMP.2SG careful the dad

c (Stefania,) stai attenta, a **papà**! (Roman reg. It.)
Stefania be.IMP.2SG careful a.VOC dad

'(Stefania,) be careful, my dear!'

11.6.4 Inverse vocatives

Within the family setting one frequently hears in central and southern Italy so-called inverse vocatives in which the speaker refers to the addressee with reference to their own kinship role. In the example of regional Sicilian Italian in (60a), for instance, the father speaking to his daughter Stefania addresses her with *papà* 'dad', the latter obligatorily occurring in clause-final position. In other parts of central and southern Italy we find the same pattern or, alternatively, structures such as (60b) in which the kinship term *papà* is now preceded by the definite article; in Rome the inverse vocative expression is preceded by the particle *a* (60c).

61 Và, và, **zio**, và!
go.IMP.2SG go.IMP.2SG uncle go.IMP.2SG

'Go on, go on, my dear, go on!' (said by an uncle to his nephew in Nanni Loy's 1989 film *Scugnizzi*)

Other kinship terms can be found including, for example, *zio* (without the article), as in the following example of regional Italian from Naples.

62 a TOG [...] con il **tuo** sostegno potremo costruire il **tuo** nuovo
TOG with the your.SG support can.FUT.1PL build.INF the your.SG new
centro sanitario. **Aiutaci** [...] **Dona** 2 euro
centre sanitary help.IMP.2SG=us donate.IMP.2SG 2 euros

'TOG [...] with your support we'll be able to build a new health centre. Help us [...] Donate 2 euros' (*Il domani*, 17 March 2023, p. 16)

This curious construction, which is attested in many different languages of the world, is found in the regional Italian varieties of central and southern Italy as a contact effect of the surrounding dialects of the same areas (Sorrento 1949; Savoia 1984; Sgroi 1992; Corr 2022).

11.7 Address forms in different text types

In advertising the predominant form of address found today is the second person singular *tu*, whereas until around 1995 the predominant form was *voi* (which was often ambiguous between a plural reading and polite singular reading, the latter alternating with *tu* and more rarely *lei*; Renzi 2001c:360).[4]

b Nissan Micra [...] **scoprila** anche **tu**
Nissan Micra discover.IMP.2SG=it also you.SG
'Nissan Micra [...] you can discover it too' (*Il mattino di Padova*, 17 March 2023, p. 40)

c Gran Biscotto Rovagnati [...] **prova** la pratica vaschetta
Gran Biscotto Rovagnati try.IMP.2SG the practical tub.DIM
'Gran Biscotto Rovagnati ham [...] try our handy packs' (*La Repubblica*, 17 March 2023, p. 26)

d Perché accontentarti, quando **puoi** avere tutto e subito? Con Opel [...]
why content.INF=you.SG when can.2SG have.INF all and at.once with Opel
'Why make do when you can have everything at once? With Opel [...]' (*Mattino di Padova*, 18 March 2023, p. 48)

63 a **Seguici**
follow.IMP.2SG=us

'Follow us!' (Facebook)

b **Apri** l' App
open.IMP.2SG the App

'Open the App' (notice on the current author's computer)

c **Scarica** l' App, Alì Supermercati
download.IMP.2SG the App Alì supermarkets!

'Download the App for Alì Supermarkets' (flysheet)

d **Spedisci** qui la **tua** corrispondenza
send.IMP.2SG=us here the your.SG correspondence

'Post your letters here' (postbox)

e Tabaccheria San Giovanni. Qui **puoi** pagare i Bollettini postali [...]
tobacconist San Giovanni here can.2SG pay.INF the slips postal

'San Giovanni Tobacconist's. Here you can pay your money orders' (shop window sign followed by five other similar notices of the type ***puoi*** *pagare/ricaricare*... 'you can pay/top up...')

f Assistenza computer e smartphone [...] Senza costo per l' uscita fino a
assistance computer and smartphone without cost for the exit until at
casa **tua**...
house your

'Computer and smartphone assistance [...] Free home call-out service' (poster on wall)

The same is true of commercial and similar forms of communication such as notices:

64 **Entrate** e **uscite** dal labirinto nel più breve tempo possibile!
enter.IMP.2PL and exit.IMP.2PL from.the maze in.the more short time possible

'Enter and get out of the maze as quickly as possible!' (*Tutto puzzle* (puzzle magazine), p. 4)

There are, however, some residual uses of *voi*, most probably to be interpreted as a plural, in examples such as (64).

65 **Stupite** i **vostri** invitati, **rendete** unica la **vostra** lista di
astonish.IMP.2PL the your.PL guests make.IMP.2PL unique the your.PL list of
nozze
wedding

'Astonish your guests, make your wedding list unique' (printed flyer in a shop window)

The following example of *voi* taken from an advertising message is also to be considered a plural, rather than the singular use of *voi*, since the addressees of the message are future brides and

bridegrooms who are also represented graphically by way of a number of small images placed around the message.

66 **Tutti** i **lavoratori** sono tenuti a segnalare subito ai propri
all the workers be.3PL required to report.INF at.once to.the own
responsabili gli infortuni [. . .]
managers the accidents

'All workers are expected to report at once to their line managers any accidents [. . .]'
(notice on a sign regarding the beginning of construction work)

If the author of the message is overtly expressed, then it is marked by the first person plural pronoun *noi* and associated inflexional forms (cf. *potremo costruire* . . . in 62a).

There are other syntactic possibilities to refer to the addressee which do not involve a pronoun, especially in official public announcements. In the following example, the addressee of the message is encoded as the subject and is realized more formally as an NP.

67 Non utilizzare sacchi neri
NEG use.INF bags black

'Do not use black refuse bags' (sign on rubbish bin)

Another possibility is the use of the negative *non* + infinitive (67), which is ambiguous between a negative impersonal reading of the infinitive with jussive value or, less plausibly, a second person singular negative imperative in which the addressee is not overtly expressed.

68 Per Info e acquisti **rivolgersi** al civico 18.
for info and purchases address.INF to.the street.number 18

'For information and purchases please contact number 18' (sign placed in shop window)

Finally, in public signs, the addressee is often left understood with the verb occurring in the infinitive, as in (68).

69 Legga attentamente questo foglio [. . .] Conservi questo foglio [. . .] Se ha
read.SBJV.SG carefully this sheet keep.SBJV.SG this sheet if have.3SG
qualche dubbio [. . .]
some doubt

'Read this leaflet carefully [. . .] Keep this leaflet safe [. . .] If you have any doubts [. . .]'
(standard text used in many medical information leaflets)

Instructions for the use of medicines are given with the polite pronoun *lei*, witness (69).

70 Si consiglia l' assunzione di 1 compressa intera [...] Le compresse,
self= advise.3SG the ingestion of 1 tablet whole the tablets
filmate, devono essere assunte intere [...]
film.coated must.3PL be.INF ingested whole

'You are advised to take one whole tablet [...] Film-coated tablets must be ingested whole [...]'

However, in the following example a different strategy is employed: in the first sentence the author of the message is expressed with an indefinite subject *si* 'one', and in the second sentence the NP designating the medicine is promoted to subject in a passive structure.

71 a **Prenda** una di queste capsule [...]
take.SBJV.SG one of these capsules

'Take one of these pills [...]'

b **Guardi** che questo non è l' ufficio reclami!
look.SBJV.SG that this NEG be.3SG the office complaints

'Take note that this is not the complaints office!' (*Tutto Puzzle*, December 2022, p. 42)

Finally, a recent case of substitution of the polite pronoun *voi* with *lei* can be observed in the popular periodical *La Settimana Enigmistica*: the systematic use of *voi* in jokes still recorded in Renzi (2001:359) has for some time now shifted to *lei* (71a–b), with a similar situation found in other such publications.

1 Nel mezzo del camin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
Che la diritta via era smarrita. (*Inf.* 1, 1–3)
'Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark
For the straightforward path had been lost.' (Trans. Henry Longfellow)

11.8 Compatibility of *tu* and *lei* with various ritual forms

In conjunction with ritual linguistic forms such as greetings, *ciao* is only used with people who one addresses with *tu*. *Ciao* is preferred over *buon giorno* 'good day' and *buona sera* 'good evening' as well as the more recent, but today firmly established, *buona*

giornata/serata/domenica ‘(Have a) good day/evening/Sunday!’, especially in northern Italy where the latter greetings are perceived as cold and typically associated with the use of *lei*. It must also be remembered that *ciao*, *buon giorno*, and *buona sera* are used both when meeting someone and when taking leave of them; *salve* ‘hello’, by contrast, which is only used upon meeting someone, is quite familiar but is also compatible with *lei*; *arriveder**ci*** lit. ‘to.resee.INF=**us**’ and *arriveder**la*** ‘to.resee.INF=**you.SG.POL**’ (but not ***arriveder**ti*** ‘to.resee.INF=**you.SG**’), both meaning ‘goodbye’, are only used when taking leave. Finally, *buona notte* ‘good night’ is compatible with both familiar *tu* and polite *lei*.

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Petrarca, F. (1374). *Il Canzoniere (Rerum vulagrium fragmenta)*.

Sbarbaro, C. (1914). *Pianissimo*.

Solera, T. (1842). *Libretto of Giuseppe Verdi’s Nabucco*.

Trevisan, V. (2016). *Works*. Turin: Einaudi.

[1] The pronouns of polite address *lei* (singular), *loro* (plural), and *voi* (singular/plural), as well as their associated clitic pronominal forms and possessive adjectives and pronouns, were traditionally written with an initial capital, a practice which has largely fallen out of usage in recent decades.

[2] For a recent case study on the changing use of *voi* and *lei* (as well as other forms such as *(Sua) Eccellenza* '(Your) Excellence', *Voscenza* 'Your.excellence'), in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Sicilian authors, see Salibra (2021).

[3] For these and other references to literary sources below, see the list of textual sources supplied at the end of the chapter.

[4] All the following examples were collected in March 2023 from newspapers and notices on public display in Padua.

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Chapter 12

Archaism and innovation

Nigel Vincent

12.1 Introduction

Luca Serianni begins his book *Parola di Dante* in unequivocal terms:[1]

> Che Dante sia il creatore della lingua (e della letteratura) italiana non è solo una percezione corrente ma un dato di fatto [. . .]. (Serianni 2021:17)
>
> 'That Dante is the creator of the Italian language (and literature) is not just a common perception but a fact.'

Of course, what Serianni has in mind here is the standard language of Italy as evident not only in literature but also in everyday educated usage both written and spoken. And it is no coincidence that in *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Standardization* the chapter on the role of literature in that process focuses on Italian (Maraschio and Matarrese 2021). The intrinsic link between language and literature is also to be seen in the scholarly tradition. Histories of French or English literature abound but for those languages one would search in vain for a history exclusively devoted to the language of literature akin to Coletti's *Storia dell'italiano letterario* (Coletti 1993) or Bruni's *L'italiano letterario nella storia* (Bruni 2002). The reasons are not hard to find: most obviously the fact that Italy was not a politically unified nation until 1861, that there were still high levels of illiteracy until well into the twentieth century (De Mauro 1963), and that for many people Italian was principally a language of reading, writing, and formal conversation and acquired within a scholastic tradition strongly focused on the great writers of the past, and on Dante in particular. By contrast, day-to-day conversation was

conducted in the local dialect. Such a state of affairs implies a consistency, a resistance to the mechanisms of change that usually proceed via the spoken language and an inherently prescriptive approach to the norms of language.

Serianni goes on to say:

> Si può discutere in che misura la lingua di Dante sia trasparente per un lettore di oggi. Alcuni studiosi—a differenza di chi scrive e di altri—considerano italiano di Dante e italiano contemporaneo due lingue diverse: da un lato deprimendo l'innegabile condivisione dei tratti fonetici e morfologici, dall'altro accentuando le differenze lessicali e microsintattiche. (Serianni 2021:17)
>
> 'One can debate the extent to which Dante's language is transparent for today's readers. Some scholars—unlike the present writer and some others—consider Dante's Italian and modern Italian to be two different languages: on the one hand playing down the undeniable shared phonetic and morphological features and on the other emphasizing the lexical and microsyntactic differences.'

It is noteworthy that the features Serianni identifies as defining the continuity of the language over the centuries relate to dimensions of linguistic form rather than content. De Mauro (1999), by contrast, focuses on the core lexical content but comes to the same general conclusion:

> Quando Dante comincia a scrivere la *Commedia* il vocabolario fondamentale è già costituito al 60%. La *Commedia* lo fa proprio, lo integra e col suo sigillo lo trasmette nei secoli fino a noi. Alla fine del Trecento l'attuale vocabolario fondamentale italiano è configurato e completo all'81,5%. Ben poco è stato aggiunto dai secoli seguenti. Tutte le volte che ci è dato di parlare con le parole del vocabolario fondamentale [. . .] non è enfasi retorica dire che parliamo la lingua di Dante. È un fatto.
>
> 'When Dante began to write the *Comedy*, 60 per cent of the basic vocabulary was already there. The *Comedy* makes it its own, brings it together and with its seal passes it over the centuries down to us. By the end of the fourteenth century, 81.5 per cent of the basic vocabulary of Italian is complete and in place. Very little has been added in the following centuries. Whenever it falls to us to use words from the basic vocabulary [. . .] it is not a rhetorical ploy to say that we are speaking the language of Dante. It is a fact.'

Important too is the distinction here between the language of Dante in the sense of the state of the language—that is to say Tuscan, and more specifically Florentine—at that time and the particular use of that language made by Dante in his own writings.

Let us, however, begin with some examples. In (1), as hardly needs saying, we have the opening lines of *The Divine Comedy*, written in the first years of the fourteenth century:

2 E lasciando omai a ciascheduna e dire e credere, come le pare, tempo è da por fine alle parole, Colui ringraziando che dopo sí lunga fatica col suo aiuto n'ha al disiderato fine condotto.

'And leaving each to say and believe, as they think fit, it is time to put an end to these words, thanking Him who after such a lengthy effort with his help has brought us to the desired end.'

And in (2) Boccaccio's conclusion to the *Decameron* (completed 1353):

3 Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote,
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licóur
Of which vertú engendred is the flour;

4 When April with his showers sweet with fruit,
The drought of March has pierced unto the root,
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower;

Anyone with a knowledge of modern Italian will be able to read and understand these passages—there are only minor spelling differences (*disiderato* instead of *desiderato* 'desired') and what in Serianni's terms we might call microsyntactic discrepancies (*n'* as the first-person plural clitic object instead of modern *ci,* the splitting of auxiliary *ha* 'has' and the participle *condotto* 'led'). By contrast, an untrained modern reader of the opening lines of Chaucer's more or less contemporary *The Canterbury Tales* in (3) will need a modern English version such as that in (4):

5 a

Gli	studenti	andavano	discutendo	la	questione.
DEF	student.PL	go.PST.IPFV.3PL	discuss.GER	DEF	issue

'The students were discussing the issue.'

Comparing (3) and (4) also demonstrates the effect of orthography; many of the lexical items here still have the same meaning in modern English but the spellings obscure the connexion as with *soote* and *sweet*, *shoures* and *showers*, *flour* and *flower*, so that (4) is as much a transliteration of (3) as it is a translation. A modern English speaker would however be thrown if (3) were read aloud with Chaucerian pronunciation since standard English has incorporated a series of sound changes, most notably the Great Vowel Shift. Equivalently drastic effects do not, by contrast, appear to have altered the sound system of medieval Florentine compared to that of modern Italian, as Serianni is keen to underscore.

At first sight, then, it looks as if Serianni and De Mauro, and others in the same vein such as Dardano (2012), have an unchallengeable case for the inherently conservative relation between the Tuscan of the time of Dante and Boccaccio, and of course the third *Corona* Petrarch, and the language that prevails as the standard in Italy in the twenty-first century. In what follows, we will argue, as also does Ledgeway (this volume, §10.1), that things are not that simple. We look first at the internal, structural dimensions of language before moving on to consider some of the historical and contextual circumstances that have influenced the debate about the relations between the language of Dante's time and that of today.

12.2 Lexicon

We follow De Mauro's lead and begin with the lexicon (cf. also Chapter 25). While there is no reason to challenge his claims about the basic vocabulary of Italian, amounting to some two thousand items, languages consist of much more than these basics. Once we move outside this lexical core, there are various respects in which the modern lexis does not correspond to that of Dante's time. Perhaps the most obvious—and in some ways the least interesting—is the arrival of new vocabulary as a result of changes in the external world and the development of new concepts, methods, and tools. It comes as no surprise that *caffè* 'coffee' and *telefono* 'telephone' were not in use in the fourteenth century! *Cappuccino* on the other hand can be traced back to the time of Dante, or at least the base *cappuccio* can be: *elli avean cappe con cappucci bassi* 'they wore cloaks with low hoods' (*Inf.* 23, 61). The concrete noun *cappuccio* 'hood' yields the diminutive *cappuccino* to refer to a religious order in the sixteenth century and from there, because of the colour of their garments, it becomes the label for a coffee-based drink, an Italianism that has travelled the world while to this day in northern Italy it is routinely called *cappuccio*. What is at work here is metaphorical extension, one of the mechanisms of semantic change, and it is processes such as these that have led to more or less subtle differences in the meanings of modern items compared to the earlier counterparts.

Table 12.1, based on Nencioni (1983b), Serianni (2017), and Giuliani (2023), provides some instances of the changes in meaning that have developed with the passage of time.

Table 12.1 Some examples of semantic changes

	meaning in Dante	modern meaning
abituato	'dressed'	'accustomed (to)'
cercare	'explore'	'look for, try'
conviene	'must'	'is useful, helps'
noia	'anguish'	'boredom'
parenti	'parents'	'relatives'
podestà	'power'	'mayor'
ragazzo	'stable boy'	'boy'
salute	'salvation, safety'	'health'

Another difference lies in the fact that many lexical items have been present since the time of Dante or before but do not figure in his writing. This is particularly true when it comes to the language of commerce and science, but also of everyday life. Among many others, Serianni (2021:ch. 3) cites: *medico* 'doctor', *notaio* 'lawyer', *mattone* 'brick', *cucitura* 'sewing'. There is then continuity from early times but not necessarily via the language of literature, and in this respect Italian is no different from any other language.

On the other hand, commentators of all kinds—academic critics, journalists, and YouTube influencers—like to highlight expressions that are Dante's own creations. To take some examples from the last-mentioned source, a popular YouTube talk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcpB6lXXeXM identifies

among others the following Dantisms that have become part of the everyday language: *le dolenti note* (*Inf*. 5, 25) literally 'the painful notes', but used as a prelude to saying something harsh or unpleasant; *bolgia* 'place of confusion and trouble, hellhole' from the name given by Dante to the levels in the eighth circle of hell; *stare freschi* (*Inf*. 32, 117), in origin meaning 'be cold' because the individuals in question were frozen in ice but now an idiom for finding oneself in an unpleasant situation; *non mi tange* (*Inf*. 2, 92), in context meaning that Beatrice is physically not touched by the flames of hell but now 'it is nothing to do with me'; *sanza infamia e sanza lodo* (*Inf*. 3, 36) originally 'without infamy or praise' and intended by Dante as a damning criticism of the individuals in question but now used more neutrally of a tedious event or experience that is neither good nor bad. What we see here is that, even when expressions are original literary coinages, they are not immune to the mechanisms of semantic change that characterize colloquial usage. With the final example we can also see how an item can be adapted in form as well as content: *senza* instead of earlier *sanza* and *lode* for *lodo* (for more examples of these kinds, see Pisano 2021). The enthusiasm evidenced by the speaker in this video parallels the way English writers and commentators of all kinds like to adduce usages that go back to Shakespeare and have subsequently become everyday expressions used by speakers without any awareness of the original source.

12.3 Phonology and morphology

When it comes to the phonological and morphological dimensions of language, there is little reason to disagree with Serianni, but even so there are some discrepancies between earlier and more recent structures. In pronunciation there had always been regional differences with respect, for example, to the distribution of [e, o] versus [ɛ, ɔ] and to [s] and [z], hence the traditional label *lingua toscana in bocca romana* 'lit. Tuscan language in Roman mouth' going back to the seventeenth century (Aprea 2015) and the more recent *lingua toscana in bocca ambrosiana* (St Ambrose is the

patron saint of Milan, Galli de' Paratesi 1984). At the same time, such variations are within a limited phonetic spectrum, are not generally detectable in the written language, and do not include the more extreme regional and dialectal differences due to truncation effects, metaphonetic alternations, and the like.

Arguably in the domain of inflexional morphology there is even greater consistency over the centuries (but see Chapter 9), even if some individual formations such as *seggio* 'I sit' or *vegno* 'I come' have not survived (cf. modIt. *siedo*, *vengo*). One obvious exception is the modern distinction between the first-person singular of the imperfect *cantavo* 'I was singing' and the third-person *cantava* 's/he was singing'. In Dante's time there was a single form *cantava* resulting from the loss of the final consonants in the Latin etyma CANTABAM VS CANTABAT. The analogical extension of the etymological first-person singular present indicative *-o* is a later development. Another difference concerns the inflexion of the conditional. Dante in the main follows the Tuscan pattern with forms derived from the Latin periphrasis of the infinitive plus the perfect of HABERE such as *canterei* 'I would sing' < CANTARE HABUI, *canterebbe* 's/he would sing' < CANTARE HABUIT. However, usage at his time was varied even within Tuscany, as documented in detail in Parkinson (2009), particularly in poetry, with alternative forms coming from the infinitive plus imperfect of HABERE: *canteria* 'I / s/he would sing' < CANTARE HABEBAM/HABEBAT.

It is also instructive to compare differences with respect to the forms associated with some of the more frequent irregular items within the core vocabulary. A case in point is the GO verb (Serianni 2021:47), where at the time of Dante *(g)ire* (< Lat. IRE) and *andare* were in use side by side: *per indugiar d'**ire** alla pena* 'to delay going to the punishment' (*Inf.* 28, 44), *per **gir**sene* 'to go away' (*Inf.* 28, 61), *mostratene la via di **gire** al monte* 'show us the way to go to the mountain' (*Purg.* 2, 60), *elli **givan** dinanzi* 'they went ahead' (*Purg.* 22, 127) beside *prima ch'altri dinanzi li **rivada*** 'before anyone should go by him again' (*Inf.* 28, 42), *ti faccio **andare*** 'I make you go' (*Inf.* 2, 70), *or **va*** 'go' (IMP.2SG) (*Inf.* 2, 139), *del bel monte il corto **andar*** 'the short ascent of the beautiful mountain' (*Inf.* 2, 120), *per me si **va*** 'through me you go' (*Inf.* 3, 1–3), *così **andammo*** 'so we went' (*Inf.* 4, 103), *quei du che insieme **vanno*** 'those two who together go' (*Inf.* 5, 74), *questa gente maledetta in vera perfezion*

già mai non ***vada*** ‘this accursed people may never reach true perfection’ (*Inf.* 6, 109–110), ***andavamo*** *introcque* ‘we went meanwhile’ (*Inf.* 20, 130). In the modern language the only surviving reflex of IRE is the lexically independent noun *gita* ‘trip’, although forms deriving from IRE are widespread in the dialects (Rohlfs 2021b:278–282).

12.4 Periphrases

On the border between morphology and syntax are periphrastic constructions (Ledgeway and Vincent 2022) and here the differences between old and modern Italian are more striking. In discussing lexis we noted that items can remain formally identical while changing their semantic content. The same possibility exists in grammar. Modern Italian has two periphrases with *andare* as exemplified in (5):

b Il pregiudizio che Dante scriva in una lingua assai
DEF prejudice COMP D write.SBJV.SG in INDEF language very
prossima all’ italiano moderno va dunque corretto.
close to.DEF Italian modern go.3SG therefore correct.PTCP
‘The prejudice that Dante writes in a language very close to modern Italian must therefore be corrected.’ (Tesi 2001:70)

6 a Lo caldo andarà augmentando enverso la fine de la primavera
DEF heat go.FUT.3SG increase.GER towards DEF end of DEF spring
‘The temperature will be increasing towards the end of spring.’ (Restoro d’Arezzo, 1282)

b […] in quella che d’ amor non vao cessando
in that.FSG COMP of love NEG go.1SG stop.GER
‘[…] in her, with whom I will not stop being in love.’ (Guido delle Colonne, thirteenth century

The first of these is amply attested in texts from the time of Dante, as the examples in (6) demonstrate (cited after Giuliani 2012, who offers a rich documentation of the phenomenon):

7 a se il detto notaio andasse eletto
if DEF said lawyer go.PST.SBJV.3SG elect.PTCP
'if the said lawyer was elected' (Siena, thirteenth century)

b [...] perché i Pistolesi andarono presi
because DEF people.of.Pistoia go.PST.PFV.3PL take.PTCP
'[...] because the people of Pistoia were captured' (Compagni *Cronica* 1310–1312, 2.27)

The second is also present at this time but with a significantly different meaning as can be seen in (7):

8 ...dicembre va a essere un mese carico di impegni
December go.3SG to be.INF a month full of job.PL
'December is going to be a busy month' (http://meemi.com/yearlyglot/2807994)

The auxiliary *andare* 'go' here has undergone semantic bleaching, has lost its motion sense and come to serve a simple passive function; however, the deontic modal value associated with the construction in modern Italian and exemplified in (5b) has not yet developed (Mocciaro 2014, from whom the examples in (7) are taken). Moreover, as (7b) shows, there is not the restriction found in the modern language whereby the non-modal meaning is only available with verbs with a negative sense, hence *andare perduto/distrutto* 'get lost/destroyed' but not ***andare trovato/costruito* 'get found/built'.

At the same time new patterns are always developing. The construction GO + (*a*) + infinitive with a (near) future meaning is well attested in French and Ibero-Romance but is traditionally considered not to be an Italian development. However, recent corpus-based work by Dessì Schmid and Momma (2024) and by Mayr (2024) documents its emergence in modern Italian examples such as (8) and (9) (= examples 19 and 21 from Schmid and Momma):

9 in questo articolo andiamo a vedere alcuni consigli per velocizzare un iPad
in this article go.1PL to see.INF some tips for speed.up.INF an iPad
'in this article we are going to consider some tips for speeding up an iPad' (diggita.it, *itTenTen*16)

10 a ella disse che ciò in niuna guisa sofferrebbe
she say.PST.PFV.3SG COMP that in no way allow.COND.3SG
'She said that in no way would she allow that.' (Boccaccio *Dec.* II.5.34)

b lei disse che non l' avrebbe permesso
she say.PST.PFV.3SG COMP NEG it= have.COND.3SG allow.PTCP
in nessun modo
in no way

A rather different kind of change is the one that underlies the contrast between the example in (10a) and its modern translation in (10b):

11 a poi che questi fue alquanto stato meco cotale
after COMP this.one be.PST.PFV.3SG some be.PTCP me.with that
'after he had been with me for a while' (Dante *Vita nuova* xxiv.11)

b poi che fu stato nascosto LV anni
after COMP be.PST.PFV.3SG be.PTCP hide.PTCP 55 year.PL
'after it had been/stayed hidden for fifty-five years' (*Leggenda aurea*, thirteenth century; Telve 2005:277)

c poi che Fiesole fue stata assidiata
after COMP Fiesole be.PST.PFV.3SG be.PTCP.FSG besiege.PTCP.FSG
da Cecerono per lungo tempo
by Cecerono for long time
'after Fiesole had been besieged by Cecerono for a long time' (*Libro fiesolano*, ms Orsucci, fourteenth century; Telve 2005:277)

Examples like (10b) instantiate the rule of modern Italian syntax that the future in direct speech becomes a conditional perfect in reported speech unlike the English translation of (10a) where the embedded verb is a simple and not a compound conditional. As Maiden (1996a) demonstrates, this usage only begins to be systematically attested in the early seventeenth century; prior to that the structure cited here from Boccaccio was the norm, as indeed it still is in other Romance languages such as French, Spanish, or Catalan.

Another periphrastic pattern where there are notable differences between early and modern usage is the *trapassato remoto*, that is to say, the construction built from the preterite of the perfective auxiliary plus the past participle of the main verb: *ebbe cantato* 's/he had sung', *fummo partiti* 'we had left (lit. we were left)'. In modern usage this is restricted to the very high written register and even then only to embedded clauses, with the additional constraint that the relevant form for *essere* 'be' does not exist and consequently there is no corresponding passive, hence the ungrammaticality of ***dopo che fu stato criticato* compared to *dopo che era stato criticato* 'after he had been criticized' (cf. *fu* 'be.PST.PFV.3SG' vs *era* 'be.PST.IPFV.3SG'). Things were different in old Italian. Telve (2005) cites examples such as those in (11):

12	Quando	leggemmo		il	disiato	riso	Esser
	when	read.PST.PFV.1PL		DEF	desired	mouth	be.INF
	basciato	da	cotanto	amante			
	kiss.PTCP	by	such	lover			

'When we read that the desired mouth was kissed by such a lover.' (*Inf.* 5, 133–134)

As Telve notes, and as these examples demonstrate, the early attestations usually occur with an adverbial expressing the duration of the state described and it is the loss of this durative value which characterizes the change evidenced in the modern language. By contrast the *trapassato remoto* in non-stative and non-passive contexts was more widespread and was not restricted, as it now is, to higher registers.

12.5 Syntax

In the domain of syntax we find the same types of difference between the Italian of Dante's era and now as we saw in lexical change: loss of old structures, development of new structures, and changes within structures. A good example of the first kind is the accusative and infinitive construction (AcI), as in (12) from the famous scene with Francesca and Paolo:

13	dirà	poi	quello	essere	un	bellissimo	diamante
	say.FUT.3SG	then	that	be.INF	a	beautiful.SUPERL	diamond

'he will then say that that is a very beautiful diamond.' (Galileo *Dialogo*, 1632)

Where modern Italian, like the English translation, requires a finite clause to express what was read, here the subject of the embedded clause *il disiato riso* occupies the immediately post-verbal object slot and is followed by the passive infinitive *essere basciato*. This structure continues for several centuries in the formal written language but does not survive in modern usage. At the same time, an example like (13), in a text constructed as a scientific dialogue, suggests that it once was also available in educated discourse.

14 a ti priego **che**, se egli avviene ch' io muoja,
you beseech.1SG COMP if it happen.3SG COMP I die.SBJV.SG
che le mie cose ed ella ti sieno raccomandate
COMP DEF my thing.PL and she you= be.SBJV.3PL entrust.PTCP
'I beseech you **that**, if it should happen that I die, **that** she and my things be entrusted to you.' (Boccaccio *Dec.* II, 7, 84)

b nessun dubita, **che** s' elle comandassero a voce,
no.one doubt.3SG COMP if they order.PST.SBJV.3PL by voice
che questo non fosse lo loro comandamento
COMP this NEG be.PST.SBJV.3SG DEF their command
'No one doubts **that**, if they were to speak their command aloud, **that** this would be their command.' (Dante *Convivio* I, vii, 11)

The AcI is of additional interest in that it is an instance of contact between classical Latin and the higher registers of Italian and indeed of the Romance languages more generally (Pountain 2011) rather than a structure that has descended directly from late Latin via the mechanisms of internal linguistic change.

Staying in the domain of clausal complementation, consider the examples in (14) (and see also §10.2.2):

15 [...] e divennero sì copiosi in dire **che**, per l' abondanza
and become.PST.PFV.3PL so prolific in say.INF COMP for DEF quantity
del molto parlare [...], **che** cuminciaro a mettere sedizione
of.DEF much speak.INF COMP begin.PST.PFV.3PL COMP put.INF sedition
e distruggimento nelle cittadi
and destruction in.DEF city.PL
'[...] and they became so prolific in public speaking **that** because of the quantity of speaking [...] **that** they began to spread sedition and destruction throughout the cities'
(Brunetto Latini *La rettorica* 28.4–6, thirteenth century)

What we see here is what has come to be called recomplementation, that is to say, the use of two complementizers to flank material that precedes the embedded main clause. In both (14a) and (14b) the initial element is the first half of a hypothetical but it could also be a topicalized item as in (15):

16 a strepitosa economia americana
resounding.FSG economy.FSG American.FSG
'resounding American economy'

b dal panorama economico passiamo
from.DEF.MSG panorama.MSG economic.MSG move.1PL
a quello politico
to that.MSG political.MSG
'let us move from the economic to the political panorama'

Here is not the place to go into details but, as Vincent (2006) demonstrates, this structure is documented in early texts in registers ranging from private correspondence through to public statutes. By contrast, similar use of a repeated complementizer in modern Italian would be regarded at best as a typographical slip.

An example of a change which sits on the border between syntax and style is to be seen in the distribution of pre- and post-nominal positions of adjectives. A variety of labels have been used to describe the different values associated with the two positions (Vincent 2007:58; cf. also §19.3.2), but for present purposes we will go with Maiden and Robustelli (2007:48f.), who distinguish the 'delimiting' function of a postposed adjective and the 'inherent', to which we can add 'evaluative', function when the adjective is preposed. Instances of both can be seen in the following examples (cited from *Corriere della Sera* 27 October 2023):

17	a	risulta	esserci	un	clandestino	mercato
		turn out.3SG	be.INF=there	a	secret	market
		'there turns out to be a secret market' (*La Stampa*, 20 January 1990)				

In (16a) the evaluative adjective *strepitosa* precedes the head noun *economia* while the delimiting *americana* follows. The delimiting function is also evident in (16b), where the two dimensions of political and economic activity are explicitly contrasted. Since an inherent property is not contrastive it may also be found with proper or quasi-proper nouns as in *la fiorentina Divina Commedia* 'the Florentine Divine Comedy' or *la solenne cerimonia di incoronazione* 'the solemn coronation ceremony'. Berruto (1998:§6) had already noted the increased frequency of the pre-nominal pattern in contemporary journalistic and broadcasting language, citing examples such as those in (17), which in his words constituted 'collocazioni aggettivali che urtavano l'orecchio' ['adjectival collocations which jarred on the ear]' and all of which he flags as ungrammatical:

b	alcune	centrali	banche	europee	
	some.FPL	central.PL	bank.FPL	European.FPL	
	'some European central banks' (*Giornale Radio* 1, 8 March 1995)				

c	il	campanile	della	gotica	chiesa	di	San Domenico
	DEF	bell.tower	of.DEF.FSG	gothic.FSG	church.FSG	of	San Domenico
	'the bell tower of the Gothic church San Domenico' (*La Repubblica*, 18 August 1995)						

18 a la città [...] con temperata aria, guardata da nocivi venti
DEF city with temperate air protected from harmful winds
'the city [...] with temperate air and protected from harmful winds' (Compagni 1310)

b alcuni scalzi per la chiara acqua cominciarono ad andare
some barefoot through DEF clear water begin.PST.FPV.3PL COMP go.INF
e altri tra' belli e diritti alberi sopra il verde
and others among beautiful and straight trees above DEF green
prato s'andavano diportando
meadow REFL=go.PST.IPFV.3PL play.GER
'some began to go barefoot through the clear water while others went playing among the beautiful straight trees above the green meadow' (Boccaccio *Dec.* VII.conc.5)

In context, (17a) implies a contrast with the usual open market and hence one would expect *clandestino* to be postposed, while for (17b) it is instructive that the Italian name for the European Central Bank is *Banca Centrale Europea*. (17c) is a more borderline case depending on whether one considers *gotica* to be an inherent feature of the church in question or in contrast with other possible architectural labels such as *romanica* 'Romanesque'.

Berruto (1998:104) identifies 'una possibile tendenza all'anteposizione dell'aggettivo serpeggiante nell'italiano di oggi' ['a possible tendency to prepose adjectives which is snaking its way into today's Italian'], and which he attributes to a convergence of two factors: what he calls its association with high registers ('il valore stilistico di registro ricercato') and the influence, particularly in journalistic language, of English. McLaughlin (2013) confirms Berruto's conclusions both as regards the journalistic predominance of the preposed pattern and the way, when tested, native speakers tend to react negatively to such uses.

In this connexion, it is striking that similar patterns are well attested in earlier Italian as exemplified in (18), documented by Alisova (1967) and further discussed in Vincent (2007) (cf. also §10.4.3):

19 a andai a parlarne con Contini = parlare dell' argomento
go.PST.PFV.1SG to speak.INF=NE with Contini speak.INF of.DEF topic
'I went to speak about it (the topic) with Contini.' (Sabatini 2024:22)

b per dimostrarne l' origine = l' origine della parola
for show.INF=NE DEF origin DEF origin of.DEF word
'in order to show its (the word's) origin'

c senza sentirsene imprigionati = imprigionati dalla lingua
without feel.INF=REFL=NE imprison.PTCP.PL imprison.PTCP by.DEF language
'without them feeling imprisoned by it (the language)' (Sabatini 2024:110)

In (18a) the more normal sequences in modern Italian would be *aria temperata* and *venti nocivi* since there is an implied contrast with alternative circumstances. Similarly in (18b) it is the distinguishing features of all the objects in question—water, trees, and meadow—which are being invoked. As Berruto and Alisova demonstrate, examples such as these do not show continuity between early and modern stages of Italian but rather a reversion in recent usage to an older pattern, in short a sequence of changes A > B > A.

More generally, as time goes by innovations accumulate in syntax as they do in lexis. A recent instance is analysed in Miola (2023). As he notes, in the standard language the clitic *ne* corresponds to prepositional phrases with *di* 'of' or *da* 'from' as in the examples in (19) taken at random from a recent volume, and where the intended argument pronominalized by *ne* is indicated immediately following the cited text:

20 a Quell' esperienza gli apparteneva.
that experience 3.DAT.MSG= belong.PST.IPFV.3SG
Ne accennò […] = accennare all' esperienza
NE= mention.PST.PFV.3SG mention to.DEF experience
'That experience belonged to him. He mentioned it…'

b Eredità […] non sarà possibile rinunciarne successivamente
inheritance NEG be.FUT.3SG possible renounce.INF=NE later
=rinunciare all' eredità
renounce.INF to.DEF inheritance
'Inheritance […] it will not be possible to renounce it later.'

By contrast in (20) we adduce Miola's examples (10) and (16) in which *ne* corresponds to full prepositional phrases introduced by *a*:

1	Voiceless stops:	/p/ vs /t/ vs /k/:
		[p]*ane* 'bread' vs [t]*ane* 'dens' vs [k]*ane* 'dog'.
	Voiced stops:	/b/ vs /d/ vs /g/:
		[b]*are* 'coffins' vs [d]*are* 'to give' vs [g]*are* 'races'.

As he explains, '[t]he variant is still marginal but its spread is apparently continuous. It originated in refined and educated varieties and has moved "downwards" into journalistic prose and also into formal speech' (Miola 2023:110, his scare quotes).

This new development sits neatly beside the now long superseded and etymologically distinct use of *ne* < Lat. NOS 'us' as a first-person plural marker seen in (2) and demonstrates how forms and functions can shift dramatically with the passage of time.

12.6 Contact and change

So far we have focused our attention mainly on differences between the older and more recent periods resulting from the various mechanisms of internal linguistic change which can affect all languages, Italian not excepted. In addition to these, either operating independently or interacting with the internally driven changes, are external forces due to contact with other languages. Such effects can in principle come from anywhere but there are four that are of particular relevance in relation to modern Italian.

12.6.1 Regional varieties

Within the territory that constitutes the modern state of Italy there are many different varieties descended from Latin, traditionally called dialects but in structural and lexical terms simply different systems (cf. §1.2, §1.4.2). The division into sub-groups is a complex, and not uncontroversial, matter. When they interact with the standard literary language the result is what has come to be called regional Italian (cf. Chapters 38–41), and once again the effects can be seen at all levels of structure, including not only lexis and pronunciation but also forms of address, as with the use of *voi* in

southern speech as a formal mode of address rather than standard *lei* (cf. §11.1.6), and grammar as with the absence of the *passato remoto* in northern speech (§26.3): for further discussion and exemplification see Cerruti (2024).

12.6.2 Latin

With the AcI construction we have already seen an instance where Italian, in addition to being descended from Latin, could also come into contact with it in special diamesic circumstances. A more refined classification of the way Latin and Italian interact is proposed by Tullio De Mauro (2014a:216). He distinguishes six dimensions, the first four of which—namely classical, reconstructed, ecclesiastical, and medieval—cover the period before Dante and therefore fall outside the present scope. However, his last two categories—modern and scientific Latin—are the source of a considerable number of lexical innovations from the Renaissance to the present day. He cites not only dedicated technical terminology such as *farmacologia* 'pharmacology', *logaritmo* 'logarithm', and *molecola* 'molecule', but also terms that have a wider use such as *biasimare* 'to blame', *modestia* 'modesty', and *tregua* 'truce'.

12.6.3 French

As with Latin, literary and cultural influences from French and Provençal Occitan were already in existence at the time of Dante, but of interest here are the many later effects of contact. These are lexical rather than syntactic and cover different semantic domains at different historical moments. And as with loan vocabulary more generally, they come in three forms: direct transposition of form and meaning: *vis-à-vis*, *savoir faire*, transposition of meaning but with the form adapted to the usual patterns of Italian phonology and morphology: *moda* 'fashion', *trucco* 'trick, ploy', *comitato* 'committee' beside Fr. *mode*, *truc*, *comité*, and calques or loan translations, that is to say, transposition of meaning but not form:

saggio ‘essay’ beside *essai*, *ammazzare il tempo* ‘to kill time’ beside *tuer le temps*. The effect of French is particularly noticeable in the eighteenth century, the period of so-called *gallomania* (see also discussion in §5.2), with borrowings in most areas; in the words of Serianni (2002a:567) ‘riesce difficile trovare un settore in cui la presenza dei gallicismi non risulti massiccia’ [‘it is hard to find an area in which there is not a massive presence of Gallicisms’].

12.6.4 English

There have been attempts to push back on foreign borrowings at various times in the past—one only has to think of the resistance to French and English in particular in the Fascist years—but perhaps none so academically underwritten as that promoted by the eminent textual philologist Arrigo Castellani. He diagnosed Italian as suffering from what he called the *morbus anglicus*:

> Nome del paziente: Italiano. Professione: lingua letteraria. Età: quattordici secoli, o sette, secondo i punti di vista [. . .] Diagnosi: sintomi chiarissimi di *morbus anglicus* (con complicazioni), fase acuta. Prognosi: favorevole, purché (puntini di sospensione)
>
> ‘Name of the patient: Italian. Profession: literary language. Age: fourteen centuries, or seven, depending on your point of view [. . .] Diagnosis: very evident symptoms of *morbus anglicus* (with complications), acute phase. Prognosis: favourable, provided that (dot dot dot).’ (Castellani 1987:1370)

Notable here is the specific reference to the literary language, which implies not only a restricted view of what counts as the standard language but also a view of literature that excludes popular fiction. A similar concern is encoded in the term *italiese* (Beccaria 2002:235–268 dedicates a whole chapter to the issue), and is picked up in contemporary websites such as https://www.italiani.it/in-italiano-per-favore-non-in-inglese-50-termini-da-dire-in- italiano.

History shows that attempts like this have mixed success. The Fascist insistence on indigenous sporting terminology has by and large worked, hence *calcio d’angolo* instead of *corner*, *rigore* instead of *penalty*, but Castellani’s alternative coinings like *fubbia* built from *fumo* ‘smoke’ and *nebbia* ‘fog’ and intended as a replacement for *smog* have gone nowhere. And even when there are obvious Italian equivalents, such as *diapositiva* beside *slide* or *intreccio* instead of

plot, they do not necessarily win the battle. Harder to dig out are shifts of sense of items that are formally related such as *realizzare* used with the sense of English 'realize' rather than the original 'carry out' or *sottomettere* in the sense of 'submit (an application, a chapter)' instead of the older 'subject'. Even in a field such as the law, where terminological precision is essential and the conceptual foundations are distinct, Anglicisms have made their presence felt, as Visconti (2024) shows with respect to the use of *contratto* 'contract' and a loan like *leasing*.

Perhaps more striking is the claim that English, unlike say French or German, has also been the source of syntactic changes. We have already mentioned Berruto's argument that English in part lies behind the recent rise in the pre-nominal use of adjectives and another construction where English influence has been adduced is the progressive periphrasis *stare* 'stand' + gerund (Carlucci 2025). The results here are, however, somewhat ambiguous. The construction itself dates back to before Dante and while its more frequent occurrence in the twentieth century is arguably due to English, the fact remains, as McLaughlin (2013) and Natale (2018) note, that the restrictions on its use in Italian do not match those of English, and its historical profile is independent of English influence (Dessì Schmid 2019:222–227). Thus, in Italian there is no compound form ***siamo stati giocando* beside English *we have been playing*, non-finite forms such as ?*star controllando* 'to be checking' are only marginally accepted, and it tends only to occur with activity verbs rather than statives. What is relevant here is the distinction Carlucci (2017a), following Pountain (1994), draws between 'innovation', or the use of a genuinely new term or structure, and 'exploitation', when the contact form both builds on and is constrained by existing patterns in the receiving language. Both the changes in the distribution of adjectives and the rise of the *stare* + gerund construction are in this sense instances of exploitation rather than being truly innovative.

12.7 Standard and variation

For the most part in this chapter our focus has been on what might be called standard Italian, that is to say, the norms that are described in grammars aimed at both native and non-native speakers and the language of traditional literature, and more or less formal writing and speech. And while systems of this kind, not just in Italy, are inherently conservative they do change with the passage of time and under the pressure of external circumstances of various kinds, as we have tried to show. However, at the same time, we should note the many dimensions along which the language can vary in everyday use, and which have attracted a corresponding variety of labels in the literature: regional Italian (cf. Chapters 38–41), colloquial Italian (cf. Chapters 28–29), neo-standard (cf. §26.3), *italiano popolare* (cf. Chapter 37), and the like (see Berruto 2012c and the contributions to Ballarè et al. 2024). All of these are characterized on the one hand by greater innovation at all levels of structure—phonetic, grammatical, and lexical—and on the other hand, and perhaps inevitably, by a tendency to avoid archaisms.

12.8 Conclusion

Yes, modern standard Italian is closer in form and content to the language of the Tuscan literary giants of the fourteenth century than say English or French are to the corresponding ancestors and that for good reasons that have been widely discussed by scholars over the generations. But no, modern Italian is not the same language as fourteenth-century Florentine and that also for good reasons, namely the interacting effects over half a millennium of internal language change, external contact, and diatopic, diastratic and diamesic diversification. In short, to repeat the words of Riccardo Tesi (2001:70) cited as example (5b) above: 'Il pregiudizio che Dante scriva in una lingua assai prossima all'italiano moderno va dunque corretto' ['The prejudice that Dante writes in a language very close to modern Italian must therefore be corrected'].

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

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Part III

STRUCTURES OF ITALIAN

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Chapter 13

Orthography and writing

Pietro Maturi

13.1 Preliminary considerations

This chapter will focus essentially on the description of present-day Italian orthography and will also include, in its final part, a brief discussion of some of the main areas of innovation which may now be observed in the writing habits of Italians. Nevertheless, it may be useful for us to start by considering, albeit briefly, some very general aspects of the linguistic history of Italian involving the peculiar relationship between written and spoken Italian, from its origins and for over seven centuries, from the first literary works of the thirteenth century until the present day.

As is explained in more detail elsewhere in this volume (cf. §§1.2–4), Italian has its main roots in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century spoken Florentine dialect. The 'success' of this particular local variety as the winning candidate among all other regional and local Italo-Romance varieties, so that it became *the* Italian language, is substantially due to the fact that Florentine and Tuscan authors decided to experiment with writing literature in their own spoken language. In this way, they broke the convention of composing poetry and prose only in Latin, as everyone else had done before them since Roman times (apart from earlier, though in the long run not as successful, attempts in Sicily and other regions).

This circumstance gradually led to an increasingly wider diffusion of Florentine in its *written* form in literature, as well as in other forms of written production in many parts of Italy, whereas *spoken* Florentine was hardly able, so to speak, to 'break out' of the city of Florence or the boundaries of Tuscany. In fact, through many

intermediate stages which we will not discuss here, Florentine found its way to becoming the common written language in all or most parts of Italy as far as literary, official, cultural, and administrative usage was concerned (D'Achille 2003b:221). However, it was spoken very little, if at all, in that people went on speaking their own dialects in everyday life and in all non-formal situations (a state of affairs, by the way, which broadly coincides with Ferguson's classic definition of 'diglossia', with Florentine/Italian as the 'high' language and the various local varieties as the 'low' language).

Even without any further investigation of these historical developments, these preliminary considerations lead us to a primary important consideration with reference to the writing of Italian: this Romance language was, fundamentally, an almost exclusively written language for many centuries (outside Tuscany) and has only become a widely spoken language in relatively recent times (see De Mauro 1963).

Certainly, Italian was also occasionally spoken, whenever necessary, outside Florence and Tuscany in past centuries, as may have been the case for intellectuals and diplomats (particularly when meeting people from different regions); but even for this category of people Italian had been a language acquired as part of learning to read and write, and not by spontaneous acquisition as a native variety—except of course for Tuscans. This means that for the great majority of its users over a period of six or seven centuries (and, for some, even now), writing and reading Italian preceded speaking and hearing it.

Only since the late nineteenth century has this diglottic system slowly started to collapse, and an oral usage of Italian (sometimes still defined as 'Florentine' or 'Tuscan' until the early twentieth century) finally developed, at first alongside dialects through forms of code-switching and code-mixing (a system which falls under Berruto's concept (Berruto 1987b) of *dilalia*), and eventually replacing dialects even in informal conversation with the birth of the first native Italian-speaking generations among the middle classes of big cities.

One notably significant effect, among others, of all these complex historical processes is still observable today in the way Italian is taught at school to native speakers, where the focus has always been entirely or predominantly on writing, including orthography,

spelling, punctuation, and on the relevant correction of all mistakes. By contrast, very little or no attention is paid to speaking and to the different aspects of the spoken language (such as accent, pronunciation, orthoepy, prosody, speaking fluency, and the construction of oral texts).

13.2 The orthographic norm of contemporary Italian

13.2.1 Introduction

In very general terms, Italian may be described as a language with a fairly good one-to-one correspondence between sounds and letters. This is relatively true, if we compare Italian with English or French, for example. From this point of view, Italian may be considered more or less on the same level as Spanish, Portuguese, or German. Nonetheless, Italian spelling is not always so regular and rational as is sometimes believed (especially by Italians, who often feel that their own language has a 'normal' or 'natural' spelling, while other languages are absurdly complicated and are not written the way they are pronounced). In fact, there are areas of orthography where Italian spelling rules produce quite a complex relationship between the spoken and written form, which triggers doubts, difficulties, and mistakes in L1-school learning, as well as in the learning of Italian as a foreign language. Such uncertainties may emerge both in writing down a spoken text (from sounds to letters) and in the opposite task of reading written words either aloud or in one's own mind (from letters to sounds).

It is also true that many of the rules, even the most complex, tend to apply quite consistently, so they only need to be learned well and to be applied correctly. In a smaller number of cases, however, different principles seem to be at work, sometimes making things less predictable, especially in those—not so many, but frequently

used—words whose spelling obeys etymological or historical mechanisms, instead of regular synchronic correspondences.

All in all, Italian spelling can surely be learned with little difficulty, and homographs or homophones, while they exist, are nowhere near as common as they are in French, for example.

13.2.2 Spelling

13.2.2.1 Introduction

When Italian first started to be written in Florence and Tuscany, authors had to cope with an issue common to most modern European languages: it was totally natural for them to adopt the Latin alphabet—which was the alphabet everybody had learned to read and write for centuries in Western Europe—in order to write 'vernacular' varieties, but they must have immediately realized that the symbols available in that alphabet did not represent many sounds which existed in Florentine, and this new necessity started a quest for creative solutions. The need to adapt the Latin script to a new language led to uncertainties and to a significant variability of usage over a long period, but gradually a more stable norm emerged and finally became established through various stages and modifications. What I describe in the following paragraphs, though, will just be the norm as it is accepted today, and I will adopt henceforth a purely synchronic point of view.

13.2.2.2 The alphabet

Modern Italian uses a twenty-one-letter alphabet, made up of the following graphemes:

A B C D E F G H I L M N O P Q R S T U V Z

The current names of the twenty-one Italian letters shown above are: *a*, *bi*, *ci*, *di*, *e*, *effe*, *gi*, *acca*, *i*, *elle*, *emme*, *enne*, *o*, *pi*, *qu*, *erre*, *esse*, *ti*, *u*, *vi* (or *vu*), *zeta*.[1] These words are now generally assigned feminine

gender, e.g., *la esse*, *la ci*, *la u*, although only a few decades ago their gender still seemed to be more variable (Serianni 1988:31).

If one compares this sequence to the alphabets of English or many other Western European languages, it is immediately evident that the Italian alphabet lacks some letters that are very common elsewhere, namely J, K, W, X, and Y. Very many older or newer loanwords do contain one or more of these letters, as for example *jazz*, *koala*, *whisky*, *kiwi* 'kiwi; kiwi fruit', *würstel* 'frankfurter sausage', *boxe* 'boxing', *sexy*, *rock* 'rock music', *trolley* 'trolley suitcase', and so on, but nevertheless they are still felt and described as foreign or 'exotic' letters and they are not yet included in the official alphabet.[2] The common Italian names for the so-called non-indigenous or exotic letters are:

J = *i lunga* (lit. 'long I'; increasingly referred to by its English name *jay*)

K = *kappa* (or *cappa*)

W = *doppia vu*, *doppia vi*, *vu doppia*, *doppiovù*, all lit. 'double V' or 'V double', (or just *vu*)[3]

X = *ics*

Y = *ipsilon* (formerly also *i greca* lit. 'Greek I')

13.2.2.3 Vowels

The major issue with the spelling of vowels arises from the fact that the vowel system includes seven vocalic phonemes [i e ɛ a ɔ o u] in stressed syllables, while the alphabet only provides the five symbols A E I O U.[4] Such an asymmetry leads to a non-one-to-one correspondence in the case of mid vowels, as shown in Figure 13.1.

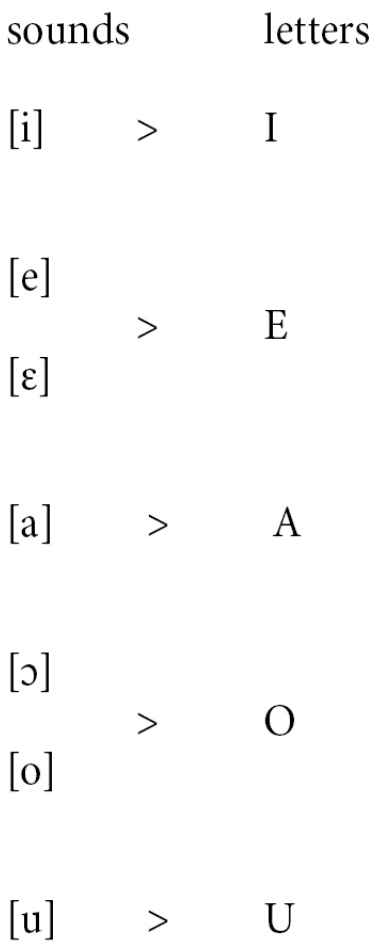


Figure 13.1 Correspondence between vocalic sounds in stressed syllables and letters.

That is to say that the spelling for mid vowels does not distinguish at all between close-mid [e o] and open-mid [ɛ ɔ] vowels, as for example in *ecco* [ˈɛkko] 'here is' vs *secco* [ˈsekko] 'dry.MSG', *porto* [ˈpɔrto] 'port, harbour' or 'I bring' vs *corto* [ˈkorto] 'short.MSG'.

A significant exception to this failure to distinguish graphically between close-mid and open-mid vowels concerns words stressed on the last syllable (in the Italian terminology *parole tronche* 'truncated words') and which end in one of the front vowels [e] or [ɛ]. In these cases, the close-mid front vowel [e] is regularly represented in writing by an *é*, with an acute accent,[5] while its open-mid counterpart [ɛ] is represented by the symbol *è*, i.e., with a grave accent: e.g., *perché* 'why', *ventitré* 'twenty-three', *viceré* 'viceroy', *temé* 'she/he feared' vs *caffè* 'coffee', *cioè* 'that is', *Giosuè* 'Joshua', *bidè* 'bidet'.

Another case where the distinction between [e] and [ɛ] is sometimes reflected, although only optionally, involves minimal pairs in which the opposition between the two members is based only on the degree of openness of the mid front vowel: e.g., *vénti* [ˈventi] 'twenty' vs *vènti* [ˈvɛnti] 'winds' (plural of noun *vento* 'wind'); *pésca* [ˈpeska] 'fishing' vs *pèsca* [ˈpɛska] 'peach'. This kind of spelling is less and less commonly encountered in contemporary written Italian, except in metalinguistic descriptions, and the words in question are mostly spelt without any accent, leaving the context to determine which is actually intended.

All other vowels, too, are also obligatorily accented when the last syllable is stressed, as in *città* 'city', *libertà* 'freedom', *papà* 'dad', *finì* 'she/he/it finished', *lunedì* 'Monday', *colibrì* 'hummingbird', *però* 'however', *mangerò* 'I will eat', *arrivò* 'she/he/it arrived', *Gesù* 'Jesus', *lassù* 'up there', *Perù* 'Peru': in all these cases, the accent is always grave.[6]

The accent may also be used, though only optionally, to distinguish words which form minimal pairs based on the position of word stress, such as *càpito* ('I turn up') vs *capìto* ('understood'), or *àncora* 'anchor' vs *ancòra* 'yet, still', *prìncipi* 'princes' vs *princìpi* 'principles' or 'beginnings', *sùbito* 'immediately' vs *subìto* 'undergone', *abbònati* 'subscribe!' vs *abbonàti* 'subscribers' (see Serianni 1988:55). This usage is now declining, disambiguation being usually left to context.

Vowels are also compulsorily accented in some monosyllables, in order to make a distinction in writing between homophones: this principle is clearly seen with *là* and *lì* (both meaning 'there'), which need to be accented in order to avoid confusion with *la* (article/pronoun) and *li* (pronoun), while *qua* and *qui* (both meaning 'here') do not carry any accent as no confusion may arise with any other words.

Other monosyllabic words whose spelling obligatorily takes an accent are: *sì* 'yes', *giù* 'down', *già* 'already', *più* 'more', *ciò* 'that', *sé* 'oneself' and *né* 'nor' (both with an acute accent), *è* 'is' and *tè* 'tea' (both with a grave accent), *può* '(she/he/it) can', *dà* '(she/he/it) gives'. Some of these monosyllabic words actually form minimal pairs with unaccented words, which explains the need for a distinctive accent: *sì* 'yes' vs *si* (reflexive and impersonal pronoun); *è* 'is' vs *e* 'and'; *né* 'nor' vs *ne* (partitive clitic pronoun); *tè* 'tea' vs *te* 'you' ; *dà* 'gives' vs *da* 'from'.[7] Some, on the other hand, bear an

accent to make it clear that their preceding *i* or *u* is an approximant and therefore not stressed, as in *più* [pju] and *può* [pwɔ], or is not pronounced at all, as in the case of *giù* [dʒu], *già* [dʒa], *ciò* [tʃɔ].

13.2.2.4 Approximants

The approximants [j] and [w] are consonantal sounds in all respects, regularly represented by the vowel symbols I and U, respectively. This creates once again a subsystem, made up of approximants and close vowels, with a non-one-to-one correspondence between sounds and letters (Fig. 13.2).

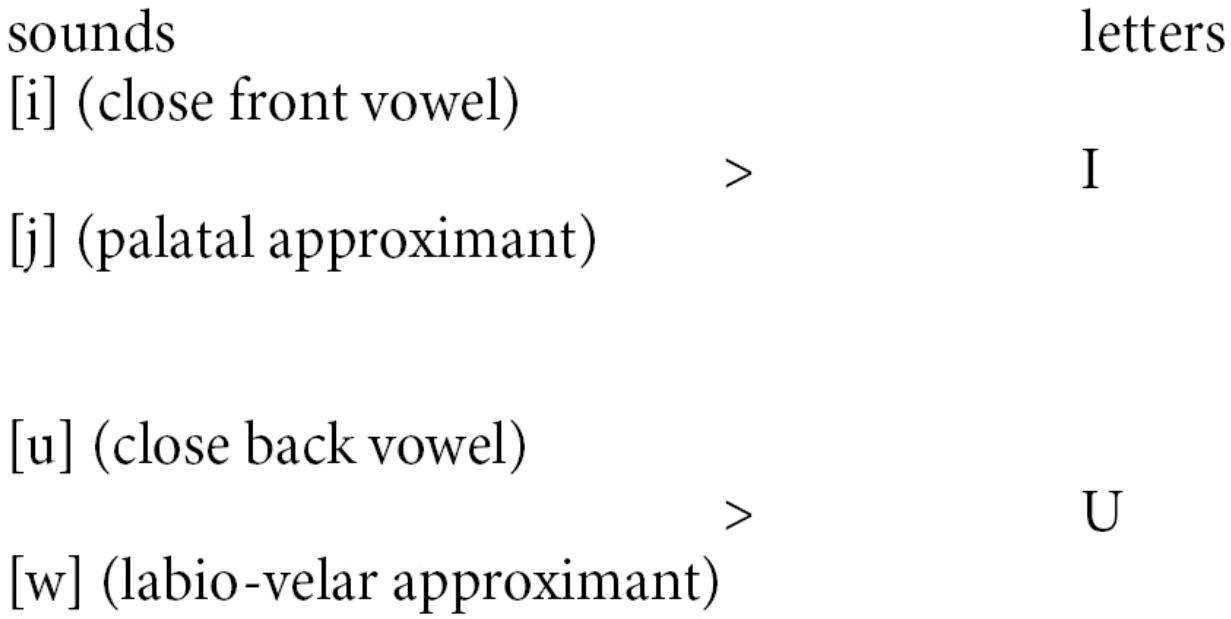


Figure 13.2 Correspondence between sounds and letters for approximants and close vowels.

For example, in *rione* [ri-ˈo-ne] ‘neighbourhood’, *zione* [tsi-ˈo-ne] ‘big uncle’, *diurno* [di-ˈur-no] ‘day-time’, *riamo* [ri-ˈa-mo] ‘I love back’, *riecco* [ri-ˈɛk-ko] ‘here is again’, the letter I represents a vowel, while in *fiore* [ˈfjo-re] ‘flower’, *azione* [at-ˈtsjo-ne] ‘action’, *violetta* [vjo-ˈlet-ta] ‘violet’, *pieno* [ˈpjɛ-no] ‘full’, *siamo* [ˈsja-mo] ‘[we] are’, the letter I stands for an approximant consonant, as is also apparent from the syllabic structure of the words shown in the phonetic transcriptions.

In the same way, the letter U performs a double function, as it represents a vowel in *duale* [du-ˈa-le] ‘dual’, *Luigi* [lu-ˈi-dʒi], *taccuino* [tak-ku-ˈi-no] ‘notebook’, *duello* [du-ˈɛl-lo] ‘duel’, and an approximant consonant in *quello* [ˈkwel-lo] ‘that’, *buono* [ˈbwɔ-no] ‘good’, *guasto* [ˈgwa-sto] ‘spoiled’, *vuole* [ˈvwɔ-le] ‘[she/he/it] wants’.

One frequently encounters a double I, that is, two Is in a row. We may distinguish two main possibilities: (a) if the first I is stressed, for example in verb forms such as *finii* [fiˈnii] ‘I finished’, *avvii* [avˈvii] ‘[you.SG] start’, and plurals of nouns such as *miagolii* [mjagoˈlii] ‘meows’, *rii* [ˈrii] ‘brooks’, the only accepted spelling is with a sequence of two Is; (b) if both Is are unstressed, for example in plural forms of adjectives as in *ovvii* [ˈɔvvi] ‘obvious’ (from *ovvio*), or of nouns as in *ozii* [ˈɔttsi] ‘idlenesses’ (from singular *ozio*), it is also optionally possible to spell these words with a double I. In such cases, though, current usage seems to be abandoning this spelling, now felt as quite old-fashioned, and prefers *ovvi*, *ozi*, with a single I (thus also re-establishing a better correspondence with the actual pronunciation of these words).[8]

13.2.2.5 Consonants

The consonantal system of Italian is much more complex than its vowel system, and it presents a larger number of situations where the correspondence between sounds and letters is far from intuitive even for native speakers. I shall examine the different problematic areas without following an alphabetical order or a phonological classification of consonants and will proceed to describe the various issues by grouping similar mechanisms together for the sake of clarity.

We may begin with the velar/palatal system: the letters C and G. Italian phonology includes a pair of voiceless/voiced velar stops [k g] and a pair of voiceless/voiced palatal affricates [tʃ dʒ]. These pairs obey a complex set of orthographic rules. In particular, the velar sounds [k g] are regularly spelled as C and G before a back or a central vowel, that is, when they are followed by A, O, or U, or before a consonant. For example:

cane [ˈkane] ‘dog’, *come* [ˈkome] ‘how, as’, *cubo* [ˈkubo] ‘cube’, *crudo* [ˈkrudo] ‘raw’

gatto [ˈgatto] ‘cat’, *gola* [ˈgola] ‘throat’, *gufo* [ˈgufo] ‘owl’, *gruppo* [ˈgruppo] ‘group’

The same sounds [k g], on the other hand, are spelt as CH and GH when they are followed by a front vowel, E or I:

che [ke] ‘what’, *chi* [ki] ‘who’

ghetto [ˈgetto] ‘ghetto’, *ghiro* [ˈgiro] ‘dormouse’

In these latter examples, the digrams CH and GH just stand for the velar consonant alone, and the letter H in them is a diacritic, not being pronounced at all as a separate sound, as seen in Figure 13.3.

sounds		letters
[k] (voiceless velar stop)	<	C (before A O U or a consonant) CH (before E I)
[g] (voiced velar stop)	<	G (before A O U or a consonant) GH (before E I)

Figure 13.3 Correspondence between sounds and letters for velar stops.

The palatal affricates [tʃ dʒ] are also spelled in two different ways depending on the following vowel, summarized in Figure 13.4. When they are followed by A, O, or U, these sounds are represented orthographically by the digrams CI and GI, respectively, where the letter I is a merely graphic diacritic and is not pronounced at all, as in:

ciao [ˈtʃao] ‘hello, goodbye’, *ciottolo* [ˈtʃɔttolo] ‘pebble’, *ciuffo* [ˈtʃuffo] ‘tuft’

giallo [ˈdʒallo] ‘yellow’, *giorno* [ˈdʒorno] ‘day’, *giurare* [ˈdʒurare] ‘to swear’

When palatal affricates stand before a vowel E, there are two different possibilities: usually the corresponding spelling is just C or G, as in:

cece [ˈtʃetʃe] ‘chickpea’, *celeste* [tʃeˈlɛste] ‘light blue’

gelato [dʒeˈlato] ‘ice-cream’, *gente* [ˈdʒɛnte] ‘people’

But in other cases, for historical reasons, the palatal affricates are represented by the digrams CI and GI, where the letter I is again not pronounced (although most probably it was originally pronounced, whence its survival in spelling):

cielo [ˈtʃɛlo] ‘sky’, *cieco* [ˈtʃɛko] ‘blind’

igiene [iˈdʒɛne] ‘hygiene’, *raggiera* [radˈdʒɛra] ‘radial pattern’

Before an I vowel, the palatal affricate is always just C or G:

cilindro [tʃiˈlindro] ‘cylinder’, *cinese* [tʃiˈneze] ‘Chinese’

gita [ˈdʒita] ‘excursion’, *gigante* [dʒiˈgante] ‘giant’

sounds		letters
[tʃ] (voiceless palatal affricate)	<	CI (before A O U, sometimes E) C (before E I)
[dʒ] (voiced palatal affricate)	<	GI (before A O U, sometimes E) G (before E I)

Figure 13.4 Correspondence between sounds and letters for palatal affricates.

If we now look at these correspondences (Figs 13.3 and 13.4) in the opposite direction, i.e., moving from letters towards sounds, we observe further peculiarities of these complex subsystems, which are shown synthetically in Figure 13.5.

letters (and digrams)		sounds
C	<	k (voiceless velar stop) *casa* tʃ (voiceless palatal affricate) *cena*
CH		k (voiceless velar stop) *chi*
CI	<	tʃ (voiceless palatal affricate) *ciao* tʃi (voiceless palatal affricate + [i]) *circo*
G	<	g (voiced velar stop) *gatto* dʒ (voiced palatal affricate) *gente*
GH		g (voiceless velar stop) *ghiro*
GI	<	dʒ (voiced palatal affricate) *giallo* dʒi (voiced palatal affricate + [i]) *giro*

Figure 13.5 From letters to sounds: the phonological values of the letters C and G.

Some morphological paradigms very clearly show the effects of this complex orthographic system, where the different endings select changes in the spelling of the root: for example the verb *cucire* 'to sew' inserts a silent I before endings beginning in A O but not before E I, as in PRS.IND 1SG *cucio*, 2SG *cuci*, 3SG *cuce*, 1PL *cuciamo*, 2PL *cucite*, 3PL *cuciono*, or the adjective *riccio* 'curly' in MSG *riccio*, FSG *riccia*, MPL *ricci*, FPL *ricce*, or the noun *arancia* 'orange', PL *arance*.

More precisely, the example of *arance* exemplifies the need for a set of spelling sub-rules concerning similar plural forms of feminine nouns ending in *-cia*, *-gia*:

- if the I in the singular is stressed, it remains unchanged in the plural, *as in farmacia/farmacie* 'pharmacy/pharmacies', *bugia/bugie* 'lie/lies';

- if the I in the singular is 'silent', e.g., in *arancia* or *frangia* 'fringe', and the syllable *-cia/-gia* is preceded by a consonant, that I disappears in the plural, as in *arance*, *frange*;
- if the I in the singular is 'silent', e.g., in *camicia* 'shirt' or *valigia* 'suitcase', and the syllable *-cia/-gia* is preceded by a vowel, the I does not disappear in the plural, as in *camicie*, *valigie*.[9]

Similar processes apply to roots ending in a velar stop, which add an H in order to show that the velar consonant is retained before front-vowel inflexional endings, as in *buco* 'hole', PL *buchi*, MSG *ricco* 'rich', FSG *ricca*, MPL *ricchi*, FPL *ricche*, 1SG.PRS.IND *pago* pay', 2SG.PRS.IND *paghi*. These mechanisms are sometimes subject to more complex morphological specificities, where the velar is palatalized before the front vowel ending, with corresponding consequences for spelling (see §9.4.4).

A further complication to the above systems of correspondence arises from the fact that, side by side with the letter C, another letter also has the value of a voiceless velar stop [k], and that is the letter Q. This letter can only appear before an approximant [w] (see above for approximants), represented graphically by the letter U, thus forming with it the sequence QU- (phonetically [kw]). This succession of letters appears in some very commonly used grammatical and lexical words, among which the demonstratives *questo* [ˈkwesto] 'this' and *quello* [ˈkwello] 'that', the locative adverbs *qui* [kwi] and *qua* [kwa] 'here', the interrogative adjectives and pronouns *quale* [ˈkwale] 'which' and *quanto* [ˈkwanto] 'how much', the adverb *quasi* [ˈkwasi] 'almost', etc.; it is also present in a number of frequently used lexical items such as *quadro* [ˈkwadro] 'painting', *acqua* [ˈakkwa] 'water', *acquistare* [akkwisˈtare] 'to purchase', and so on, as well as in the numerals *quattro* [ˈkwattro] 'four', *quaranta* [kwaˈranta] 'forty', *quarto* [ˈkwarto] 'fourth', with all their derivatives and compounds. At the same time, the picture is complicated by the fact that Italian also has words where the same phonetic sequence [kw] is spelt CU instead of QU: among these are *cuore* [ˈkwɔre] 'heart', *scuola* [ˈskwɔla] 'school', *cuoco* [ˈkwɔko] 'cook', *cuoio* [ˈkwɔjo] 'leather', *scuotere* [ˈskwɔtere] 'to shake'. While QU can only correspond to [kw] and never to [ku], the sequence of letters CU can also transcribe [ku], that is the voiceless velar stop [k] followed by a full close back

vowel (instead of by an approximant), as in the relative adjective and pronoun form *cui* [ˈkui] 'whose, to whom' or in the verb *acuire* [akuˈire] 'to sharpen'.[10]

In our discussion of the velar/palatal subsystem, we have met the letter H as the second member of the digrams CH and GH, that stand for [k] and [g], where H is just a diacritic graphic symbol without phonetic expression and serves only to ensure that C and G get their value as velar stops before the front vowels E and I. The letter H is also present in a wholly different position, at the beginning of some forms of the indicative present tense of the verb *avere* 'to have'. Although most of the paradigm of this verb does not present an initial H (as in *abbiamo* 'we have', or *ebbi* 'I had', or *avendo* 'having'), this letter does appear at the beginning of the first, second, and third persons singular and third person plural of the present indicative tense *ho* 'I have', *hai* 'you have', *ha* 'she/he/it has', *hanno* 'they have', where it also lacks any phonetic counterpart, since these words are pronounced, respectively, [ɔ], [a͡i], [a], and [ˈanno]. The reason for this unusual preservation of the etymological Latin H- (which has instead completely disappeared everywhere else in Italian) lies in the necessity of distinguishing graphically these verbal forms of *avere* from their homophones *o* 'either/or', *ai* 'to the (MPL)', *a* 'to, at', *anno* 'year', while all the other forms of this verb do not run the same risk of being mistaken for any other words and can consequently do without their etymological H-.

A further series of words also containing a 'silent' H are some much-used interjections where this letter stands at the end of the word or, in other cases, in the middle of it. Examples for this are *ah*, *eh*, *oh*, *bah*, *beh*, *boh*, *deh*, *mah*, *neh*, *puah*, on the one hand, and *ahi*, *ahia*, *ehi*, *ohi*, *ohé* on the other. An initial, silent H is also present in a large group of loanwords, some in quite common use, too, such as *hobby*, *hotel*, *hit*, *hip-hop*, *hangar*, *hub*, etc.: significantly, this H stays silent in Italian even in those words where it is pronounced [h] in the original language. Some cases of homophony result indeed from this peculiar behaviour of H, as in the series *ai* 'to the (MPL)', *hai* 'you have', *ahi* 'ouch!', all pronounced identically, as [a͡i]. In fact, Serianni (1988:44) defines H as the 'diacritic grapheme *par excellence*'.

The letter S does not involve any special spelling issues. It should only be borne in mind that Italian orthography does not reflect the

phonological opposition between two different consonantal sounds, that is [s] and [z], the voiceless and voiced alveolar fricatives, respectively, as shown in Figure 13.6.

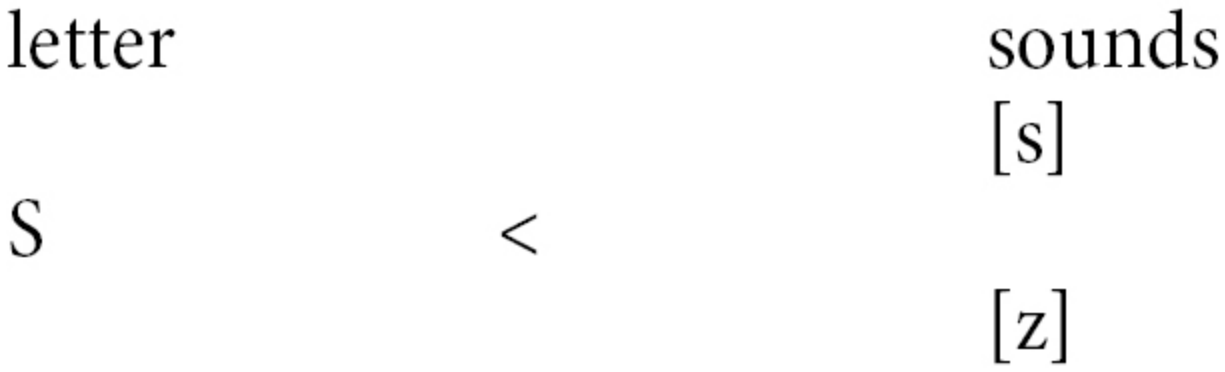


Figure 13.6 Correspondence between the letter S and the sounds it can represent.

For example, S stands for [s] in *sole* 'sun', *casa* 'house', *scuola* 'school', *questo* 'this', and for [z] in *rosa* 'rose', *sbaglio* 'mistake', *turismo* 'tourism'.[11]

Something similar, as far as spelling is concerned, happens with the letter Z. In fact, Z can correspond to either [ts] or [dz], that is the voiceless and voiced alveolar affricates, respectively (Fig. 13.7), both word-initially and between vowels.



Figure 13.7 Correspondence between the letter Z and the sounds it can represent.

Z stands, for example, for the voiceless [ts] in *azione* 'action', *zio* 'uncle', *zucchero* 'sugar', and for the voiced [dz] in *zero* 'nought', *azoto* 'nitrogen', *zanzara* 'mosquito'.[12]

As has been mentioned above in the introduction to this chapter, one historical dilemma with Italian orthography since its beginnings involved those sounds which were not present in Latin and thus were not provided for by its alphabet as it was inherited by Italian. Among the most conspicuous of the sounds which lacked a corresponding Latin letter are three palatal consonants that are very common in Italian: the voiceless palatal fricative [ʃ], the palatal nasal [ɲ], and the palatal lateral [ʎ]. In all three cases the solution adopted by Italian orthography consists in combining different letters together into digrams (or sometimes even trigrams), which are assigned the task to represent these sounds in writing.

The consonant whose IPA symbol is [ʃ] ([ʃː] intervocalically), that is the voiceless palatal fricative, is regularly represented by the digram SC in writing. This combination of letters, though, can also stand for the sequence [s] + [k]. The orthography avoids the ambiguity between the two different possibilities of interpreting the digram SC as [ʃ] or as [sk] by resorting to a complex but regular system of correspondences, exactly parallel to the system described above for the letters C and G. Specifically, when SC is followed by A, O, or U, it stands for the sequence [sk], as in *scala* [ˈskala] ‘stairs’, *scopo* [ˈskɔpo] ‘aim’, *scuro* [ˈskuro] ‘dark.MSG’. When it is followed by E or I, on the other hand, it corresponds to a palatal fricative [ʃ], for example in *scena* [ˈʃɛna] ‘scene’, *scimmia* [ˈʃimmja] ‘monkey’. To represent a palatal [ʃ] before A, O, U the letter I is inserted after SC, without any phonetic value of its own at all: *sciarpa* [ˈʃarpa] ‘scarf’, *sciocco* [ˈʃɔkko] ‘silly’, *sciupare* [ʃuˈpare] ‘to spoil’. In these latter cases, in fact, it is a three-letter group or trigram S-C-I standing for one single consonantal sound, [ʃ]. To obtain a [sk] sequence before E or I, on the other hand, an H is inserted, as in *scherzo* [ˈskertso] ‘joke’, *schifo* [ˈskifo] ‘repugnance’, and this H also has no sound of its own. S-C-H can never appear before A, O, U. Figure 13.8 summarizes the different possibilities just examined.

letters		sounds
SC	<	[sk] *scala* [ʃ] *scena*
SCI	<	ʃ (voiceless alveo-palatal fricative) *sciarpa* ʃi (voiceless alveo-palatal fricative + [i]) *sciare*
SCH		[sk] *scherzo*

Figure 13.8 Correspondence between the sequences SC/SCI/SCH and the sounds they can represent.

Some words, for etymological reasons, are spelt with SCI even before a vowel E, as is the case of *scienza* [ˈʃɛntsa] 'science' (cf. Lat. SCIENTIA), *coscienza* [koʃˈʃɛntsa] 'conscience' (cf. Lat. CONSCIENTIA), *usciere* [uʃˈʃɛre] 'doorman' (cf. It. *uscio* 'door' + agentive suffix -*iere*).[13] This I is also merely orthographic, never being pronounced in standard Italian, just like the I in *sciarpa* and so on.

The digram GL (Fig. 13.9) appears in some intellectual and scientific terms mostly of Greek origin, such as *glicine* [ˈglitʃine] 'wisteria', *glucosio* [gluˈkɔzjo] 'glucose', *geroglifico* [dʒeroˈglifiko] 'hieroglyphic', *glia* [ˈglia] 'glia', where it stands for [gl]. In the vast majority of cases, however, GL represents the lateral palatal consonant [ʎ]. In particular, before a vowel I it performs this task on its own as in *gli* [ʎi] (as an article and as a pronoun), *egli* [ˈeʎʎi] 'he', *tagli* [ˈtaʎʎi] 'you cut'; on the other hand, before any other vowel (A, E, O or U) it obligatorily requires the addition of an I in order to stand for a [ʎ] sound as in *taglia* [ˈtaʎʎa] 'size', *moglie* [ˈmoʎʎe] 'wife', *voglio* [ˈvɔʎʎo] 'I want', *pagliuzza* [paʎˈʎuttsa] 'blade of straw; mote'. This I is, again, totally silent.

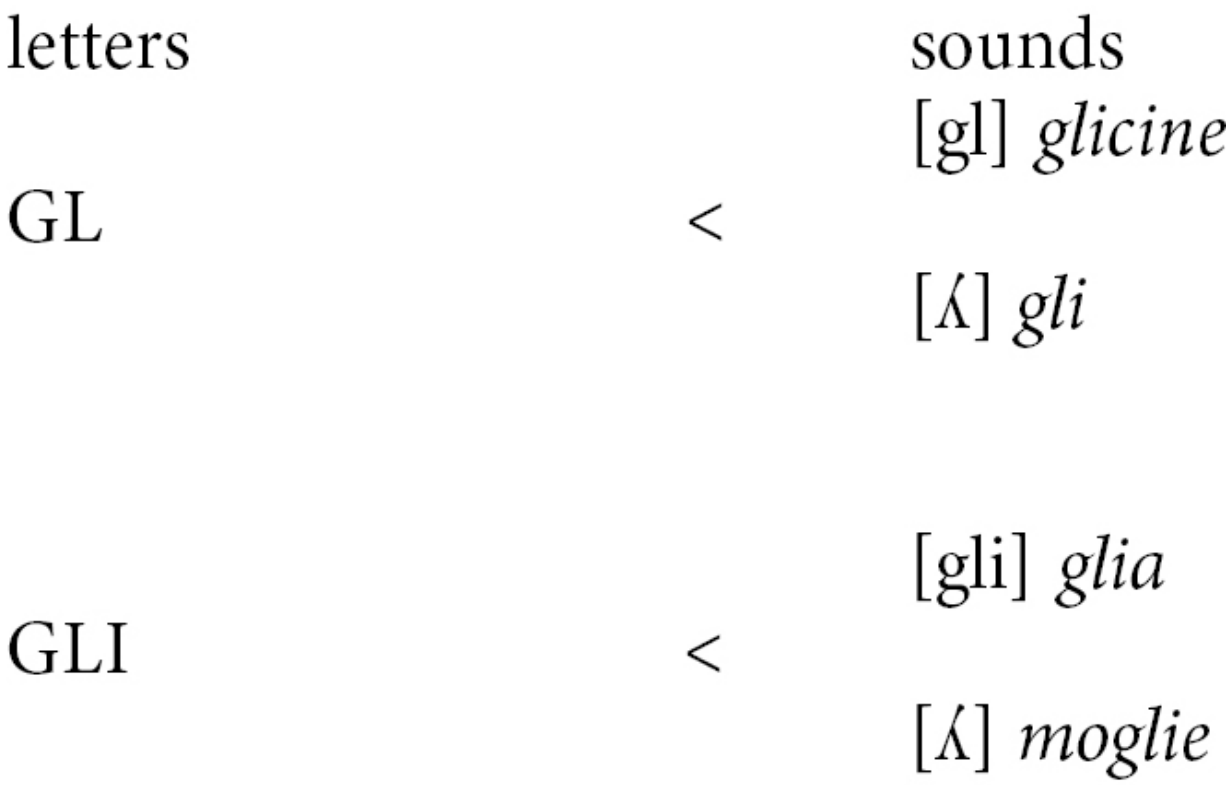


Figure 13.9 Correspondence between the groups GL/GLI and the sounds they can represent.

The digram GN always stands for the nasal palatal consonant [ɲ] and, unlike GL discussed just above which requires a letter *I* after it in most cases, GN never needs an *I* between it and the following vowel. For example, *ignaro* [iɲˈɲaro] 'unaware', *ligneo* [ˈliɲɲeo] 'wooden', *magnifico* [maɲˈɲifiko] 'magnificent', *ignoto* [iɲˈɲɔto] 'unknown', *gnu* [ɲu] 'gnu'. Only in some verbal forms, where a root ending in -GN is followed by a suffix beginning with an *I* such as -*iamo*, -*iate*, may an *I* appear between GN and the vowel, for example in *sogniamo* [soɲˈɲamo] 'we dream (IND/SBJV)', *spegniate* [speɲˈɲate] '[you.PL] extinguish (SBJV)', but this *I* remains unpronounced.

Double consonants, i.e., the immediate repetition of the same consonant in the same word, are not a peculiarity of Italian orthography, as this characteristic is common to many other European languages (for example Eng. *funny*, Fr. *pomme* 'apple', Ger. *Bitte* 'request', etc.). The specificity of the Italian system is that a consonant which is double in spelling always corresponds to a long phonetic realization of the same consonant. This quite regular

correspondence between orthography and pronunciation does have a few exceptions, however. All Italian consonant graphemes do actually appear both in a single and in a doubled form, with the only exception of H. Often this particular feature distinguishes members of significant minimal pairs. Table 13.1 gives some examples for each Italian consonant (wherever possible, minimal or semi-minimal pairs will be used).

Table 13.1 Single and double consonants

	single	double
B	*Ebe* [ˈɛbe] ‘Hebe’ (goddess)	*ebbe* [ˈebbe] ‘(she/he/it) had’
C	*eco* [ˈɛko] ‘echo’ *cacio* [ˈkatʃo] ‘cheese’	*ecco* [ˈɛkko] ‘here is’ *caccio* [ˈkattʃo] ‘I hunt’
D	*cadi* [ˈkadi] ‘you fall’	*caddi* [ˈkaddi] ‘I fell’
F	*rifà* [riˈfa] ‘she/he makes again’	*riffa* [ˈriffa] ‘raffle’
G	*sego* [ˈsego] ‘I saw’ (< *segare* ‘to saw’) *regia* [ˈrɛdʒa] ‘royal’	*seggo* [ˈsɛggo] ‘I sit’ *reggia* [ˈrɛddʒa] ‘royal palace’
L	*pala* [ˈpala] ‘shovel’	*palla* [ˈpalla] ‘ball’
M	*fumo* [ˈfumo] ‘smoke’	*fummo* [ˈfummo] ‘we were’
N	*nono* [ˈnɔno] ‘ninth’	*nonno* [ˈnɔnno] ‘grandfather’
P	*capi* [ˈkapi] ‘heads, items’	*cappi* [ˈkappi] ‘nooses’
R	*bara* [ˈbara] ‘coffin’	*barra* [ˈbarra] ‘bar’
S	*casa* [ˈkasa] ‘house’	*cassa* [ˈkassa] ‘case; cash till; coffin’
T	*fato* [ˈfato] ‘fate’	*fatto* [ˈfatto] ‘done, made’

	single	double
V	*bevi* [ˈbevi] ‘you drink’	*bevvi* [ˈbevvi] ‘I drank’

As is evident when comparing the spelling of these words with their phonetic transcription, the orthography of Italian reflects in all cases the actual sounds, and vice versa (while other languages may have double consonants in writing but not so at the phonic level). The consonants Q and Z are rather more problematic. Q does fit the general pattern, except that there is one example of a word with a double Q in contemporary Italian, and this is *soqquadro* [sok ˈkwadro] ‘mess’. Otherwise the phonological lengthening of a Q results orthographically in a digram CQ, as in *acquisto* [akˈkwisto] ‘purchase’, *acqua* [ˈakkwa] ‘water’, *tacque* [ˈtakkwe] ‘she/he kept silent’, and so on.

The letter Z may be written as single or double, but, unlike all other consonants, this spelling difference does not reflect a different pronunciation, as this consonant always has a long phonetic realization intervocalically, a fact which can lead to misspellings by native speakers. This peculiarity in the correspondence between sound and spelling of words containing Z means that word pairs such as *azero* [adˈdzɛro] ‘Azerbaijani’ vs *azzero* [adˈdzɛro] ‘I reset’ or *vizi* [ˈvittsi] ‘vices’ vs *vizzi* [ˈvittsi] ‘withered. MPL’ are homophones but not homographs, an infrequent situation in Italian. Some words, moreover, contain both a single and a double Z, for example those nouns formed with suffixes *-izz-* [iddz] (containing a double Z) plus *-azione* [attsjone] (with a single Z) in a row, e.g., *autorizzazione* ‘authorization’, *formalizzazione* ‘formalization’, *nazionalizzazione* ‘nationalization’.

The very common mechanism of *raddoppiamento fonosintattico* is a peculiar phonological rule of Italian which produces the lengthening of consonants at the beginning of words under the effect of the previous word, as in *a casa* [a kˈkasa] ‘at home’, *ho capito* [ɔ kkaˈpito] ‘I have understood’, *Gesù Cristo* [dʒezu kˈkristo] ‘Jesus Christ’, and so on (see §15.2.1.2.4). This mechanism is not normally reflected in the orthography of the words involved in the sequences, as the examples above clearly show.

The only orthographic effect of *rafforzamento fonosintattico* is observed when two (or more) originally independent words, whose combination triggered a doubling of the first consonant of the second word, have merged into one orthographic word (univerbation): for example *a posta* 'at stake' > *apposta* [apˈpɔsta] 'intentionally', *tre piedi* 'three feet' > *treppiedi* [trepˈpjɛdi] 'tripods', *e bene* 'and well' > *ebbene* [ebˈbɛne] 'and so', *sopra a tutto* 'above at everything' > *soprattutto* [sopratˈtutto] 'above all', *caffè latte* > *caffellatte* [caffelˈlatte] 'white coffee', *a Dio* 'to God' > *addio* [adˈdio] 'farewell', *chi sa* 'who knows' > *chissà* [kisˈsa] 'who knows, maybe'. Clearly, in many cases we can have both the sequence of separated words, as in *tre piedi* 'three feet' vs *treppiedi* 'tripods', with the same phonetic realization (both have a long [pp] sound) but orthographically distinct, which makes them homophones but not homographs, just like *a Dio* 'to God' vs *addio* 'farewell', also perfect homophones in standard Italian.[14] The same effect of consonant doubling caused by *raddoppiamento fonosintattico* (both in writing and in pronunciation) appears with the second person singular monosyllabic imperative forms *da'* 'give', *di'* 'say', *fa'* 'do', *sta'* 'stay', *va'* 'go' (see below for the apostrophes in these words), which also double the initial consonant of any clitics which are attached to them, as in *dacci!* 'give us!', *dimmelo!* 'tell it to me!', *faccelo!* 'do it for us!', *stammi bene!* 'take care! (lit. stay well for me)', *vattene!* 'go away!'.

Another quite peculiar case of relatively wide diffusion of double consonants in Italian arises from loanwords, borrowed from English or from other languages, which end in a single consonant, such as for example *stop*, *split*, *rap*, *goal*. These words, when they form derivatives in Italian through the adding of a suffix, tend almost regularly to double their final consonant, as in *stoppare* [stopˈpare] 'to stop', *splittare* [splitˈtare] 'to split', *rappare* [rapˈpare] 'to rap', *golletto* [golˈletto] 'little, easy goal (in football)'. Sometimes even more surprising forms of consonant doubling appear in texting or in graffiti etc. where a similar mechanism seems to regularly apply. Well-known English words which are not (as yet?) accepted as loanwords in Italian, for example the verb *to love*, happen in fact to show a double consonant in semi-ironical neo-formations such as *ti lovvo* 'I love you', from a hypothetical verb **lovvare* 'to love'. Even

more striking is the infinitive *laikkare* with a double K, based on Eng. *like* and used only in the special meaning connected with approving a post on a social network by clicking on the 'like' thumb-up icon: *non mi hai laikkato* 'you didn't like me (my post)'.

13.2.3 Combining words and its effects in writing

Many words may present special variants in writing, in particular when they are involved in special sequences or combinations. Such variants can arise from frequent mechanisms such as: connecting words by apostrophes; shortening words, usually by omitting the final vowel or syllable; attaching a clitic particle to a verb; and combining words into compounds with or without a hyphen.

One very common type of linking between words in Italian is elision, i.e., the deletion of the final vowel of a word when it is followed by another word also beginning with a vowel or with an (always silent) H. This deletion is very common, though increasingly less frequent today than in the past, and is represented in orthography by an apostrophe. There are some combinations where the elision is regularly present, others where it may or may not appear and others where it has now become quite rare:

- definite articles *lo* and *la* and the corresponding forms combining preposition and an article lose the vowels *-o* and *-a*, respectively: *l'amica* 'the friend', *l'olio* 'the oil', *l'hotel* 'the hotel', *dell'acqua* 'of the water', *dell'aceto* 'of the vinegar', *all'Italia* 'to [the] Italy', *all'interno* 'to the inside', *dall'America* 'from [the] America, *dall'estero* 'from [the] abroad', *nell'opera* 'in the work/opera', *nell'esempio* 'in the example', *sull'isola* 'on the island', *sull'occhio* 'on the eye';
- the feminine indefinite article *una* and the related quantifiers *nessuna*, *alcuna*, and *qualcuna*: *un'elica* 'a screw', *nessun'ombra* 'no shadow', *alcun'attività* 'any activity', *qualcun'altra* 'some other one' (the masculine equivalents *un*, *nessun*, *alcun*, *qualcun*, in

contrast, never need an apostrophe: *un anno*, *nessun amico*, *alcun elemento*, *qualcun altro*, etc.);

- adnominal demonstratives *questa*, *questo* 'this' and *quella*, *quello* 'that', followed by a noun or adjective beginning with a vowel: *quest'epoca* 'this epoch', *quest'albero* 'this tree', *quest'occhio* 'this eye', *quell'isola* 'that island', *quell'idiota* 'that idiot', *quell'unica volta* 'that single time';
- third person singular clitic object pronouns *lo* 'him, it.M' and *la* 'her, it.F': *l'incontro spesso* 'I meet her/him often' (but *lo/la incontro spesso* are also very common and perfectly acceptable spellings), *l'accompagno io* 'I'll accompany her/him', *l'hai vista* 'you saw her', *l'hanno detto loro* 'they said it';
- personal clitic pronouns *mi* 'me', *ti* 'you.SG', *ci* 'us', *vi* 'you.PL', especially before a word beginning with an I: *non m'interessa* 'it doesn't interest me', *t'invidio* 'I envy you', *c'incontriamo* 'we meet (each other)', *v'incoraggiano* 'they encourage you', although variants without elision are growing more and more common (see D'Achille 2003b:223), as in *non mi interessa*, *ti invidio*, and so on; before other vowels elision is nowadays quite rare in spelling, for example *mi arrabbio* 'I get angry', *ti accuso* 'I accuse you' are much more frequent than *m'arrabbio*, *t'accuso*, etc.;
- the pronouns *ci*/*vi* 'there' and *ne* 'of it; therefrom', in particular before the forms of the verb *essere* 'be' which start with a vowel (third person singular of the present indicative, *è*, and all forms of the imperfect indicative, such as *era*), but also occasionally with other verbs:[15] *c'è/v'è* 'there is', *c'era/v'era* 'there was', *c'ero* 'I was there', *c'eravamo* 'we were there'; *se n'è andato* 'he's gone away', *me n'ero accorta* 'I had realized', *ce n'erano pochi* 'there were few of them', *che cosa c'entra?* 'what does it have to do with it?', *non se n'esce* 'there's no way out of it';
- the preposition *di* 'of', as in *penso d'aver capito* 'I think I've understood [lit. think.1SG of have.INF understood]', *non privo d'interesse* 'not without [lit. devoid of] interest', *la città d'Otranto* 'the town of Otranto', *il fratello d'Alfredo* 'Alfredo's brother [lit. the brother of Alfredo]', but this usage is also rapidly declining and it is much more customary now to have *penso di aver capito*, *non privo di interesse*, *la città di Otranto*, *il fratello di Alfredo*, etc.

- *dove* ‘where’, *come* ‘how’, *tanto* ‘so (much)’, *quanto* ‘how much’, *quando* ‘when’, *senza* ‘without’, *tutto* ‘all, quite, entirely’, *cosa* ‘what’ show a variable tendency to lose their final vowel by elision in particular before the verbal forms *è* ‘is’, *era* ‘was’, etc., as in *dov’è* ‘where it is’, *com’era* ‘how it was’, *cos’erano* ‘what they were’ or in few fixed phrases such as *tant’è* ‘(so much so) that it is’, *quant’altro* ‘whatever else’, *quand’anche* ‘even though’, *senz’altro* ‘absolutely’, *tutt’altro* ‘quite the opposite’, *tutt’al più* ‘at the very most’ (while the elision of *che* ‘that’ as *ch’* is no longer to be found in present-day usage);
- *anche* ‘also, too’ followed by a personal pronoun, as in *anch’io* ‘me too’, *anch’essi*, *anch’esse* ‘they too’;
- the adjective *bello* or *bella* ‘handsome, beautiful’ before any vowel: *bell’amico* ‘good friend’, *bell’esempio* ‘good example’, *bell’idea* ‘good idea’, *bell’uomo* ‘handsome man’;
- the adjectives *grande* ‘great’, *povero* ‘poor, unfortunate’, *onesto* ‘honest’, especially before the word *uomo* ‘man’: *grand’uomo* ‘great man’, *pover’uomo* ‘poor man’, *onest’uomo* ‘honest man’ and in a few other cases such as *grand’ufficiale* ‘high officer’ (while *buon* is considered to be an independent allomorph of *buono* and never needs to be followed by an apostrophe, e.g., *buon amico* ‘good friend’);
- the adjective *mezza* in *mezz’ora* ‘half an hour’;
- the adjective *santo/santa* before saints’ Christian names beginning with a vowel, as in *Sant’Antonio*, *Sant’Elena*, *Sant’Irene*, *Sant’Ottavio*, *Sant’Ugo*;
- the verbal form *deve* ‘she/he/it must’ in combination with the infinitive *essere* ‘to be’ in *dev’essere* ‘must be’, *dev’essere stato* ‘must have been’.

On the other hand, some very common grammatical words ending in a consonant are not considered to be the result of synchronic elision, and therefore do not take an apostrophe before a vowel, as in the already mentioned cases of *un*, *nessun*, *alcun*, *buon*, or with the indefinite pronoun *qual* ‘which’, in *qual è?* ‘which one is it?’. The apostrophe is also occasionally used in Italian as a sign for the

deletion of a whole final syllable or truncation (it is considered a mistake to use an accent on these words):

- *po'*, shortened form of *poco* 'little', as in *un po' di pane* 'a little bread', *un altro po' di tempo* 'a little more time', *dammene un po'* 'give me a little of it' (but also *un poco di pane*, *un altro poco di tempo*, *dammene un poco*, etc.);
- *mo'* 'way', for *modo*, but only in the set phrase *a mo' di* 'by way of' as in *a mo' di introduzione* 'by way of introduction';
- *da'*, *di'*, *fa'*, *sta'*, *va'*, second person singular imperatives of *dare* 'give', *dire* 'say', *fare* 'do', *stare* 'stay', *andare* 'go' (although the variants without apocope *dai*, *fai*, *stai*, *vai* have been gaining more ground in current oral and written usage, while only *di'* seems to resist change).

13.2.4 Capital letters

The use of capital letters in Italian follows a number of different criteria, which we may summarize as follows:

- the first letter of a paragraph;
- the first letter of a sentence which follows a full stop, a question mark, an exclamation mark (not after a comma, a semicolon, or a colon);
- the first letter of proper names: first and family names, as in *Paola Egonu*, *Antonella Viola*, *Mina Anna Mazzini*; names of places, as in *Napoli* 'Naples', *L'Aquila*,[16] *Salento*, *Sicilia* 'Sicily', *Spagna* 'Spain', *America*, *Oceano Indiano* 'Indian Ocean', *Gran Sasso*; names of institutions, e.g., *Repubblica Italiana* 'Italian Republic', *Regno Unito* 'United Kingdom', *Unione Europea* 'European Union', *Nazioni Unite* 'United Nations'; optional capitalization with plural names of national, geographic or ethnic groups, e.g., *gli Italiani/italiani* 'Italians' (but *un italiano* 'an Italian'), *gli Ebrei/ebrei* 'Jews', *gli Africani/africani* 'Africans', *i Lombardi/lombardi* 'Lombards'.

- all the letters in acronyms, for example *ONU* (*Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite* 'United Nations Organization'), *NATO* (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), *FIAT* (*Federazione Italiana Automobili Torino*), *IPA* (International Phonetic Alphabet), or *API* (*Alphabet phonétique international* 'International Phonetic Alphabet'): as some of the above examples show the acronym frequently refers to the name of the institution in a different language and formed from the original words, not in their translated Italian form;
- names of holidays, whether or not religious: *Ognissanti* 'All Saints', *Ferragosto* 'August 15th (Feast of the Assumption)', *Pasqua* 'Easter', *Purim*, *Ashura*, *Giorno del Ringraziamento* 'Thanksgiving Day', *Capodanno* 'New Year's Eve/Day', *Epifania* 'Epiphany', *Festa del Lavoro* 'May Day';
- the first letter of the first word of the title of an artistic work such as novels, poems, films, paintings, music compositions, television series, or shows, etc.: *L'amica geniale* 'My Brilliant Friend', *Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia* 'Night Song of a Wandering Shepherd in Asia', *La vita è bella* 'Life is Beautiful', *Pietà*, *Ultima cena* 'The Last Supper', *La canzone del sole* (lit. 'The Sun Song' by Lucio Battisti), *Pagliacci* (lit. 'Clowns', opera by Ruggero Leoncavallo), *Mare fuori* (lit. 'The Sea Beyond', an Italian television drama), *Porta a porta* (lit. 'Door to Door', an Italian late-night television talk show), sometimes though, perhaps under the influence of English, titles are now spelled with a capital letter on most or all of the words, e.g., *La Vita è Bella*;
- in more formal texts, the polite or courtesy pronouns *Lei*, *Loro*, including in their clitic forms *La*, *Le*, and the corresponding possessives *Suo*, *Sua*, *Suoi*, *Sue* (cf. note 1 of Chapter 11): for example, in *Abbiamo esaminato la Sua gentile richiesta e La autorizziamo a posteggiare il Suo veicolo nel nostro parcheggio. Cordiali saluti a Lei e ai Suoi familiari* 'We have considered your kind request and authorize you to park your vehicle in our parking area. Kind regards to you and your family'; even rarer, or rather almost obsolete, is the capitalization of informal pronouns *tu*, *ti*, or plural *voi*, *vi*, etc., as in *Cara Margherita, vorremmo invitare Te e la Tua famiglia a cena da noi. Facci sapere cortesemente le*

Vostre disponibilità. Saremo lieti di averVi tutti qui con noi.[17]
'Dear Margherita, we would like to invite you and your family for dinner at our place. Please let us kindly know when you are available. We will be glad to have you all here with us.'

13.2.5 Abbreviations

In private and public writing some words are regularly spelled in a shortened form, marked by a full stop at the end of the shortened form or sometimes between its root and an ending: among the most common abbreviations are professional nouns such as *professore* 'professor, teacher (M) > *prof.*, *professoressa* 'professor, teacher (F)' > *prof.ssa*, *dottore* 'doctor; someone with first degree (M)' > *dott.*, *dottoressa* doctor; someone with first degree (F) > *dott.ssa*, *avvocata/avvocato* 'lawyer (F/M.) > *avv.*, *ingegnera/ingegnere* 'engineer (F/M)' > *ing.*, *architetta/architetto* 'architect (F/M)' > *arch.*, *onorevole* 'honourable member of parliament (F/M) > *on.*, *senatrice/senatore* 'senator (F/M) > *sen.*

Adjectives in their superlative form are sometimes also shortened in reference to persons: *chiarissimo* (lit. 'extremely distinct') > *ch.mo* before the name of an academic, meaning 'eminent', while *illustrissimo* > *ill.mo* with a similar meaning can be used of a person occupying a very high office, e.g., *Ill.ma Presidente della Camera* 'Most Honourable Head of the House'.

In referring to texts, the word *pagina* 'page' becomes *pag.* or *p.* and its plural receives a double consonant, as in *pagg.* or *pp.*, *capitolo* 'chapter' becomes *cap.*, plural *capp.*, while the participle *seguente* 'following' is shortened to *sg.*, plural *sgg.* The word *eccetera* 'etcetera' is also commonly abbreviated to *ecc.*

In particular, as some of the examples show, in plurals the last grapheme of the abbreviated form is generally doubled. A similar mechanism is at work in some acronyms based on plural forms, e.g., *VV.FF.* (*Vigili del Fuoco* 'Fire Brigade'), *FF.AA.* (*Forze Armate* 'Armed Forces'), *SS.LL.* (*Signorie Loro* 'Your Ladyships/Lordships').

13.2.6 Joining words: hyphenation and clitics

The use of a hyphen to connect words in compounds or between morphemes within words is not frequent. Nonetheless, hyphenation is regularly used for some geographical entities formed from two members such as the Italian regions *Emilia-Romagna*, *Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, and *Trentino-Alto Adige*, or the former Empire of *Austria-Ungheria* 'Austria-Hungary', together with the associated adjectives *emiliano-romagnolo* 'Emilian-Romagnol' and *austro-ungarico* 'Austro-Hungarian'. Similar combinations of adjectives such as *afro-americano* 'Afro-American' and *anglo-italiano* 'Anglo-Italian' are also found, as well as in other semantic areas forms such as *politico-economico* 'politico-economic', *fisico-chimico* 'physico-chemical', *socio-culturale* 'socio-cultural'.

More generally, noun+noun compounds are often spelled with a hyphen, as in *fine-settimana* (but also *fine settimana* lit. 'end week') 'weekend', *bar-ristorante* 'bar-cum-restaurant', *spazio-tempo* (but also *spaziotempo*) 'spacetime', *scuola-lavoro* lit. 'school-work', i.e., 'work apprenticeship during school-time', *sud-ovest* 'southwest'. Some prefixes, for example, *ex-*, *anti-*, *post-*, *pre-*, or *mini-* are also usually connected to their head noun by a hyphen, as in *ex-fidanzato* 'former boyfriend', *ex-direttrice* 'former director', *anti-italiano* 'anti-Italian', *post-moderno* 'postmodern', *pre-acquisto* 'pre-purchase', *mini-aumento* 'small wage rise'. Some of these compounds, though, are increasingly spelled as a single word, for example *postmoderno*, *preacquisto*.

Particular orthographic conventions apply to clitics. When they follow the verb they are not separated by spaces and verb and clitics are written together as one word: *mandarmeli* 'to send them to me', *essersene andati* 'to have gone away'. Before the verb, clitics are written separately from the verb and from each other, except that the third person indirect object clitic form *glie* combines with a following clitic. So, *me li manda* 'he/she sends them to me', *se ne sono andati* 'they went away', but *glieli manda* 'he/she sends them to him/her', *gliene parla* 'he/she talks to him/her about it'.

13.3 New trends in writing Italian

13.3.1 Introduction

New writing practices are emerging increasingly often in Italian, not as a result of random and unintentional mistakes, but reflecting new tendencies, fashions, or styles deliberately chosen by writers who appear to be well aware that they are thereby transgressing norms and in order to attract the attention of readers. Two areas in present-day communication yield the most interesting novelties as far as written Italian is concerned: the first is texting, where the need to quickly produce the shortest messages possible with the most information possible leads writers to shorten words in many ways and to skip most or all of the punctuation and often even grammatical words; the second is gender, with a strong effort—common to many languages—to introduce forms and signs that create a real linguistic equality between women and men and, more recently, that make it possible to express more than two genders also for the sake of gender-fluid and non-binary persons.

13.3.2 Text-speech and its spelling features

Texting has become the most common writing practice for a great many people of all ages and education levels. In time, it has acquired some specific features that are also changing in parallel with technological developments. Some peculiar characteristics are relatively stable (see Fiorentino 2013 and Lubello 2016b). The reasons for the spread of peculiarities in the spelling of texting seem to be essentially the tendency to spare time and characters, on the one hand, which leads to what can be defined as a new form of tachygraphy, and, on the other, the diffusion of peculiar graphemes and non-alphabetic characters stemming from a seemingly intentional desire to break rules and traditions.

Common abbreviations have become quite customary in texting, consisting mainly of a consonantal script, such as *cmq* for *comunque* 'anyway', *nn* for *non* 'not', *qst* for *questo/a/e/i* 'this, these' where vowels and occasionally other elements of the word are dropped, or the much older abbreviation *tvb* for *ti voglio bene* 'I care for you, I love you', where the technique applied is the same as for acronyms, except the letters are usually not capitalized.

Another interesting aspect of these new spelling habits is the introduction of some 'exotic' letters such as K or X, both for the sake of time-saving and out of transgression: K is used instead of the digraph CH in words such as *ke* for *che* 'that', *ki* for *chi* 'who', and so on; X has become a very frequent substitute for the preposition *per* 'for', as in *x me* 'for me'. Both K and X can appear in the spelling *xke* for *perché* 'why, because'. While the use of K is interestingly nothing but a phonetic transcription, the substitution of X for the preposition *per* can be explained based on the mathematic value of the preposition *per*, which is used in multiplications in Italian, e.g., *sette per tre* 'seven times three'. This *per* is represented by the symbol *x* in formulas, as in *7 x 3*. Thus, X has been felt, since pre-digital times, as an excellent alternative for *per*, and it has started to appear in youth script and even in school essays since the 1970s and 1980s.

13.3.3 Gender issues and new inclusive spellings

Changes in social, cultural, and political relations between women and men have brought about a crisis in what was traditionally called 'inclusive masculine' and have laid the basis for new attempts at a more inclusive use of language. Some of the effects of this language revolution, actually yet to be achieved, involve orthography and we shall examine them briefly.

When the reference is to a person whose gender is still unknown, for example, it was customary until quite recently to resort to the masculine, for example *Chi sarà il nuovo professore di filosofia?* 'Who will be our new philosophy teacher?'. Now it is considered more correct to say something like *Chi sarà il nuovo professore o la nuova professoressa di filosofia?*, which is actually a much longer

sentence. In writing, this can be shortened thanks to the introduction of the symbol / (*barra obliqua* 'slash'): *Chi sarà il/la nuovo/a professore/ssa di filosofia?* Similarly, when referring to groups including both women and men, the old 'inclusive masculine' is also replaced by forms that are considered to be more inclusive and therefore preferable, as in *Quest'anno ho più di trenta alunni* 'This year I have more than thirty pupils' (where the masculine form *alunni* conceals the probable presence of girls within the group, maybe even in the majority): this now becomes *Quest'anno ho più di trenta alunni e alunne* or, for the sake of time and in order to spare characters, *Quest'anno ho più di trenta alunni/e*. A further step in the same direction has led to the widespread adoption of the non-alphabetic character the asterisk * to replace both masculine and feminine endings: *Quest'anno ho più di trenta alunn**; *Chi sarà l* nuov* professor* di filosofia?*[18] This particular solution has met with some success and is found now relatively often, especially in bureaucratic writing, but it has the big disadvantage of being largely unpronounceable. To obtain a neutral form that, unlike the asterisk, can be used easily both in writing and in speech, the schwa symbol [ə] from the International Phonetic Alphabet has more recently been suggested (see Gheno 2019). This usage has already received some popular support, in particular among student organizations and the LGBTQ+ community, but has met with negative reactions from major institutions such as the Accademia della Crusca, and from some linguists and intellectuals who have even started petitions online against this proposal.

No one can foresee how this debate will develop in the near future and whether conservative or innovatory pressure will prevail, but it must be noted that it is no longer rare to come across spellings such as *studentə* for 'students (of any gender)', *tuttə* for 'everyone', *autorə* for 'male or female author',[19] and so forth (see Thornton 2022). In fact, the introduction of new spellings with asterisks, with schwas, or with any other similar innovation which might be suggested in the future in order to satisfy the same social pressures might not only allow for an equal expression of the male and female genders, thus removing or limiting the predominance of the masculine, but could also represent an effective means for the linguistic inclusion of all non-binary gender identities as well.

[1] Sometimes in school practice consonants are named simply with their sound (usually followed by a central vowel), as for example in [də], [fə], [mə], and so on.

[2] The letter J was commonly used in Italian until the early twentieth century in some word positions and has survived in some placenames such as *Jesi* or *Jesolo*, or in first names such as *Jacopo* or *Jolanda*, always with a phonetic value [j].

[3] Although *vu* is also a common name for the letter V, it is increasingly frequently the letter W which is referred to with this same name, especially when uttering the string *www* in a web address: *vu-vu-vu* or in the acronym for World Wildlife Fund, WWF, currently called *vu-vu-effe*.

[4] In unstressed syllables Italian phonology only includes five vowels, and in this case a one-to-one correspondence between sounds and letters holds regularly.

[5] Actually, native speakers do not always follow this rule, either because they are unaware of it, or because they fail to distinguish between open-mid and close-mid vowels, due to their regional habits. It is also true that practically all texting systems now restore the 'correct' accents in case of mistakes.

[6] Some publishing companies do adopt an acute accent on the vowels I and U as in *cosí* 'so' or *piú* 'more', but this usage is so rare that Italian computer keyboards do not include these particular characters at all, and neither did typewriters, where only *à è é ì ò ù* were directly available.

[7] Even if *è* 'is' may be unstressed when forming a phonological word with a past participle as in *è partita* 'she has left', etc., it still takes a grave accent in order to distinguish it from *e* 'and'.

[8] A further option, now obsolete, was to spell these words with an *î*, as for example in *studî*. This usage can be found in literature until the early twentieth century (for example, Luigi Pirandello still made use of it). The same can be said for spellings with *j*, as in *studj*, now completely abandoned.

[9] This complex system was formed relatively recently; in fact, we find some different spellings in texts until the early twentieth century, and some of these older forms still appear occasionally, for example *provincie* (now *province*) 'provinces' or *ciliege* 'cherries' (now *ciliegie*).

[10] One interesting though not so common near-minimal pair is *la quale* [la ˈkwale] 'which' (FSG) vs *lacuale* [lakuˈale] 'pertaining to lakes', where the different spelling QU vs CU in fact reflects a different pronunciation.

[11] More specifically, before a consonant an assimilation rule applies, whereby the alveolar fricative will be voiceless before a voiceless consonant, and voiced before a voiced one, as some of the examples given show. Between vowels, on the other hand, both fricatives can be found in standard Italian. In word-initial position only the voiceless one is possible.

[12] A further complication, as we will see later, is that intervocalically Z always corresponds to a long pronunciation.

[13] As both these latter examples show, SC corresponds to a long [ʃː] in intervocalic position. The same phonetically long realization of a palatal consonant is observed with GL(I) and GN, as in *moglie* [ˈmoʎʎe] 'wife' or *ignoto* [iɲˈɲɔto] 'unknown'.

[14] This is not the case, however, in northern regional varieties of Italian where the rule of *rafforzamento fonosintattico* is not applied.

[15] Also of particular interest here is the colloquial use of the verb *avere* 'have' incorporating the locative *ci* 'there', e.g., *c'ho* [ʧɔ] (1SG), *c'hai* [ʧaj] (2SG), *c'ha* [ʧa] (3SG), etc., which also presents the exceptional oddity of the sequence C + H + back vowel with palatal realization.

[16] The article in *L'Aquila*, *La Spezia*, *Il Cairo*, and in a few other cities is a lexicalized part of their name, and hence is capitalized, which is not the case if any other proper name is occasionally preceded by an article, as in *la Sardegna*, *il Brasile*, *le Hawaii*.

[17] The capitalization of enclitics is now quite rare in fact, but it creates surprising spellings such as *averVi* 'to have you', *invitarLa* 'to invite you', or *proporLe* 'to propose to you', with a capital letter appearing *inside* a graphic word.

[18] The form *l** comports the additional complication that here the form of the masculine singular definite article would normally be *il*.

[19] The generalized use of schwa as a neutral ending has the negative effect of neutralizing the distinction between singular and plural. To avoid that, a further symbol has occasionally appeared for the plural, that is [ɜ] (an IPA symbol for an open-mid central unrounded vowel), with much less success than schwa, though.

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Chapter 14

Phonetics

Antonio Romano

14.1 Introduction

The pronunciation of Italian is known to show considerable regional variation, with characteristics not always traceable to local dialects (Mioni 1993; Telmon 1993; Maturi 2006; Canepari 2005). We refer here to pronunciation models that are considered appropriate for the most official situations variously referred to as standard or neutral. The most common of these models—which developed in the pronunciation of actors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and is roughly associated with the so-called Florentine and Roman schools—survives thanks to the arts and media (theatre, cinema, and broadcasting) and is nowadays no longer associated with its original sources (Canepari 1999).

Information regarding a standard pronunciation and the persistence of some of the features of standard pronunciation into so-called neo-standard Italian is very scarce and contradictory (see, among others, Lubello 2017 and Cerruti et al. 2017), since the few considerations accorded to phonetics are generally unsupported by references (as Iannàccaro 2019 complains). Moreover, the chapters written by various authors in the main handbooks and encyclopaedias (e.g., *Enciclopedia dell'Italiano Treccani*, Simone 2010–2011) are often heterogeneous. One should not therefore be surprised by their implicit adoption of lay beliefs that the opposition between /ʦ/ and /ʣ/ is neutralized or that the passage from /s/ to /z/ between vowels is already complete everywhere (Berruto and Cerruti 2006). Against these views we may observe that at least a minimal pair contrasting /ʦ/ and /ʣ/ is preserved by professional speakers belonging to the aforementioned schools (who even keep an initial /ʦ/ in traditional words, see below). Furthermore an intervocalic /s/ is still widely employed in some morphemes (it may be often heard in suffixes such as *-es+a* or *-os+o*, but more frequently after a prefix, e.g., *preselezione* 'preselection', *risollevato* 'relifted', *antisettico* 'antiseptic' and in compound words or words perceived as compounds, such as *dinosauro* 'dinosaur', *cercasi* 'wanted', *qualsiasi* 'any'; see Calabrò 2010).

In order to get to the core of the matter, we propose a simplified but well-established systematic description, with the help of schemes and graphic representations from experimental studies, supporting the historically best regarded descriptions (from Camilli 1947 to Lepschy 1966; Muljačić 1969; Chapallaz 1979; Mioni 1993; Canepari 1999; and Schmid 1999) without losing sight of more recent contributions that have avoided the traditional gap between phonetics and phonology (Maturi 2006). Given the articulatory definitions established by the conventions of the *IPA* (International Phonetic Association) and assessments of the nature and constituency of syllables (see §15.3.1), a schematic sound inventory of Italian includes consonant and vowel sounds organized into sub-systems.

14.2 Consonant sounds (contoids)

Phonology defines consonant sounds as syllabic constituents which always occupy peripheral (onset or coda) positions. These kinds of sounds are generally described from a phonetic point of view, by taking into account their places and manners of articulation.

Within this framework there are twenty-three Italian phonemes with a universal and stable distribution. They are reproduced in Table 14.1 with a selection of allophones given between square brackets ([ ]). Note that some sources count only twenty-one phonemes, since they claim that [j] and [w] are merely asyllabic allophones of /i/ and /u/.

Table 14.1 Italian phonemes

place manner	bilabial		labiodental		dental		alveolar		postalveolar		palatal		velar	
stop	p	b					t	d					k	ɡ
nasal		m		[ɱ]				n		[n̠]		ɲ		[ŋ]
trill								r						
tap/flap								[ɾ]						
fricative			f	v			s	z	ʃ	[ʒ]				

place manner	bilabial		labiodental		dental		alveolar		postalveolar		palatal		velar	
affricate					ʦ	ʣ			ʧ	ʤ				
approximant [*]				[ʋ]								j		
lateral Appr.								l				ʎ		

[*] Other approximant: labial-velar w

/ʦ/-/ʣ/, and often also /t/-/d/ and /s/-/z/, have alveodental realizations (while /n/, /l/, /r/, and [ɾ] are predominantly alveolar, see Romano and Badin 2009). /k/ and /g/ tend to assume a slightly more advanced place of articulation, in contact with front vowels or palatal elements (e.g., *china* 'China ink' /ˈkina/ → [ˈkʲiːna], *ghiro* 'dormouse' /ˈgiro/ → [ˈgʲiːɾo]; *chiave* 'key' /ˈkjave/ → [ˈkʲjaːve], *ghiaia* 'scree' /ˈgjaja/ → [ˈgʲjaːja], Lepschy 1965). Simultaneous lip rounding appears when they are in contact with phonemes with labial features such as /u/ and /w/ (e.g., *cura* 'care' /ˈkura/ → [ˈkʷuːɾa], *cuore* 'heart' /ˈkwɔre/ → [ˈkʷwɔːɾe], *guaio* 'woe' /ˈgwajo/ → [ˈgʷwaːjo]).

In addition to the numerous preconsonantal nasal variants (including [ɱ, n̪, ŋ], which occur in labio-dental, postalveolar, and velar clusters, respectively), Table 14.1 also shows [ɾ], a variant of /r/ in unstressed syllables, and [ʋ], a variant of /w/ after /f/ and /v/ (*fuoco* 'fire' /ˈfwɔko/ → [ˈfʋɔːko], *vuoto* 'empty' /ˈvwɔto/ → [ˈvʋɔːto], or even [ˈʊwɔːto]/[ˈʊɔːto] in casual pronunciations). [ʒ], by contrast, is a xenophone commonly found in borrowings from French (as in *garage*) or English (as in *fusion* or *casual*).

As discussed in many works in recent decades (Payne 2005; 2006), a significant series of oppositions within the system is established because of a distinctive gemination (as opposed to expressive gemination, Bafile 2011a). This concerns fifteen contoids (out of the twenty-three phonological sounds). We have the following geminates: /pp/, /bb/, /tt/, /dd/, /kk/, /gg/, /mm/, /nn/, /rr/, /ff/, /vv/, /ss/, /tʧ/, /dʤ/, and /ll/, and their phonetic realizations are characterized by a greater length (stops and affricates mainly in their closure phase): [pː], [bː], [tː], [dː], [kː], [gː], [mː], [nː], [rː], [fː], [vː], [sː], [t͡ʃː], [d͡ʒː], and [lː].[1]

Examples of phonological contrasts are offered by the following pairs: *rupi* 'rocks' ~ *ruppi* 'I broke', *libra* 'hovers' ~ *libbra* 'pound', *dita* 'fingers' ~ *ditta* 'firm', *cade* 's/he falls' ~ *cadde* 's/he fell', *ròca* 'hoarse $_{\text{FSG}}$' ~ *ròcca* 'fortress', *fuga* 'flight' ~ *fugga* 'flee$_{\text{3SG.SBJV}}$', *tufo* 'tufa' ~ *tuffo* 'I dive', *béve* 's/he drinks' ~

bévve ‘s/he drank’, *casa* ‘house’ ~ *cassa* ‘till’, *luci* ‘lights’ ~ *lucci* ‘pikes;’, *legènda* ‘key (to map, etc.)’ ~ *leggènda* ‘legend’, *fumo* ‘smoke’ ~ *fummo* ‘we were’, *cane* ‘dog’ ~ *canne* ‘reeds’, *caro* ‘dear’ ~ *carro* ‘cart’, *pala* ‘shovel’ ~ *palla* ‘ball’.

The *casa* ~ *cassa* example is useful because it constitutes one of those situations in which a neo-standard emerges even in the world of professionals: the traditional pronunciation of words like *casa* /ˈkasa/, *presa* /ˈprɛsa/ ‘grip, hold’, *costoso* /kosˈtoso/ ‘expensive’ and so on nowadays often contrasts with a preference for replacing /s/ with /z/. However, as stated above, voiceless realizations are still found at the morpheme boundary (*presidente* ‘president’, *riserva* ‘reservation’, sometimes *disegno* ‘drawing’) and in many contexts in which the speaker perceives two different meanings associated with the use of /s/ ~ /z/; e.g., *tubercolosi* ‘those with tuberculosis, the tuberculous’, with /s/ (and /o/), vs *tubercolosi* ‘tuberculosis’, with /z/ (and /ɔ/).

The case of *caro* ~ *carro* also throws light on the opposition between /r/ and /rr/, which can be seen as between two consonants of different length (whose realizations can both be considered as trills; the former with fewer vibrations than the latter, thus [r] and [rː]). However, [ɾ] appears as a realization of /r/ in unstressed syllables in the neutral pronunciation of present-day Italian (not so in past decades for professionals trained in the first half of the twentieth century). Although depending on individual features, the numerous allophones attested for these phonemes frequently appear also in media speech and are subject to positional variation (variously [ʋ], [ʋʸ], [ʁ], or [ʁ̟], for /r/, and combinations of [ʁ], [ʁ̟], or [ʀ] and [ʋ]/ [ʋʸ], or long realizations of some of these, for /rr/; see Canepari 2005; Vietti et al. 2010; Romano 2013).

Furthermore, the realizations in postvocalic position of /ʃ/, /ʦ/, /ʤ/, /ɲ/, and /ʎ/ are inherently long (in this position we have: [ʃː], [t͡sː], [d͡zː], [ɲː], and [ʎː], Endo and Bertinetto 1999), whereas /z/, /w,/ and /j/, are inherently short, with interesting variational features (for /ʎ/ and /j/ see Anastaseni 2022 who reviewed various conditions including those in which their length may be equalized in some regions).

14.3 Vowel sounds (vocoids)

14.3.1 Monophthongs

The vowel sounds of Italian can be summarized in the chart in Figure 14.1. The universal vowel phonemes of neutral Italian are /i e ɛ a ɔ o u/ (see §15.2.2).

A distinct distribution is traditionally assumed for mid-aperture sounds which are also those with the greatest variation in the preferences of the most prestigious models (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005). Even though /e/ and /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ and /o/ are generally well opposed in stressed syllables, some Florentine-inspired vs Roman-inspired models differ in what have become classic examples such as *colonna* 'column' (/koˈlɔnna/ in Rome vs /koˈlonna/ in Florence) or *lettera* 'letter' (/ˈlettera/ in Rome vs /ˈlɛttera/ in Florence). Furthermore, the system is reduced in unstressed position where /e/ ~ /ɛ/ and /o/ ~ /ɔ/ undergo a systematic neutralization favouring /e/ and /o/ (e.g., /ˈɛrba/ 'grass' > /erˈbetta/ 'herb' or /ˈpɔsta/ 'post' > /posˈtino/ 'postman').

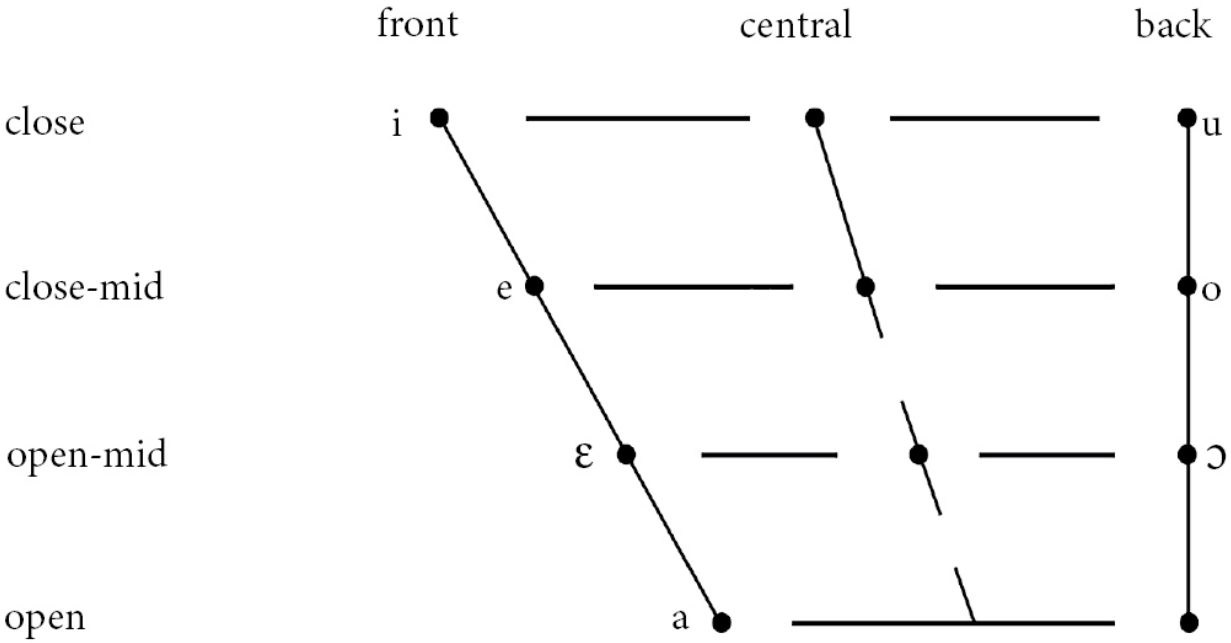


Figure 14.1 The vowel sounds of Italian.

14.3.2 Diphthongs (and hiatuses)

The range of diphthongs is remarkable. Among rising diphthongs [wi we wɛ wa wɔ wo] and [je jɛ ja jɔ jo ju], we find /wɔ/ (as in *uovo* [ˈwɔːvo] 'egg') and /jɛ/ (as in *ieri* [ˈjɛːɾi] 'yesterday') which are particularly widespread. Falling diphthongs [(iu̯) eu̯ ɛu̯ au̯ (ɔu̯ ou̯)] (as in *flauto* [ˈflau̯to] 'flute') and [ei̯ ɛi̯ ai̯ ɔi̯ oi̯ ui̯] (as in *baita* [ˈbai̯ta] 'mountain hut/lodge') are less frequent, even though

they are attested in frequently occurring words (such as *lei* 'she, her', *noi* 'we, us', *sui* 'on the$_{MPL}$'; Muljačić 1969).

The distinction between diphthong and hiatus is of some importance: traditional manuals point out that Italian has the possibility of distinguishing between *spianti* 'you uproot' [sˈpjanti] (two syllables) and *spianti* 'spying$_{PL}$' [spiˈanti] (three syllables) or *la quale* 'which$_{FSG}$' [la ˈkʷwaːle] (three syllables) and *lacuale* 'pertaining to lakes' [lakʷuˈaːle] (four syllables). It should be noted, however, that acoustic studies on the distinction between diphthong and hiatus have shown possibilities of neutralization of the opposition in connected speech (Marotta 1987; Salza et al. 1987; Salza 1988).[2]

14.4 Articulatory and acoustic description of the Italian sounds

14.4.1 Introduction

In order to illustrate some of the articulatory configurations corresponding to the sounds described above, we may refer to diagrams (orograms) such as those in Figures 14.2–13, which represent the shape assumed, in a mid-sagittal section, by the vocal tract of an educated Italian speaker without particular regional connotations during the production of each contoid. Following the example of some authoritative publications (Ferrero et al. 1979; Giannini and Pettorino 1992; Albano Leoni and Maturi 1995), we also give some spectrographic analysis.

14.4.2 Articulatory and acoustic description of the main Italian consonant sounds

In the case of contoids, each orogram corresponds to the articulatory configuration adopted at the place of articulation it exemplifies, in the same segmental context. All orograms are based on images obtained in the closure phase of contoids originally articulated in logatomes in which they were preceded and followed by /a/. They represent both conditions of laryngeal activity: voiceless vs voiced. In the general case (exceptions in Figs 14.7, 14.8, 14.9, and 14.11), each figure thus provides two conditions: the one relating to the articulatory configuration assumed during the realization of the unvoiced

contoid and the other—practically identical (with the exception of the state of larynx)—assumed in the realization of the corresponding voiced contoid.

Furthermore, waveforms and spectrograms of a contoid realization in context /a_a/ are also displayed and allow us to observe the acoustic characteristics such as formant values (indicated as F_n), acoustic loci (L_n) and noise bands (in Hz; see Ferrero et al. 1979 and Giannini and Pettorino 1992).

For the bilabial stops (Fig. 14.1) a general lowering of the formants (with F_2 towards 650 Hz) is associated with a short duration release (5–10 ms).

A lowering of F_2 between 1000 and 1100 Hz is typical for the labiodental fricatives (Fig. 14.3), with a clear difference in the signal-to-noise ratios, since only the unvoiced one is a proper fricative (with well-distributed noise in all bands), while the voiced one seems almost an approximant sound with a particular moment of closure and a sort of release.

The acoustic locus increases for the dental affricates (Fig. 14.4) at just over 1800 Hz with a longer release phase and generally more energy for the unvoiced sound.

Waveforms and spectrograms of alveodental sounds (stops, Fig. 14.5, and fricatives, Fig. 14.6) show a rise in F_2 (coming from and going towards [a]) to values between 1600 and 1800 Hz. The release times of the stops are still of the order of 10–15 ms (with virtually a null VOT, in the case of the unvoiced sound, or negative VOT, corresponding to the entire duration of the sound closure).[3] The noise energy of [s] is clearly visible and uniform above 4 kHz, with particular concentration between 5 and 7 kHz. The same applies to the voiced sound, although the energy subtracted for the vocal fold vibration weakens the noise, especially in the first phase.

Among the alveolar sounds (Fig. 14.7), the lateral confirms the acoustic locus seen above, with a formant around 1600 Hz and an energy drop of about 15 dB. On the other hand, a dorsal secondary articulation, fleetingly detectable during the trill realization, causes lower F_2 values (between 1200 and 1300 Hz) perturbed by the apical vibrations (with five full and one partial contact, which generates an approximant final phase).

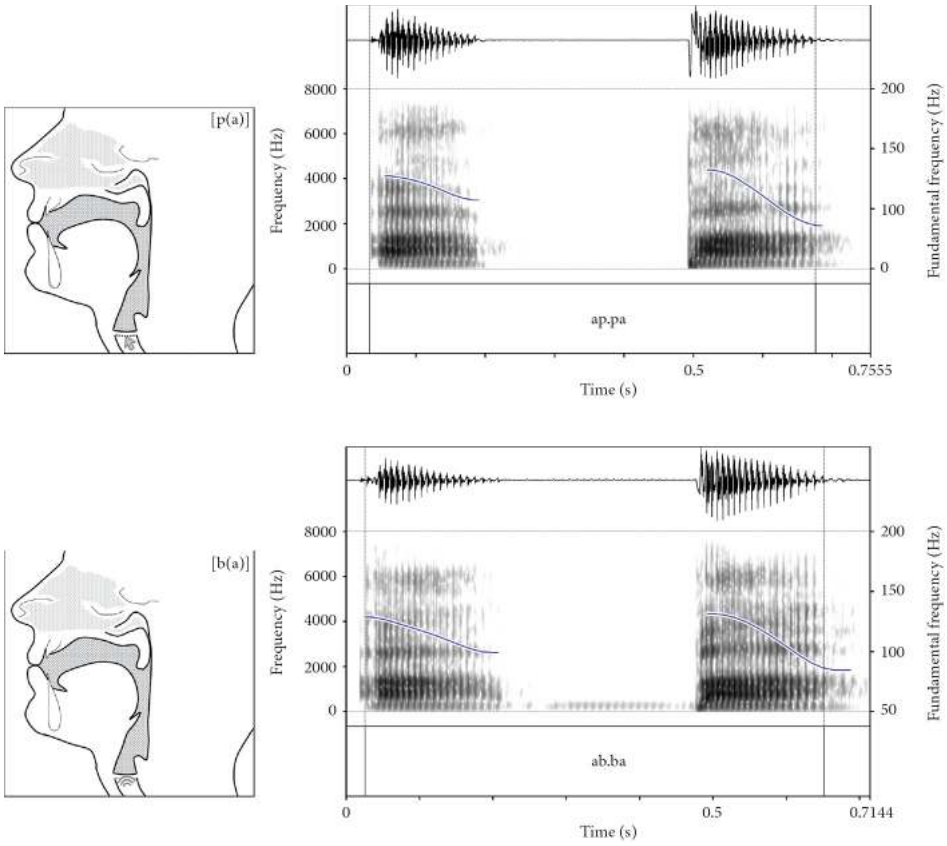


Figure 14.2 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to bilabial articulations realized for /p/ and /b/ in the /a_a/ context.

The postalveolar articulations (Fig. 14.8) appear to be slightly fronted (Romano and Badin 2009), not only with respect to the presumed characteristics of palatality (attributed on historical-evolutionary bases rather than solid phonetic grounds) but already with respect to the very definition of postalveolar: among the substantial characteristics, sulcalization and labiality seem instead to be decisive (Canepari 2005).

The acoustic cues of postalveolars are a locus around 2000 Hz for the affricates and a first relevant concentration of noise energy around 2100 Hz for the fricative, with an even greater concentration in the 2400 Hz band. As for the fricative release phase of /ʧ/ and /ʤ/, we see that here too the unvoiced sound has longer releases: around 80 ms, vs 50 of the voiced sound. The noise band is compatible with that described for /ʃ/.

For the lateral palatal described in Figure 14.9, we observe an overall approximant pattern (similar to that of [j]), but with an extended band for F_3 (which seems to temporarily capture the energy of F_4) and almost a release phase (of about 80 ms) in the transition to the following vocoid.[4]

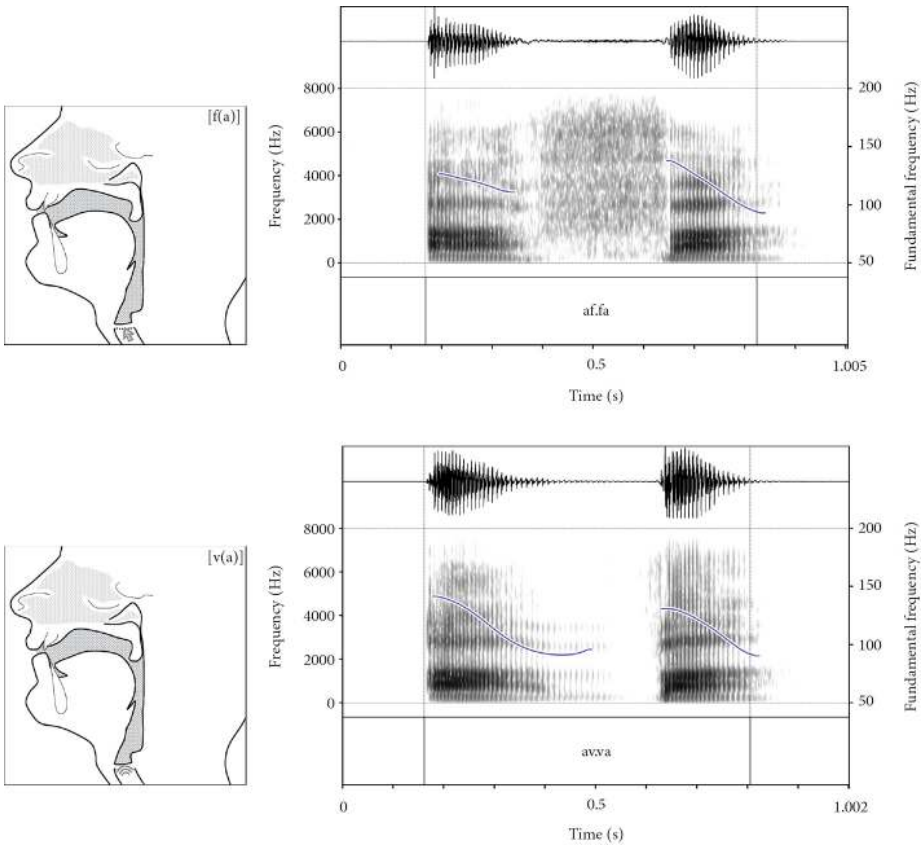


Figure 14.3 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to labio-dental articulations realized for /f/ and /v/ in the /a_a/ context.

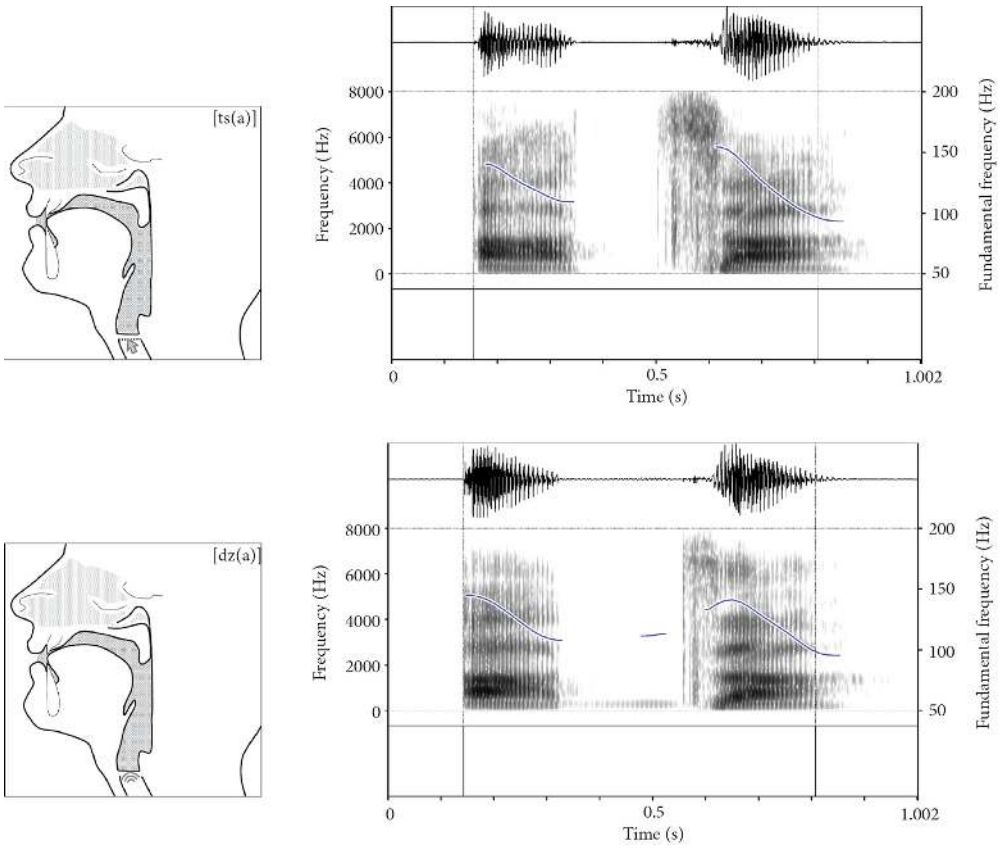


Figure 14.4 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to alveodental (laminal-alveolar + apico-dental with lower tip) articulations realized for /ʦ/ and /ʣ/ in the /a_a/ context.

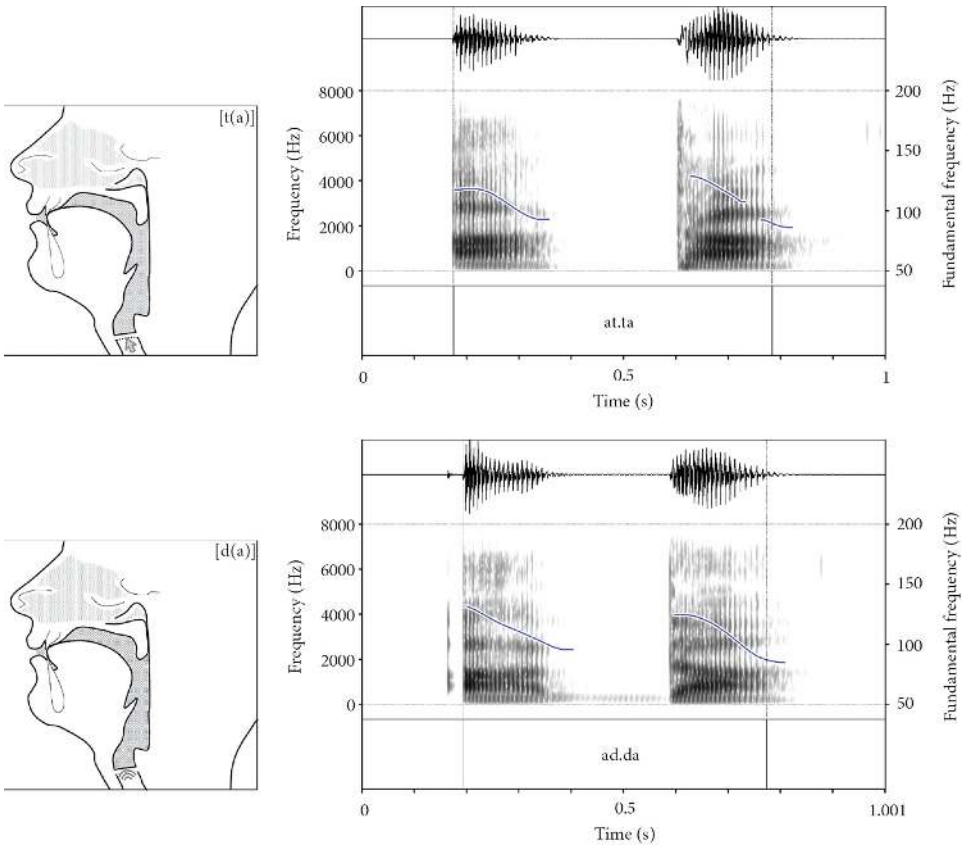


Figure 14.5 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to apico-alveodental articulations realized for /t/ and /d/ in the /a_a/ context.

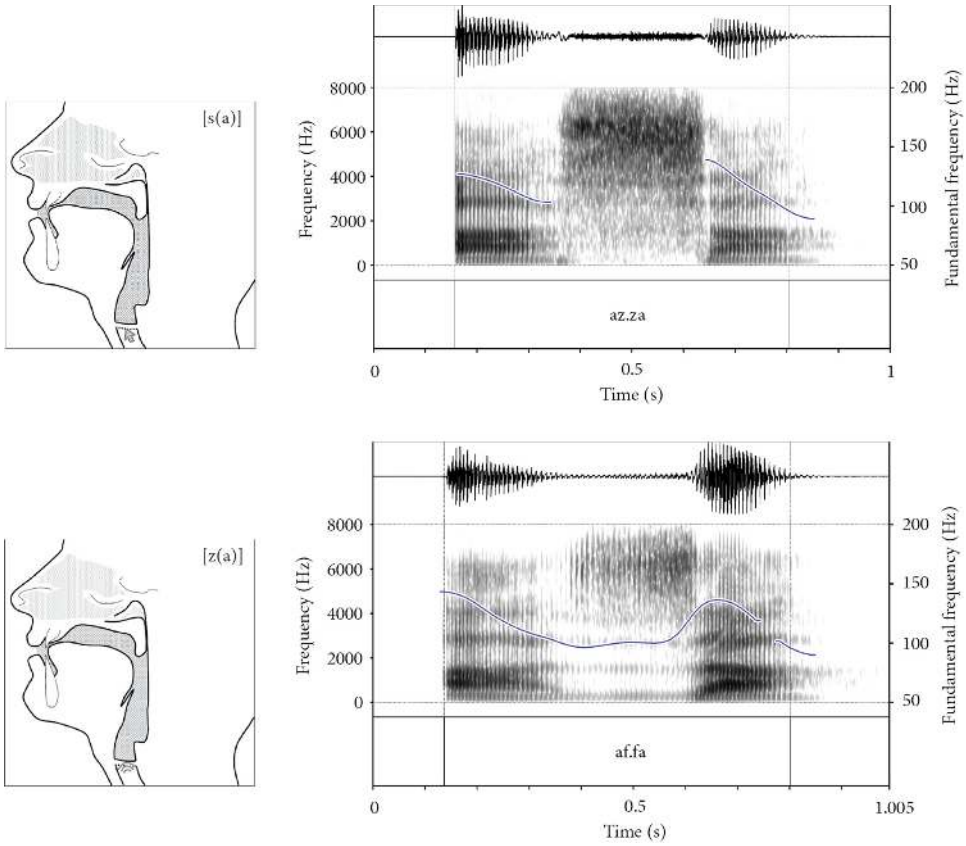


Figure 14.6 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to lamino-alveolar articulations realized for /s/ and /z/ in the /a_a/ context.

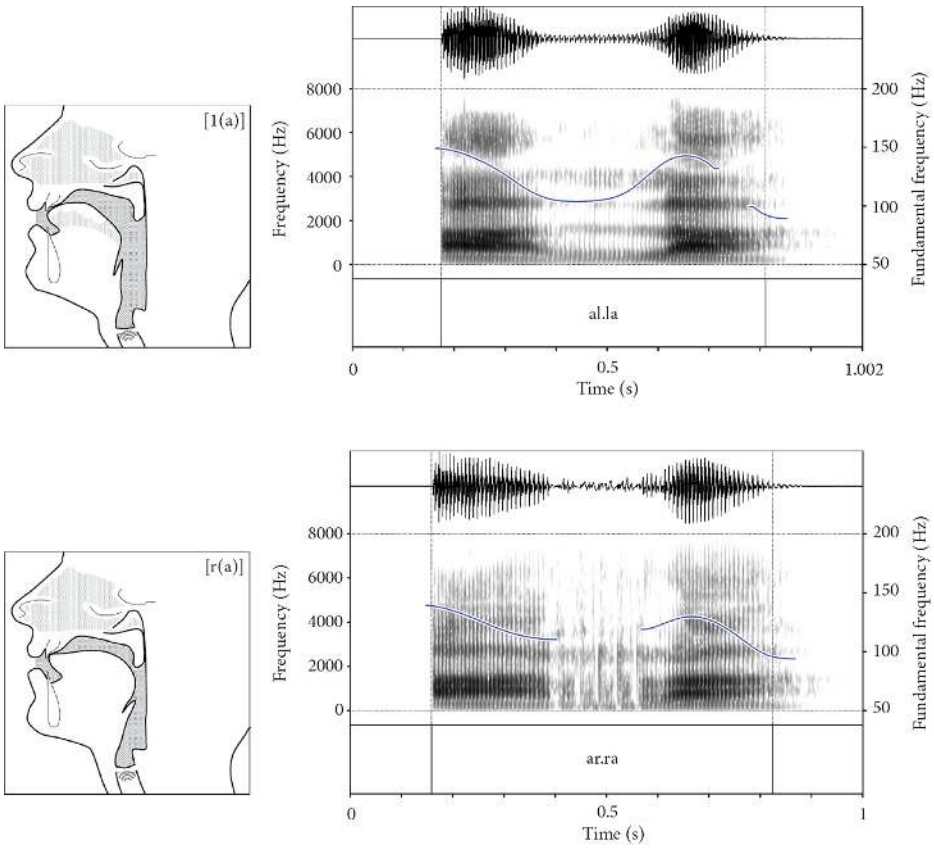


Figure 14.7 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to lamino-alveolar (lateral) articulations realized for /l/ and /r/ in the /a_a/ context. Both contoids are voiced in this case.

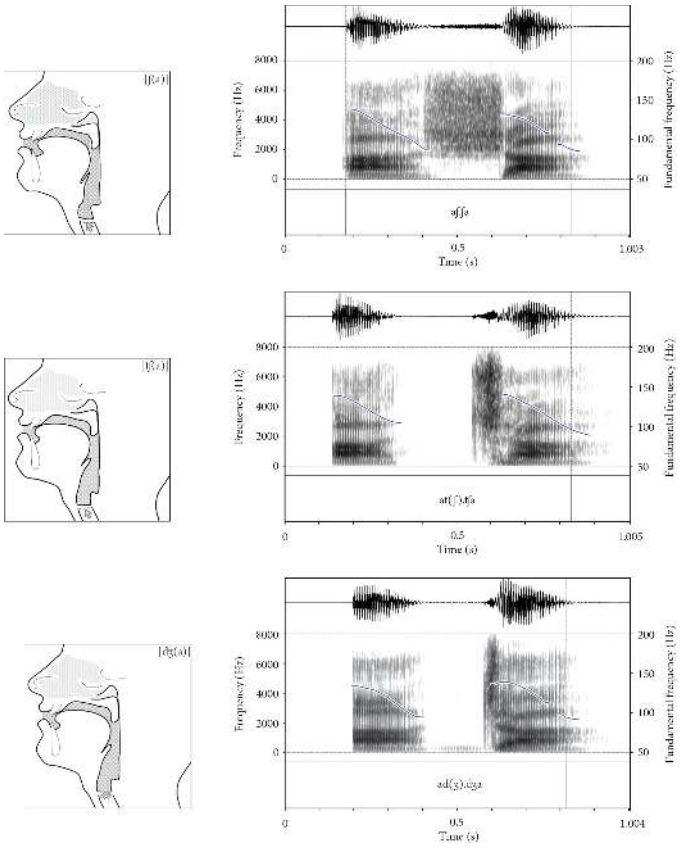


Figure 14.8 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to (post)alveolar articulations realized for /ʃ/, ʧ/, and /ʤ/ in the /a_a/ context.

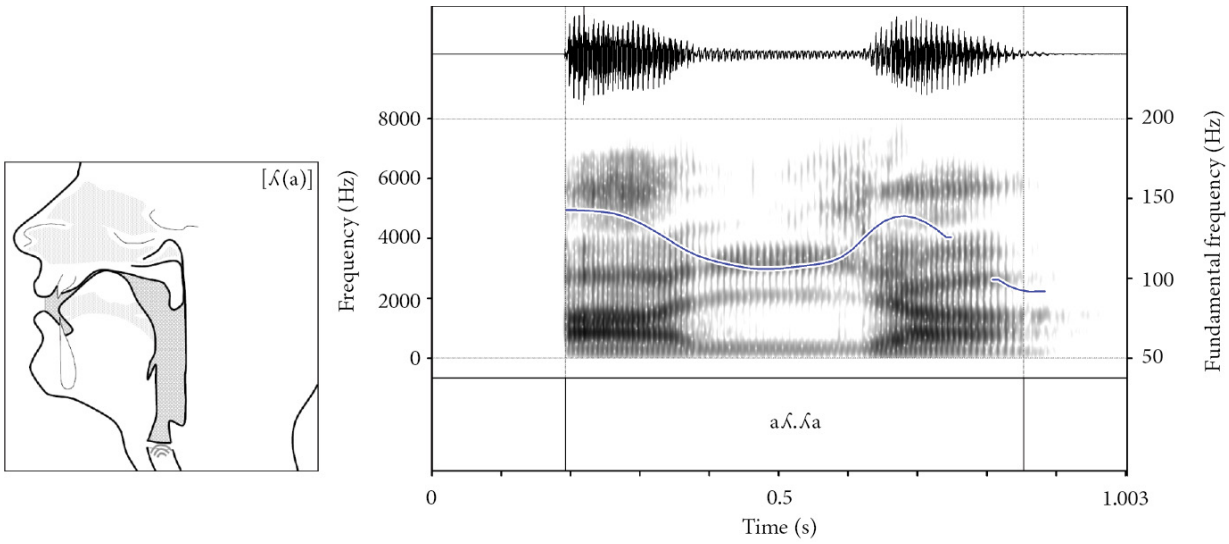


Figure 14.9 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to palatal (lateral) articulations realized for /ʎ/ in the /a_a/ context.

While at the articulatory level the general characteristics of the velar stops are not surprising (Fig. 14.10): even though their locus, roughly estimated here, is lower than reported in the literature (2100–2300 Hz vs. 3 kHz; among others, Giannini and Pettorino 1992 and Pettorino and Giannini 1991), they are in line with the values found in other studies for the duration of the releases, here exceeding 25 ms.

We conclude with three different raw localization areas of the L_2 locus in the case of phonological nasals (Fig. 14.11): around 1000, 1600, and 2200 Hz. The concentration of F_2 is not clearly visible in the case of /n/ due to anti-resonances and the proximity of an F_{2N} just above 1100 Hz.

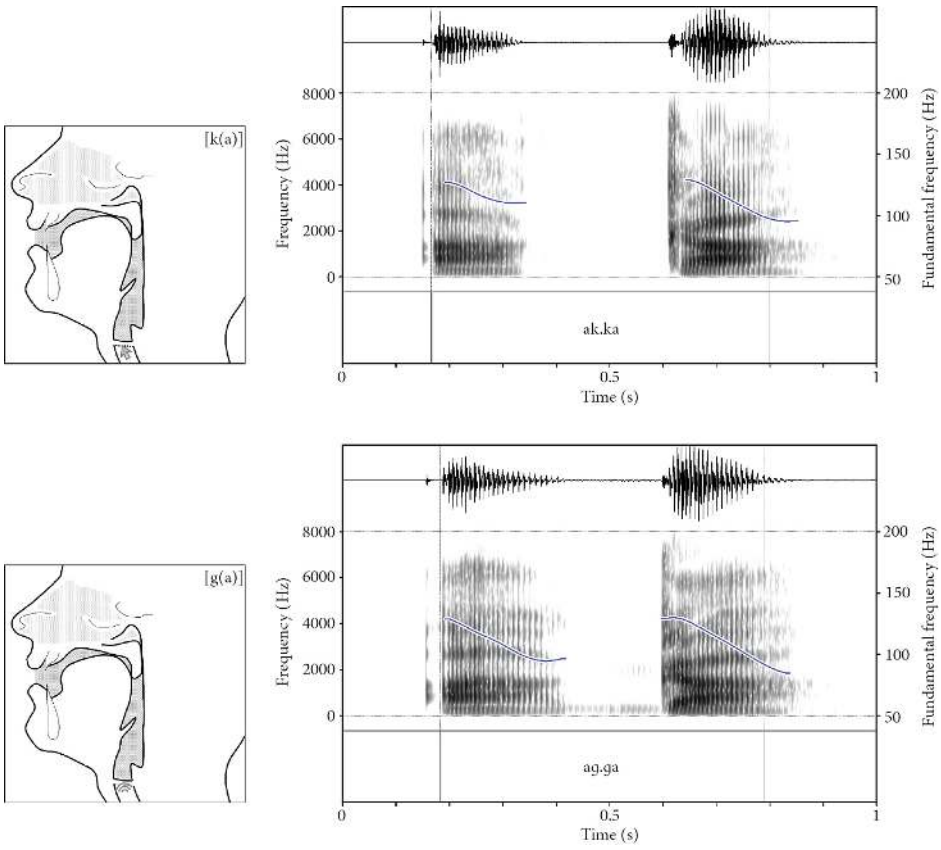


Figure 14.10 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to articulations realized in the velar place for /k/ and /g/ in the /a_a/ context.

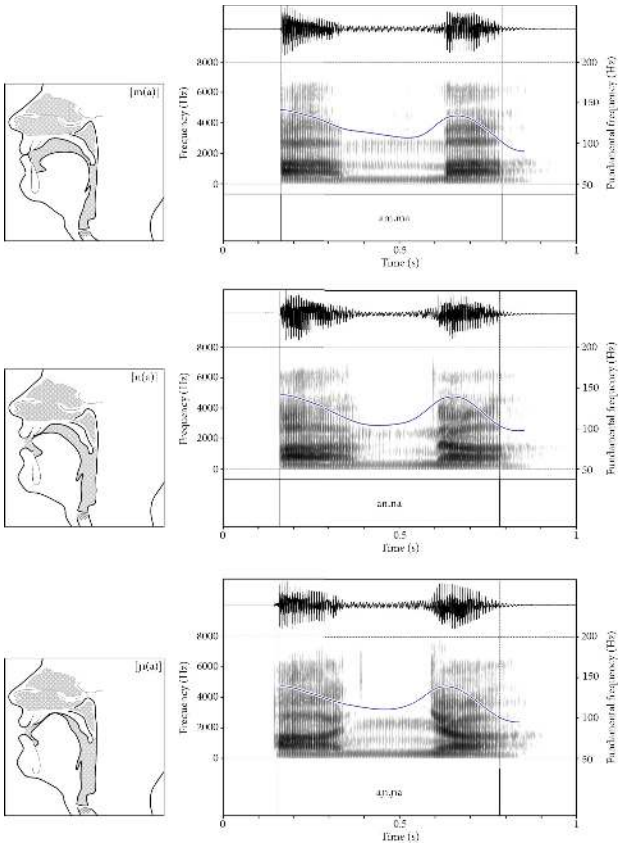


Figure 14.11 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to nasal articulations realized in the bilabial, alveodental, and palatal place for /m/, /n/, and /ɲ/ in the /a_a/ context. Note the velum lowering and the activation of the nasal cavities resonance (left) with consequent additive formants and acoustic coupling effects between cavities (right).

Finally, to make clearer the articulation mechanisms related to the different manners, we show in Figures 14.12–14 a summary of the conditions that determine each manner in reference to the alveodental place of articulation.

Figure 14.12a shows how, in the nasal manner, a configuration of total closure in the oral vocal tract is associated with a lowering of the velum that allows the oral resonance to couple with that of the nasal cavities. Figure 14.12b illustrates the two main phases (closure and release) that occur in the plosive manner of articulation (in this case for an unvoiced alveodental stop): an initial phase of total closure is followed by a rapid movement of the mobile articulator away from the fixed one (downward arrow) resulting in a sudden release of air (with a short noisy burst).

Figure 14.13a reproduces the articulatory conditions in which a fricative occurs (in this case an unvoiced alveodental sound): the assumption of a (for a certain time rather static) configuration of a constriction between the mobile and fixed articulators, and of an egressive airflow, corresponds to the production of a noise (friction). A similar type of noise also occurs in the

affricate manner, of which Figure 14.13b presents the two main phases (closure and release) in the case of the alveodental place. In fact, an initial phase of total closure is followed by a gradual, limited movement of the mobile articulator away from the fixed one (downward arrow) with the subsequent generation of a noisy release phase.

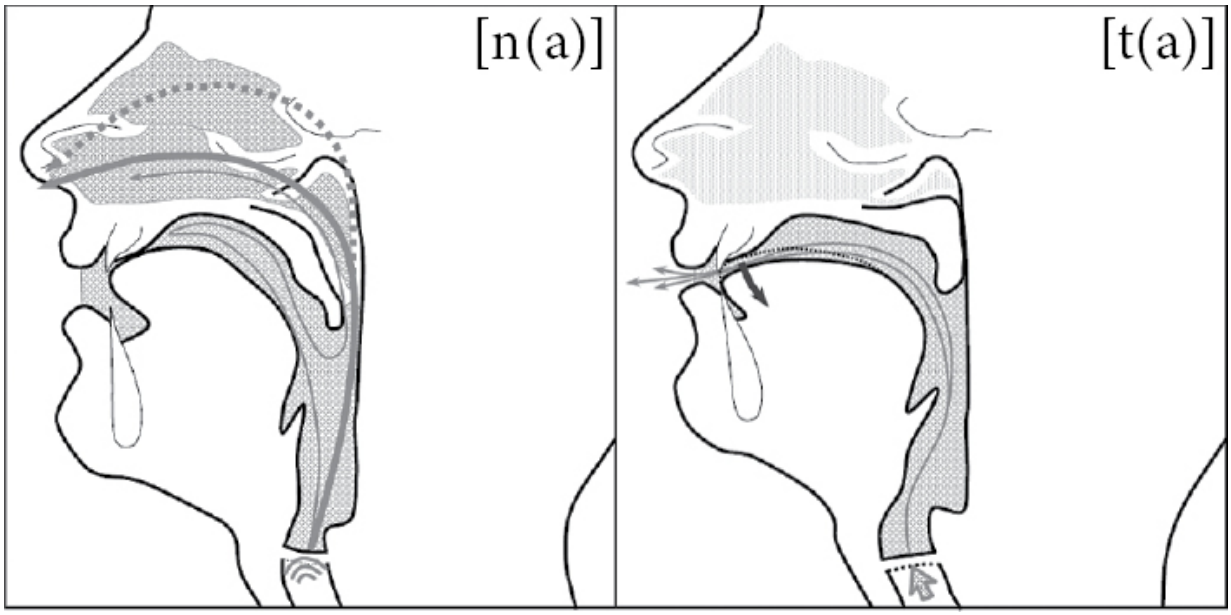


Figure 14.12 Orograms with rough indications corresponding to articulatory settings realizing: (a) the typical dynamic of a nasal contoid (alveolar in this case) and (b) two phases (closure and release) of a plosive contoid (voiceless alveodental in this case). Source: Romano (2008)

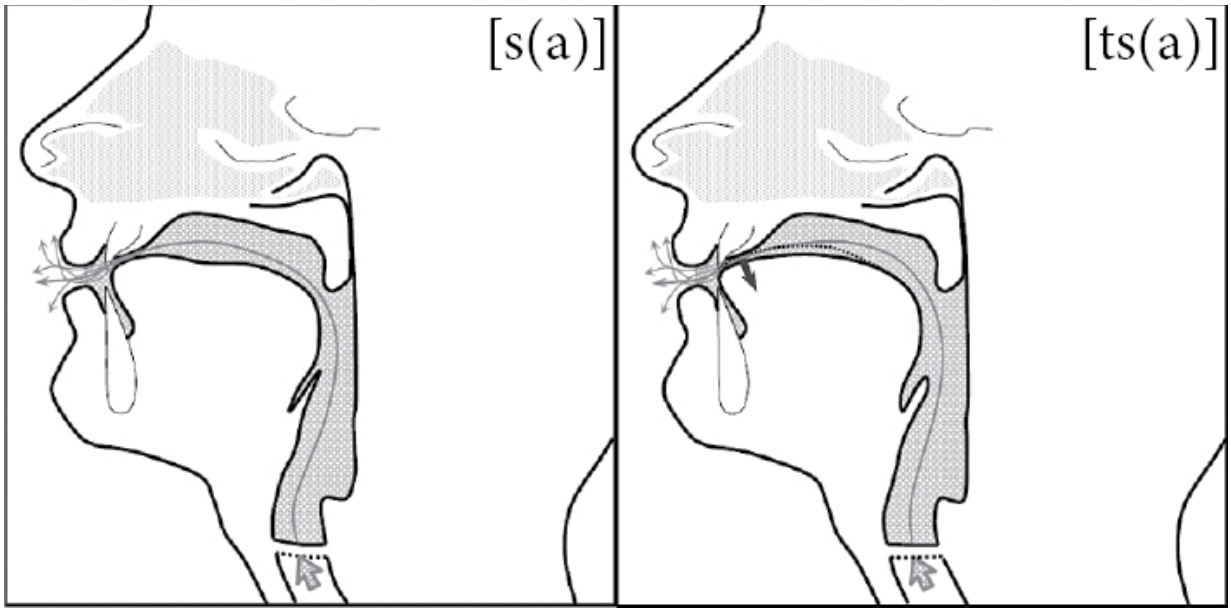


Figure 14.13 Orograms with rough indications corresponding to articulatory settings realizing: (a) the typical dynamic of a fricative contoid and (b) two phases (closure and noisy release) of an affricate contoid (voiceless alveodental in both cases). Source: Romano (2008)

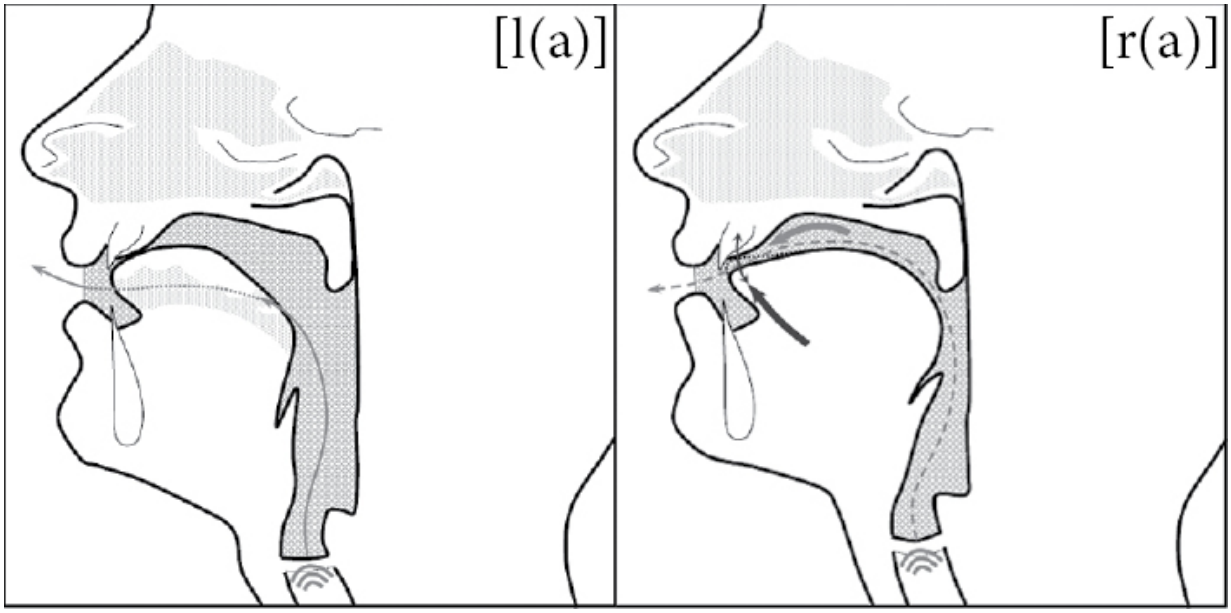


Figure 14.14 Orograms with rough indications corresponding to articulatory settings realizing: (a) a lateral contoid (alveolar) and (b) the (apico-alveolar) trill. Source: Romano (2008)

As for the lateral and trill manners, Figure 14.14 (a and b) allows us to observe the articulatory settings and typical configurations that occur in the alveolar place of articulation. The lateral contoid considered (Figure 14.14a) is characterized by a total closure on the median plane to which, however, is

associated the creation of (one or two) lateral passages that allow the airflow —set in vibration by the vocal folds (continuous or dotted line, in the section where it escapes laterally)—to flow more or less freely outwards (until the generally negligible release of the median closure). In the case of the trill (in this case apico-alveolar; see Fig. 14.14b), an initial configuration of closure is associated with a certain muscular tension (the arrow along the body of the tongue) that ensures the restoration of a closure even once the air pressure behind the obstacle (left-pointing arrow) has succeeded in creating the conditions for the passage of the egressive airflow (set in vibration by the vocal folds). The aerodynamic and myo-elastic conditions that are established allow for the production of a vibration of the tongue tip (at a frequency < 35 Hz, see Fig. 14.7) that causes repeated contact (double-headed arrow) and intermittently interrupts (or suffocates) the egressive flow (dotted line).

In the case of the approximant mode, finally, the articulation (long identified as 'glide' in Italian scientific manuals vs the traditional 'semiconsonant') is characterized, in fact, precisely by a continuous dynamic variation that brings one or more mobile articulators (coming from positions corresponding to those determined by the previously articulated sounds) to approach temporarily a fixed articulator, only gradually to move away from it (towards the position required by the articulation of the following sound, see Fig. 14.15).

The acoustic cues are those of a gradually varying amplitude (and energy) profile and formant movements towards the values that determine a vowel-like pattern (see Fig. 14.16) in an exaggeratedly long closure phase here (F_2 is equal to about 600 Hz in the case of /w/ and 2200 Hz in the case of /j/).

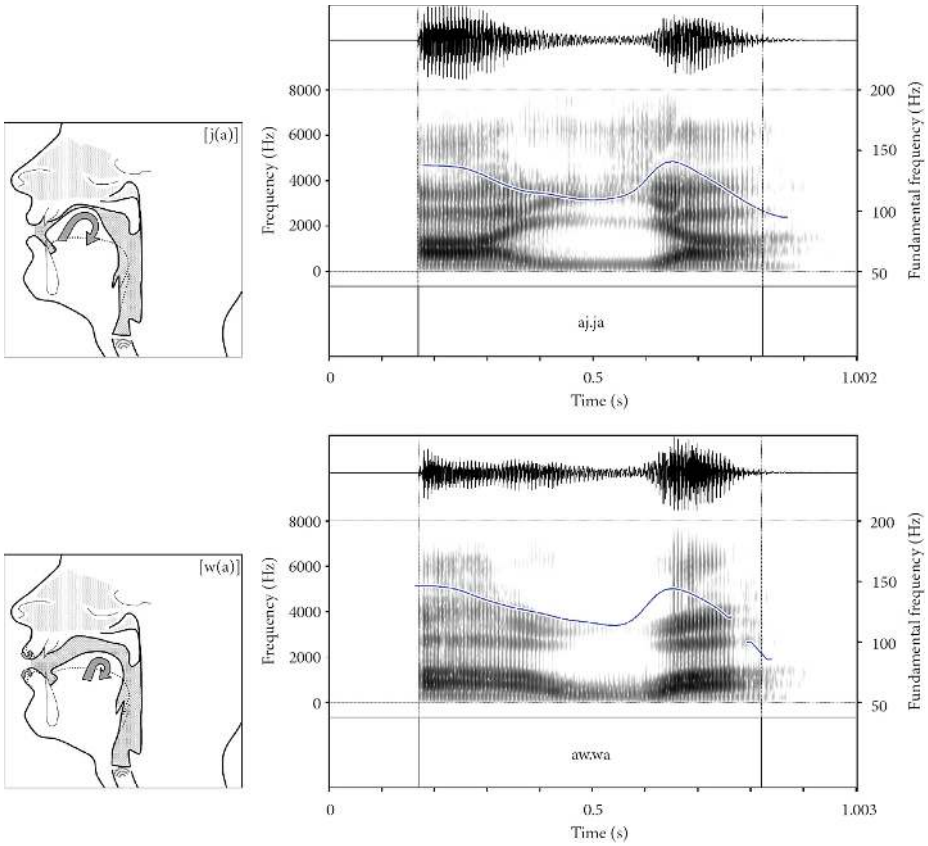


Figure 14.15 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms with rough indications corresponding to the articulatory settings in which the approximant manner is realized for the palatal and the labial-velar contoid.

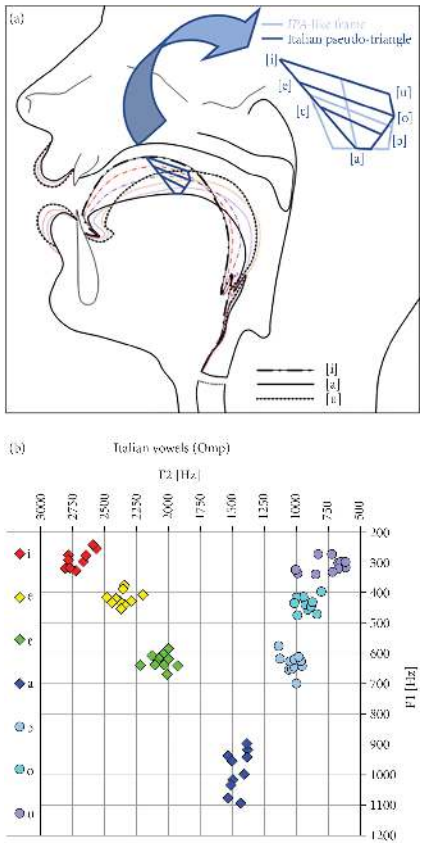


Figure 14.16 Overlapping orograms showing different articulatory configurations of the main Italian vocoids (a) and dispersion of the formant values of the corresponding timbres (b).

14.4.3 Articulatory and acoustic description of the main Italian vowel sounds

The Italian vowel system allows seven vowel timbres to be distinguished in stressed position (four degrees of aperture and three positions on the antero-posterior axis: /i e ɛ a ɔ o u/). These timbres roughly correspond to the articulatory configurations plotted for a reference speaker in Figure 14.16a (see plate insert); cf. Romano and Badin (2009). Furthermore, detecting the values of the first two formants of the acoustic spectrum of vowel sounds of this quality yields areas of dispersion such as those in the F_1–F_2 diagram in Figure 14.16b (see plate insert), which—in addition to indicating the non-linearity of acoustic distances with respect to articulatory degrees of aperture—show how the realizations of /a/ fall in a truly central region, thus supporting authoritative sources (Ferrero et al. 1979; Ferrero 1996; Calamai 2003) to contrast the numerous phonological systematization exercises of authors who have made use of fictitious 'anterior' or 'posterior' features.

14.5 Segmental characteristics, syllables, and phonotactics

As is shown in Chapter 15, a considerable role in the phonology of Italian is played by syllables. The syllable is a phonological unit driving sound aggregation, determining the way in which consonant clusters form inside the word and allowing the distinction between diphthongs and hiatuses.

Among the most relevant constraints concerning consonant clusters we highlight in Table 14.2 those defined by the articulatory changes which determine the nasal allophones (e.g., in *campo* 'field', *inferno* 'hell', *senza* 'without', *canta* '(s)he sings', *gancio* 'hook', *granchio* 'crab', *banco* 'desk').

Table 14.2 Constraints on consonant clusters

[mp]	[ɱf] [n̪t̪s]	[nt] [n̪ʧ]	[ŋʲkʲ]	[ŋk]
[mb]	[ɱv] [n̪d̪z]	[nd] [n̪ʤ]	[ŋʲgʲ]	[ŋg]
		[ns] [n̪ʃ]		
		([nz])		
		[nl]		
		[nr]		

A distinct distribution of /s/ and /z/ (very frequent in the initial position) produces the regular clusters in Table 14.3 (e.g., in *stentato* 'difficult, hard-won' vs *sdentato* 'toothless', *sfogliata* 'puffed (pastry)' vs *svogliata* 'listless$_{FSG}$').

Table 14.3 Clusters with /s/ and /z/

[sp]	[sf]	[st]	([sʧ])	[sk]
[zb]	[zv]	[zd]	([zʤ])	[zg]
[zm]		[zn]	([zɲ])	

		[zl]		
		[zɾ]		

Within a considerable range of combinatorial possibilities, we merely point out the limited distribution of non-native clusters like [n.z] (e.g., *Kanzi*): only some northern Italian speakers may extend it (even in the pronunciation of broadcasters) to words with a more standard [n.s] (e.g., *transitorio* 'transitory', *transatlantico* 'transatlantic').[5]

It is also interesting to highlight the diffusion of possible word-final complex clusters such as /rt/, /lm/, or /nt/ in loanwords such as *sport*, *film*, *sprint*, etc. Because it does not have in its traditional lexicon words ending with (more than one) consonant (or, rather, with final syllables closed by a consonant other than /l, r, m, n, s/), in the past Italian usually adapted foreign borrowings with these characteristics, restructuring them by adding a final vowel (Repetti 2012). This phenomenon is visible in examples from various languages: Russian (*rublo* < *rubl'* рубль 'ruble'), German (*quarzo* < *Quarz* 'quartz'), English (*redingote* < *riding coat*), or French (*brevetto* < *brevet* 'patent'). Nevertheless, in modern Italian, which no longer graphically adapts these forms, there are pronunciations in which even educated speakers produce, e.g., [ˈfilmə] *film*, [sˈpɔrtə] *sport*, [ˈliːderːə] *leader*. These solutions allow us to redefine the original tautosyllabic cluster as /l.m/, /r.t/ and, very probably, even /r.r/.

14.6 Phonosyntax

14.6.1 Introduction

At the post-lexical level, it is useful to mention some phonosyntactic phenomena that go beyond the lexical framework and appear at word boundaries. In the formation of speech chains in Italian, the process of *raddoppiamento* (or *rafforzamento*) *fonosintattico* 'phonosyntactic doubling (or strengthening)' and the phenomena resulting from the contact between contoids and vocoids belonging to different words acquire a regularity.

14.6.2 *Raddoppiamento fonosintattico*

Much has been written to describe, justify historically, and delimit the contexts of manifestation of phonosyntactic doubling (henceforth *RF*), making it a process of primary importance in the description of Italian internationally (to the more complete list of sources offered in §15.2.1.2.4 we might add Camilli 1909; 1911; and Stevens 2012).

RF is the regular manifestation of a gemination (doubling of a contoid) at the boundary between two words (hence, it is phonosyntactic). The process has, in part, historical reasons: it is generally justified in terms of an original total assimilation, which must then have led, apparently, to an extension by analogy, see Loporcaro (1997a). In addition to the diatopic variability of its conditions of application, it is limited only to some parts of Italy.

Even though the written language does not always show it, a model of Italian that receives a wide consensus in the media envisages saying, e.g., *Roma e Torino* 'Rome and Turin', with a longer realization of the initial /t/ in *Torino* → [ˌromaˌ e tːoˈriːno] that depends on the preceding connector (*e* 'and'). We can attribute this gemination to the presence of the final /t/ in Latin ET from which the Italian connector *e* (sometimes also *ed*) derives and its contact with the initial /t/ of *Torino*. The same final /t/, by total assimilation with the following consonant, leads, for example, to pronouncing with a longer initial /m/ and /f/ the words *Milano* 'Milan' and *Firenze* 'Florence' in expressions such as *Roma* e_{RF} *Milano* 'Rome and Milan' → [ˌromaˌ e mːiˈlaːno] or *Roma* e_{RF} *Firenze* 'Rome and Florence' → [ˌromaˌ e fːi ˈrɛntse]. This is valid in countless other examples for all words that follow the connector and to which we attribute this property (e_{RF}) shared by other monorematic connectors and prepositions (e.g., a_{RF} 'to, at', su_{RF} 'on', tra_{RF} 'between', but not di_{NRF} 'of', for instance).

The cases in which *RF* occurs in the more traditional variety of standard Italian are inspired by the model of Italian spoken in Florence, but a standard with a certain amount of media coverage slightly reduces the number of contexts of application. The list of words that cause *RF* is in fact variable according to language models and there is no *RF* for some (also rather cultured) northern Italian models. The traditional standard establishes that *RF* occurs with four categories of words.

The first group includes: prepositions *a* 'to', *da* 'from' (only in Tuscan-inspired Italian models), *su* 'on', *tra* 'between', *fra* 'between'; connectors *e* 'and', *o* 'or', *ma* 'but', *se* 'if', *che* 'that', *né* 'neither'; the pronouns *ciò* 'that', *tu* 'you.NOM.SG' and *chi* 'who'; adverbs *già* 'already', *più* 'more', *qui/qua* 'here', and *lì/là* 'there'. For example, a_{RF} *presto* '(see you) soon' → [a ˈpːrɛsto]. The second group includes words such as *dì* 'day', *re* 'king', *sci* 'ski', *tè* 'tea', *blu* 'blue', the monosyllabic names of the letters of the alphabet and of musical notes, the 'tonic' form of pronouns (*me* 'me', *te* 'you.OBL.SG', *se* (> *sé*) 'him-/her-/itself') and, above all, some widely used verb forms such as *è* 'is',

ho ‘I have’, *ha* ‘s/he has’, *va* ‘s/he goes’ (but also *va’* ‘go.IMP.2SG’), *fa* ‘s/he does’ (but also *fa’* ‘do.IMP.2SG’), *do* ‘I give’, *dà* ‘s/he gives’, *di’* ‘say.IMP.2SG’, *può* ‘s/he can’, *so* ‘I know’, *sa* ‘s/he knows’, *sto* ‘I stand’, *sta* ‘s/he stands’, etc., e.g., *tè*$_{\text{RF}}$ *freddo* ‘cold tea’ → [tɛ ˈfːredːo]. The third group includes,[6] rather exceptionally, *qualche* ‘some’, *come* ‘like’, *dove* ‘where’ (the last two mainly in Tuscany); e.g., *qualche*$_{\text{RF}}$ *cosa* ‘some thing’ → [ˌkwalke ˈkːɔːsa]. The fourth group, including a small core of functional words (*perché* ‘because’, *poiché* ‘since’, *così* ‘so’, *chissà* ‘who knows’ etc.), is the open class of oxytones (all nouns in *-ità* ‘-ity’, all verbs with past historic in *-ò*, *-é*, *-ì*, future forms in *-ò*, *-à* etc.); e.g., *andrà*$_{\text{RF}}$ *lontano* ‘s/he will go far’→ [anˌdra lːonˈtaːno].

14.6.3 Vowel + vowel sequences at word boundaries

Even though it is subject to individual variation (with regional conditioning), the realization of vowel + vowel sequences—in phenomena such as dialephe, synalephe, crasis or coalescence, elision, aphaeresis, and euphonisms—is equally interesting.

While recognizing the greater prominence of elision, we may define a complete typology by observing the outcomes of adjacent word-final and word-initial vowels (we leave euphonisms until §14.6.4) we have the following examples. A dialephe is, e.g., in *tre elefanti* ‘three elephants’ → [treˌeleˈfanti] or *già Anna (. . .)* ‘Anna already . . .’ → [ˌʤaˈʔanːa]. A synalephe generally occurs in examples such as *dodici anni* ‘twelve years’ → [ˌdodiˈʧjanːi] or *mi è piaciuto* ‘I liked it’ → [ˌmjɛ pːjaˈʧuto]. In these cases, deletion is also common, but is marked graphically as elision only in the latter (which is now considered regional or stilted): *dodici anni* → [ˌdodiˈʧanːi] and *m’è piaciuto* → [ˌmɛ pːjaˈʧuto].

Even the deletion that can occur in the case of aphaeresis, while enjoying literary attestation, is generally stigmatized and is limited in speech to the popular usages of certain regions: *e ’nfatti* ‘and indeed’ → [ˌeŋˈfatːi] or *è ’n amico* ‘he’s a friend’ → [ˌɛn aˈmiːko], etc.

Elision had been regularly applied for centuries, until a few decades ago (**lo albero* > *l’albero* ‘the tree’; **la oca* > *l’oca* ‘the goose’; *una indiana* > *un’indiana* ‘an Indian (F)’, or even *mi è piaciuto* > *m’è piaciuto* ‘I liked it’, see above), in complementary distribution with cases of apocope (*uno indiano* ‘an Indian’ > *un indiano* ‘an Indian (M)’; *quale è* ‘which is’ > *qual è* etc.). A great many writers struggle with it, though, often resorting to hyper-analytical solutions, such as *una indiana*, *quale è* (as observed in recent

decades by Mortara Garavelli 2004 and Cignetti and Demartini 2007 in writing of compound words and sentence splitting).

The aphaeresis of the examples seen above—admitted in some cases even in the absence of a vowel + vowel sequence (e.g., in *a 'sto punto* alternating with *a questo punto* 'at this point')—is considered regionally marked in speech and is avoided in writing (where it creates perplexity among the less educated and, due to the automatic correctors of some editing programmes, has generated spellings in open violation of typographical norms).

14.6.4 Euphonisms

In this framework, the natural context in speech for manifestation or preservation of euphonisms, namely *ed* for *e* 'and', *ad* for *a* 'to', and *od* for *o* 'or', is where the word-final vowel is identical to the following word-initial vowel: *ed Enrico* 'and Enrico', *ad Arturo* 'to Arthur', *od Oreste* 'or Oreste', etc. Solutions of the type *ed anche* 'and also', *ad infiniti* 'to infinite', *od altri* 'or others', which are commonly seen in (hyper)literary texts, are generally absent in the speech of professionals (except in the case of those who are occasionally influenced by the writing of authors unaccustomed to metalinguistic reflexion). They are also avoided in the more reputable publishing houses and in the audio-visual productions of more experienced authors. A more traditional diffusion is, however, detectable for *ad*, which appears in formulas such as *ad esempio*, *ad oggi*, and a few others (Cignetti and Demartini 2007).

In examples such as *ed anche* 'and also', *ed il* 'and the' instead of *e anche*, *e il* (as well as in the presence of boundaries between intonation groups; e.g., *ed, infatti* 'and, indeed', . . . *ed, eventualmente* 'and, possibly'), one may call them pseudo-euphonisms given that they may give rise to ambiguous realizations, such as *a te ed a me* 'to you and to me' > [aˌtːe(ː)d(ː)aˈmːe] > *a te da me* 'to you from me'. A *careful* pronunciation of the example, [aˌtːe(ʔ)e̯aˈmːe], is indeed in most cases already euphonic and prompts only one analysis and one way of rendering in writing.

14.6.5 External sandhi and other word-boundary treatments

In so-called external sandhi phenomena the final consonant of the first word, /n/ or /s/, partly assimilates to the initial sound of the following word. For instance, the Italian preposition *in* 'in' ends with the nasal phoneme /n/;

however, when concatenating it with a word with an initial bilabial (e.g., *prima* ‘first’), we may observe how this is realized as [m] (*in prima* [im ˈpriːma] ‘at first’, indistinguishable from the homophonous verb form, *imprima* ‘that he/she imprint’). Concatenating it instead with a word with an initial velar (e.g., *causa* ‘cause’) we get [ŋ] (*in causa* [iŋ ˈkaʊ̯za] ‘in question’).

Another example of sandhi may be that offered by a sonority assimilation involving the alternation of /s/ and /z/ before another consonant. Since in phonotactics we have /sp sf st sk/ vs /zb zm zv zd zn zl zr zg/ (as shown in Table 14.3), in the pronunciation of the loanword *miss* /mis/ ‘female beauty contestant’ many speakers produce [miz] when the word is followed by a voiced consonant, in expressions such as *miss Veneto* ‘Miss Veneto’ or *miss Mondo* ‘Miss World’ (as if they were pronouncing them /z.v/ or /z.m/).

Other facts of this kind concern phonosyntactic geminates (in examples such as *il lato* ‘the side’, *un nodo* ‘a knot’, *per Roma* ‘for Rome’) or coarticulation phenomena between /l/ and /r/ or between /n/ and /r/ (in examples such as *il ragno* ‘the spider’ e *un ragno* ‘a spider’).

An example combining several of these phenomena is the expression *in mezzo a un parco a Firenze* ‘in the middle of a park in Florence’. By producing a total assimilation between /n/ (of *in*) and /m/ and a partial one between /n/ (of *un*) and /p/, the elision of /o/ (of *mezzo*) or its reduction (in *parco*) and the synalephe/coalescence between /a/ and /u/ (leaving aside the possible aphaeresis of /i/ of *in*), one result that the speaker can achieve in careful speech is [imːɛd͡ːz(o̯)aumˌparko̯afːiˈrɛnʦe].

14.7 Suprasegmentals

In the description of Italian phonetics, some other significant non-segmental properties involve prosody, namely rhythm and intonation (Canepari 2005; Marotta and Vanelli 2021). It is important, for example, to note how stress and duration patterns correlate (variably) with specific patterns of loudness and pitch.

Italian is a free-stress language. This means that, unlike fixed-stress languages, one finds words marked by a primary accent occupying a permanent position in the metrical structure of the word, being anchored to a specific syllable (last, penultimate, antepenultimate, etc.) but differing from word to word. Only the experience of using a word makes it possible for the native speaker to know (implicitly and often metalinguistically unconsciously) how a word is stressed (words such as *facile* ‘easy’ and *comico* ‘comic’, stressed on the first syllable, unlike words such as *fucile* ‘rifle’ and *amico* ‘friend’, stressed on the second). There is generally no graphic

indication of the difference of stress, except a word-final stressed vowel bears a graphic accent (although in the following examples an accent has been added to indicate the position of stress).

The main Italian stress patterns are well described in §15.3.2 providing examples of words with a strong penultimate syllable (*piane* or paroxytone words), words with a stress on the third-last syllable (*sdrucciole* or proparoxytone words), and words with a stress on the last (*tronche* or oxytone words). In a limited number of verb forms with clitics, stress may finally also be on the fourth-last syllable (as in *òrdinagli!* 'order him!' or *pòrtaglielo!* 'bring it to him!'), or on the fifth-last (*òrdinaglielo!* 'order it for him!').

This word accent, or lexical accent, is linked in production to a *prominence* that, acoustically, helps to distinguish the same sequence of sounds from others that are (almost) identical at a segmental level, but have different meanings. In Italian, there are countless examples, from the well-known cases of *àncora* 'anchor' and *ancóra* 'still, yet' (or *sùbito* 'soon' and *subìto* 'suffered') through numerous other 'minimal pairs' determined by mere differences in the stress pattern, ending with rarer triads such as *càpito* 'I turn up', *capìto* 'understood', and *capitò* 's/he turned up' (Fig. 14.17).

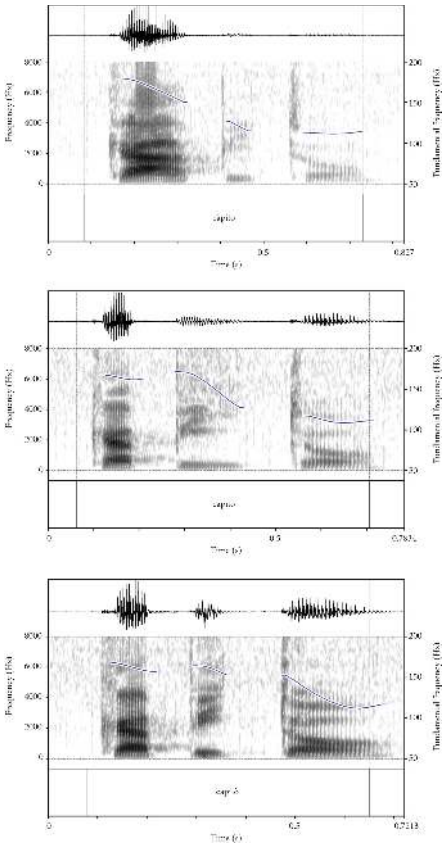


Figure 14.17 Waveforms, spectrograms, and graphic curves of acoustic variables for stress distinctions in words such as *càpito–capito–capitò* (left to right).

Stress is thus related to linguistically controlled events that distinguish one syllable from the others in the unit of reference (word, accent group, sentence) and is linked to phenomena of prominence associated with acoustic correlates of duration, melodic movement (pitch), and acoustic energy or intensity (loudness). Assuming that the acoustic phenomena that realize them are related to the instantaneous amplitude and the speed of vibration of the vocal folds (fundamental frequency, f_0,), we may therefore conclude that, in the examples shown in Figure 14.17, the stressed syllable is that distinguished by variations in the values of duration, energy, and pitch of its sounds making it prominent as compared to the other syllables, namely in these cases the antepenultimate, the penultimate, and the last, respectively, for the triad - *càpito -capito -capitò*.

A consequence of stress position is particularly clear, phonetically speaking, in the duration of prominent syllables, which generally become longer than other unstressed syllables. In standard Italian in particular, a phonetic lengthening rule applies to the vowels of open non-final stressed syllables (Fava and Magno Caldognetto 1976; Bertinetto 1981).

The way in which stress is realized determines the co-decoding of prosodic properties that characterize the phonological structure of all Italian lexical forms, with the exception of a small number of ambiguous examples in which two stress solutions are allowed—without changing the meaning—as stylistic or socio-cultural variants (*èdile* or *edìle* 'to do with building', *rùbrica* or *rubrìca* '(newspaper) column', *vàluto* or *valùto* 'I evaluate').

While distinguishing more conservative or stilted pronunciations from innovative or more casual solutions, the variation in lexical stress positioning is in any case conditioned by segmental factors (closed vocoids have intrinsic phonetic qualities that lead them to be generally less prominent—some speakers easily switch from *devìo* to *dèvio* 'I deviate'—and is rather bound to syllabic structure). One rule, with only a handful of exceptions in words borrowed from Greek (*Tàranto*, *pòlizza* 'insurance policy', *àrista* 'loin of pork'; Rohlfs 1921a:441f.; Muljačić 1969) is, for example, that of stress attraction of the 'penultimate heavy syllable' (a rule adapted from Latin constraints, Giannini and Marotta 1989; see §15.3.2). Basically, if a syllable in the penultimate position is closed (i.e., has a consonant in the coda), except in the few cases just mentioned, it will be stressed (*amaranto* 'amaranth', *panizza* 'paniccia', *artista* 'artist', etc.).

In Italian, on the other hand, a certain mobility in stress placement is regularly observed in derivational and inflexional morphology (unlike some free-stress languages such as English and German): from *féde* 'faith' to *fedèle* 'faithful' there is a shift from the root to the suffix (*-èl+e* is stress-shifting, Garde 1972). One then has *infedèle* 'unfaithful' (the prefix *in-* does not shift the stress), but then also *infedelménte* 'unfaithfully' (the adverbial suffix *-ménte* is stress-shifting).[7]

Secondary stress has only a marginal function in Italian, where it can only assume a distinctive function by participating in the hierarchies of prominences that are established at word level or, more often, at group level. A secondary stress may occur with some regularity in the positions of a lexical root stress that has lost its original function, in compounding and derivation. The addition of stress-shifting suffixes (or suffixoids) to polysyllabic roots can leave a secondary stress (usually non-standardized) on the root (or prefixoid, in word-compounds). For example (with secondary stress here marked by underlining): *partìto* '(political) party' > *partitocrazìa* 'rule by parties', *papìro* 'papyrus' > *papirologìa* 'papyrology', *capìtolo* 'chapter' > *capitolazióne* 'capitulation', *neonàto* 'newborn' > *neonatologìa* 'neonatology' (Fig. 14.18).

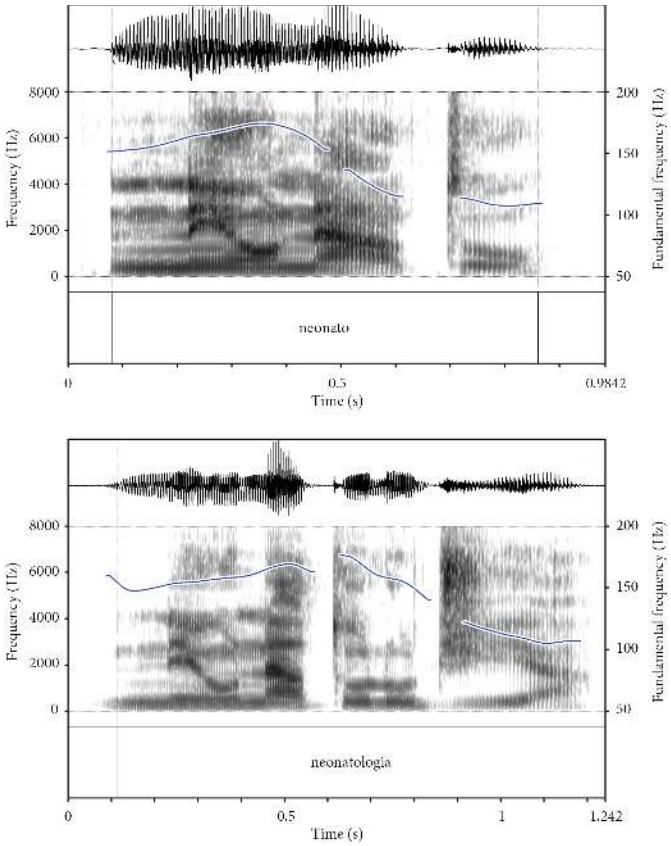


Figure 14.18 Waveforms, spectrograms, and graphic curves of acoustic variables for stress distinctions in words such as *neonato* (left) and *neonatologia* (right).

The non-distinctness of this stress is proven, however, by the frequency with which native speakers (sometimes even professional speakers) restructure these forms, even though in sporadic cases some oppositions are retained in the compound as in the case of *autore-attore* 'author-actor' > *autoreattòre* vs *autoreattore* > *autoreattòre* 'autoreactor' (Bertinetto 1976; Lepschy 1992, 1993; Romano 2008).

Stress has also a demarcative function, contributing to the realization of word juncture. In speech, the signalling of word boundaries does not in fact result from a pause (as the space of writing mistakenly leads one to think): the delimitation of lexical units is guaranteed in a large number of cases precisely because of the distinct groupings signalled by stress hierarchies (as in the potential distinction between *la normalità* 'the normality' and *l'anormalità* 'the abnormality').

14.8 Rhythm and intonation: suprasegmental acoustic analysis

14.8.1 Introduction

As seen above, suprasegmental phenomena establish the rules by which from a continuous sound stream it is possible to retrieve information about the beginning and/or end (the presence and position) of the concatenated units, be they rhythmic-intonative units or tone-accentual aggregations (which both fall within the sphere of prosody) or elements with semantic-lexical or functional properties, syllables (or aggregations of sounds) or single sound segments (further extensive references to these themes are in Bertinetto and Magno Caldognetto 1993 and Sorianello 2006).

In addition to characterizing a lexical level, suprasegmental cues are organized into broader structures that determine certain rhythmic-intonative regularities. In particular, stretches of stresses, i.e., prominent and non-prominent syllables, with their consequential local dilation or compression on the temporal level, define a rhythm (the regularity of which may condition the realization of the sequence itself) that listeners must correctly 'lock onto' in the decoding phase and whose manifestations they must be able to recognize, linking them to the construction of the utterances, distinguishing those that derive from a linguistic organization from those that reproduce para- or extra-linguistic characteristics present in the performance.

14.8.2 Rhythmic-melodic organization

At the level of rhythmic organization, Italian speech may show a variation along a continuum that varies from that of languages classified as syllable-timed towards the positions usually occupied by stress-timed languages.

In fact, even though its more standardized rhythmic model tends to be characterized by a certain invariability of strength and care in the articulation of syllables, some regional pronunciations tend to alternate strong and weak syllables with a regularity in the inter-stress distance (such as some characteristic Pugliese ones: Schmid 2004; Romano 2020) and with greater contrasts in duration and quality of articulation (reduced and/or centralized weak syllable vowels vs lengthened and/or diphthongized strong syllable vowels).[8]

As mainly syllable-timed, standard Italian shows patterns in which the strong syllables tend to resemble each other in duration, overwhelming the weak syllables, which will correspond to equally uniform and congruent durations.

The measurements carried out on samples of Italian and compared to various other languages (assumed to be of one type or another), while generally valid in approximating one model or the other, fail to account for specialists' expectations and required the introduction of distinct dimensions of variability (prosodic words and enunciative segments, as shown by Farnetani and Kori 1986) and new characterization parameters (the greater control over duration at one level may correspond to a greater tendency to compensation at another, Bertinetto and Vékás 1991).

By adopting an analysis of speech rhythm based on 'rhythmic metrics', i.e., measures of the variability of the durations of vowel and consonantal intervals following the so-called 'Delta method' (Ramus et al. 1999), various attempts have been proposed to classify Italian speech samples by comparing them on a scatter plot and confirming the dominant type (Fig. 14.19; see plate insert).[9]

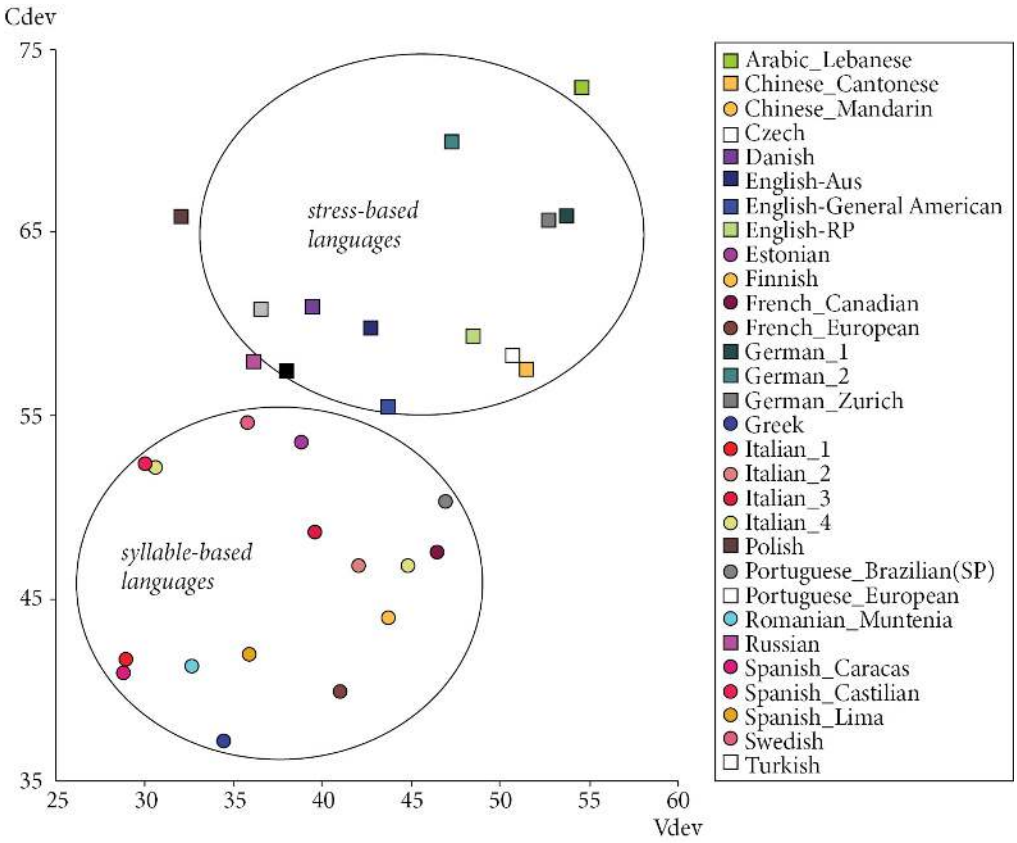


Figure 14.19 Scatter plot of Delta values (ΔC vs ΔV) for different speech samples. IA = *isoaccentuale* / stress-timed, IS = *isosillabica* / syllable-timed. Source: Romano and Mairano (2010).

14.8.3 Melodic curves and intonemes

14.8.3.1 Introduction

Speech chunking into intonational units allows us to classify utterances and their internal organization. Since they are associated with accelerations and decelerations on the timing level, these intonation patterns determine (and allow the emergence of) the textual structure, the information pattern, and the pragmalinguistic properties of the speech act. These units rely on the realization of stresses and their hierarchies in the syntactic and lexical economy of the sentence (depending on the extent to which pitch is bound in a language to the realization of pitch accents or tones—for Italian see Marotta 2003). We propose here to outline the main general patterns with reference to Delattre (1966).

14.8.3.2 Assertive vs question patterns

In Italian the modality of sentences is usually conveyed by intonation. A question or a statement can be distinguished precisely by a particular rhythmic-melodic shape of the utterance without any syntactic or lexical difference. See for instance the change in meaning of the phrase *Gianni ha preso il giornale* 'Gianni took the newspaper' when it is associated with its different intonations in the following two examples: *Gianni ha preso il giornale.* vs *Gianni ha preso il giornale?* In the first case, given the assertive (declarative) intonation of the utterance, an overall falling melodic contour marks its 'finality', with minimum pitch values reached at the end of the utterance (not without exceptions in different regional varieties). The interrogative intonation characterizing the questions of the second example is usually presented with a strong perlocutionary force associated with an evident terminal modality contour, usually, at least in part, rising (see below).

In the intonational characterization of utterances, of course, these variations are distributed over chains of segments of widely varying lengths, but they constitute an inventory of rather stable and predictable general patterns of variation of the fundamental frequency (f_0) which various authors have tried to encode in comparison with other languages (see, e.g., the studies in Hirst and Di Cristo 1998, Frota and Prieto 2015).

Figure 14.20 provides a comparison between two realizations for the assertive intonation (declarative = *D*) and interrogative intonation (of the total or *yes/no* question above = *I*). As can be seen, the terminal contour is an obvious differentiator; however, the attack values and the whole development of the curve are also clearly distinguished. In particular, *D* shows a more pronounced declination with the lowest values being reached at the last

stressed segment. The profile of *I* presents fewer amplitude variations in the first section, flattening out in the intermediate section and bringing the curve to higher values in correspondence with the last nuclear element (which is however descending): a more marked melodic rising is aligned with the last segment.

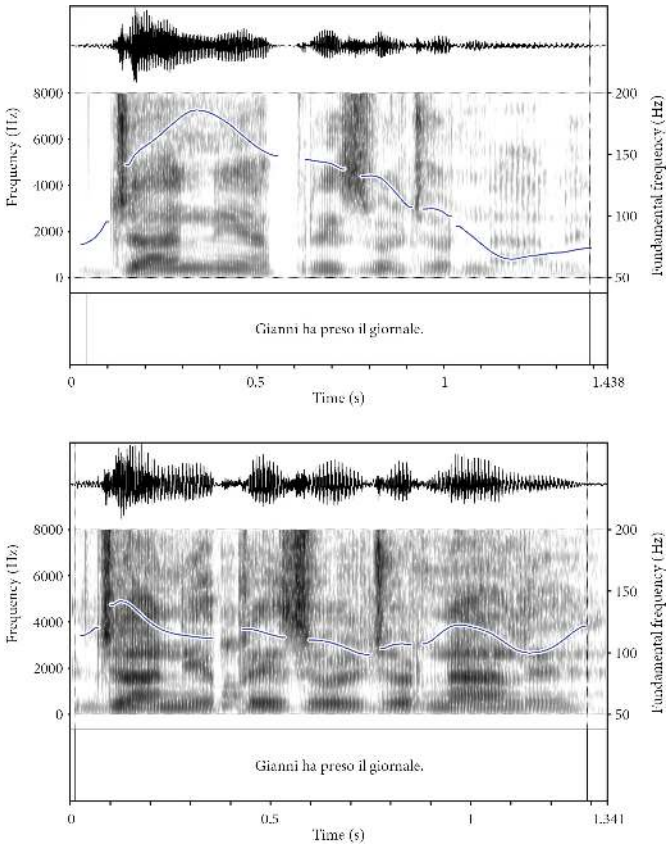


Figure 14.20 'Gianni ha preso il giornale' ('Gianni has taken the newspaper') pronounced by a (dubbing) actor and former radio presenter: declarative assertive (D, left) and yes/no question (I, right).

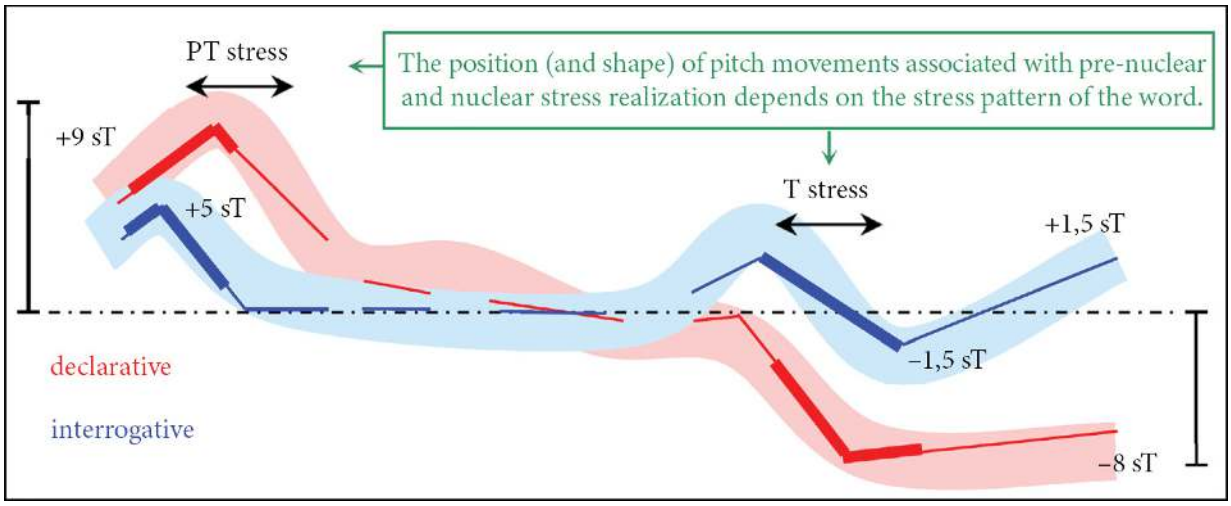


Figure 14.21 Prototypical diagrams (based on sentences produced by two speakers, in neutral Italian) for the two intonation modes illustrated in Figure 14.20.

Distinguishing between a position in which the pre-nuclear movements are realized and the final nuclear position some authors who have worked on Italian (Sorianello 2006; Gili Fivela 2008) would describe the *D* pre-nuclear Pitch Accent, *PA*, (on *Gian-*) as L+H (low and high targets aligned with the vowel segment) and that of *I* as H. Simplifying, they would then describe the nuclear *PA* (on *-na-*) of *D* as L* and that of *I* as H*+L (because only the target H is aligned within the nuclear segment). This effective and concise description of the two intonation units would be completed by acknowledging a 'boundary tone' of type L% for *D* and type H% for *I*.

However, another method for adequately representing the differences between the two profiles is to trace superimposed stylized curves showing all the positions where they deviate: indeed the curves may be prototyped as in Figure 14.21 and allow discussing where profiles systematically diverge in terms of differences in semitones (sT).[10]

14.8.4 Other question patterns

Besides being distinguished into direct or indirect, other frequent types of questions in Italian are represented by those formed with specific interrogative morphemes usually beginning with /k/ (*che . . . ?* what', *che cosa . . . ?* what', *chi . . . ?* who', *come . . . ?* 'how', *quando . . . ?* when', *quanto . . . ?* 'how much' as well as *dove . . . ?* where', *perché . . . ?* 'why' etc.). Due to the particular intonational profile they assume, questions of this type are known as partial questions or *k*-questions (the interrogative particles used almost all begin with a /k/ phoneme). They present distinct melodic profiles

depending on their length and the immediacy with which the answer is requested: e.g., a totally falling profile is only present in the case of particularly prompt *k*-questions (*Quale giornale?* 'What newspaper?'), while a more changing profile appears for longer questions (*Chi ha preso il giornale?* 'Who took the newspaper?').

Another very common type of question in Italian is the so-called tag-question—yes/no questions whose intonation, though sounding interrogative in correspondence with more or less prominent initial elements, is then conveyed by a descending contour of a more assertive type, and resumed at the end with the addition of a new clause that is really interrogative and sometimes also consists only of a single lexical element of the type *no?* 'no?', *vero?* 'true?', *giusto?* 'correct?', *è vero?* 'is it true?', *non è vero?* 'is it not true?' (e.g., *Gianni ha preso il giornale, no?* 'Gianni took the newspaper, didn't he?').

A fourth type of question is the alternative question, an open-ended interrogative (partial but polar) in which an answer is asked from two (or more) solutions proposed in the same question: *Gianni ha preso il Corriere o la Gazzetta?* 'Did Gianni buy the *Corriere* or the *Gazzetta*?' or, with a more autonomous phrase—as an adjunct, after a *k*-question (e.g., *Che cosa ha preso Gianni? Il Corriere o la Gazzetta?* 'What did Gianni buy? The *Corriere* or the *Gazzetta*?'). The pattern of these questions reproduces that of the *k*-questions that precede them (or could have preceded them); it therefore involves a falling from high initial pitch, with a particularly low final trend on the last syllables (from the stressed, nuclear, one onwards) with a potential reversal at the last syllable on which a 'kindness' profile may be realized: (–*Passami il giornale, per favore.* 'Pass me the newspaper, please.') –*Il Corriere o la Gazzetta?* (most commonly with a falling pattern) vs (–*Mi darebbe il giornale, per favore?* 'Could you please give me the newspaper?') –*Il Corriere o la Gazzetta?* (possibly with the falling pattern deactivated at the end).

14.8.5 Continuation patterns

Other more common patterns include the continuation, whose realization is usually associated with a rising pattern (Chapallaz 1960; 1962; 1964; several chapters in Frota and Prieto 2015).

This may be distinguished into distinct types since it may characterize different functions of introductory clauses. In the example (1) below, *avrebbe preso il giornale* evidently has the same characteristics as an assertion (it is intonationally indistinguishable from *ha preso il giornale*); *Se Gianni* is characterized, by contrast, as a minor continuation that, while waiting to reach the suspension that preludes the final assertion, may determine a

partial (optional) melodic rise that may be reset in a more or less evident way on the first syllable of *fosse andato al lavoro più presto* from which the overall upward trend that realizes the major continuation may restart.[11]

Starting from the segmental material of this same example, by reversing the order of some phrases or clauses, we could have utterances with different intonational properties:

1. Se Gianni fosse andato al lavoro più presto, avrebbe preso il giornale.
   'If Gianni had gone to work earlier, he would have taken the newspaper.'
2. Gianni avrebbe preso il giornale, se fosse andato al lavoro più presto.
   'Gianni would have taken the newspaper, if he had gone to work earlier.'

In (1), *fosse andato al lavoro più presto* is realized as a major continuation (the actual profile of which may be rather variable depending on the strength of the implication, usually associated with other minor continuations). In (2), the introductory clause is no longer subordinate, but the main clause: its intonation would start out as assertive (with different characteristics from the one seen so far) but with a weakened intonational force that is disactivated as one approaches the prosodic boundary. It is instead the subordinate clause *se fosse andato al lavoro più presto* that takes on a concluding intonation thanks to which the entire utterance is characterized as assertive.

From a corpus of recordings from a selection of podcasts Romano and De Iacovo (2022) observed more than 20,000 intonational units that have been labelled as major continuation vs about 12,000 segments labelled as declarative (18 per cent vs *c.*14 per cent). More than 2,500 continuation units were manually checked and analysed, isolating around a hundred major continuatives which were classified by distinguishing three main enunciative strategies (H L* L/H%, M H* L% and the more prototypical L+H* H%).

A continuation may also appear on elements of an open (asyndetic) enumeration, which is presented with a series of oscillating contours, as in *(Prima di andare al lavoro, Gianni prende) il giornale, il biglietto del tram, il pane, la focaccia . . .* '(Before going to work, Gianni takes) the newspaper, the tram ticket, the bread, the focaccia . . .' (various contributions in Frota and Prieto 2015; Setti 2010).

A closed enumeration (which is usually assertive) is characterized instead by a series of similar oscillating elements except the penultimate one, which is clearly rising, and the last one, on which a final assertive pattern appears, as in *(Prima di andare al lavoro, Gianni prende) il giornale, il biglietto del tram, il pane e la focaccia* '(Before going to work, Gianni takes) the newspaper, the tram ticket, the bread and the focaccia'.

We detail in particular the more typical patterns we observed in the same corpus as above, in which, besides a unique open enumeration pattern, distinct types of closed enumeration have been confirmed (Romano 2019).

These examples do not exclude other solutions involving, e.g., internal groupings of two, three, etc., depending on the number of elements in the list and the interaction of these patterns with syntactically defined ones (an enumeration may be in declarative, continuative, interrogative, terminal or non-terminal position, etc., and may include further lists or other internal structures).

14.8.6 Other patterns

Although in the writing systems of several languages exclamation is signalled with a special punctuation element, the versatile '!', exclamation has less structural autonomy and is less well defined, being associated with a gradation of force of the assertion, often corresponding to imperative (command or exhortation) or emphatic patterns, with usually very accentuated but rather variable pitch contours (Sorianello 2011).

Echo intonation concerns an additional clause (affirmative, question, or plea) that roughly reproduces the contour of a previous total interrogative clause by adapting it on a sustained level. This pattern occurs frequently in examples such as *L'hai preso il giornale, Gianni?* 'Did you take the newspaper, Gianni?' (in which the real question is signalled by the first clause, delimited by the comma, while the second clause—which, though followed by a question mark, is not a question—recalls its contour, terminating it on a high level).

Although it can also be appositive, a different pattern is that of the appendix intonation that may appear as a vocative/adjunct as in *Il giornale l'ho preso io, Gianni* 'I took the newspaper, Gianni' (Cresti and Moneglia 2005; Lombardi Vallauri 2009). Its phonetic realizations are quite different from those of the parenthetical intonation, which is pitched in a lower register and occurs on commentary or parenthetical clauses, as in the example *Gianni, che è uscito presto stamattina, ha preso il giornale* 'Gianni, who went out early this morning, took the newspaper'.

14.8.7 The intonational focus

Other sources of variation are given by different possibilities of focus and information organization, but the patterns identified remain highly variable, also depending on expressive (emotional and attitudinal) factors.

As discussed at the beginning of the previous section, orthographic systems often lack graphic expedients to effectively signal certain aspects of intonation in speech, but this does not detract from the fact that—as we have tried to

show—even in speech there are tacit rules, reference models that, beyond regional 'cadences', govern the intonative production of utterances in the language of our community. One of these, at the centre of a common consensus among specialists is intonational focus, highlighting informative or contrastive relevance of some elements in the message without any lexical marker.

Thus, for example, consider the formal answer taught to children for questions such as *Chi ha preso il giornale?* 'Who took the newspaper?'. In the case of the whole sentence *Gianni ha preso il giornale*, the element *Gianni* receives a particular intonative emphasis that makes it the salient element of the answer (the 'new' element) followed by a *ha preso il giornale* absolutely relegated to a comment function (in this case also 'given'). However, the same sentence can also answer the question *Che cosa ha preso Gianni?* 'What did Gianni take?'; in this case the melodic-dynamic salience of the utterance we are trying to represent graphically with the words *Gianni ha preso il giornale* can all shift to *il giornale* (Fig. 14.22).

Other examples of contrastive or corrective focus are shown in the specialist literature (Andorno 2000; De Paolis et al. 2023), but generally they deal with examples of strategies for which there is no conventional written form and which may show significant regional variation as well as different phonological representations (Avesani and Vayra 2004; Bocci and Avesani 2006; see §15.3.3).

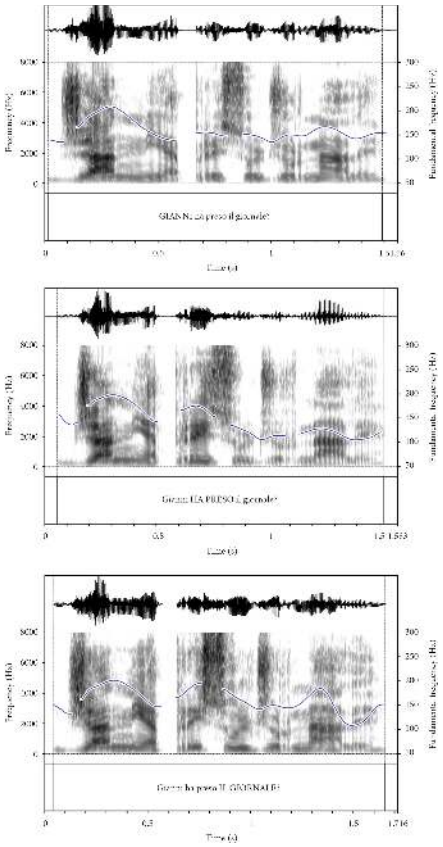


Figure 14.22 Focus effect on pitch curve and timing on the three sentences ‘Gianni ha preso il giornale’ (‘Gianni has taken the newspaper’) with narrow focus moving from the syntactic subject to the object (left to right).

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[1] Note that affricates are also traditionally transcribed with the ligature, which in the phonology of Italian is unnecessary; see Chapter 15, which also summarizes phonological models in which the two phases are identified as ‘segments’.

[2] Nor has acoustic-articulatory research, probably conducted on speakers who are not very sensitive to these distinctions, revealed substantial differences (Zmarich et al. 2011).

[3] VOT = Voice Onset Time, the time between the stop release and the beginning of the vocalic vocal fold vibration.

[4] Relevant contributions on the acoustic and articulatory of postalveolars and palatals, as compared to retroflexes of some specific areas, have been offered in studies by Celata (2002). More information regarding the comparison between /ʎ/ and /j/ is provided by Pettorino and Giannini (1991) and has recently been supported by some acoustic and perceptual work by Anastaseni (2022) and Anastaseni and Romano (2023).

[5] There is a theoretical possibility of preserving non-canonical clusters which may appear in careful speech, such as [m.s] in *samsara*, [m.ʃ] in *gramsciano*, or [n.p] in the acronym *INPS*: nasal sounds, in these cases, are generally not coarticulated with the onset of the following syllable.

[6] In some cases also *sopra* 'over, above'. *Sopra* as an independent preposition has lost its capacity to trigger RF in modern Italian, but we find the lexicalized RF in compounds such as *sopraffatto* 'overwhelmed', *soprattutto* 'above all', *sopracciglia* 'eyebrows', *soprassedere* 'supersede'; the same effect is observed for its variant form *sovra*, which today is limited to compounds, such as *sovraccarico* 'overloaded', *sovrappeso* 'overweight'. The same effect is observable after the (currently) purely prefixal *intra-* and *contra-*: *intrattenere* 'entertain, maintain', *intravvedere* 'glimpse, see into', *contraffatto* 'counterfeit', *contraccolpo* 'recoil, repercussion'.

[7] As can be seen from the example of the prefix, not all derivational morphemes have stress-shifting properties. Morphemes without this property are those suffixes (or those clitics, in the case of verb+pronoun compounds) that, when added to the root, do not alter the stress pattern (e.g., -°*ano* in *pàrlano* 'they speak' or -°*e+o* in *fèrreo* 'iron-clad' vs -*ós+o* in *ferróso* 'ferrous'). In Italian, verb forms alternate between stress-shifting and non-stress-shifting inflexions (*pòrto* 'bring.1SG', *portàte* 'bring.2PL', *pòrtano* 'bring.3PL'). Furthermore, in the composition of verb forms with a clitic, pronouns do not have stress-shifting properties and therefore stress remains on the root or its verbal inflexion (*pòrtagli* 'bring.IMP.2SG=DAT.3MSG', *pòrtaglielo* 'bring.imp.2sg= DAT.3MSG=i' . . . *portàtegli* 'bring.IMP.2PL=DAT.3MSG', *portàteglielo* 'bring.IMP.2PL=DAT.3MSG=it' . . .).

[8] The complexity of syllable structure and the phenomena of unstressed vowel reduction (as well as deletions) are highly relevant to the perception of speech rhythm. Indeed, the creation of complex consonant clusters and the presence of vowel reduction are indicative of stress-based organization, while a relative invariability of vowel durations and the prevalence of simple consonant clusters correlate with syllable-based languages (Marotta 2016).

[9] This classification method based on the proportions between durations of vowel and consonantal segments and measures of duration variation of the corresponding intervals has now further developed and other metrics have been proposed, which have led to new indicators (Grabe and Low 2002). Furthermore, while maintaining the reference to metrics but distinguishing different levels of temporal organization (a phrasal level, which is based on the coupling of the accentual and syllabic oscillators vs an oscillator relating the duration of inter-V onset intervals), another method has been established that is able to unify the assessment of minor or major control or compensation tendencies (see Control vs Compensation Indexes, Bertinetto and Bertini 2010) and Italian emerged as a control language on both levels.

[10] While in the initial section, considerable differences may appear by virtue of the intonational thematic possibilities available to the speaker (thus depending on informational and communicative constraints) a final target with different values (and with sometimes negligible mismatches) may result in the realization of distinct modalities that may be validated by perception tests (Gili Fivela et al. 2015).

[11] A practical difficulty in identifying these patterns in speech examples also lies in the fact that it is sometimes a subjective matter to establish their boundaries. It can often even be difficult to determine how many there are, i.e., the number of intonational units that can be recognized and classified in an utterance (Cresti and Moneglia 2005).

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Chapter 15

Phonology

Laura Vanelli

15.1 Introduction

Before exemplifying the phonological inventory of Italian, we must clarify what type of 'Italian' we shall be describing. One option would be to describe what is called 'standard Italian', namely the language codified in prescriptive usage (Berruto 2012a:ch. 2), the so-called received pronunciation (It. *pronuncia ortoepica*) used in elocution handbooks and courses and in dictionaries. The problem with this approach is that it does not represent the authentic usage of native Italian speakers, or at best only a small number of speakers such as radio and television presenters and actors who, for professional reasons, have learned received pronunciation. As is well known, spoken Italian is characterized by a significant degree of diatopic (as well as diastratic) variation such that what Italians actually speak can be said to be regional varieties of Italian (cf. Bruni 1992; Telmon 1993; Fusco and Marcato 2001; see also Chapters 38–41). Regional differences are particularly salient in pronunciation, at the phonetic-phonological level, where the influence of the underlying dialects is strongest (Canepari 1986). Some differences involve strictly phonetic aspects such as the different pronunciations of the vowel [a] which, in contrast to the central realization typical of Florence, is realized as a back vowel in Piedmont and Liguria, and is fronted in Puglia. Particularly marked are differences in intonational patterns which give rise to distinctive cadences, not only at a regional level, but even at a subregional or, in some cases, local level. In some cases, however, regional differences take on phonological significance, in that they are involved in the distribution of particular allophones with different pronunciations tied to specific phonetic contexts.

On the other hand, it must also be noted that in general the phonological system, and, in particular, the phoneme inventory and system of phonological oppositions, is quite uniform in exhibiting some rules of allophonic distribution common to all Italian speakers. For this reason, we shall start from a description of the shared common features of the phonological system adding, where necessary, further details about specific phonological features peculiar to different regional varieties of Italian.

The chapter is divided into two parts: §15.2 illustrates the phonological system of Italian from a segmental perspective, whereas §15.3 presents an overview of major prosodic phenomena. For essential reference works on Italian phonology, see Muljačić (1972), Franceschi (1973), Mioni (1973:43–73; 2001:ch. 8), Schmid (1999), Bertinetto and Loporcaro (2005), and Krämer (2009) for an Optimality Theory approach, De Dominicis (2010), and Marotta and Vanelli (2024). Aspects of the phonology of Italian are also discussed in Maturi (2014), even if that volume is primarily given over to phonetics, as well as in Nespor and Bafile (2008) where they are treated within a general discussion on the 'sounds of human language'.

15.2 Segmental phonology

§15.2.1 describes the phonological inventory of the consonants of Italian, followed in §15.2.1.1 by a discussion of their distinctive features. Allophonic processes affecting the consonants are introduced in §15.2.1.2 before individual discussions of the assimilation of nasals to a following consonant in §15.2.1.2.1, the distribution of the fricatives /s/ and /z/ in §15.2.1.2.2, the problem of so-called intrinsic geminates in §15.2.1.2.3, and the phenomenon of *rafforzamento fonosintattico* 'phonosyntactic strengthening' in §15.2.1.2.4. Some examples of diatopic variation in the consonants are discussed in §15.2.1.2.5. The inventory of the vowels of Italian is described in §15.2.2, together with their distinctive features in §15.2.2.1. In §15.2.2.2 the rule of open-syllable vowel lengthening is discussed.

15.2.1 Consonant inventory

Table 15.1 presents with IPA symbols the distinctive consonantal segments of Italian, arranged according to their manner and place of articulation along the vertical and horizontal axes, respectively (voiceless segments are placed before their voiced equivalents in each cell).

Table 15.1 Italian consonants

	bilabial		labiodental		dental / alveolar[1]				postalveolar		palatal	velar	
stop	p	b			t			d				k	g
fricative			f	v	s			z	ʃ				
affricate					ts			ʣ	ʧ	ʤ			
nasal		m						n			ɲ		
vibrant								r					
lateral								l			ʎ		

[1] The dental and alveolar places of articulation are grouped together, since the dental or alveolar (sometimes alveodental) realization depends on different regional pronunciations (see Chapter 14).

Table 15.1 includes six places of articulation, but phonologically only four of these are contrastive. More specifically, there is no articulatory opposition between bilabials (involving stops and nasals) and labiodentals (restricted to fricatives), nor between post-alveolars (involving fricatives and affricates) and palatals (limited to nasals and laterals).

The identification of the distinctive segments of Italian can be established through a substitution process (in accordance with the classical principles of Prague structuralist phonology). Below there follows a list of minimal (or subminimal) pairs which display phonological contrasts that allow us to identify the phonemes of Italian. However, these represent just an illustrative sample, exemplifying some groups of phones (speech sounds) with shared features from which we have extracted some minimal pairs.

Voiceless fricatives:	/s/ vs /f/: [s]*orte* 'sorts' vs [f]*orte* 'strong.SG'. /s/ vs /ʃ/: [s]*alare* 'to salt' vs [ʃ]*alare* 'to waste', [s]*oglie* 'thresholds' vs [ʃ]*oglie* 'melts'. /f/ vs /ʃ/: [f]*atto* 'done' vs [ʃ]*atto* 'slovenly'.
Affricates:	/ts/ vs /tʃ/: *mar*[ts]*o* 'March' vs *mar*[tʃ]*o* 'rotten.MSG'. /dz/ vs /dʒ/: *man*[dz]*o* 'beef' vs *man*[dʒ]*o* 'eat.1SG'.
Sonorants:	/n/ vs /l/ vs /r/: [n]*ane* 'dwarves.F' vs [r]*ane* 'frogs' vs [l]*ane* 'wools'. /n/ vs /m/: [n]*ano* 'dwarf.M' vs [m]*ano* 'hand'. /n/ vs /ɲ/: [n]*omi* 'names' vs [ɲ]*omi* 'gnomes'. /l/ vs /ʎ/: [l]*i* 'there' vs [ʎ]*i* 'the.MPL' (pre-vocalic allomorph).
Voiceless vs voiced:	/p/ vs /b/; /t/ vs /d/; /k/ vs /g/; /f/ vs /v/; /s/ vs /z/; /tʃ/ vs /dʒ/:[1] [p]*are* 'seems' vs [b]*are* 'coffins'; *mon*[t]*o* 'mount.1SG' vs *mon*[d]*o* 'world'; [k]*ara* 'dear.FSG' vs [g]*ara* 'race'; [f]*aro* 'lighthouse' vs [v]*aro* 'launch'; *chie*[s]*e* 'asked.3SG' (< preterite of *chiedere* 'to ask') vs *chie*[z]*e* 'churches'; *man*[tʃ]*a* 'tip' vs *man*[dʒ]*a* 'eat.3SG'.

2 *rupe* 'cliff' vs *ruppe* 'broke.3SG', *note* 'notes' vs *notte* 'night', *fico* 'fig (tree)' vs *ficco* 'thrust.1SG', *fuga* 'escape; leak' vs *fugga* 'flee.SBJV.SG', *cade* 'falls' vs *cadde* 'fell.3SG', *tufo* 'tuff' vs *tuffo* 'dive', *bevi* 'drink.2SG' vs *bevvi* 'drank.1SG', *cacio* 'cheese' vs *caccio* 'hunt.1SG', *cane* 'dog' vs *canne* 'reeds', *soma* 'burden' vs *somma* 'sum', *pala* 'spade' vs *palla* 'ball', *caro* 'dear.MSG' vs *carro* 'cart'.

[1]

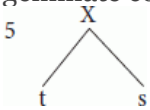
One of the peculiarities of the Italian consonantal system is the presence of geminate, or long, consonants (also called *doppie* 'double (consonants)' in Italian), the duration of which is about double that of the corresponding single consonants. With the exception of the voiced fricative /z/, all the consonants in Table 15.1 also present a long variant. However, a distinction needs to be made here between two types of geminate: phonological (or lexical) geminates on the one hand and intrinsic geminates on the other. The former are distinctive, inasmuch as they contrast with the corresponding single consonants, as can be seen from the minimal pairs in (2).[2]

3 *sogno* ['soɲːo] 'dream' vs *sonno* ['sonːo] 'sleep', *paglia* ['paʎːa] 'straw' vs ['palːa] 'ball', *lascio* ['laʃːo] 'let.1SG' vs *lasso* ['lasːo] 'lapse', *mazzo* ['matːso] 'bunch' vs *masso* ['masːo] 'boulder',[3] *cozzo* ['kɔtːso] 'clash' vs *coccio* ['kɔtːʃo] 'earthenware'.

Besides intervocalic positions as seen in the examples in (2), the stops and the fricative /f/ can also occur as geminates before /l/ and /r/, e.g., *abbraccio* 'hug', *approvare* 'to approve', *affresco* 'fresco', *attrarre* 'to attract', *accludere* 'to enclose'. In this context, contrasts with the corresponding single consonant are somewhat rare, e.g., *libra* 'weighs; soars' vs *libbra* 'pound', *Ebro* 'Ebro (river in Spain)' vs *ebbro* 'drunk'. By contrast, phonological geminates are never found in word-initial position or post-consonantal position, but word-initial lexical geminates are quite widespread in southern regional varieties of Italian (e.g., [dː]*ue* 'two', [rː]*e* 'king(s)', [mː]*olle* 'soft.SG'); in some cases geminates are etymological, as in [kː]*iesa* 'church' < ECCLESIA, [kː]*ua* 'here' < ECCU-HAC, [lː]à 'there' < ILLAC.

Intrinsic geminates, by contrast, involve those consonants which in intervocalic position are always realized long, namely /ɲː, ʎː, ʃː, tːs, dːz/, hence *ogni* [ˈoɲːi] 'each', *figlio* [ˈfiʎːo] 'son', *liscio* [ˈliʃːo] 'smooth.MSG', *pazzo* [ˈpatːso] 'mad.MSG', *mezzo* [ˈmɛdːzo] 'half.MSG' (/ʦ/ is geminate even when followed by the approximant /j/, even if represented by a single consonant in standard orthography: *stazione* [staˈtːsjoːne] 'station', *vizio* [ˈvitːsjo] 'vice'). Given their intrinsic long nature, these consonants do not contrast with their corresponding single

consonants, which can never occur in the same intervocalic positions, but only with other geminate consonants. Some examples are provided in (3).

5 

3

Just like lexical geminates, intrinsic geminates are also excluded from word-initial and post-consonantal positions where only their corresponding single forms are found: *gnocchi* [ˈɲɔkːi], *gli* [ʎi] 'the.MPL' (pre-vocalic allomorph), *sciare* [ʃiˈaːre] 'to ski', *zio* [ˈʦiːo] 'uncle', *zero* [ˈʣɛːro] 'zero', *conscio* [ˈkonʃo] 'aware.MSG', *alzo* [ˈalʦo] 'raise.1SG', *manzo* [ˈmanʣo] 'beef'. Intrinsic geminates cannot precede /l/ or /r/. The palatal lateral and nasal [ʎ] and [ɲ] cannot be preceded by another consonant within the word.

Although excluded from word-initial position, if a word with an initial potential intrinsic geminate is preceded by a vowel-final word, then an intervocalic context is created which, under specific contextual conditions (i.e., not following pauses), gives rise to gemination of the word-initial consonant. For example, if preceded by one of the forms of the definite article *lo* (MSG), *gli* (MPL), *la* (FSG), *le* (FPL), or the indefinite article *uno* (MSG) or *una* (FSG), gemination obtains: *sci* [ʃi] 'ski', but *lo / uno sci* [lo/unoˈʃːi] 'the/a ski', *scia* [ˈʃiːa] 'wake', but *la / una scia* [la/unaˈʃːiːa] 'the/a wake', *zoccolo* [ˈʦɔkːolo] 'hoof; plinth', but *gli zoccoli* [ʎiˈtːsɔkːoli] 'the hooves; plinths', *zie* [ˈtsiːe] 'aunts', but *le zie* [leˈtːsiːe] 'the aunts', *zero* [ˈʣɛːro] 'zero' but *lo / uno zero* [lo/unoˈdːzɛːro] 'the/a zero' (see also the discussion of *rafforzamento fonosintattico* in §15.2.1.2.4).

Finally, it should be noted that phonological and intrinsic geminates are also distinguished by their areal distribution: while the former belong to the phonological repertoire of all Italians (even if there is a tendency for some northern speakers to shorten them in some cases), the latter are not part of the phonological inventory of northern speakers who always realize them as short.

15.2.1.1 Distinctive features

Table 15.2 presents the distinctive features which define Italian consonants following substantially Chomsky and Halle (1968), *The Sound Pattern of English* (SPE).

Table 15.2 Distinctive features of the Italian consonants

	p	b	t	d	k	g	f	v	s	z	ʃ	ʦ	ʣ	ʧ	ʤ	m	n	ɲ	l	ʎ	r
consonantal	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
sonorant	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
voice	–	+	–	+	–	+	–	+	–	+	–	–	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
continuant	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	+
delayed release	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	–
nasal	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	–	–	–
lateral	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	–

	p	b	t	d	k	g	f	v	s	z	ʃ	ʦ	ʣ	ʧ	ʤ	m	n	ɲ	l	ʎ	r
anterior	+	+	+	+	–	–	+	+	+	+	–	+	+	–	–	+	+	–	+	–	+
coronal	–	–	+	+	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	+
posterior	–	–	–	–	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

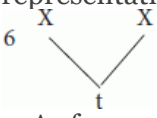
The SPE model also includes the consonantal features [high], [low], and [distributed], but these prove redundant in the Italian system. The [+high] feature serves to distinguish palatals and velars from all other consonants specified [–high], but it has no distinctive value in the Italian system where [–high] consonants are already distinguished from palatals and velars by the features [anterior], [coronal], and [posterior]. As for the feature [low], a positive specification captures pharyngeal consonants which are not found in Italian where all consonants are therefore [–low]. The feature [distributed] is not employed either since [+distributed] consonants, namely the post-alveolars /ʃ/, /ʧ/, and /ʤ/, are also defined by the feature specifications [+coronal] and [–anterior]. The choice to treat the feature [distributed] as redundant is, in some sense, arbitrary, because, unlike the others, it is only active in the case of coronal consonants.[4]

Table 15.3 reinterprets the places of articulation illustrated in Table 15.1 in terms of distinctive features.

Table 15.3 Places of articulation and distinctive features

	anterior	coronal	posterior
bilabial: /p/, /b/, /m/	+	–	–
labiodental: /f/, /v/	+	–	–
dental: /t/, /d/	+	+	–
alveolar: /s/, /z/, /ʦ/, /ʣ/, /n/, /l/, /r/	+	+	–
postalveolar: /ʃ/, /ʧ/, /ʤ/	–	+	–
palatal: /ɲ/, /ʎ/	–	–	–
velar: /k/, /g/	–	–	+

Although we have chosen to maintain the SPE feature [±delayed release] to mark off affricates as a separate class, they receive a more natural analysis in autosegmental phonology (Goldsmith 1990) which, through a multidimensional approach, distinguishes between a segmental or melodic tier made up of sets of phonological features, and several prosodic (e.g., syllabic, accentual, metrical) tiers. The various tiers are independent, but converge through the skeletal tier whose 'slots' determine the phonological timing of the segments linked to it. Thus, at a melodic level an affricate is made up of two segments, each with its own bundle of features, which are associated with a single timing unit in the skeletal tier. For example, /ʦ/ has the representation in (5).

6 

As for geminate consonants, in SPE long and short segments are distinguished through the feature [±long], but in this case too a non-linear phonological solution is preferable, namely a single segment associated with two positions in the skeletal tier as illustrated for /tː/ in (6).

7 *in casa* [iŋ#'ka:sa] 'in house (= at home)', *un vaso* [uɱ#'va:zo] 'a vase', *con pazienza* [kom#pat'tsjɛntsa] 'with patience',[5] *non credo* [noŋ#'kre:do] 'NEG believe.1SG (= I don't believe)'.

15.2.1.2 Allophonic processes: representations and rules

The presence of allophones in the system is due to the activation of processes triggered by specific contexts which determine restrictions on the distribution of particular sounds. In §§15.2.1.2.1–2 we shall consider two cases of allophony caused by assimilatory processes, and in §15.2.1.2.3–4 examples involving the distribution of geminate consonants. As will become evident, we shall tackle these topics essentially through the framework of generative phonology (including SPE and autosegmental phonology) which derives the observed allophones from the application of phonological rules which operate on underlying phonological representations to derive surface phonetic representations (Cole and Hualde 2011). A different approach is adopted by Krämer (2009) based on the interaction of constraints within the theoretical framework of Optimality Theory.

15.2.1.2.1 Nasal allophones

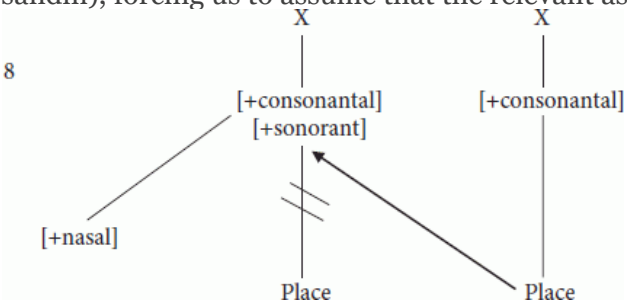
One of the most common assimilatory processes involves the nasals, which in many languages, including Italian, take on the place of articulation of a following consonant in a process of regressive partial assimilation. Above we saw that in the phonological inventory of Italian there are three distinctive nasal consonants, namely the phonemes /m/, /n/, and /ɲ/ (and their corresponding geminates /mː/, /nː/, and /ɲː/—but see §15.2.1.2.3 for the representation of intrinsic geminates). As already exemplified in the (sub)minimal pairs in §15.2.1, e.g., *nomi* 'names' vs *gnomi* 'gnomes', *rane* 'frogs' vs *rame* 'copper', *canna* 'reed' vs *cagna* ['kaɲːa] 'bitch', *somma* 'sum' vs *sogna* ['soɲːa] 'dream.PRS.IND.3SG', the three nasal sounds only contrast in word-initial positions (except the geminates) and in intervocalic position. In pre-consonantal position the situation is different: on the one hand we find [m] and [n], but not [ɲ] (e.g., *ca*[m]*po* 'field', *tro*[m]*ba* 'trumpet', *le*[n]*to* 'slow.MSG', *ma*[n]*do* 'send.PRS.IND.1SG'), but on the other we also find other nasals, namely the labiodental [ɱ] and the velar [ŋ], e.g., *i*[ɱ]*vece* 'instead', *go*[ɱ]*fiare* 'to inflate', *bia*[ŋ]*co* 'white.MSG', *u*[ŋ]*ghia* '(finger) nail'. As these examples illustrate, the nasal shows the same place of articulation as the following consonant.

Before consonants we therefore find not only the sounds [ɱ] and [ŋ], which only occur in this context and hence are not contrastive but clear examples of allophones, but also the nasal phonemes /m/ and /n/ which partially lose their contrastiveness in this same context: before a

consonant only their nasality is contrastive whereas their place of articulation depends on the following consonant, a case of partial neutralization.

It should be noted that assimilation to a following obstruent consonant not only occurs within words, but also, albeit with some regional variations, across word boundaries (a case of external sandhi), forcing us to assume that the relevant assimilation rule (7) is post-lexical.

8



5

We will not consider any further here (though see Marotta and Vanelli 2024:72–79) the complex question of the correct phonological representation of pre-consonantal nasals (the archiphoneme of the structuralists): are they fully specified nasals (although it is not clear whether the nasal should be considered /n/ or /m/ in certain cases such as before labiodentals) or underspecified segments which only contain distinctive features, in practice nasality, without any further specification for place of articulation? To this can be added the problem that [n] and [m] are sometimes the realization of the corresponding phonemes and other times represent pre-consonantal allophones.

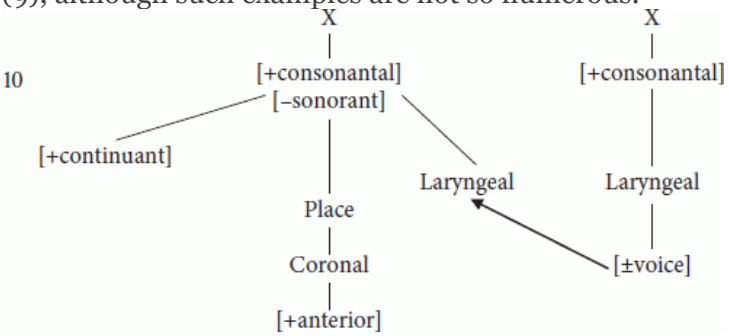
The formulation of the assimilation rule can be most effectively expressed in terms of a feature geometry (Clements 1985; Sagey 1986; Halle 1992; 1995), according to which the features which make up phonemes do not form a simple unordered list but, rather, are hierarchically structured in terms of independent tiers. Using this model, the assimilatory process affecting nasals can be represented as in (8) in which the terminal features dominated by Place, whatever the place of articulation, spread from the obstruent consonant to the nasal which, through the disassociation, loses in the process its original features.

9 *chie*[s]*e* 'asked.PST.PFV.3SG' (of *chiedere* 'to ask') vs *chie*[z]*e* 'churches', *fu*[s]*o* 'spindle' vs *fu*[z]*o* 'melted', *pre*[s]*ente* 'foretell.3SG' (of *presentire* 'to have a premonition') vs *pre*[z]*ente* 'present'.

15.2.1.2.2 The fricatives /s/ and /z/

Another phenomenon similar to that just seen for the nasals involves the voiceless and voiced alveolar fricatives /s/ and /z/, respectively. In standard Italian and Tuscan the two consonants contrast in intervocalic position, as shown by the existence of minimal pairs such as those in (9), although such examples are not so numerous.

10



Note also *ingle*[s]*e* 'English.SG' vs *france*[z]*e* 'French.SG', *co*[s]*a* 'thing' vs *ro*[z]*a* 'rose', *ca*[s]*a* 'house' vs *ba*[z]*e* 'base'.

In non-intervocalic positions, however, [s] e [z] are allophones in complementary distribution: word-initially (before a vowel), word-finally, and following the sonorants /n r l/,

only the voiceless [s] is found (e.g., [s]*empre* ‘always’, *ga*[s] ‘gas’, *pen*[s]*o* ‘think.1SG’, *cor*[s]*a* ‘race’, *pol*[s]*o* ‘wrist’); before consonants the alveolar fricative assumes the voicing value of the following consonant, hence [s] in [s]*copa* ‘broom’, [s]*tudio* ‘study’, *fi*[s]*chio* ‘whistle’, *di*[s]*fare* ‘to undo’, and [z] in [z]*baglio* ‘error’, [z]*dentato* ‘toothless’, [z]*garro* ‘mistake’, *ri*[z]*veglio* ‘awakening’, *co*[z]*mo* ‘cosmos’, [z]*litta* ‘sled, sleigh’, [z]*nello* ‘thin, slim’, *i*[z]*raeliano* ‘Israeli’.

In (10) the relevant assimilatory process is represented in feature geometry terms. Underlyingly, the voice feature of the sibilant is not specified, but is acquired from the spreading of the voice feature associated with the following consonant.

11 *p*[a]*zzo* ‘mad.MSG’ vs *p*[i]*zzo* ‘lace’ vs *p*[u]*zzo* ‘smell.1SG’ vs *p*[ɛ]*zzo* ‘piece’ vs *p*[o]*zzo* ‘well’ (N), *p*[a]*sta* ‘pasta’ vs *p*[ɔ]*sta* ‘post, mail’ vs *p*[i]*sta* ‘track’ vs *p*[e]*sta* ‘crushes’.

15.2.1.2.3 Distribution of geminates: the representation of ‘intrinsic’ geminates

It was observed in §15.2.1 that, alongside lexical geminates which are present in the phonological representation of individual lexemes and contrast with the corresponding single consonants in specific contexts, e.g., /ˈkane/ ‘dog’ vs /ˈkanːe/ ‘reeds’, /ˈmɛta/ ‘destination’ vs /ˈmetːa/ ‘put.SBJV.SG’, in the consonantal system of Italian, or rather the varieties of Tuscany and central-southern Italy, we also find so-called ‘intrinsic’ geminates. These involve the palatal nasal and lateral [ɲː], [ʎː], the voiceless post-alveolar fricative [ʃː], and the alveolar affricates [tːs] and [dːz] which in intervocalic position are invariably realized as geminates and hence contrast in this context only with other geminates (cf. examples in (3) above). Given that intrinsic geminates are limited to occurring in intervocalic position, in word-initial and post-consonantal positions we only find the corresponding single variants [ɲ], [ʎ], [ʃ], [ʦ], and [ʤ]. Overall then, given that the distribution of short and long segments is contextually determined and hence complementary (with single consonants occurring only in word-initial position and post-consonantally, and geminates only in intervocalic positions including also across word boundaries in external sandhi, as in *lui* [ʃː]*ia bene* ‘he skis well’ vs [ʃ]*ia bene* ‘(he) skis well’), *molto* [dːz]*ucchero* ‘much sugar’ vs *con* [dz]*ucchero* ‘with sugar’), single and geminate consonants must be treated as allophones. But if they are allophones, this implies that one of the two represents the underlying phoneme and the other is derived by a rule. Here there are two possible options: (a) the underlying consonant (the phoneme) is a single consonant that undergoes lengthening in intervocalic position, or (b) the underlying consonant is long and undergoes shortening whenever not intervocalic.

The first option (the lengthening rule) would however be restricted to just the relevant consonants, failing to apply to all the other consonants of Italian which (with the exception of /z/) in intervocalic position can be either single or geminate. The second option, by contrast, is coherent with a general restriction affecting *all* Italian consonants, namely the impossibility of geminates occurring in absolute word-initial position (and following consonants). In this sense, the rule is congruent with a more general phonological condition that regulates the well-formedness of Italian words, namely **#C:, **CC:. In light of the more general predictive power of this second rule, it appears best suited to explaining the distribution of [ɲː, ʎː, ʃː, tːs, dːz] and [ɲ, ʎ, ʃ, ʦ, ʤ]. Moreover, these consonants are termed *intrinsic* geminates on the implicit assumption that they are phonologically geminated.

By way of final observation, we have shown how, in general, phonemes are distinguished by their contrastiveness, an underlying property which is manifested on the surface through their phonetic realization. In the case of intrinsic geminates the situation is a little different. We have said that in absolute word-initial position intrinsic geminates undergo degemination following the application of a shortening rule: interestingly, once shortened, these consonants form (sub)minimal pairs with words beginning with other consonants, e.g., [ˈnoːmi] ‘names’ vs [ˈɲɔːmi] ‘gnomes’, [ʎi] ‘the.MPL’ (pre-vocalic allomorph) vs [li] ‘there’, [tʃi] ‘there’ vs [ʃi] ‘ski(ing)’ vs [si] ‘-self.3; yes’ vs [ti] ‘you.SG’, [ˈtsiːa] ‘aunt’ vs [ˈsiːa] ‘be.SBJV.SG’ vs [ˈmiːa] ‘my/mine.FSG’. We are thus faced with a case in which the phonological opposition that surfaces phonetically finds no corresponding opposition at the underlying phonological level (for which

we have reconstructed geminates). In other words, the phonological rule of shortening that operates on intrinsic geminates produces new contrasts at the phonetic level.

15.2.1.2.4 Distribution of geminates: *rafforzamento fonosintattico*

Besides phonological and intrinsic geminates, we also find in standard Italian, Tuscan, in many central-southern varieties of Italian and in regional varieties of Italian spoken in Sardinia another phonological phenomenon which produces geminates, *rafforzamento fonosintattico* 'phonosyntactic strengthening' (Marotta 1986; Chierchia 1986; Sluyters 1990; Agostiniani 1992; Loporcaro 1997a; Borrelli 2002; Absalom, Hayek, and Stevens 2004). As geminate consonants restricted to a specific context, they have to be treated as a third type of geminate, namely as allophones.

Rafforzamento fonosintattico, as its name suggests, is a phonological phenomenon which operates across word boundaries on a word-initial single consonant (except *s* followed by a consonant, cf. §15.3.1) when the latter is preceded by: (a) an oxytone, namely a word ending in a final stressed vowel (including tonic monosyllables); (b) certain lexical items, mono- or bisyllabic words such as *a* 'to, at', *da* 'from', *fra* 'among', *se* 'if', *dove* 'where', *come* 'as, like', *qualche* 'some', and *sopra* 'above' (see also §14.6.2). In the first case, consonantal lengthening is sensitive to a purely phonological (or, to be more precise, prosodic) condition which applies in a regular and productive fashion. In the second case, by contrast, the list of lexical triggers may partially vary from region to region; for example, in Florence one says *da* [t:]*e* 'from you; at your house' with *rafforzamento*, whereas in Rome one says *da* [t]*e*, without gemination. In standard Italian, including the regional varieties of Tuscany and Lazio, *rafforzamento* applies in both cases, whereas in southern regional varieties *rafforzamento* is not a prosodically driven phenomenon (cf. Nap./Cal. It. *città* [v]*ecchia* lit. 'city old', not **[v:]*ecchia*), but only occurs in the cases listed under (b), namely following specific lexical items (including *perché* 'because; why' and *così* 'thus; so').

Examples of type (a) include *così* [s:]*olo* 'so alone', *così* [b:]*ravo* 'so clever', *caffè* [f:]*reddo* lit. 'coffee cold (= cold coffee)', *città* [v:]*uota* lit. 'city empty (= empty city)', *finì* [m:]*ale* '(it) finished badly', *va* [p:]*iano* '(s/he) goes slowly', *sto* [b:]*ene* '(I) am well', and examples of type (b) include *qualche* [k:]*osa* 'some thing', *come* [t:]*e* 'like you', *dove* [s:]*ei* 'where (you.SG) are', *a* [k:]*asa* 'at home', *se* [v:]*uole* 'if (s/he) wants', *fra* [n:]*oi* 'among us'.

Diachronically, the roots of *rafforzamento* lie in the application of an anticipatory assimilation of the word-final consonant (since lost) of Word_1 to the initial consonant of Word_2, e.g., Lat. AD TE > **at te* > *a te* [aˈt:e] 'to you' (just like FA**CT**UM > *fa**tt**o* 'done.MSG'). In time the phenomenon spread analogically beyond its original context, and in the case of the examples in (a), e.g., PER+QUID > *perché* 'because; why', *rafforzamento* was reanalysed as a phonologically regular process motivated by the position of the stress accent of the final open syllable of Word_1 operating on the word-initial consonant of Word_2. The origins of the process are to be sought in a weight restriction on Italian stressed syllables which must include a heavy rhyme containing two units (cf. §15.3.1), either VC (closed syllables) or V: (open syllables). If, however, the stressed syllable is word-final, the stressed vowel is always short (cf. §15.2.2.2) and thus falls short of the weight rule. To make up its weight, whenever the oxytone is followed by a consonant-initial word, this word-initial consonant is lengthened with the initial part of the geminate extending into the coda of the preceding word. *Rafforzamento* does not occur in northern Italian, except in those cases where it has been lexicalized: in such cases the two words have undergone univerbation (thus treated as a single word, as reflected in conventional spelling) and thus include a geminate in their realization, e.g., *sopralluogo* '(on-the-spot) investigation (lit. above.place)', *contraddetto* 'contradicted (lit. counter.said)', *soprattutto* 'above all', *sovrappeso* 'overweight', *sennò* 'if not', *neppure* 'not even (lit. nor.even)', *ovvero* 'or rather (lit. or.true)', *eccome* 'certainly (lit. and.how)'.

15.2.1.2.5 Diatopic variation

Above it was noted that northern varieties of Italian only have lexical geminates, but neither display intrinsic geminates (except for the affricates /tːs/ and /dːz/ within words) nor *rafforzamento fonosintattico*. Other differences among regional varieties of Italian which have an impact both on the phonological inventory of Italian and the distribution of allophones include:

a. in northern Italy the neutralization in word-initial position of the distinction in the alveolar affricates between voiceless /ʦ/ and voiced /ʣ/ in favour of the latter, e.g., *zio* [ˈʣiːo] 'uncle', *zoccolo* [ˈʣɔkːolo] 'hoof; plinth', *zucchero* [ˈʣukːero] 'sugar', *zuppa* [ˈdzupːa] 'soup';

b. in Tuscany and various areas of central and southern Italy the loss of occlusion in the voiceless post-alveolar palatal /ʧ/ realized as the fricative [ʃ] in intervocalic position (including across word boundaries), e.g., *pace* [ˈpaːʃe] 'peace', *dice* [ˈdiːʃe] 'says', *la cena* [la ˈʃeːna] 'the dinner'. Note that [ʃ] derived by deaffrication from original /ʧ/ is short, unlike underived /ʃ/ which is intrinsically long in intervocalic position (cf. §15.2.1), e.g., [ˈfaʃːa] *fascia* 'strip, band', hence contrasts between (sub)minimal pairs such as *pesce* [ˈpeʃːe] 'fish' vs *pece* [ˈpeːʃe] 'tar, pitch' and *la scena* [la ˈʃːɛːna] 'the stage' vs *la cena* [la ˈʃeːna] 'the dinner';

c. the deaffrication in Tuscany of the corresponding voiced affricate /ʤ/ which in intervocalic position is realized as [ʒ], a sound not found in Italian (except in some French loans such as *abat-jour* 'bedside lamp; lampshade', *garage*), e.g., *agile* [ˈaːʒile] 'agile', *grigio* [ˈgriːʒo] 'grey', *la gente* [la ˈʒɛnte] 'the people';

d. the affricate pronunciation of [s] as [ts] in the sequences /ns, rs, ls/ in central-southern Italy and Tuscany, e.g., *penso* [ˈpɛnʦo] 'think.1SG', *corsa* [ˈkorʦa] 'run', *orso* [ˈortso] 'bear', *salsa* [ˈsaltsa] 'sauce';

e. the neutralization of the opposition between the alveolar fricatives /s/ and /z/ in intervocalic position with generalization of the voiced variant [z] in northern Italy (exceptions are those cases in which between the vowel and *s* there falls a morpheme boundary or, at any rate, there is perceived to be a morpheme boundary, e.g., *stasera* 'this evening (lit. this.evening)', *risentire* 'to rehear; feel the effects of', *asociale* 'asocial.SG', *risolvere* 'to resolve', *presidente* 'president', all with [s], although there is some variability among speakers, e.g., *ri*[s]*olvere* or *ri*[z]*olvere*, *pre*[s]*idente* or *pre*[z]*idente* (Baroni 1997; 2001; Bafile 2011b)). In central-southern varieties, by contrast, only [s] is found in intervocalic position (although there is a tendency to substitute, especially in specific words, the voiceless sibilant with its voiced variant, e.g., *casa* [ˈkaːza] 'house', *scusa* [ˈskuːza] 'excuse'). Consequently, in all such cases the distribution of [s] and [z] is allophonic in all contexts.

15.2.2 Vowel inventory

The Italian vowel system consists of seven phonemes, as shown by the minimal pairs in (11) (where we limit ourselves to just a couple of examples) which allow us to establish phonological oppositions for /i/, /u/, /e/, /o/, /ɛ/, /ɔ/, and /a/ in stressed positions:

12 *acc*[e]*tta* 'hatchet' vs *acc*[ɛ]*tta* 'accept.3SG'; *aff*[e]*tto* 'slice.1SG' vs *aff*[ɛ]*tto* 'affection';
b[o]*tte* 'barrel' vs *b*[ɔ]*tte* 'blows, punches'; *f*[o]*sse* 'was.PST.SBJV.1/3SG' vs *f*[ɔ]*sse* 'ditches'.

In Table 15.4 the seven vowels are described in articulatory terms along both the horizontal and vertical axes. Note that the front vowels and the central vowel are pronounced with spread lips (and hence not rounded), whereas the back vowels are pronounced with rounded lips.

Table 15.4 The Italian vowels

	front	central	back
high	i		u
mid-high (or close)	e		o
mid-low (or open)	ɛ		ɔ
low		a	

Contrasts between the mid-high vowels /e/ and /o/ and the mid-low vowels /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ prove somewhat problematic. Although the existence of minimal pairs like those in (12) allows us to treat these vowels as phonemes in the standard, there is some marked regional variation in the pronunciation of the mid vowels, such that their contrastive value may vary considerably from one variety to another.

13 *aff*[ɛ]*tto* 'affection', but *aff*[e]*ttuoso* 'affectionate'; (*lui*) *acc*[ɛ]*tta* '(he) accepts', but *acc*[e]*ttare* 'to accept'; *f*[ɛ]*sta* 'party', but *f*[e]*stoso* 'festive, merry'; *b*[ɔ]*tte* 'blows, punches', but *b*[o]*ttarella* 'poke, little push; [ɔ]*sso* 'bone', but [o]*ssicino* 'ossicle'; *n*[ɔ]*tte* 'night', but *n*[o]*tturno* 'nocturn.MSG'; *f*[ɔ]*rte* 'strong.SG' / *f*[ɔ]*rza* 'strength', but *f*[o]*rtezza* 'fortress' / *f*[o]*rzuto* 'muscular, strapping'.

In general, the distribution of the high-mid and low-mid vowels is in synchronic terms determined lexically, namely on a word-by-word basis, so that their distribution is not predictable from the phonological context. Lombard varieties of Italian are partial exceptions inasmuch as the distribution of [e] and [ɛ] is conditioned by context giving rise to allophonic alternations: [ɛ] is found in closed syllables and word-final open syllables, while [e] occurs in non-word-final open syllables, hence *qu*[ɛ]*sto* 'this.MSG', *pal*[ɛ]*tta* 'small spade', *cont*[ɛ]*ssa* 'countess', *v*[ɛ]*rza* 'Savoy cabbage', *m*[ɛ] 'me', *perch*[ɛ] 'because; why', but [eː]*va* 'Eva', *Andr*[eː]a 'Andrea', *ci*[eː]*lo* 'sky', *t*[eː]*ma* 'subject, topic'.

In unstressed positions there are only five vowels [i, e, a, o, u]. In this context there is a neutralization of the opposition between the high-mid vowels /e/ and /o/ and the low-mid vowels /ɛ/ and /ɔ/, with generalization of the high-mid vowels in unstressed positions. By way of illustration, consider the following lexically related words where the mid vowels are realized as low-mid vowels when stressed and as the high-mid vowels [e] and [o] in derived words where the vowels have become atonic under stress shift.

14 *m*[eː]*ta* 'destination' vs *m*[e]*tta* 'put.SBJV.SG' / *m*[e]*nta* 'mint'; *fin*[iː]*re* 'to finish' vs *fin*[i]*sco* 'finish.1SG' / *fin*[i] 'finish.PST.PFV.3SG'; *c*[aː]*ro* 'dear.MSG' vs c[a]rro 'cart' / c[a]rne 'meat' / *met*[à] 'half'; *cr*[eː]*dere* 'to believe' / *cred*[eː]*va* 'believed.PST.IPFV.3SG' vs *cred*[e]*tte* 'believed.PST.PFV.3SG' / *cred*[e]*nte* 'believer' / *cred*[é] 'believed.PST.PFV.3SG'.

In final unstressed positions only the four vowels [i, e, a, o] are found, since [u] is not permitted in word-final position. This is shown by the fact that there is a strong tendency systematically to replace final unstressed [u] with final stressed [ˈu] in foreign loans such as *bambù* 'bamboo', *caribù* 'caribou', *tribù* 'tribe', *zulù* 'Zulu', *Perù* 'Peru', etc. (in very rare cases final unstressed [u] is preserved, e.g., in *bàntu* 'Bantu').

15.2.2.1 Distinctive features

The distinctive features of Italian vowels are provided in Table 15.5.

Table 15.5 The place features of Italian vowels

	i	u	a	e	ɛ	o	ɔ
Consonantal[1]	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
high	+	+	–	–	–	–	–
low	–	–	+	–	–	–	–
back	–	+	–	–	–	+	+
(rounded)	–	+	–	–	–	+	+
ATR[2]	+	+	–	+	–	+	–

[1] To distinguish vowels from consonants we only need one of the so-called major class features [±consonantal] or [±vowel] (the latter termed 'syllabic' in Chomsky and Halle 1968). The use of both terms is only needed to distinguish glides ([–consonantal, –vowel]) from vowels and consonants but, as we shall see in §15.2.2.3, glides can be treated as high vowels in terms of their segmental content.

[2] The feature [ATR] (= Advanced Tongue Root) was not available in SPE which instead used the feature [±tense] to capture the fact that the vowel is pronounced with greater or lesser muscular tension. From a functional perspective, the two features are equivalent. Here we use [ATR] which is the most widespread term in the literature, although doubts have been expressed about its validity as a feature applied to the Romance languages in general and, consequently, to Italian too (cf. Calabrese 2007).

The features [+sonorant] and [+voice] are not given in Table 15.5 since they fall out automatically from the feature specification [–consonantal]. The feature 'rounded' has been placed between parentheses because it is redundant in Italian, since all [+posterior] vowels are [+rounded] and all [–posterior] vowels are [–rounded] (Italian does not have [–posterior, +rounded] vowels such as /y/ and /ø/).

15.2.2.2 Allophonic processes

Vowels also exhibit length differences but, unlike consonants which show long (geminate) and short contrasts, the differing duration of vowels is conditioned by context. For instance, stressed vowels are relatively long when they occur in non-word-final open syllables, but are shorter when they occur in closed syllables or word-final open syllables (unstressed vowels are always shorter than stressed vowels). Given this distribution, long vowels must be treated as allophones, as exemplified in (14).

15 *v*[ja:]*le* 'avenue; path', *m*[jɛ:]*le* 'honey', *vecch*[je]*tto* 'little old man', *p*[jɔ:]*ve* '(it) rains', *f*[jo:]*re* 'flower', *ch*[ju:]*so* 'closed.MSG', *q*[wa]*ttro* 'four', *q*[wɛ:]rulo 'querulous.MSG', *q*[we]*llo* 'that.MSG', *q*[wi] 'here', *c*[wɔ:]*re* 'heart', *q*[wo]*ziente* 'quotient'.

The process of vowel lengthening in non-word-final stressed syllables stems from the need for stressed syllables to be heavy. In particular, the rhyme must contain two units (Marotta 1985), either a nucleus + coda in closed syllables or a nucleus with a long vowel in open syllables (see also the discussion of *rafforzamento fonosintattico* in §15.2.1.2.4).

15.2.2.3 Diphthongs

From an articulatory perspective, diphthongs are made up of two vocalic sounds contained within the same syllable. One of the two elements of the diphthong is a genuine vowel that constitutes the nucleus of the syllable (see §15.3.1), whereas the second element is an approximant or glide of shorter duration which is produced with greater restriction of the vocal tract than is found with the high vowels [i] and [u] (Salza, Marotta, and Ricca 1987). When,

however, two adjacent vowels occur in the nucleus of two different syllables, a hiatus obtains, e.g., *mio* [ˈmiː.o] 'my/mine.MSG', *leale* [le.ˈaː.le] 'loyal.SG', *tuo* [ˈtuː.o] 'your/s.MSG', *coatto* [ko.ˈat.to] 'compulsory.MSG', *reame* [re.ˈaː.me] 'realm', *duello* [du.ˈɛl.lo] 'duel', *trionfo* [tri.ˈoŋ.fo] 'triumph'. If the approximant of a diphthong precedes the vowel (on-glide), this gives rise to a rising diphthong with sonority increasing from the first to the second segment, e.g., *ia* in *chiave* 'key' and *uo* in *vuoto* 'empty.MSG'. Approximants in this type of diphthong are also called semiconsonants, inasmuch as their realization is effectively closer to that of a fricative consonant (in IPA transcribed as [j] (front or palatal) and [w] (back or labiovelar), respectively). If, on the other hand, the approximant follows the vowel (off-glide), this gives rise to a falling diphthong with sonority decreasing from the first to the second segment, e.g., *ai* in *daino* 'deer' and *au* in *pauroso* 'fearful'. In this case the approximants are also called semivowels on account of their greater resemblance to vowels (and because they are longer than semiconsonants) and are transcribed as such in IPA as [i̯] and [u̯]. Here, however, we shall use the same transcription [j] and [w] for both types of glide since the relevant difference is phonetic, not phonological.

There are differences in the combinatorial possibilities of the glides in accordance with the distinction between rising and falling diphthongs (Marotta 1987; 1988; Mioni 2001:176–180; Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005; Krämer 2009:84–90; Canalis 2018), although the high clusters **[ji], **[wu], **[ij], and **[uw], which are problematic in both articulatory and perceptual terms, are universally ruled out in both diphthong types. In rising diphthongs, both glides can combine with all the remaining vowels yielding the sequences [ja], [jɛ], [je], [jɔ], [jo], [ju], [wa], [wɛ], [we], [wi], [wɔ], and [wo], as exemplified in (15).

16 *d*[aj]*no* 'deer', *l*[ɛj] 'she', *n*[ej] 'in.the.MPL', *p*[ɔj] 'then', *n*[oj] 'we, us', *c*[uj] 'which' (OBL), *L*[aw]*ra* 'Laura', *f*[ɛw]do 'feud', *f*[ew]*dale* 'feudal'.

Falling diphthongs, by contrast, show some important restrictions, with the sequences **[iw], **[ɔw], and **[ow] ruled out (except in the case of some learnèd and foreign loan words). Permitted combinations in falling diphthongs are thus limited to [aj], [ɛj], [ej], [ɔj], [oj], [uj], [aw], [ɛw], and [ew], as exemplified in (16).

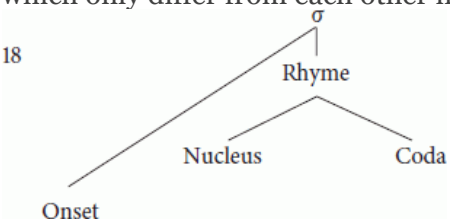
17 *sp*[ja]*nti* 'uproot.2SG' (from *spiantare* 'to uproot') vs *sp*[ia]*nti* 'spying.PL' (present participle of *spiare* 'to spy'), *p*[ja:]*no* 'slowly' vs *p*[ia:]*no* 'related to Pius' (denominal adjective based on proper name *Pio* 'Pius'), *la* q[wa:]*le* 'which (lit. the which)' vs *lac*[ua:]*le* 'lacustrine', *r*[ju]*scire* 'to succeed' vs *r*[iu]*scire* 'to re-exit, go out again'.

Although somewhat rare, we can also find triphthongs in which a vowel is accompanied by two approximants, as in *miei* [ˈmjɛi̯] 'my/mine.MPL' and *tuoi* [ˈtwɔi̯] 'your/s.SG.MPL' (rising-falling) or in *reliquia* [reˈliːkwja] 'relic', *acquiescenza* [akːwjeˈʃːɛntsa] 'acquiescence' (rising with two semiconsonants before the vowel).

In terms of the phonological status of the approximants [j] and [w], there are two possible options which, given the current state of our knowledge, prove difficult to choose between. In general terms, one can think of them as allophones of /i/ and /u/ in non-nuclear positions. However, the problem is that whenever two vocoids occur together in a sequence, it is not always possible to predict whether they should be realized as a glide or a vowel. Put quite simply, it is not easy to ascertain whether we are dealing with a diphthong or a hiatus, though see Marotta and Vanelli (2024:§6.4.3) for a discussion of the criteria for distinguishing between diphthongs and hiatus, e.g., *d*[u.a]*le* 'dual.SG' vs *q*[wa]*le* 'which', *ubr*[i.a]*co* 'drunk.MSG' vs *cav*[ja]*le* 'caviar', *b*[i.o]*logo* 'biologist.M' vs *rav*[jo]*lo* 'raviolo'.

Although admittedly somewhat rare, there also exist pairs of words such as those in (17) which only differ from each other in terms of the alternation between a glide and a vowel.

18



Given these pairs, it would be possible in such cases to assign phonemic status to the glide since it contrasts with the vowel. However, examples like those in (17) are not genuine minimal pairs inasmuch as, other than the opposition between [i, u] and [j, w], these words have different syllable structures. Consequently, the relevant contrast in such cases probably lies not so much in the alternation between vowel and glide but, rather, in their different syllabification (with hiatus involving two nuclei in the underlying lexical representation: see Levi 2011 and Canalis 2018).[6] Moreover, the notions of diphthong and hiatus are intimately connected to syllable structure, which is explored in detail in §15.3.1.

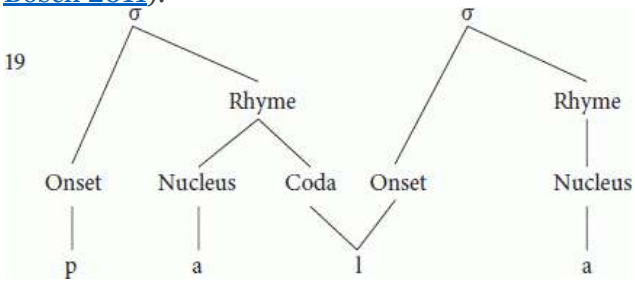
15.3 Prosodic phonology: suprasegmental phenomena

In §15.2 we focused on individual segments, whether considered as single units or as elements that can be further decomposed into phonological features. In this second part of the chapter we turn to consider phenomena that make reference to domains larger than the individual segment which fall within the realm of suprasegmental or prosodic phonology. Relevant phenomena include, for example, those connected to the syllable, stress, and intonation. In what follows we will only consider those suprasegmental elements and phenomena which are strictly relevant to phonological analysis, with individual sections on syllable types (§15.3.1) and lexical stress (§15.3.2). A short section is also given over to intonation (§15.3.3), although its specific linguistic relevance is limited in Italian since, as we shall see, intonation fulfils pragmatic and expressive, rather than grammatical, functions. Finally, it should be noted that when dealing with prosodic phenomena we must also constantly consider their phonetic implementation, since, although the distinctive and discrete properties of segmental units are well defined, suprasegmental phenomena, and especially intonation, are not so discrete in nature and require for their proper description precise reference to their acoustic properties (for which, see §14.8).

15.3.1 Italian syllable types

The syllable includes a combination of vowels and consonants which form a (prosodic) phonological unit that is intermediate between single segments (phonemes) and the word. The syllable is made up of the nucleus, normally containing a vowel and representing the only obligatory and sufficient element for the formation of a syllable, and the onset and coda which contain consonants that precede and follow, respectively, the nucleus. We assume that the internal structure of the syllable is hierarchical and involves binary branching as in (18) (cf. Bosch 2011).

19



As can be seen, onset, nucleus, and coda are not situated at the same level, with the nucleus and coda forming together a single constituent, the rhyme.

Before illustrating the different types of syllable found in Italian and their various restrictions (on the principles of syllabification, see Pulgram 1970 and Venneman 1988), we must first

consider, albeit briefly, two complex questions about which there is still much debate among linguists and which cannot be resolved on phonetic evidence alone, namely the syllabification of glides (semiconsonants and semivowels) and /sC/clusters.

Starting with glides (abbreviated below as G), as segments which are intermediate between consonants and vowels, the question arises as to whether they should be associated with the nucleus or with the onset (on-glide) and coda (off-glide). On this question different hypotheses have been advanced, drawing on both phonetic and phonological arguments (for an overview, see Canalis 2018). In relation to rising diphthongs, following Marotta (1987) and Marotta and Vanelli (2024:§6.4.4) the on-glide can be considered to belong to the onset on the basis of various arguments such as its greater phonetic similarity to a consonant or the fact that the stressed vowel following the glide undergoes lengthening in open syllables: if the glide were part of the nucleus, then the nucleus (rhyme) would be predicted to be heavy (see §15.2.1.2.4) and thus block vowel lengthening, contrary to fact. Canalis (2018:§6.1), on the other hand, argues that on-glides should be assigned to the nucleus (cf. also Schmid 1999:162f.). This is based on evidence such as the observation that the consonants /ʦ, ʤ/ are realized long before the rising diphthongs, as happens in intervocalic position (e.g., [atˈtsjoː]*ne*] 'action'), and the fact that in northern Italian /s/ undergoes voicing between a vowel and a rising diphthong, exactly as happens between two vowels (e.g., *c*[azwa]*le* 'accidental, fortuitous', *v*[izjoː]*ne*] 'vision').

Turning to falling diphthongs, assigning the off-glide to the coda is supported, for example, by the fact that the diphthong does not allow other consonants to occur in the coda (except *-s*, as in [au̯s.]*picare* 'to wish', [au̯s.]*tria* 'Austria') in line with the constraint on simple codas (on which see below), and the fact that the vowel preceding the glide is short, as happens in syllables closed off by a consonant (Marotta 1988; Marotta and Vanelli 2024:§6.4.4). For Canalis (2018:§5; cf. also Schmid 1999:162f.), on the other hand, the glide represents an independent vowel within the nucleus, as evidenced by /s/-voicing which is normal in northern Italian in intervocalic position and following diphthongs, e.g., *p*[au̯z]*a* 'pause'. However, this would constitute the only case of a complex nucleus in Italian given the otherwise absence of distinctive vowel quantity.

In what follows, we shall assume that glides are associated with onset and coda, although of course the question remains open.

Syllabification of /sC/ clusters (see Goad 2011) proves problematic. Although standard orthography treats them as tautosyllabic forming a complex onset, there are also many arguments in favour of a heterosyllabic articulation according to which *-s* would be associated with the coda of the preceding syllable and C with the onset of the following syllable. One empirical argument in favour relates to the duration of the preceding vowel: in §15.2.2.2 vowels were shown to be long (hence allophonic) in non-word-final open stressed syllables, but short in closed syllables. For example, the stressed vowels in open syllables such as *meta* [ˈmeːta] 'destination', *metro* [ˈmɛːtro] 'metre', *fico* [ˈfiːko] 'fig (tree)', and *fibra* [ˈfiːbra] 'fibre' are long, while in closed syllables such as *metta* [ˈmetːa] 'put.SBJV.SG', *menta* [ˈmenta] 'mint', *ficco* [ˈfikːo] 'thrust.1SG', and *finto* [ˈfinto] 'feigned, false' they are short.[7] If we now compare structurally similar words such as *mesta* [ˈmɛsta] 'dejected.FSG' and *fisco* [ˈfisko] 'tax authorities', we can see that their stressed vowels are more similar to those found in *metta*, *menta*, *ficco*, and *finto* than those in *meta*, *metro*, *fico*, and *fibra* (Marotta 1985). This leads us to treat *s* as the coda of the preceding syllable.

Another supporting argument comes from the failure of *rafforzamento fonosintattico* (§15.2.1.2.4) in cases such as *città* [s]*traniera* lit. 'city foreign (= foreign city)'. This shows that /s/ is assigned to the coda since, if it were part of a complex onset, then it would be expected to undergo lengthening as in *così* [fː]*reddo* 'so cold'.

The heterosyllabic articulation of such clusters also finds support in the diachronic phonology of Italian. For example, the outcome of the Latin open vowels Ĕ and Ŏ developed into [jɛ] and [wɔ] in open syllables (e.g., DĔCE(M) > *d*[jɛː]*ci* 'ten', PĔTRA(M) > *p*[jɛː]*tra* 'stone', ŎUU(M) > [wɔː]*vo* 'egg', RŎTA > *r*[wɔː]*ta* 'wheel'), and into [ɛ] and [ɔ] in closed syllables (e.g., SĔPTE(M) > *s*[ɛ]*tte* 'seven', DĔNTE(M) > *d*[ɛ]*nte* 'tooth', UITĔLLU(M) > *vit*[ɛ]*llo* 'calf', ŎSSU(M) > [ɔ]*sso* 'bone',

PŎRTA > *p*[ɔ]*rta* ‘door’). Now when followed by *s*C, Ĕ and Ŏ behave as in closed syllables and develop into [ɛ] and [ɔ], e.g., FĔSTA(M) > *f*[ɛ]*sta* ‘party’, TEMPĔSTA(M) > *temp*[ɛ]*sta* ‘storm’, CŎSTA(M) > *c*[ɔ]*sta* ‘coast’, PŎSTU(M) > *p*[ɔ]*sto* ‘place’. Another argument comes from old Florentine/Italian where, in word-initial position, the cluster *s*C shows prosthesis of the vowel *i*, e.g., *istudio* ‘study’, *ispesa* ‘expenditure’, *isveglia* ‘waking up’. This prosthetic vowel provides the nucleus for a syllable to which *s* could attach in coda position.

To these two examples we can add a third which comes from the history of the masculine singular definite article which in old Italian presented the basic form *lo*, subsequently replaced by the form *il* in the modern language where today it represents the basic form, except in some specific contexts where *lo* is preserved. One of these latter contexts involves words beginning with *s*C clusters (*lo studio* ‘the study’, *lo sbaglio* ‘the error’): since article + noun behave as a single phonological word the preservation of *lo* allows *s* to be syllabified as part of the coda, in the same way that it allows intrinsic geminates to be maintained in word-initial positions (§15.2.1), e.g., *lo* [tːs]*io* ‘the uncle’, *lo* [ʃː]*i* ‘the ski(ing)’.

Although well supported, this analysis remains, however, problematic since it fails to completely solve the problem: in modern Italian the cluster *s*C is very frequent in word-initial position, even without an article as in *con sforzo* ‘with effort’, *in studio* ‘in (the) study’. In such cases *s* cannot therefore be analysed as occurring in coda position. Putting aside possible alternative analyses (such as treating *s* as extraprosodic and hence not subject to syllabification or assuming a phonologically underlying syllable with a phonetically empty nucleus whose coda is filled by *-s*), the issue remains difficult to resolve, perhaps ultimately insoluble, and in some sense open-ended (Bertinetto 1999; 2004).

Italian presents a rather rich array of possible syllable types (Vogel 1982; Schmid 1999:157–165; Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005; Krämer 2009:127–142; Marotta and Vanelli 2024:§6.6). By far the most frequent is CV (amounting to over 50 per cent of syllables according to Schmid 1999:158f.), namely a vocalic nucleus preceded by a simple onset containing a single consonant or glide. This represents the most general or unmarked syllable type inasmuch as it is found in all languages of the world. Also possible are syllables consisting solely of a nucleus, as in ***a*** ‘to, at’, ***e*** ‘and’, ***a****.to.mo* ‘atom’, and ***u****.ni.co* ‘unique, single’.

As already observed in §15.2.2.2, in phonetic terms nucleic vowels undergo lengthening when they occur in non-word-final open stressed syllables, e.g., /ˈpa.lo/ > [ˈpaː.lo] ‘stake, pole’, /ˈbɛ.ne/ > [ˈbɛː.ne] ‘well’, /ˈa.mo/ > [ˈaː.mo] ‘love.1SG’. This lengthening process is in response to a prosodic constraint, present not only in Italian but in many languages, according to which stressed syllables are associated with a specific prosodic weight: in particular, the rhyme (consisting of the nucleus (+ coda)) must be heavy, which means it must contain two temporal units (or morae; Hayes 1989). If the syllable is open, namely it occurs without a coda, the vowel is lengthened.

Also frequent are syllables with a simple coda, viz. (C)VC. There are restrictions, however, on the segments that can appear in coda position. These are limited to nasals, liquids, and the alveolar sibilant (see above), as well as all geminates (whether intrinsic or not) which are syllabified at the same time in coda and onset positions, e.g., *ca****n****.to* ‘sing.1SG’, *po****m****.pa* ‘pump’, *ca****r****.ta* ‘paper’, *ma****l****.ta* ‘mortar’, *ca****s****.ta* ‘caste’, *ri****s****.veglio* ‘awakening’, *ri****t****.to* ‘upright’, *bo****c****.ca* ‘mouth’, *a****p****.peso* ‘hanging’, *pa****l****.la* ‘ball’, *figlio* [ˈfiʎ.ʎo] ‘son’, *pesce* [ˈpeʃ.ʃe] ‘fish’, *ragno* [ˈraŋ.ɲo] ‘spider’. In autosegmental phonology the syllabic structure of a word with a geminate such as *palla* ‘ball’ would therefore be represented as in (19).

1	Cris	era		nervosissimo	ed	ha	
	Cris	be.PST.IPFV.3SG		nervous-*issimo*	and	have.3SG	
	dato	il	via	a	un	super litigio.	
	give.PTCP	the	start	to	a	super-fight	

‘Cris was extremely on edge and started a huge fight.’

Obstruents can also be found in coda position, albeit only when part of the learnèd sequences [ps, pn, ft, kt, km, kn, tm] which, in any case, represent marked coda types, e.g., *sin****ap****si* ‘synapse’, ***ap****nea* ‘apnoea’, *n****af****ta* ‘diesel oil’, ***ac****me* ‘acme, peak’, *t****ec****nico* ‘technical.MSG’, *r****it****mo*

'rhythm'. Finally, as seen above, the coda position can also be filled by the semivowels of falling diphthongs [i̯] and [u̯], e.g., ***feu****do* 'feud', *z****ai****no* 'rucksack'.

Syllables with complex onsets such as CCV(C) are also frequent. Complex onsets composed of two consonants are essentially limited to the so-called *muta cum liquida* type, namely a stop or fricative followed by a vibrant or lateral, e.g., ***tr****e.no* 'train', ***fr****e.no* 'brake', ***br****i.na* 'frost', ***gr****an.de* 'big.SG', ***pr****on.to* 'ready', *mano.****vr****a* 'manoeuvre', ***pl****i.co* 'parcel', ***gl****a.bro* 'hairless', *su.****bl****i.me* 'sublime.SG'. Syllabification of complex onsets therefore respects the Sonority Sequencing Principle according to which sonority rises towards the syllable peak and then falls. By way of illustration, let us compare the different syllabification of *la.dro* 'thief' and *lar.do* 'pork fat': in the former case the sequence *.dro* respects the Sonority Sequencing Principle, whereas in the latter case a syllabification with **.*rdo* is ruled out because it would violate the Sonority Sequencing Principle. If we also take the semiconsonants *j* and *w* to be associated with the onset (cf. discussion above), then complex onsets can also include a consonant followed by a glide (CGV(C)), e.g., ***pian****to* 'cried.PTCP', ***fuo****co* 'fire', ***mie****le* 'honey'.

Italian does not usually allow onsets consisting of three elements since in triconsonantal clusters (e.g., *stra.da* 'road', *sbri.nare* 'to defrost', *spre.mere* 'to squeeze') the initial sibilant is generally considered to be heterosyllabic with respect to the following segments (cf. discussion above). Exceptions are the admittedly rare sequences consisting of C+G1G2 (namely, a consonant followed by two prenucleic glides as in ***qui****e.to* 'still.MSG' and *reli.****qui****a* 'relic') and C1C2+G (namely, a *muta cum liquida* cluster followed by a glide as in ***trion****fale* 'triumphant.SG', ***clie****ntela* 'clientele', ***fluo****ro* 'fluorine').

Generally, in coda positions we find a single element, in turn subject to the restrictions noted above. Consequently, complex codas prove entirely marginal: (C)VG*s* is found in words such as ***Aus****tria* 'Austria' and ***caus****tico* 'caustic.MSG'; a special case is represented by the prefix *trans*C in such words as ***trans****fuga* 'deserter' and ***trans****danubiano* 'Transdanubian.MSG'. Complex codas prove more frequent in word-final position in foreign loan words such as *film*, *sport*, and *sprint* (see §14.5).

Table 15.6 summarizes the various syllable types found in Italian.

Table 15.6 Italian syllable types

	Syllable Type	Examples
1	CV(ː)	***fa*** 'does', ***di*** 'of', ***pa****ː.ne* 'bread', ***ta****ː.****vo****.****lo*** 'table'
2	GV(ː)	***ie****ː.ri* 'yesterday', ***uo****ː.mo* 'man'
3	V(ː)	***e*** 'and', ***a****.mico* 'friend', ***u****ː.no* 'one'
4	(C)VC	***an****.che* 'also', ***al****.to* 'tall', ***per****.ché* 'because; why', ***rot****.to* 'broken.MSG', ***pis****.ta* 'track'
5	(C)VG	***au****.to* 'car', ***poi****.ché* 'since'
6	CG(G)V(ː)(C)	***pian****.ta* 'plant', ***vio****ː.la* 'violet; viola', ***quie****ː.to* 'quiet', *reliː.****qui****a* 'relic'
7	CC(G)V(ː)(C)	***fra*** 'among', ***tre****ː.no* 'train', ***pro****ː.sa* 'prose', ***pli****ː.co* 'parcel', ***pren****.do* 'take.PRS.IND.1SG', ***pron****.to* 'ready.MSG', ***trion****.fale* 'triumphant.MSG', ***fluo****ː.ro* 'fluorine'
8	(C)VGC	***caus****.tico* 'caustic.MSG', ***aus****.triaco* 'Austrian.MSG'
9	(CC)VCC	***trans****.fuga* 'deserter', ***pers****.picace* 'shrewd.SG', ***nord*** 'north', ***film*** 'film'

15.3.2 Stress

Stress refers to the greater phonetic prominence given to one of a series two or more contiguous syllables (see §14.7). In this sense, a syllable is perceived as stressed (or tonic) only relative to surrounding unstressed (or atonic) syllables. The alternation between tonic or strong syllables and atonic or weak syllables gives rise to what is called accentual or metrical structure which operates across different domains, including words, phrases, and entire clauses. In this section stress is considered only in relation to its relevance for strictly phonological phenomena limited to the word.

In Italian, as in other Romance languages such as Spanish and Romanian, word (or lexical) stress is free, inasmuch as it may affect any syllable in a polysyllabic word, e.g., *tàvolo* 'table', *partìta* 'game, match', *perdonò* 'forgave.3SG'.[8] Thanks to this freedom of placement, stress may have a contrastive function, witness its distinctive value in the following cases: *àncora* [ˈaŋkora] 'anchor' vs *ancòra* [aŋˈkoːra] 'still, yet'; *pàpa* [ˈpaːpa] 'pope' vs *papà* [paˈpa] 'dad'; *càpitano* [ˈkaːpitano] 'happen.3PL' vs *capitàno* [kapiˈtaːno] 'captain' vs *capitanò* [kapitaˈnɔ] 'lead.PST.PFV.3SG'; *prìncipi* [ˈprinʧipi] 'princes' vs *princìpi* [prinˈʧiːpi] 'principles'; *pèrdono* [ˈpɛrdono] 'lose.3PL' vs *perdòno* [perˈdoːno] 'forgive.1SG' vs *perdonò* [perdoˈnɔ] 'forgive.PST.PFV.3SG'. Moreover, stress placement can assume a morphological role, systematically distinguishing minimal pairs within the verb paradigm, e.g., *cànto* 'sing.1SG' vs *cantò* 'sang.PST.PFV.3SG', *dòrmi* 'sleep.2SG' vs *dormì* 'sleep.PST.PFV.3SG'.

Although Italian stress is free, its placement is subject to some restrictions that make it not entirely unpredictable. In particular, there is a phonological constraint which represents the residue of an algorithm operative on Latin stress placement regarding the structure of the rhyme that is still operative today: in non-oxytonic words a closed penultimate syllable is normally stressed in Italian, e.g., *orècchia* 'ear', *sorèlla* 'sister', *pertinènte* 'pertinent.SG', *borsètta* 'handbag', *finèstra* 'window', *lunghèzza* 'length'. Consequently, stress is banned from falling on the antepenultimate syllable in such contexts, with the consequence that forms such as ***òrecchia*, ***sòrella*, ***fìnestra* are immediately perceived as ill-formed by speakers. Exceptions involve toponyms (e.g., *Tàranto*, *Àgordo*, *Òtranto*, *Lèpanto*, *Lèvanto*), loan words, principally borrowed from Greek (e.g., *àrista* 'pork loin', *màndorla* 'almond', *pòlizza* 'insurance policy'), words of recent formation (e.g., *ìnternet*, or *Fìninvest*, the name of a holding company (< ***Fin****anziària d'****invest****imènto*)), which show a weakening of the original prosodic constraint. There are also some family names which are optionally stressed on the first syllable although the penultimate syllable is closed, e.g., *Bènetton* and *Bèrlinguer* instead of *Benettòn*, *Berlinguèr*.

The tendency for stress to retract to the initial syllable is also confirmed by the widespread placement of the stress on the antepenultimate syllable in a number of foreign loan words such as the toponyms *Ìstanbul*, *Àmsterdam*, and the English loan words *performance* and *continental* which are realized in Italian as [ˈpɛrfɔrmans] and [konˈtinental] rather than [pəɹˈfɔrməns] and [ˌkɒntɪˈnɛntəł]. Even some indigenous Italian words such as *scandinàvo* 'Scandinavian.MSG', *rubrìca* 'address book', *edìle* 'building-/construction-' (ADJ), *salùbre* 'healthy.SG', and *mollìca* 'crumb; soft part of bread' are increasingly realized today as *scandìnavo*, *rùbrica*, *èdile*, *sàlubre*, and *mòllica*.

Despite the freedom of stress placement in Italian, most words display paroxytonic stress: according to Mancini and Voghera (1994), 93 per cent of bisyllabic and 81 per cent of trisyllabic words are stressed on the penultimate syllable, whereas oxytones make up a little more than 16 per cent and proparoxytones about 9 per cent. Words stressed on the fourth-last syllable are much rarer since they are limited to the third person plural of the present indicative of verbs with proparoxytonic lexical root stress (*lìtigano* '(they) argue', *prèdicano* '(they) preach'), to forms of the imperative hosting an enclitic pronoun, e.g., *telèfona* 'telephone.IMP.2SG' + *-mi* '=me' > *telèfonami!* 'ring me!', *àbita* 'live.IMP.2SG' + *-ci* '=there' > *àbitaci!* 'live there!', or to paroxytonic imperatives, gerunds or absolute participles to which two enclitics have been

adjoined, e.g., *preparàte* 'prepare.IMP.2PL' + *-mi* '=me' + *-lo* '=it' > *preparàtemelo!* 'prepare it for me!', *preparàndo* 'preparing' + *-mi* '=me' + *-lo* '=it' > *preparàndomelo* 'preparing it for me', *preparàto* 'prepared' + *-mi* '=me' + *-lo* '=it' > *preparàtomelo* '(having) prepared it for me'). Words stressed on the fifth syllable from the end, by contrast, are only found in imperatives hosting two enclitics, e.g., *pèttina* 'comb.IMP.2SG' + *-mi* '=me' + *-li* '=them' > *pèttinameli!* 'comb them for me!', *òccupa* 'occupy.IMP.2SG' + *-te* '=you.SG' + *-ne* '=of.it' > *òccupatene!* 'deal with it!'

Besides a primary word stress, polysyllabic words of a certain length usually display an additional prosodic prominence traditionally referred to as secondary stress. The distribution of the latter is essentially motivated by a general rhythmic principle between stressed and unstressed syllables: e.g., *attaccapanni* [at͵tak.aˈpan:i] 'hanger; coat stand', *mangerò* [͵mandʒe ˈrɔ] '(I) will eat', *coccodrillo* [͵kok:oˈdril:o] 'crocodile', *tavolino* [͵tavoˈli:no] 'coffee table', *dormitorio* [͵dormiˈtɔ:rjo] 'dormitory'. Also verbal forms with primary stress on the fourth- or fifth-last syllable display a secondary stress on the last syllable, e.g., [ˈlitiga͵no] 'argue.3PL', [te ˈlɛfona͵mi] 'ring me!', [prepaˈrandome͵lo] 'preparing it for me'; in long verb forms including a single enclitic or a sequence of two enclitics there occur two secondary stresses, e.g., *organizziamo* 'organize.IMP.1PL' + *-ci* '=us' [͵organidˈdzjamo͵ʧi] 'let's organize ourselves!', *pettina* 'comb.IMP.2SG' + *-mi* '=me' + *-li* '=them' [ˈpɛt:i͵name͵li] 'comb them for me!'.

As can be seen, secondary stress is more frequently found in inflected verb forms, in derived words, and in compound words. In the case of compounds involving two words which independently exist in the lexicon (e.g., *attaccapanni* 'hanger; coat stand' < *attacca* 'attach.IMP.2SG' + *panni* 'clothes'), the primary stress falls on the second word and the secondary stress on the first word as a reduced version of the primary accent found with the same word when used in isolation. Note furthermore that in compounds the opposition between high-mid and low-mid vowels is maintained under secondary stress, unlike what happens in unstressed syllables where the distinction is neutralized in favour of the high-mid vowels, e.g., *testolina* [͵testoˈlina] 'small head' (< *testa* 'head' + DIM *-lina*), but *testacoda* [͵tɛstaˈkoda] 'spin' (lit. 'head.tail'), *voltavamo* [͵voltaˈvamo] 'we turned' (< *volta-* 'turn' + *-vamo* 'PST.IPFV.1PL') but *voltagabbana* [͵vɔltagabˈbana] 'turncoat' (lit. 'turn.overcoat'), *portamento* [͵portaˈmento] 'posture, bearing' (< *porta-* 'carry' + nominalization *-mento*) but *portafoglio* [͵pɔrtaˈfɔʎ:o] 'wallet' (lit. 'carry.banknote'). It is also possible to find minimal pairs such as *reggimento* [͵redːʒiˈmento] 'regiment' (< *reggi-* 'bear' + nominalization *-mento*) vs *reggimento* [͵rɛdːʒi ˈmento] 'chinstrap' (lit. 'support.chin').

Another difference between compounds and other polysyllabic words is that whereas in the former case the secondary stress is fixed (falling on the same syllable as the primary stress when the same word is used in isolation), in the latter case the position of the secondary stress is relatively free, e.g., *generalmente* [͵dʒeneralˈmente] or [dʒe͵neralˈmente] 'generally', *veterinario* [͵veteriˈnarjo] or [ve͵teriˈnarjo] 'veterinary surgeon'.[9]

15.3.3 Intonation

In intonational languages such as Italian the domain of reference for the modulation of fundamental frequency (=F_0) is not only larger than the syllable, but also larger than the word. Whereas tones and tonal accent (pitch) operate at the lexical level, intonation involves larger syntagmatic relations, including the utterance. In Italian different intonational contours are linked to different pragmatic-expressive functions (cf. Endo and Bertinetto 1997; De Dominicis 2010; Gili Fivela et al. 2015; Marotta and Vanelli 2024:ch. 8; Sorianello 2021) and above all to the distinction between declaratives and interrogatives. In the former, which are considered unmarked, the melodic curve exhibits a falling contour in contrast to polar interrogatives (yes-no questions) which are marked by a rising melodic contour in the final part of the utterance. Other intonational cues linked to clause type include the rapid and steep falling melodic contour found in imperatival clauses, the use of greater frequential excursions in exclamatives,

and the presence of higher F_0 values for fronted interrogatives (so-called *wh*-words such as *chi* 'who', *quando* 'when', *perché* 'why') in partial questions.

Focalization phenomena are also directly involved in the interaction between intonation and pragmatics. The focus of an utterance is the element which receives the highest degree of communicative interest and as such is marked at the phonetic level by an appropriate degree of prosodic prominence. Usually, the focalized word is produced with a tonal rise aligned with the stressed syllable, sometimes accompanied by an increase in intensity. This is particularly the case with so-called contrastive or corrective focus, e.g., *Ho incontrato* MARIO, *non Luca* 'I met MARIO, not Luca'.

Other functions conveyed by intonation include emotive and expressive values which mark the speaker's state of mind and their psychological attitude towards the addressee. In such cases intonation serves to convey not grammatical but paralinguistic meanings traditionally relegated to the periphery of phonological competence although communicatively significant.

Finally, it needs to be said that, in the same way that in segmental terms the phonological inventory and allophonic rules can display differences in accordance with the regional origin of the speaker, there is a considerable degree of variation in the intonational patterns of different regional or subregional varieties of Italian. Indeed, diatopically based variation in the prosodic patterns of Italian is wide-ranging and is immediately perceived by speakers and listeners who are highly sensitive to cadences different from their own. Intonational patterns are therefore one of the most robust cues available to the Italian hearer to identify not only the generic regional origin of the speaker, but also more subtle distinctions such as those between different accents of neighbouring villages.

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[1] Although it is difficult to find minimal pairs based on the opposition [ʦ] vs [ʣ], these do occasionally alternate in the same positions, at least in the standard, e.g., voiceless [ʦ] in *zucca* 'pumpkin, marrow', *zampa* 'paw', *zappa* 'hoe', *zio* 'uncle', *zitto* 'silent.MSG', *zoccolo* 'hoof; plinth', *alzare* 'to raise', *forza* 'strength', *calza* 'stocking; sock' vs voiced [ʣ] in *zero* 'zero', *zaino* 'rucksack', *zeta* 'zed', *zanzara* 'mosquito', *zona* 'zone', *manzo* 'beef', *romanzo* 'novel' (but see §15.2.1.2.5). Furthermore, some subminimal pairs exist such as *anzi* [ˈanʦi] 'rather' vs *manzi* [ˈmanʣi] 'bullocks', *forzata* [forˈʦata] 'force.PTCP.FSG' vs *orzata* [or ˈʣata] 'almond-based drink; barley water'.

[2] The pairs in (2) are actually subminimal since the differing duration of te consonant also involves a duration difference in the preceding vowel, longer in the case of a single consonant and shorter in the case of a geminate consonant (see §15.2.2.2).

[3] The opposition between [tːs] and [dːz] has a low functional load, e.g., *razza* [ˈratːsa] 'race, kind' vs [ˈradːza] 'ray fish, skate', *mozzo* [ˈmotːso] 'ship's boy' vs [ˈmɔdːzo] '(wheel) hub'.

[4] SPE also contains the feature [±strident], already included in the Jakobsonian system of features, which refers to a type of turbulence produced by the air that passes between two surfaces that come close together. [+strident] sounds are the fricatives /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, and /ʃ/, and the affricates /ʦ/, /ʣ/, /ʧ/, and /ʤ/. The feature lacks distinctive force in Italian and does not define any natural class.

[5] Here and below geminates are sometimes transcribed as 'double' consonants, although they are always single long consonants. This is necessitated by the need in some cases to indicate syllable boundaries since, as will be shown in §15.3.1, geminates are ambisyllabic but IPA accentuation conventions require us to place the relevant diacritic at the beginning of the syllable.

[6] Insofar as the difference between vowels and glides is tied to their differing positions within the syllable, it can be assumed in terms of segmental structure that glides should be treated as high vowels (see note 1 in Table 15.5 above).

[7] Note that the presence of a short vowel in words such as *metta* and *ficco* shows that geminates are ambisyllabic in that they are syllabified in both the preceding coda and the following onset (see also example 19 below).

[8] Except in the case of oxytones such as *perdonò*, standard Italian orthography does not mark word stress. However, for the purposes of the discussion in the text, we indicate word stress in non-oxytones through the use of a grave accent over the stressed vowel.

[9] On the basis of these differences, Lepschy (1992; 1993) suggested that the term *secondary stress* should be reserved for compounds, with the term *contraccento* ('counterstress') used in reference to other polysyllabic words.

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Chapter 16

Inflexional morphology

Franck Floricic

16.1 General considerations

Italian is an inflexional language whose morphological units may show cumulative exponence (cf. the final vowels of the adjective *piccol-o*, *piccol-a*, *piccol-i*, *piccol-e* 'small-MSG/-FSG/-MPL/-FPL' which mark both gender and number; see also Chapter 9). It is usually assumed that inflexional morphology is concerned with the relationship between the word-forms in a lexeme's inflexional paradigm, while derivational morphology describes the relationship between lexemes. However, the concept of 'lexeme' is used anything but consistently by linguists (cf. Glessgen 2011 for a discussion of this notion). In what follows, it will be used with the most neutral value of 'lexical form'. Italian nouns usually inflect for number and adjectives for number and gender, and verbs inflect for tense, mood, person, number, and to a limited extent also aspect.

16.2 Nominal inflexion

16.2.1 Inflexion classes

It was pointed out by Hockett (1958:231) that '[g]enders are classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words'. Hall (1971:72) also observes that grammatical gender has no independent expression in Italian and that it is only triggered by syntactic agreement. Hall

thus holds that Italian nouns show six thematic vowels in the singular: (i) -/a/ with nouns that are masculine (cf. *diagramma* 'diagram'), feminine (cf. *forma* 'shape'), or either (cf. *artista* 'artist'); (ii) -/o/ predominantly with masculine nouns (cf. *buco* 'hole') and with a few (marginal) feminine nouns such as *mano* 'hand' (but see D'Achille and Thornton 2008);[1] (iii) -/e/ with masculine (cf. *monte* 'mountain') or feminine nouns (cf. *legge* 'law'); (iv) -/i/ mainly with feminine nouns (cf. *crisi* 'crisis') and some masculine nouns (cf. *brindisi* 'toast'); (v) -/u/ with nouns such as *domu* 'Sardinian house'—but it is clear that we are dealing here with some kind of loan, as is *guru* 'guru'; (vi) -Ø for nouns ending in a consonant (cf. *tram* 'tram', *album* 'album', etc.). These nouns include a wide set of elements that can be masculine (*tram*, *computer*, *hotel*) or feminine (*gaffe* 'blunder', *miss*, *jeep*, etc.). In the plural, these thematic vowels are replaced by the inflexional marker of the plural (-/e/ in the feminine when the thematic vowel is -/a/, and -/i/ in almost all other cases). From this perspective, an Italian form such as *forma* 'shape' should be analysed as *form-a-Ø*; but in the plural, a coherent view would be to assume that the thematic vowel is lacking, rather than to hold that some kind of substitution has taken place (cf. *form-Ø-e*). A rather similar position is taken by Scalise (1990:120) in a generative framework, where it is assumed that in Italian nouns such as *cas-a* 'house', *libr-o* 'book', and *pan-e* 'bread', the thematic vowel parallels that of verbs: it indicates inflexional class.[2] On the other hand, it is pointed out by Thornton (2003:207) that the inflected forms of the noun contain a root and a desinence, without any vocalic element appearing between them. From this point of view, Thornton casts some doubt on the relevance of the notion of thematic vowel in Italian nominal morphology. As we saw, the analysis proposed by Hall amounts to recognizing as many thematic vowels as there are inflexion classes. In any case, as Thornton observes, the information provided by the final vowel of Italian nouns is not sufficient to infer unambiguously the inflexional class of the noun (Thornton 2003:208f.)—cf. also the case of feminine singular nouns in *-o* such as *mano* 'hand' or that of masculine nouns in *-a* such as *fantasma* 'ghost' (cf. Migliorini 1957b:61; D'Achille and Thornton 2008). Thornton (2003:212) suggests the distribution of the Italian noun inflexional classes as exemplified in Table 16.1.

Table 16.1 Italian noun inflexional classes

class	form (singular/plural)	examples
1	-o/-i	*libro* ‘book’ / *libri*, *mano* ‘hand’ / *mani*
2	-a/-e	*casa* ‘home’ / *case*
3	-e/-i	*cane* ‘dog’ / *cani*, *siepe* ‘hedge’ / *siepi*, *cantante* ‘singer’ / *cantanti*
4	-a/-i	*poeta* ‘poet’ / *poeti*, *ala* ‘wing’ / *ali*, *arma* ‘weapon’ / *armi*
5	-o/-a	*uovo* ‘egg’ / *uova*
6	various; invariable	*re* ‘king’, *gru* ‘crane’, *città* ‘city’, *specie* ‘species’, *crisi* ‘crisis’, *foto* ‘photo’, *sport* ‘sport’

Source: Thornton 2003:212

Table 16.1 does not differ very much from that proposed by Tekavčić (1980:78), who also distinguishes six classes, as illustrated in Table 16.2, where further subclasses can be identified.

Table 16.2 Italian noun inflexional classes

class	form (singular/plural)	examples
1	-a/-e (F)	*terra* ‘earth’ / *terre*
2a	-a/-i (F)	*ala* ‘wing’ / *ali*
2b	-a/-i (M)	*poeta* ‘poet’ / *poeti*
3a	-o/-i (M)	*campo* ‘field’ / *campi*, *porco* ‘pig’ / *porci*
3b	-o/-i (F)	*mano* ‘hand’ / *mani*
4	-o/-i (M); -a (F)	*braccio* ‘arm’ / *bracci*; *braccia*

class	form (singular/plural)	examples
5	-e/-i (M, F)	*dente* 'tooth' / *denti* (M); *gente* 'people' / *genti* (F)
6	-Ø/-Ø (M, F)	*sport* 'sport' (m); *città* 'city' (F)

Source: Tekavčić 1980:78

As can be seen, the phonetic form of a noun is not sufficient to infer its class or its gender given that one and the same ending can appear in nouns of different inflexional classes. Table 16.2 cannot capture an important aspect: for the same gender/number value, various forms may be found (cf. Thornton's notion of 'overabundance' or 'polymorphism'). In the case of *bracci* / *braccia*, Acquaviva (2008) holds that *braccia* is a distinct and inherently plural lexeme. With respect to MSG *braccio* 'arm', FPL *braccia* refers to pairs of arms in the anatomical sense while MPL *bracci* refers to the figurative arms of objects (cf. *bracci di un fiume* 'branches (lit. 'arms') of a river'): the relationship between *il braccio* and *le braccia* is on this account derivational, not inflexional (see also §10.4.3).

16.2.2 Number and gender

The examples mentioned above directly concern the question of number and gender. Italian marks singular vs plural oppositions via vowel alternations, and such a feature has been taken to set Italian (and Romanian) apart from the 'western' Romance languages where plural oppositions are (to simplify) formed by the addition of *-s* to the singular form. Given nouns ending in *-i* in the plural, it is not possible to infer from X_{stem}-*i* the singular form (Table 16.3).

Table 16.3 The Italian *-i* plurals

masculine			feminine

ending	-i					
	‘books’	‘dogs’	‘problems’	‘toasts’	‘springs’	‘crises’
plural	*libri*	*cani*	*problemi*	*brindisi*	*fonti*	*crisi*
singular	*libro*	*cane*	*problema*	*brindisi*	*fonte*	*crisi*

The fact that masculine nouns characteristically end in *-i* in the plural is reinforced by the fact that *-i* is the regular ending of masculine plural adjectives (cf. the two main classes in which adjectives are distributed: *alto* ‘tall’ vs *alti*, *grande* ‘big’ vs *grandi*, etc.). The invariable masculine and feminine nouns *brindisi* ‘toast’ and *crisi* ‘crisis’ are borrowings from German and Greek, respectively. Historically, *-i* has been extended to nouns that originally had a different ending (cf. POETAS > *poeti* ‘poets’).[3] In masculine nouns such as *parco* ‘park’ or *albergo* ‘hotel’, the plural retains the same stem (cf. *parchi*, *alberghi*)—in the adjective, the velar stem is regularly maintained (cf. *bianco* ‘white’, *bianchi*, *fresco* ‘fresh’, *freschi*).[4] But in other cases, the continuation of Latin plural nominatives in *-i* shows up in the selection of a palatalized stem (cf. *amico* [aˈmiko] vs *amici* [aˈmiʧi] ‘friends’, *porco* [ˈpɔrko] vs *porci* [ˈpɔrʧi] ‘pigs’, *monaco* [ˈmɔnako] vs *monaci* [ˈmɔnaʧi] ‘monks’): the palatalized stem of these nouns can only be explained on historical grounds. According to Mańczak (1982:62), the (non-palatalized) stem found in plural nouns such as *amiche* ‘friends’, *fuochi* ‘fires’, *luoghi* ‘places’ is due to an analogical extension of the stem found in the singular (i.e., *amica*, *fuoco*, *luogo*).[5] Number contrasts on the noun are suspended if the noun ends in a stressed syllable or in a (set of) consonant(s): cf. monosyllabic forms such as *tè* ‘tea’, *re* ‘king’, *gru* ‘crane’, *gol* ‘goal’, *sport* ‘sport’, *film* ‘film’, *spot* ‘advertisement’, and many other foreign loans, but also (polysyllabic) oxytonic words such as *papà* ‘daddy’ *caffè* ‘coffee’, *comò* ‘dresser’; *bontà* ‘kindness’, *città* ‘town’, *virtù* ‘virtue’, *vanità* ‘conceit’ are the result of historical truncation of what were once non-oxytonic nouns (cf. *bontade*, *cittade*, *virtude*, *vanitade*) (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:49; see also §9.4.3). We may also mention various truncated nouns in *-o* such as *auto* ‘car’ (< *automobile*), *frigo* ‘fridge’ (< *frigorifero*), *moto* ‘motorcycle’ (< *motocicletta*), *metro*

'metro' (< *metropolitana*) or loans such as *mambo*.[6] We can also add that various nouns in *-a* are also invariable, e.g., *boia* 'executioner(s)', as well as various loans from other languages, e.g., *i gorilla* 'the gorillas', *i lama* 'the llamas', *i boa* 'the boas', *i puma* 'the pumas' (cf. Migliorini 1957b:106f.).

Proper names belong to a category of nouns that should not allow for number contrasts (as opposed to gender oppositions) given their referential status. Neutralization of number contrasts is illustrated by surnames such as *Savoia*, *Gonzaga*, *Maia*, *Sforza*, etc. which require the (default) masculine plural article when they refer to the family members or to the community of individuals. It is not difficult, however, to find examples such as *i Guidi* 'the Guidi' (vs *Guido* in the singular), where the forename is taken as a pure designation. In this case, *Guidi* does not pick out a set of objects: it selects within a set of individuals the ones that share the same *designans*, while in the case of, say, *i Savoia* 'the Savoia', the last name refers to a set whose members are defined by the fact that they share the same membership to the family referred to. The plural form *Guidi* would be ill-formed as a vocative, because the nature of the vocative lies in the direct appeal of the speaker to the hearer. In other cases, several nouns exclusively or mainly occur in the plural (*pluralia tantum*), e.g., *forbici* 'scissors', *occhiali* 'spectacles', *nozze* 'wedding', *tenebre* 'darkness', *doglie* 'labour (in childbirth)', *ferie* 'holidays'.[7] In yet other cases, the plural may have a rather different meaning from the singular. Such a differentiation can be observed either in countable / concrete nouns, e.g., *panni* 'laundry' vs *panno* 'cloth', or in mass / abstract nouns, e.g., *vetro* 'glass' vs *vetri* 'glazing', *vino* 'wine' vs *vini* 'wines', *bellezza* 'beauty' vs *bellezze* 'beauties, beautiful women', *violenza* 'violence' vs *violenze* 'acts of violence'—in the latter case, pluralization expresses concrete items, qualities, or manifestations (cf. Lombard 1930:95–106).

We may mention briefly the widely discussed case of singulative vs collective / dual notions, some but not all of which are derived from original neuter plurals, e.g., *muro* 'wall' vs *mura/muri* 'walls', *dito* 'finger' vs *dita* / *diti* 'fingers', *membro* 'member, limb' vs *membri* 'members' / *membra* 'limbs', *braccio* 'arm' vs *bracci* / *braccia* 'arms', *ginocchio* 'knee' vs *ginocchia/ginocchi* 'knees', *grido* 'scream' vs *grida* / *gridi* 'screams'. In cases such as *ginocchi/ginocchia* 'knees', *gridi/grida* 'screams', *diti/dita* 'fingers', it has repeatedly been

observed that we are dealing with free semantic variation in the sense that no semantic motivation can be adduced to account for the choice between the two options (e.g., Brunet 2000; Thornton 2013)—in the case of *orecchio* / *orecchia* 'ear', Brunet (2000:1) points out that free variation shows up as well in the singular. She convincingly shows, on the basis of a wide corpus of literary texts, that the distribution of the plurals just mentioned cannot be accounted for in semantic terms, given that they may be used in the same contexts. What is at stake here is the question of polymorphism, i.e., the 'coexistence, in the language of a speaker, of two or more phonetic variants of the same word, used concurrently to express the same concept, the choice of one or the other appearing to be absolutely independent of articulatory conditioning—we are thinking, for example, of the "speed" of delivery—or of any search for expressivity' (Allières 1953–1954:1; cf. as well Allières 1981). So polymorphism refers to free variation of forms which are equally available in the system of language, without any semantic or stylistic motivation behind the variation. This is illustrated by the nominal forms mentioned above, but also by many other phenomena of Italian morphology, some of which will be discussed below.

16.3 Articles, adjectives, and other modifiers

The morphonology of the Italian articles has been widely discussed in the historical linguistics literature (cf. Repetti 2020 and references therein). Suffice it to mention here their main properties. Table 16.4 summarizes the distribution of the articles (forms are given here in IPA transcription).

Table 16.4 Forms of the articles

	definite		indefinite / partitive	
	singular	plural	singular	plural

masculine	lo / il / l	i / ʎi	un / ˈuno	deį / ˈdeʎʎi
feminine	la / l	le	un / ˈuna	ˈdelle

As summarized by Maiden (1995a:117):

> Before vowels the singular is *l'* and the plural *gli* (pronounced [ʎ]): *l'orso gli orsi* 'bear'. Before a heterogeneous set of phonological environments (namely [ts], [dz]; [s] + consonant; [ʃ]; [ks]; labial stop + obstruent; [ɲ]; [j]), we have singular *lo* and plural *gli* ([ʎi]): *lo zio gli zii* 'uncle'; *lo spacco gli spacchi* 'split'; *lo scatto gli scatti* 'click'; *lo stato gli stati* 'state'; *lo sfregio gli sfregi* 'slash'; *lo scemo gli scemi* 'idiot'; *lo xilofono gli xilofoni* 'xylophone'; *lo pneumatico gli pneumatici* 'tyre'; *lo psichiatra gli psichiatri* 'psychiatrist'; *lo bdellio* 'bdellium'; *lo gnocco gli gnocchi* 'dumpling'; *lo yacht gli yacht*, etc'.

We will not commit ourselves to the hypothesis that eliminates any kind of allomorphy in favour of a unique underlying form (/ilo/ in the singular, /ili/ in the plural of the definite article, as argued for by Faust, Lampitelli, and Ulfsbjorninn 2018—cf. also Larsen 1998). Suffice it to observe that in old Italian, the unmarked form was *lo*, which could be used in the widest set of contexts (this is still visible in proper nouns such as *Lo Cascio* or in fixed expressions such as *per lo meno* 'at least'). In modern Italian, on the other hand, the allomorph *il* has taken on the extensive value of *lo* in the sense of Hjelmslev, given that it can extend its functional domain to that covered by *lo*, e.g., *lo / il pneumatico* 'the tyre', which shows a rather rare initial consonant cluster (cf. Repetti 2020). Of course, we are not claiming that these options are equivalent, nor are we saying that *il* can cover the whole functional domain of *lo*. But the fact that expressions such as *il pneumatico* are attested in the modern press and in contemporary literature illustrates some kind of ongoing evolution that cannot be ignored—recall that what is the norm in the synchronic state of the language may be the final result of a conflict between old patterns and innovative options that may have been deviant before becoming established. Interestingly, Marazzini (2018a) presents the example of *i pneumatici* as an example of a changing norm. When a pattern is widely attested in a linguistic community and widely adopted by many journalists and writers, as documented by Brunet (1979:38–39), it can be no longer said to be marginal or deviant.

A particularly complex situation holds with nouns which have [w] as initial segment. The noun *uomo* [ˈwɔmo] 'man' selects the asyllabic allomorph [l] (cf. *l'uomo* [ˈlwɔmo] 'the man'). Marotta (1988) holds that the rising diphthong [wɔ] represents a complex nucleus within the syllable. In examples such as *l'week-end* / *lo week-end* 'the week-end' or *il whisky* / *l'whisky* / *lo whisky* 'the whisky', variation could be accounted for by suggesting a different syllabification of the two options (cf. as well examples such as *il Webster* / *lo Webster* reported by Brunet 1979:54f.). In any case, whatever formal solution is chosen, the crucial point is that examples of oscillation of this kind are far from being rare and are all the greater when dealing with loans, especially when they have not been fully integrated into the phonological system of the language. And of course, they offer another apt example of polymorphism.

Gender/number marking in adjectives has already been mentioned. They normally covary with the head (pro)noun they modify. The adjectival classes *buono buoni*, *buona buone* 'good.MSG, good.MPL, good.FSG, good.FPL', *grande grandi* 'great.M/FPL, great.M/FPL' share the inflexional pattern of the main classes of nouns (cf. *lupo lupi* 'wolf', *casa case* 'house', *pesce pesci* (M) 'fish' / *corte corti* (F) 'court'). Observe that the unmarked status of the masculine can be seen in the fact that the reduced (unmarked) allomorphs *buon* 'good' / *bel* 'nice' etc. are interpreted by default as masculine: no overt (gender/number) exponent follows the stem. As can be seen, the reduced allomorph *gran* of the adjective *grande* 'great' neutralizes gender/number oppositions. Such neutralization only is possible in pre-nominal position, as illustrated by expressions such as *una gran bella macchina* 'a very beautiful car' vs *una macchina bella grande* (**gran) 'a big beautiful car': interestingly, the selection of the variant and its position entails a different semantic interpretation.

More complex is the case of those elements that may shift from one category to another. The proximal and distal demonstratives *questo* 'this' / *quello* 'that' and their allomorphs agree with the head noun they modify.[8] However, the head noun can be left unexpressed provided the referent is (con)textually recoverable, as in *ho diverse camicie ma preferisco quella arancione* 'I have several shirts but I prefer the orange one'. In still other cases, the referent can be picked up on the sole base of the extralinguistic context, as in *preferisci questa o quella?* 'do you prefer this one or that one?'. *Questo* and

quello can also have a human referent (cf. *questo / quello, lo conosci*? 'this one / that one, do you know him?'). As (syntactically and prosodically) independent elements, no allomorphy is observed in these contexts (cf. ***Preferisci quest o quel*? 'do you prefer this or that?', ***Preferisco quell'arancione* 'I prefer the orange one', etc.): as can be seen, the syntactic context has a direct influence on the morphological shape of the demonstrative (cf. as well the case of *nessun* / *nessuno* 'no / no one' discussed by Floricic 2009). The (default) masculine singular form *questo* can be used to bind anaphorically a preceding clause, as in *Mi sento positivo e questo* (***questa*) *lo devo alle arti marziali* 'I feel positive and I owe this to martial arts' (cf. Thornton 2001:483). In this type of context, it can be said to have a neutral (inanimate) value, as is the case in the famous book title *Se questo è un uomo* 'If this is a man'.

The default or unmarked member of the category surfaces in nominalizations such as *il bello* 'the beautiful, that which is beautiful ', *il vero* 'the true, that which is true', *il nulla* 'the nothing', *il mangiare* 'the fact/action of eating', etc. (Maiden 1995a:107), where the masculine article is nothing more than a syntactic device used to nominalize the following element (cf. as well the same use of the article with compounds such as *il pigia pigia* 'the push and pull' discussed by Migliorini 1957b:79f.).

A particular case is that of adjectives transformed into 'adverbs'—Thornton (2004b:550) analyses this kind of phenomenon as an instance of (morphological) conversion. If sentences like *parla chiaro* '(s)he speaks clearly' or *lavorano duro* 'they work hard' are commonly accepted as grammatical, normative grammars would probably exclude examples such as *Gli italiani guidano veloci* 'Italians drive fast' or *Le ragazze avanzano tranquille* 'The girls move on quietly', which are nonetheless attested—they would also admit more easily sentences such as *voleva andarsene serena e tranquilla* 'she wanted to leave peacefully and quietly'. In both cases however, it will be noted that an adjective in adverbial function may agree in gender/number with the subject referent. Another case to mention in this respect is that of *mezzo* 'half', because agreement can take place or not—absence of agreement has been taken to provide support for the adverbial value of *mezzo*: Brunet (1979:227–229) reports variants such as *mezzo svestita* 'half undressed' / *mezza svestita*, *mezzi svestiti*.

If the crucial property of determiners is taken to be agreement with the head noun they modify or actualize, it must be observed that some of them are invariable. This is the case with *niente* 'nothing' in NPs such as *niente amici* 'no friends' (cf. Tovena 2003; 2007), where some morphologists would see a conversion process given that there is no formal difference between the *niente* meaning 'nothing' and *niente* as a quantifier meaning 'no'.[9] As a matter of fact, if conversion is said to refer to a morphological process whereby a semantic change is associated with a change of the syntactic category without any formal modification, then the negative element *niente* of the sequence *niente amici* should be taken to illustrate a conversion process. In the same vein, if the uninflected (oblique) form *altrui* 'of someone else' is taken to be a pronoun with human reference, it must be said to be converted to an adjective in expressions such as *i problemi altrui* 'someone else's problems'.

16.4 Verb inflexion

16.4.1 Introduction

Italian verbs are traditionally grouped into three morphological classes, or conjugations, on the basis of their inflexional affixes. Different parameters of variation can be taken into account to describe the main features of the Italian verb, which alternates rhizotonic and arrhizotonic stems. It must also be stressed that morphological oppositions in the verb can be expressed synthetically through inflexional morphs, or analytically through periphrastic constructions. Another fundamental aspect of the Italian verb—but this observation extends to Romance varieties in general—is root allomorphy and cumulative exponence (cf. also §9.1).

16.4.2 Person and number

Person and number typically are expressed through inflexional elements, but the gerund, the infinitive, the present and past participles do not indicate person. The first-person singular exponent in the present indicative and past imperfective indicative is *-o* in Italian—of course, for clear semantic reasons, this ending and the other person exponents cannot be used with impersonal or meteorological verbs (cf. ***piovo* 'I am raining', ***nevico* / ***ci voglio* 'I am needed', etc.). On the other hand, a third-'person' form such as *amava* should be analysed as zero as far as person is concerned: *am-a-va-Ø* '(s)he loved' can be analysed as containing the verb stem, the theme vowel, the imperfect exponent, and zero as person, in keeping with the unmarked status of the third 'person'.[10] The same kind of analysis applies to present indicative forms such as *cant-a-Ø* '(s)he sings' and to (second-person singular) imperatives such as *ascolt-a-Ø* 'listen!': of course, an order is given by an individual to another one in a dialogic configuration in which the subjective point of origin of the order or request has in front of him/her another subjective reference pole. But morphologically speaking, it is just misleading to talk about a 'second-person' exponent given that the imperative is a bare stem (cf. Koch 1995). With monosyllabic roots found in such verbs as *stare* 'to stay', *dare* 'to give', the imperative forms *sta-i* and *da-i* do contain a person exponent, but these forms are clearly borrowed from the present indicative (cf. Floricic 2007).

As for verbs in *-ere*, they do not show the bare stem in the second-person singular imperative: the imperatives *vendi* 'sell!' and *temi* 'fear!' of the verbs *ˈvend-e-re* and *teˈm-e-re* show the typical marker of the second-person singular, probably extended into the imperative from the present indicative.[11] It has not been extended to the verbs in *-are* (cf. ***canti!* 'sing!'), probably due to the stability and productivity of the first conjugation. The ending *-i* is the regular exponent of the first-person singular in the *passato remoto* (preterite), where it is the outcome of the Latin perfect in -I—the same ending has ousted the ending of the imperfect subjunctive, e.g., *amassi* 'I loved' < OTsc. *amasse* < Lat. AMAUISSEM (cf. D'Ovidio 1886:87; Merlo 1952:117).

The first-person plural exponent *-mo* is reflected, for example, in the *passato remoto* (preterite) *amammo* 'we loved', *vedemmo* 'we saw', etc., where lengthening of the consonant may be due to some kind of historical compensatory lengthening, be it phonetically regular or analogical (cf. FUIMUS > *fummo* 'we were'). In the present

indicative, in place of the endings -(a)*mo*, -(e)*mo*, -(i)*mo* found in old Tuscan (and in other central and southern dialects), in Florentine we find -*iamo*, which has been taken to generalize from subjunctive verb forms. Interestingly, Vincent (1980:389) points out that indicative forms such as *abbiamo* 'we have' (≠ aviamo), *dobbiamo* 'we must' (≠ doviamo) can only be explained as a replacement of the entire indicative word-form by the subjunctive one. According to Clédat (1925:107), the subjunctive-imperative inflexion has been extended to the indicative because of the second-person plural, which was identical in the (present) indicative and in the imperative. It then follows that a form like *cantiamo* 'we sing / let's sing' can be analysed at least in two different ways: either we take the ending -*iamo* to be the exponent of the first-person plural, but this means that we have to recognize at least two allomorphs of this exponent, -*mo* [mo] and -*iamo* [jamo]; or we take the ending -*mo* to consistently represent the first-person plural, but then -*ia*- [ja] will have to be analysed as an allomorph of the theme vowel (cf. Vincent 1980:387).

The exponent of the second-person plural consistently is -*te* in all conjugations and in the various tenses/moods. Note that from a historical point of view, we might expect **aˈmati instead of *amate* (cf. Maiden 1996b:165–168). A simple account would be to hold that the ending of the present indicative *amate* and of other tenses is taken from the imperative AMATE (cf. Lausberg 1971:358n12; Maiden 1995a:130; 2007:159f.).

Slightly more complex is the problem of the third-person plural, among other things due to the strong variation found in some tenses (cf. Nencioni 1989b on the polymorphism found in the perfect). The third-person plural exponent is -*no* in the present and in the imperfect indicative (cf. *ama-no* 'they love', *ama-va-no* 'they loved'). With monosyllabic verbs and in the future, the initial consonant of the ending lengthens due to stress, as it does before enclitics: from this point of point view, *stanno* 'they stay', *danno* 'they give', etc. parallels *stammi* 'stay me', *dammi* 'give me', etc. mentioned earlier. Observe that -*no* could attach to verb forms already identifiable as third-person plurals: in this sense, forms such as *fécerono* < *fécero* 'they made' or *viderono* < *videro* 'they saw' found until the sixteenth century can be said to be hypercharacterized (cf. Lehmann 2005).[12] As can be seen, either -*ro* or -*no* play the same role and take as their base the third-person singular. It is clear that the first impetus for such an

extension is to be found in the series of verb forms such as *furono* 'they were', *amarono* 'they loved', *partirono* 'they left'.

The same analysis applies to conditional forms such as *vedrebbe-ro* 'they would see' and *dormirebbe-ro* 'they would sleep', where the final syllable clearly represents the exponent of the third-person plural.

16.4.3 Tense, aspect, and mood

16.4.3.1 Introduction

Tense, mood, and aspect encode in the verb the subjective point of view of the speaker, the time of the situation referred to with respect to the moment of speech, even though it should be clear that tense/mood marking in the verb may not be enough to infer any information concerning the temporal localization of the process. Creissels (2006:181) points out that the same verb form can be used with very different temporal/modal values, thus showing that (con)textual information is essential in order to fix the temporal localization of the process. Just to give one example to illustrate the complexity of the interplay between morphological exponence and semantic information, consider a sentence such as *Peccato che te ne vai: stasera c'era un dolce buonissimo* 'Too bad you're leaving: tonight there was a delicious cake', it is evident that the situation referred to by the sentence *stasera c'era un dolce buonissimo* is posterior with respect to the time of utterance. Nonetheless, a verb form in the imperfect indicative is used, thus showing that 'a past tense' may be used to refer to a future event or state of affairs. In the same vein, a sentence such as *in questi mesi sto mangiando meno* 'In recent months I have been eating less' does not refer to an ongoing process, as would be expect by the progressive form *sto mangiando* 'I am eating', but to a repetitive one.

The future is typically described as a tense, but it may as easily convey modal values, in accordance with its originally deontic value (cf. Kuryłowicz 1975). As pointed out by Bybee (1985:156) and Bybee and Pagliuca (1987), the morphemes used in many languages to indicate future time have other uses which are not strictly temporal. Suffice it to mention examples such as *Marco avrà sui 40 anni* 'Marco

must be about 40', where the verb form in the future merely expresses epistemic modality, not posteriority with respect to the speech act.

16.4.3.2 The present/imperfect indicative

The present indicative is unmarked in the tense system, and its unmarkedness is reflected in its morphological make-up, as shown by the paradigms in Table 16.5.

Table 16.5 Present and past imperfective verb pradigms

amare 'to love'		*dare* 'to give'		*vincere* 'to win'	
PRS.IND	IPFV.IND	PRS.IND	IPFV.IND	PRS.IND	IPFV.IND
ˈam-Ø-o	aˈm-a-v-o	d-Ø-ɔ	ˈd-a-v-o	ˈviŋk-Ø-o	vinˈʧ-e-v-o
ˈam-Ø-i	aˈm-a-v-i	d-a-i̯	ˈd-a-v-i	ˈvinʧ-Ø-i	vinˈʧ-e-v-i
ˈam-a-Ø	aˈm-a-va-Ø	d-a-Ø	ˈd-a-va-Ø	ˈvinʧ-e-Ø	vinˈʧ-e-va-Ø
aˈm-ja-mo	am-a-ˈva-mo	ˈd-ja-mo	d-a-ˈva-mo	vinˈʧ-a-mo	vinʧ-e-ˈva-mo
aˈm-a-te	am-a-ˈva-te	ˈd-a-te	d-a-ˈva-te	vinˈʧ-e-te	vinʧ-e-ˈva-te
ˈam-a-no	aˈm-a-va-no	ˈd-a-nno	ˈd-a-va-no	ˈviŋk-o-no	vinˈʧ-e-va-no

As can be seen, the complexity of the present indicative is lower than that of the imperfect: a form such as *am-Ø-o* 'I love' shows no theme vowel, or any tense marker—if the theme vowel appears through the whole paradigm of the imperfect indicative, the exponent of the imperfect indicative shows two allomorphs depending on the context (*-v-* before vowel and *-va-* elsewhere; cf. Touratier 1987). The verb *dare* 'to give' shows the same properties and deserves mentioning

because its stem is asyllabic—as pointed out earlier, the nasal consonant of the third-person singular *-no* is lengthened due to stress into the preceding syllable—such lengthening does not occur when this condition is not met, as in *amano* 'they like' (cf. **ˈamanno). The paradigms of the verb *vincere* 'to win' illustrate a stem allomorphy which is pervasive in the Italian verb (cf. Maiden 2018a). The selection of the stem—viŋk or viɲʃ—historically depends on the frontness of the following vowel (front→ ɲʃ, non-front → k) (cf. Tekavčić 1980:273). A particular problem is raised by the vowel preceding the third-person plural exponent in the present (cf. 'viŋk-o-no). Inter-paradigmatic coherence (cf. *ama* '(s)he likes' / *amano* 'they like') would have led to the generalization of the thematic vowel *-e*. The first-person plural type *vincemo* is attested in old Italian, as well as the third-person plural *vinceno* (cf. Nannucci 1843:443; Rohlfs 2021b:255; Alkire and Rosen 2010:101). According to Rohlfs (2021b:255), the replacement of *e-no* by *o-no* is due to *sono* 'they are'. The two homophonous forms *sono* (< SUM) and *sono* (< SUNT) can be analysed in two different ways. The first-person singular can be said to show up with an epenthetic vowel analogically inserted with the other first persons in *-o*, hence *son-o*; the second one can be segmented in a different way—*so-no*—on account of the many third-plural forms in *-no*. A question that cannot be addressed here concerns the absence of lengthening of the nasal consonant in standard Italian. However, Rohlfs (2021b:273) and Spagnoletti and Dominicy (1992:18) point out that the (probably analogical) form *sonno* is attested in various dialects and authors (cf. *hanno* 'they have', *fanno* 'they do', dialectal *ènno* 'they are', etc.; also Nannucci 1843:233f.).

Due to their high frequency and their functional role, *essere* 'to be' in the present and the imperfect indicative, and the present indicative of *avere* 'to have' are not morphologically regular, even though some subregularities may be identified. While the imperfect indicative exponent and its allomorphs (*-v-* and *-va-*) consistently appear through the various verb classes (cf. Table 16.5), it is limited to the first- and second-person plural in the case of *essere* 'to be' (cf. *er-o*, *er-i*, *era*, *era-va-mo*, *era-va-te*, *era-no*), thus showing hypercharacterized forms as far as tense exponence is concerned (*eramo* 'we were' is attested in Dante)[13]—Tekavčić (1980:347f.) holds that *eramo*, *erate* did not fit the system, hence their replacement by *eravamo*, *eravate* (for a discussion, cf. D'Angelo 2019).

16.4.3.3 Perfect

The allomorphy mentioned in the preceding paragraph extensively opposes rhizotonic and arrhizotonic bases in the perfect. The paradigms in Table 16.6 offer some examples of the patterns found in Italian.

Table 16.6 Italian perfect

amare 'to love'	*fare* 'to do'	*ridere* 'to laugh'	*cadere* 'to fall'	*vendere* 'to sell'	
aˈmai̯	ˈfeʧi	ˈrizi	ˈkaddi	venˈdei̯	venˈdɛtti
aˈmasti	faˈʧesti	riˈdesti	kaˈdesti	venˈdesti	venˈdesti
aˈmɔ	ˈfeʧe	ˈrize	ˈkadde	venˈde	venˈdɛtte
aˈmammo	faˈʧemmo	riˈdemmo	kaˈdemmo	venˈdemmo	venˈdemmo
aˈmaste	faˈʧeste	riˈdeste	kaˈdeste	ven'deste	ven'deste
aˈmarono	ˈfeʧero	ˈrizero	ˈkaddero	venˈderono	venˈdɛttero

The first-conjugation verb *amare* 'to love' has already been dealt with in our discussion of the various person/number endings. Suffice it to observe that the theme vowel is maintained through the paradigm, except in the third-person singular (cf. Skytte 1988:43). As can be seen, the root alternation of the verb *fare* 'to do' (ˈfeʧ vs faˈʧ) correlates with stress—the same observation holds for the distribution of ˈriz- / riˈd- of the verb *ridere* 'to laugh'. The precise scenario giving rise to the geminate consonant of the rhizotonic forms of *cadere* 'to fall' (cf. *caddi* 'I fell', etc.) is not very clear. It has been suggested, among others by Magni (2000), that the model provided by the abstract scheme CVCCV prototypically associated with the formation of perfect could very well have spread in the lexicon on account of its salience and frequency—as Malkiel (1982:176) puts it, the $C_1VC_2C_2V$

pattern ‘crystallized as an identifiable morphological scheme—endowed with the power to attract miscellaneous formations adrift in the lexicon’ (cf. Esher, Floricic, and Maiden 2020). Interestingly, in the volume dedicated to the morphology of Italo-Romance dialects, Rohlfs (2021b:326) mentions verb forms such as *creddi* ‘I thought’, *viddi* ‘I saw’, which can hardly be explained on phonetic grounds. What is crucial here is that a handful of frequent and cognitively salient verb forms endowed with a geminate consonant (*ebbe* ‘(s)he had’, *seppe* ‘(s)he knew’, *stette*, ‘(s)he stayed’, *dette* ‘(s)he gave’, *disse* ‘(s)he said’ and the wide series of *passato remoto* forms in *-ss-*) may have served as a model for the development and propagation of a pattern that cannot be explained on historical grounds. According to Magni (2000), what is at stake here is a process of *exaptation*, namely, ‘the opportunistic co-optation of a feature whose origin is unrelated or marginally related to its later use’ (Lass 1990:80).

The pattern is illustrated by venˈdɛtti ‘I sold’ in Table 16.6. can only be the result of an analogical extension of ˈstɛtti ‘I stayed’, following the same structural propagation to the first-and third-persons singular and third-person plural (cf. Clédat 1925:130; Bonfante 1998:104; Słapek 2020:248). D’Ovidio (1934:186) interestingly pointed out that among the forms that have adopted the ending *-ette*, half have a root in *-d-* (e.g., *credere*, *vendere*, *perdere*), a feature which may have favoured the analogical model of *dette*, itself due to the analogical pressure of *stette*. On the other hand—and quite paradoxically—Thornton (2011:370) mentions the analysis of Flamm (1987) according to which the ending *-etti* is disfavoured with verb stems ending in *-t*, while it is favoured when the stem ends with other consonants. From this point of view, it would seem that the selection of the various endings is at least partly phonologically conditioned (cf. Słapek 2020, who however points out that verbs in *-stere*, for example *insistere* ‘insist’, favour the long ending).

The point to stress—which is of major interest for general morphology—is the co-existence in the system of various options, i.e., polymorphism. For verbs such as *cadere* ‘to fall’, speakers have at their disposal two paradigms, and other verbs may offer up to three paradigms. Of course, this is not to say that these co-existing paradigms show the same frequency and are available to all Italian speakers—the *passato remoto* (preterite) itself is much less used than the *passato prossimo*, even though their respective extension in Italy

is highly correlated with diatopic considerations (cf. Słapek 2020:251 who reports, for example, 87.4 per cent of the first-person singular *credetti* 'I thought', as opposed to 12.6 per cent of *credei* in the SketchEngine corpus). Italian grammars—especially Italian grammars of the preceding centuries—used to offer synoptic tableaux that gathered forms and paradigms of various periods which may not reflect the real use of a given state of the language. In the same vein, any normative grammar of Italian will probably mention forms such as the third-person singular feminine pronoun *ella* 'she', even though it can be said to be out of use in the (informal) contemporary language.[14] As can be seen, a given linguistic system may show relics of older states of the language, and at the same time innovative patterns that co-exist with older ones. This is one possible explanation of the exceptional situation reported in Table 16.6—Thornton (2012b:184) rightly acknowledges that the many cases of 'overabundance' found in Italian occur for historical reasons, and she further points out that '[i]t is very difficult to tease apart diachronic, diaphasic, and diatopic factors in the Italian situation' (Thornton 2011:363). Allières (1962:530f.) already held the view that polymorphism is the living reflexion of diachrony within synchrony.

16.4.3.4 Future and conditional

The question of the future has already been mentioned in the preceding sections. It was pointed out that the future may have modal values dissociated from any temporal considerations, not to mention the fact that its functional domain may be covered by the present indicative from which it originates: the future goes back to forms denoting the moment of speaking (cf. Kuryłowicz 1975). It was taken by Meillet (1921:144–146) to offer an example of grammaticalization, whereby a full lexical item—the verb HABĒRE 'to have, to hold' turns into a morphological exponent. In other words, in the sequence infinitive + HABĔŌ at the origin of the Italian future, the lexical verb of 'possession' loses its lexical value and acquires a purely functional role, thus combining with the preceding verb to create a word form with a unique main stress (Schwegler 1990:131). This construction owes its development to the fact that it is more expressive in the sense that it marks the necessity, will, or desire of the speaker—its intentions—expressed in the *hic and nunc* of the speech situation. The

formation of the Italian conditional also resorts to the infinitive of the lexical verb, followed by the outcome of the perfect HABUI / **hebui* 'I had'. Even though the conditional is often defined as a 'future in the past', the conditional can be used with purely modal values, as illustrated by sentences such as *prenderei un caffè* 'I would have a coffee', without mentioning its use in non-assertive contexts, when the speaker does not want or cannot take responsibility for the validity of the process referred to (cf. sentences such as *I terroristi sarebbero armati* 'the terrorists are believed to be armed'). In informal Italian, when an event in the future is conceived from a reference point in the past, the conditional in the past often is replaced by the imperfect indicative (cf. *se lo sapevo non venivo* 'if I had known, I wouldn't have come' instead of *se l'avessi saputo, non sarei venuto*).

In the future forms in Table 16.7, the old auxiliary is still recognizable in some of the forms of the paradigm: ˈɔ, ˈaɪ̯, ˈa, ˈanno = *ho*, *hai*, *ha*, *hanno*. The exponent found in the first- and second-person plural (*-emo*, *-ete*) are reduced forms of the corresponding auxiliaries (cf. Maiden 1995a:159).

Table 16.7 Italian future and conditional forms

amare 'to love'	*dare* 'to give'future	*venire* 'to come'	*amare* 'to love'	*dare* 'to give'conditional	*venire* 'to come'
ameˈrɔ	daˈrɔ	verˈrɔ	ameˈreɪ̯	daˈreɪ̯	verˈreɪ̯
ameˈraɪ̯	daˈraɪ̯	verˈraɪ̯	ameˈresti	daˈresti	verˈresti
ameˈra	daˈra	verˈra	ameˈrɛbbe	daˈrɛbbe	verˈrɛbbe
ameˈremo	daˈremo	verˈremo	ameˈremmo	daˈremmo	verˈremmo
ameˈrete	daˈrete	verˈrete	ameˈreste	daˈreste	verˈreste
ameˈranno	daˈranno	verˈranno	ameˈrɛbbero	daˈrɛbbero	verˈrɛbbero

The stressed vowel of the first-person ameˈrɔ cannot be regular from a phonetic point of view: rather, ˈɔ arose on the model of stɔ ‘I stay’, dɔ ‘I give’, etc. (cf. Clédat 1925:111; Rini 1995:422).[15] As can be seen and as witnessed by examples such as *margherita* ‘daisy’ (< MARGARITAM), the pretonic thematic vowel [a] of the first conjugation is raised to [e] before [r] in Florentine. No such raising is observed with the type da ˈrɔ ‘I will give’, probably because the thematic vowels appears in strong (initial) position in four of the six forms of the present indicative. The thematic vowel of *-ère* verbs is further deleted, hence *vederà* > *vedrà* ‘(s)he will see’—the same process feeds total (regressive) consonantal assimilation in verb forms such as verˈrɔ ‘I will come’ (< *venˈrɔ < *veniˈrɔ), porˈrɔ ‘I will put’ (< *ponˈrɔ < *poneˈrɔ), vorˈrɔ ‘I will want’ (< *volˈrɔ < *voleˈrɔ), thus creating new patterns of allomorphy. Of course, total assimilation occurs provided the syllable structure allows it, e.g., temeˈrɔ ‘I will fear’ / **temˈrɔ, where the sequence [mr] is in any case very rare, but in other contexts, gemination, even though phonologically possible and despite some attestations in grammars and older writers, has not been generalized in the system, e.g., moriˈrɔ ‘I will die’ / morˈrɔ (cf. Thornton 2011:361), ɡwariˈrɔ ‘I will heal’ / ɡwarˈrɔ—the latter is attested in the *Novelle* of Sercambi at the end of the fourteenth century.[16]

The third-person conditional forms (cf. ameˈr-ɛbbe / ameˈr-ɛbbe-ro ‘(s)he / they would love’) clearly show their connexion with the perfect of the verb *avere*, i.e., *ebbe* ‘(s)he had’, *ebbe-ro* ‘they had’ (cf. Table 16.6). The origin of the ending of first-person singular forms such as *amerei* ‘I would love’ is not very clear (cf. Maiden 1995a:160). According to Tagliavini (1936:169; 1969:414), it could be due to the analogy of the first-person singular perfect forms in *-ei* (cf. *temei* ‘I feared’), even though he does not rule out a strictly phonetic development.

16.4.3.5 Imperative and subjunctive

The second-person singular of the imperative is often among the shortest forms in the verb system, and it is in some sense parasitic on other categories (cf. Maiden 2007; Floricic 2007; Maiden, Swearingen, and O’Neill 2010). It is perhaps unsurprising that its exponents are often syncretic with those found in the present

indicative: the latter is anchored to the *hic et nunc* of the speech situation and the realization of a given state of affairs can only be carried out after the reference time t_0 of the speech act. This also explains the shape of the monosyllabic imperatives *stai* 'stand!', *dai* 'give!', *fai* 'do!', *vai* 'go!' which can be said to be taken from the present indicative (cf. Rohlfs 2021b:351). In the case of *vai* [ˈvai̯] 'go!', *stai* [sˈtai̯] 'stay!', *dai* [ˈdai̯] 'give!', etc. gemination of the enclitic elements in, say, *vammi* 'go me!', *stammi* 'stay me', *dammi* 'give me', might be analysed synchronically as the result of deletion of the weak element of the diphthong, which triggers compensatory lengthening of the consonant: the same process may explain the geminate consonant of *passato remoto* (preterite) first-person plural forms such as *amammo* 'we loved' (< *aˈmajmo < AMAUIMUS) or *fummo* 'we were' (< *ˈfuimo < FUIMUS). In other cases, however, gemination of the enclitic cannot be accounted for in the same way. The non-standard form *veh* [ˈve] 'look!' can be mentioned along with *vedi*, hence the co-existence of *vedilo* / *vello* 'look at it!', for example in the works of Antonfrancesco Grazzini. A simple solution to explain the non-standard and dialectal form *vello* is to hold that truncation of the full form *vedi* 'look' produces the apocopated imperative *veh* [ˈve]. Gemination of the initial consonant of the enclitic is a consequence of stress, as it is in other similar cases of *rafforzamento fonosintattico* after (stressed) monosyllabic words. A similar analysis can be proposed to account for the highly frequent imperative *di'* [ˈdi] 'say!', which is exceptional in many respects. While the monosyllabic imperatives mentioned above show (phonologically) heavy and light variants (consonant vowel and consonant vowel glide), the imperative *di'* only allows for the CV scheme. And in this case too, lengthening of the initial consonant of the enclitic elements fits the general scenario of *rafforzamento fonosintattico* (as in *sta male* '(s)he feels bad' [sˈtam ˈmale]), hence *dillo* [ˈdillo] 'tell it!', *dimmi* [ˈdimmi] 'tell me!', etc. (cf. Battisti 1946:99 for a similar analysis). A (synchronically) plausible and coherent account of this imperative is to hold that it is obtained via truncation of the corresponding present indicative form *dici* [ˈdiʧi] 'you say', for the same reasons put forward earlier: an order can only be fulfilled in the temporal slot that opens in the *hic and nunc* of the speech act realized when giving the order. Interestingly, the full form of the imperative appears in the verbs *benedire* 'to bless', *contraddire* 'to contradict', *predire* 'to predict' whose imperative is *benedici!*

[ˌbeneˈdiʧi] ‘bless!’ (not **_benedi’_), _contraddici!_ [ˌkontradˈdiʧi] ‘contradict!’ (not **_contraddi’_), _predici!_ [preˈdiʧi] ‘predict!’ (not **_predi’_)—syncretism with second-person singular present indicative can be illustrated as well with imperative forms such as _finisci_ [fiˈniʃʃi] ‘finish!’, which cannot be analysed as a pure stem.

There are also reduced/truncated variants typically found in informal contexts and not always reported in reference grammars, often because they reflect dialect structures penetrating regional Italian. As expected with forms that belong to informal speech and dialogic organization, they are duly mentioned in such works as those of Spitzer (2007), which offers an accurate description of the spoken language.[17] To this class of elements belong such expressions as the reduced sˈpɛ / asˈpɛ < asˈpɛtta ‘wait!’, asˈkɔ < asˈkɔlta ‘listen!’, ɡwa < ˈɡwarda ‘look!’, ˈtɔ ‘here you are! / ‘what a surprise!’ < ˈtɔʎʎi ‘take away!’, ˈtjɛ / ˈtɛ ‘here you are!’ < ˈtjɛni, etc. which cannot be said to be limited to some dialectal area (cf. as well the example of _veh_ [ˈve] mentioned above).[18] The form asˈpɛ ‘wait!’ is used by young people in Bologna (Cristiana de Sanctis, p.c.), and _gua’_ ‘look’ is widely used in the _Saggio di scherzi comici_ of the Florentine writer Giovanni Battista Zannoni—it is mentioned as well as a lexical entry of the _Grande Dizionario della lingua Italiana_, as are the forms _ve’_ / _veh_ or _tè_ / _tiè_. A crucial aspect of these truncated forms is that they have shifted from the verb domain to that of interjection and discourse markers (cf. Salvioni 1899; Spitzer 2007; Millardet 1923:441; Huber-Sauter 1951; Floricic 2007; Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014; 2015; Aikhenvald 2010; 2017). This is the case as well of the imperative _di’_ [ˈdi] ‘say!’ which, at the moment of its creation, must have been felt as marginal / deviant as are the discourse markers / interjections just mentioned.

The imperative is also said to be defective given that it lacks some persons—Meillet argued that the only ‘real’ imperative is the second-person singular. Togeby (1953:156) points out that in French and Spanish—but the analysis holds as well for Italian—the imperative is intensive (in Hjelmslev’s sense) in so far as (a) it cannot combine with tense and aspect; (b) it cannot be embedded; (c) it is incompatible with negation; (d) it is not compatible with all persons; (e) it is not compatible with such verbs as _dovere_ ‘to have to’, _potere_ ‘to be able to’, _valere_ ‘to be worth’, _avere_ ‘to have’. The functional gap created by such incompatibilities explains the development of suppletive strategies. For clear semantic reasons, the ‘imperative’ of _dovere_,

potere, *essere*, *avere* is borrowed from the subjunctive: will and existence for example cannot be object of commands. Maiden (1995a:129) holds that 'the subjunctive inflexion *-i* survives in the small class of verbs which form their imperative from the subjunctive: *avere: abbi* "have"; *sapere: sappi* "know"; *volere: vogli* "want"; *essere: sii* "be"'. As a matter of fact, these forms are clearly connected with *abbia*, *sappia*, *voglia*, and *sia* respectively; synchronically, they can be said to be obtained by deleting the final vowel of the subjunctive (on the particular case of *sii* 'be!', cf. Floricic 2000; 2007; Floricic and Molinu 2003; 2012). Table 16.8 gives the present subjunctive forms of the verbs *amare* 'to love', *dare* 'to give', *vincere* 'to win', *avere* 'to have', and *dormire* 'to sleep' (cf. Touratier 1987:273f.).

Table 16.8 Italian present subjunctive forms

amare 'to love'	*dare* 'to give'	*vincere* 'to win'	*avere* 'to have'	*dormire* 'to sleep'
ˈam-i-Ø	ˈdi-a-Ø	ˈviŋk-a-Ø	ˈabbj-a-Ø	ˈdɔrm-a-Ø
ˈam-i-Ø	ˈdi-a-Ø	ˈviŋk-a-Ø	ˈabbj-a-Ø	ˈdɔrm-a-Ø
ˈam-i-Ø	ˈdi-a-Ø	ˈviŋk-a-Ø	ˈabbj-a-Ø	ˈdɔrm-a-Ø
aˈm-ja-mo	ˈd-ja-mo	vinˈʧ-a-mo	abˈb-ja-mo	dorˈm-ja-mo
aˈm-ja-te	ˈd-ja-te	vinˈʧ-a-te	abˈb-ja-te	dorˈm-ja-te
ˈam-i-no	ˈdi-a-no	ˈviŋk-a-no	ˈabbj-a-no	ˈdɔrm-a-no

The Italian subjunctive of the first conjugation has generalized *-i* in the singular and third-person plural cells, thus showing a characteristic subjunctive stem. The first three cells are syncretic and do not show any person contrast, which is why person is often marked with pronouns when required by the syntactic contexts. As can be seen, the subjunctive exponent -ja- of the verb form *abbiamo* abˈb-ja-

mo ‘we have’ can be found in the first- and second-person plural present subjunctive of all conjugations (cf. Hall 1971:104–106). In the case of subjunctive vinˈʧ-a-mo ‘we win’ / vinˈʧ-a-te ‘you win’, orthographically *vinciamo*, *vinciate*, the palatal element of -ja- is simply absorbed in the preceding palatal segment. As a result, we find stem allomorphy between palatalized and non-palatalized stems.

The case of monosyllabic verbs like *dare* ‘to give’ is more complex. According to Mourin (1977:151), *dia* ‘that (s)he give’, *stia* ‘that (s)he stay’, etc. are due to *sia* ‘that I be’, which however is not easy to explain from a historical point of view—the forms *sii* ‘be!’ and *sia* may be due to a wide typological tendency to avoid light monosyllabic prosodic words, following a general principle put forth among others by Meillet (1900; 1905–1906) and Wackernagel (1906). Table 16.9 shows in the first- and second-person plural ˈd-ja-mo and ˈd-ja-te the same string -ja- as in abˈb-ja-mo ‘that we have’ and abˈb-ja-te ‘that you have’.[19]

Table 16.9 Present subjunctive forms of *dare* ‘to give’, *avere* ‘to have’, and *andare* ‘to go’

dare ‘to give’	*avere* ‘to have’	*andare* ‘to go’
ˈdi-a-Ø	ˈabbj-a-Ø	ˈvad-a-Ø
ˈdi-a-Ø	ˈabbj-a-Ø	ˈvad-a-Ø
ˈdi-a-Ø	ˈabbj-a-Ø	ˈvad-a-Ø
ˈd-ja-mo	abˈb-ja-mo	anˈd-ja-mo
ˈd-ja-te	abˈb-ja-te	anˈd-ja-te
ˈdi-a-no	ˈabbj-a-no	ˈvad-a-no

From a synchronic point of view, the paradigms reported in 16.9 clearly show that the first-person plural and second-person plural

forms show a different pattern. They also allow us to understand the 'imperative' forms *abbi* 'have!', *sappi* 'know!', etc.: the (phonological) ill-formedness of **ˈabbj-Ø-Ø, **ˈsappj-Ø-Ø entails vocalization of final -j, hence *abbi* 'have!' and *sappi* 'know!'. From this point of view, the forms *abbi* 'have!', *sappi* 'know!', etc. should not be analysed as containing any person marker: they show the bare stem, in keeping with a widespread typological tendency concerning the morphology of imperatives (cf. Aikhenvald 2010; 2017).

The forms of the Italian imperfect subjunctive are arrhizotonic. Their stem differs from that of the present subjunctive and the personal endings partly converge with those of the *passato remoto* (preterite).

Table 16.10 Italian imperfect subjunctive forms

amare 'to love'	*temere* 'to fear'	*dormire* 'to sleep'
aˈm-a-ss-i	teˈm-e-ss-i	dorˈm-i-ss-i
aˈm-a-ss-i	teˈm-e-ss-i	dorˈm-i-ss-i
aˈm-a-ss-e	teˈm-e-ss-e	dorˈm-i-ss-e
aˈm-a-ss-i-mo	teˈm-e-ss-i-mo	dorˈm-i-ss-i-mo
aˈm-a-st-e	teˈm-e-st-e	dorˈm-i-st-e
aˈm-a-ss-e-ro	teˈm-e-ss-e-ro	dorˈm-i-ss-e-ro

Rohlfs (2021b:303) also takes the *passato remoto* (preterite) to be the source of the final *-i* in the first-person singular. The third-person plural ending *-ro* is also found in the *passato remoto* (cf. 1. *ebb-i* 'I had', 3. *ebb-e* '(s)he had', 6. *ebb-e-ro* 'they had').

16.4.3.6 The non-finite forms: infinitive, present/past participles, gerund

The gerund, the present/past participles, and the present infinitive are integrative forms of the verb in the sense that they show dependency properties that set them apart. The gerund has generalized the theme vowel *-e-* in non-first conjugations (cf. *am-a-re* > *am-a-ndo* 'loving', *cred-e-re* > *cred-e-ndo* 'thinking', *tem-e-re* > *tem-e-ndo* 'fearing', *part-i-re* > *part-e-ndo* 'leaving', *usc-i-re* > *usc-e-ndo* 'going out'). Observe that the gerund of *fare* 'to do', *dire* 'to say' is not ***fando*, ***dendo* but *facendo*, *dicendo*, whose stem is that also found in the imperfect indicative / subjunctive (cf. *facevo* 'I made' / *dicevo* 'I said', *facessi* 'that I made', *dicessi* 'that I say').

Many verbs have a present participle in *-nte* derived from the Latin present participle, and used as an adjective, e.g., *ignorante* 'ignorant', *vivente* 'living', *ubbidiente* 'obedient', a noun, e.g., *cantante* 'singer', *sorgente* 'source' (Migliorini 1957c:109f.; Lausberg 1971:198; Pisani 1974:142). As pointed out by Luraghi (1999), a long process may take place in which the present participle progressively loses its verbal features to acquire adjectival or nominal ones, hence the possibility for some of these forms to take a direct object. The productivity of the first conjugation in *-are* explains the success and extension of *a-nte* suffixation to nominal bases (cf. *bracciante* 'day labourer', *edicolante* 'newspaper seller', etc.).

Wahlgren (1920) offers an in-depth analysis of the complex analogical processes that led to various innovations and restructurings involving the perfect and the past participle. Italian offers many examples of polymorphism in the past participle, e.g., *veduto/visto* 'seen', *perduto perso* 'lost'. Nannucci (1843:389f.) points out that due to the co-existence of 'regular' perfects and 'irregular' ones (i.e., *mordei* / *morsi* 'I bite'), various past participle variants were created analogically. Pairs such as old Italian *vivuto* 'lived' / *visse* '(s)he lived' have given way to the symmetrical pair *vissuto/visse*. Other participial forms such as *nasciuto* 'born', *romputo* 'broken', *difenduto* 'defended' for *nato*, *rotto*, *difeso*, are no longer used, even though children easily produce participles such as *nasciuto* when acquiring the language.

The rhizotonic past participles probably are responsible for the success of old Tuscan first-conjugation participial forms such as *cerco* 'sought' (vs *cercato*), *porto* 'carried' (vs *portato*) (Gorra 1895:81; Rohlfs 2021b:375f.; Maiden 1995a:124). To these formations belong the still-used short participles *lesso* 'boiled' (vs *lessato*), *stanco* 'tired' (vs *stancato*), *gonfio* 'swollen' (vs *gonfiato*) expressing a resultative-

state value, as opposed to the dynamic/processual value of the longer forms (Tekavčić 1980:327; Ledgeway 2016a:221).

The last integrative and non-finite form to be mentioned is the infinitive (cf. Creissels 2006 on the syntax and morphology of integrative forms). The theme vowel preceding the exponent *-re* of the infinitive indicates the verb class (cf. *am-a-re* 'to love', *rid-e-re* 'to laugh', *tem-e-re* 'to fear', *dorm-i-re* 'to sleep', etc.). From a morphological point of view, it is not clear whether forms such as *dire* 'to say', *fare* 'to do' are phonetically regular (cf. *condurre* [konˈdur:e] 'to drive' with a geminate consonant). With respect to *dicere* [ˈdiʧere], *facere* [ˈfaʧere], Mańczak (1982:98) holds that these reduced infinitives owe their reduced form to frequency. While Maiden (1995a:123) holds that *condurre* 'to drive', *trarre* 'to draw' are the result of assimilation once syncope has taken place, he takes *fare* 'to do' to have been remodelled on *dare* 'to give' (cf. as well Ascoli 1873b:81f.; Clédat 1925:100; Battisti 1949:253)—to this list we can also add *stare* 'to stay': indeed Rydberg (1893:44f.) hypothesizes the reciprocal attraction of these three verbs. On the other hand, *dire* 'to say' was (Rydberg claims) refashioned on the old Tuscan verb *gire* 'to go'. It is not impossible that the frequency of the imperative *di'* 'say!' may have contributed as well to the (early) formation of the infinitive *dire* (cf. as well *dite* 'say.2PL!'). Note that polymorphic infinitives developed which have afterwards fallen out of use: *sciogliere*/**sciorre* 'to loosen', *togliere*/**torre* 'to take away', *scegliere*/**scerre* 'to choose', *cogliere*/**corre* 'to pick' (cf. Tekavčić 1980:322).

16.5 Periphrastic constructions

The periphrastic constructions of Italian can only be touched upon in passing, because they lie at the interface between morphology and syntax. Šabršula talked about 'premorphological formations' concerning these peripheral structures—a concept taken from Imbs (1960:7). These periphrastic constructions offer another illustration of the grammaticalization—or regrammation—process (Andersen 2010) that led to the emergence of these new categories at the intersection of syntagmatic and paradigmatic structure.[20] Table 16.11 illustrates the

conjugation of Italian *passato prossimo* (present perfect) and future of the verb *finire* ‘to finish’.

Table 16.11 Italian ***passato prossimo*** **(present perfect) and future (*finire* ‘to finish’)**

ɔf fiˈn-i-t-o	fin-i-ˈr-ɔ
a-i̯ fiˈn-i-t-o	fin-i-ˈra-i̯
a-Ø f fiˈn-i-t-o	fin-i-ˈra-Ø
ab¦b-ja-mo fiˈn-i-t-o	fin-i-ˈr-e-mo
a¦v-e-te fiˈn-i-t-o	fin-i-ˈr-e-te
¦a-nno fiˈn-i-t-o	fin-i-ˈra-nno

Von Wartburg (1963:65–67) points out that various synthetic formations such as the future of the modern language go back to analytic/periphrastic constructions. As can be seen in Table 16.11, the TAM and person/number exponents of the future show a tight integration with the lexical base. Interestingly, they show the same elements at the opposite side of the *passato prossimo* (present perfect) forms, except in the first and second plural which have undergone major reduction in the future. It follows that the auxiliary is less recognizable in the future than in the *passato prossimo*, even though due to frequency and routinization, the sequence auxiliary + participle resulted in a semantic whole whose parts have lost any functional independence (cf. Schwegler 1990:127): (a) the auxiliary no longer has the value of a verb of possession; (b) a sequence such as ɔf fiˈnito ‘I have finished’ may be analysed as a prosodic word, with main stress on the past participle and a secondary one on the auxiliary. When monosyllabic as in the first-person singular, the auxiliary undergoes destressing, a phenomenon which is still clearer when the past participle is stressed on the first syllable, as in ɔfˈfatto ‘I have made’ where otherwise stress clash would occur (cf. Kramer 2009:195). The same phenomenon may actually take place in the

third-person plural, where the bisyllabic form *hanno* [ˈanno] may reduce to [an]; (c) in question-answer pairs such as *Hai finito? Sì, ho finito* 'Have you finished? Yes, I have', it would be impossible to omit the past participle (cf. ***Sì, ho*) (cf. Schwegler 1990:133f., who points out that in similar examples in French, the level of boundedness of the auxiliary is comparable to that found in the future); (d) the order between the auxiliary and the past participle cannot be reversed (cf. ?? *finito hai*, which however would be possible in the regional variety spoken in Sardinia); (e) with transitive verbs, the direct object—be it a full noun phrase or a clitic—cannot break the unity and cohesion between the auxiliary and the past participle.

Of course, analysis and synthesis are not a matter of all or nothing, and intermediate situations may be found, as illustrated in some Romance languages by the phenomenon of 'mesoclisis'.[21] From this point of view, the simple opposition between a 'synthetic' formation and a periphrastic one must not obscure the fact that at a certain point in the history of a given language, various co-existing/competing options may be found, halfway between analysis and synthesis.[22] Meillet (1921:141–143) insists on the unification process that led to the loss of independence of the constituent parts of the periphrastic construction. Observe however that the synthesis of the elements is far from having reached that illustrated by the future forms mentioned earlier. Interestingly, the auxiliary may be optionally omitted from the second of two coordinated *passato prossimo* forms (cf. *Marco ha scritto e pubblicato molti articoli* 'Marco has written and published many papers') and adverbial elements can be inserted between the two elements of the periphrastic construction (cf. *ho quasi finito* 'I have almost finished' / *ho più o meno finito* 'I have more or less finished') (cf. Maiden 1995a:149). The same observation holds for the progressive periphrasis such as *sto mangiando* 'I am eating': an adverbial element can be inserted between the auxiliary and the gerund (cf. *sto ancora mangiando* 'I am still eating') and the second auxiliary can be omitted in coordinated constructions (cf. *sta mangiando e bevendo* '(s)he is eating and drinking'). But observe that in this case too, omission of one of the elements of the periphrasis in a question/answer pair would produce an ill-formed structure (cf. *Stai mangiado? Sì, sto ***(mangiando)* 'Are you eating? Yes, I am eating'). Another periphrastic construction involves the motion verbs *andare* 'to go' / *venire* 'to come' + past participle. As shown by examples such

as *la domanda va presentata su carta libera* 'the application must be done on simple paper' taken from Sansò and Ramat (2016), the *andare* 'to go' + past participle construction has the value of a deontic passive which refers to a requirement imposed by (social) norms that are independent from the agent's volition. They point out that this construction is possible with all tenses of *andare* except compound tenses (i.e., tenses formed by means of the auxiliary + the perfective participle) and the *passato remoto* (preterite). In other cases, however, it is observed that the *andare* 'to go' + past participle construction refers to a process in which a patient is affected by an external agent or force: in a sentence like *l'edificio andò distrutto* 'the building was destroyed', no external requirement is imposed, and the construction does not differ from *l'edificio venne distrutto*, whose reading is that of a (dynamic) passive construction.

16.6 Conclusion

This brief presentation of inflexional morphology of Italian necessarily cannot account for the numerous problems and questions raised by Italian morphology. Many aspects have not yet received satisfactory answers, others remain controversial, and still others have only been touched upon (cf. among others the place and nature of periphrastic expressions as regards the relation between syntax and morphology). We have not said anything concerning the richness and dialectal/social variability of the Italo-Romance domain, even though it is clear that the enormous quantity of dialectal data sheds a rich light on Italian morphology, without mentioning its interest for general linguistics. Suffice it to mention the complexity and extension of allomorphy in nouns and verbs. Italian is a language spoken by individuals rooted in a specific territory, within a specific socio-cultural network and organization, and in specific historical moments and situations. From this point of view, the description of the standard language and its shared norm should not ignore the important variability of speech, nor should it ignore the important polymorphism found in literary texts, as witnessed for example by the perfect forms studied by Nencioni (1989b).

[1] Observe that various nouns in *-o* referring to institutional functions may maintain the same masculine ending when used with the feminine article: *la medico* 'the doctor', *la ministro* 'madam minister', *la sindaco* 'the mayor', etc. (cf. Iacobini and Thornton 2016:194).

[2] In Scalise (1986:115), it is assumed that a noun such as *libro* 'book' is an uninflected word whose representation is $[\text{libro}]_N$, while *libri* 'books' is an inflected word form whose representation is $[\text{libro}] + \text{inflexion}]_N$.

[3] The question as to whether the plural ending of, say, *cani* 'dogs' (< CANES) should be viewed as phonetically regular or as the result of analogical levelling has given rise to endless discussions.

[4] The *h* here is purely diacritic, indicating that the *c* or *g* is a velar as in the singular.

[5] But cf. also Maiden (2000a).

[6] Another complex case that cannot be discussed here regards nouns such as *lampo* 'zipper' in expressions such as *chiusura lampo* 'zipper': the noun *lampo* 'flash' is masculine (cf. *il lampo* 'the flash'), but it remains invariable in *le chiusure lampo* 'the zippers' or in the reduced noun phrase *le lampo*.

[7] A special situation holds with expressions such as *ginocchioni* 'kneeling', *striscioni* 'crawling', *quattoni* 'crouching', *tentoni* 'gropingly', *penzoloni* 'dangling', *ciondoloni* 'dangling', *gattoni* 'crawling', *bocconi* 'face down', etc., which look like plurals of nouns suffixed with the augmentative element *-one*. These expressions, which may take as a base a noun (*gattoni*, *ginocchioni*, etc.), an adjective (*quattoni*) or a verb (*striscioni*, *penzoloni*, *ciondoloni*, etc.), are invariable and are used adverbially (cf. Pieri 1904; 1906; Veland 2015).

[8] A third demonstrative form is mentioned in normative grammars, i.e., *codesto*, which is characteristically Tuscan and encodes proximity to the addressee (Maiden 1995a:62, 116). Serianni (1998:78) points out that it is used in bureaucratic/literary language.

[9] There exists an endless literature on the status of expressions such as *niente* 'nothing', *nessuno* 'nobody', etc. They have been defined in many different ways according to theoretical orientations (i.e., quantifiers, indefinites, Free-choice items, Negative Concord Items, n-words, Negative Polarity Items, Minimizers, Totalizers, etc.). It is clear that these definitions refer to the semantic side of *niente*, *nessuno*, etc. Sometimes, some of these definitions are given to the very same element (Parry 2013:92 describes *niente* as an indefinite quantifier, but she takes it to be (syntactically) an (invariable) determiner in examples such as *niente lunghe code* 'no long queues').

[10] If verb forms such as the present indicative *ama* '(s)he loves' can be said to be morphologically unmarked, it is hard to analyse in the same way forms such as the perfect *amò* '(s)he loved', *credé* 's(h)e thought', or *partì* '(s)he left'. First of all, the stress pattern is marked with respect to the Italian accentual system; but at the same time, the fact that the third-person singular can be taken as basic can be illustrated by formations such as the old Italian third-person plural *passorono* 'they passed' / *usorno* 'they used' from *passò* '(s)he passed' and *usò* '(s)he used', respectively, not to mention Tuscan dialectal forms such as *lavònno* 'they washed' from *lavò* '(s)he washed' (cf. D'Ovidio 1899:315; Spagnoletti and

Dominicy 1992:19; and Floricic 2021, in which the basicness of the third person is illustrated from the Occitan verb).

[11] Bourciez (1910:504) takes the *-i* of *vendi* 'sell!' to be due to analogy with *dormi* 'sleep!'. A similar analysis was proposed by D'Ovidio (1886:86) and Clédat (1925:108, §69).

[12] The following examples found in the newspapers *La Stampa* and *La Repubblica* show that some instances of the same forms can be found in modern Italian.

i a [...] osserviamo che le immatricolazioni viderono una crescita dell' 11,4%,
observe.1PL that the registrations see.PST.PFV.3PL a growth of.the 11.4%

(https://www.lastampa.it/motori/2017/08/02/news/il_mercato_a_luglio_cresce_del_7_4_meglio_le_moto_le_top_100-1199918/, accessed January 2024).

'[...] we observe that registrations grew by 11.4 per cent.'

b [...] le Olimpiadi invernali del 2006, che furono un successo organizzativo e
the Olympics winter of.the 2006 that be.PST.PFV.3PL a success organizational and
fecerono uscire Torino dal cono d' ombra.
make.PST.PFV.3PL exit.INF Turin from.the cone of shadow

(https://www.repubblica.it/rubriche/spycalcio/2016/07/20/news/lega_di_serie_a_spunta_il_nome_di_antonio_romei-144491839/?ref=search, accessed January 2024).

'[...] the 2006 Winter Olympics, which were an organizational success and placed Turin in the limelight.'

[13] On hypercharacterization, cf. Lehmann (2005).

[14] From this point of view and as pointed out by Francescato (1961:43), we should not forget that 'the system of a language is therefore, in reality, the product of the interweaving of many systems of more limited hierarchical order. On the one hand, they may reflect the residues of a previous system, and on the other, the first signs of active tendencies in the language. [. . .] It is also possible that the diachronic interpretation of the facts of the language sheds light on the structure of the system as a whole, i.e., the coexistence of partial systems within the total system.'

[15] The reduced forms *ao* / *aio* of the first-person singular *ho* [ˈɔ] 'I have' show that the strong element of these expressions is the initial open vowel [a]. From this point of view, it is questionable that the exceptional zero lexeme form Ø-ˈɔ could be responsible for the generalization of the ending [ˈɔ] found in the future (cf. Tekavčić 1980:312). Interestingly, Tekavčić (1980:348) points out that it is precisely to the analogy of *darò* 'I will give', *starò* 'I will stay', *farò* 'I will do' that the future form *sarò* 'I will be' owes its initial (unstressed) vowel. Parodi (1889:610) already observed that 'in the future of *essere*, *serò serai*, etc. are notable, where one would expect *sarò*, *sarai*, which is instead the Florentine form. This is explained by the attraction of *darò*, *farò* and the like, which retained the *a* because in the first syllable, cf. *maraviglia*'.

[16] Observe that the string [dr] is well-formed in Italian. It is hard to explain why, then, it is attested in future forms such as *vedrò* [veˈdrɔ] 'I will see' or *cadrò* [kaˈdrɔ] 'I will fall', but not in *venderò* [ˌvendeˈrɔ] 'I will sell', *crederò* [ˌkredeˈrɔ] 'I will believe', or *cederò* [ˌʧedeˈrɔ] 'I

will give up'. Given that the infinitive forms of the last series all have antepenultimate stress, syncope would be expected in the latter case more readily than in the former.

[17] Given the sociolinguistic situation of Italy referred to earlier, and given the complex interplay between high and low varieties, between local varieties and the learned norm, it is no wonder that the lexical choices and phonetic variants of Italian speakers may bear the trace of their social and geographic roots (cf. Franceschi 2004:16f.). Needless to say, the greater the mobility of individuals within a given territory, the closer and more complex the interplay, interpenetration, and conflict between linguistic traditions and individual habits or innovations. What is particular in the present sociolinguistic situation of Italy and the renewal of its linguistic norm is the variable weight devoted to (and the variable distance between) the literary language and the spoken registers.

[18] Poggi (1981:111) holds that the most common value of *toh* in standard Italian is that of violation of a cognitive expectation. As for *tié* (< *tieni* 'take!' / 'here you are!'), Salvioni (1908:63) points out that such abbreviated forms of the second-person singular imperative of *tenere* are widespread throughout Italy.

[19] An alternative analysis would be to hold that the string *-ja-* appears throughout the paradigm as a subjunctive exponent. Subjunctive forms such as *vadia* 'that I / you / (s)he go' are attested in old Italian—Meyer-Lübke (1895:294) takes it to be due to the analogical influence of *abbia*.

[20] Šabršula (1966) identifies various tests that show that these periphrastic verbal formations do not follow the laws of free syntax and owe their functional unity to their integration into specific paradigms.

[21] For the nature of 'mesoclisis' in Romance languages such as Portuguese, where a clitic pronoun can still be inserted between the future/conditional stem and the inflexional ending see, e.g., Dubert and Galves (2016:425).

[22] As Andersen (2010:118) observes, 'there is no sharp line of demarcation between inflectional morphology and the analytic expression of grammatical categories. Not only do inflectional categories commonly originate in analytic constructions; it is not unusual for grammatical categories to be expressed only analytically, as, say, periphrastic tenses are, or for a given category to have inflectional (synthetic) and periphrastic (analytic) expressions in complementary distribution; e.g. the tenses of the Latin perfective aspect have synthetic active forms, but periphrastic forms in the passive and in deponent verbs'.

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Chapter 17

Derivational morphology and compounding

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17.1 General overview

Derivation and compounding in Italian are thoroughly described in Grossmann and Rainer (2004), and by Dardano (1978; 2009); short comprehensive presentations are offered by Rainer (2016) and Iacobini and Thornton (2016). Monographs on specific types and devices include, among others, Tollemache (1945), Radimský (2006; 2015), and Micheli (2020) on compounds, Tollemache (1954) on converted deverbal nouns, Rainer (1989) on quality nouns, Crocco Galèas (1991) on ethnic nouns and adjectives, Gaeta (2002) on some action nouns, and Montermini (2008) on prefixation. Many influential descriptions and proposals are contained in handbooks of morphology such as Scalise (1983). For a comprehensive bibliography of Italian word-formation, see Grossmann (2026).

17.2 Compounding

17.2.1 Introduction

Compound words are formed by concatenating two or more free forms, two bound combining forms, or a free form and a combining form; in some compounds, constituents are joined by a linking element. Many compounds are nonce-formations with a low degree of lexicalization, as demonstrated by the fact that only a limited number of compounds are listed in dictionaries. In modern Italian only nominal and adjectival compounding are fully productive (for synchronic and diachronic surveys, see Masini and Scalise 2012; Micheli 2020; Radimský 2006; 2015; Rainer 2021b; Tollemache 1945). As for spelling, there is some wavering as to whether constituents are written together, or separated by a hyphen or a blank space. The more the compound is lexicalized the more frequent it is to spell it as one word.

17.2.2 Nominal compounds

17.2.2.1 NN compounds

The formation of NN compounds has increased remarkably in recent decades; in some cases, they might be calques from English or French (Arcodia, Grandi, and Montermini 2009; Baroni, Guevara, and Pirrelli 2009; Radimský 2015). They can be classified as coordinate, attributive-appositive, and subordinate, depending on the relation between the constituents (Scalise and Bisetto 2009).

Most coordinate NN compounds are made up of two constituents that are semantically at the same taxonomic level, simultaneously identifying or classifying the entity denoted by the compound. Constructions with more than two Ns that cannot be broken down into binary structures (*bar-ristorante-pizzeria* 'bar-restaurant-pizzeria') or recursively built up (*pizzeria-tavola calda* $[[\text{pizzeria}]_N$ $[[\textit{tavola}$ 'table'$]_N$ $[\textit{calda}$ 'hot'$]_A]_N]_N$ 'pizzeria-cafeteria') are rarer. Coordinate compounds can refer to: professions and roles (*architetto-arredatore* 'architect-interior designer'), tools (*misuratore-dosatore* 'measurer-doser'), clothes (*gonna-pantalone* 'skirt-pant'), furnishings (*divano letto* 'sofa bed'), means of transport (*taxi-furgone* 'taxi-van'), establishments (*libreria caffè* 'bookshop

coffeeshop'), ideologies (*marxismo-leninismo* 'Marxism-Leninism'), events (*compravendita* purchase_sale 'sale and purchase'), periods of time (*autunno-inverno* 'autumn-winter (period)'), cardinal points (*nord-ovest* 'north-west'). Regarding semantic headedness, there is disagreement in the literature as to whether such compounds are exocentric or two-headed. Most of them have an intersective reading in that they identify an entity not corresponding to any of the individual constituents, but rather to intersections of the two (e.g., *portafinestra* door_window 'French window' is both a kind of door and a kind of window); the compound is a hyponym of both constituents. A few compounds, including some proper nouns, allow an additive reading (*compravendita*, *Emilia-Romagna*—an administrative region comprising the historical regions of Emilia and Romagna). As for gender assignment, when the two constituents have different genders, coordinate compounds inherit gender from the left-hand constituent. Plural marking usually occurs on the left-hand constituent or on both, depending on the gender of the constituents and whether they refer to persons or things (cf. §9.4.1). The order of constituents is relatively free but can depend on pragmatic factors: the constituent perceived as more relevant occupies the leftmost position (e.g., *centro-destra* 'centre-right' vs *destra-centro* 'right-centre').

A productive pattern is represented by constructions such as *alternanza scuola-lavoro* 'school-work alternation', labelled 'trinominal compounds' (see Radimský 2015). The semantic requirements of the head (*alternanza* 'alternation') license the subordinate embedding of two coordinate nouns (*scuola-lavoro* 'school-work') which display a 'between' relationship. With a few exceptions, the embedded nouns do not constitute autonomous compounds. Their order is usually reversible; an oriented relationship occurs, for example, in the case of locative constructions (*trasferimento aeroporto-albergo* 'transfer airport-hotel' vs *trasferimento albergo-aeroporto* 'hotel-airport transfer').

Another group of NN constructions consists of attributive-appositive compounds. The head constituent, on the left, classifies or identifies the entity denoted by the compound, while the non-head constituent characterizes or qualifies it. Scalise and Bisetto (2009) split this kind of compound into two categories according to the type of modifier: attributive, where the modifier is an abstract noun

(*legge truffa* law [is a] fraud ‘fraudulent law’), and appositive, where the modifier is a concrete noun with a metaphorical reading (*pantaloni sigaretta* trousers [like a] cigarette ‘cigarette trousers’). The head noun determines the compound’s gender and is usually also the locus of plural marking. The appositive group includes many compounds systematically displaying a few specific nouns as right-hand elements (*parola chiave* word key ‘keyword’). These nouns always convey the same metaphorical meaning and each of them gives rise to a family or series of compounds. They carry adjectival meanings, and in some cases also exhibit other adjective-like properties, such as number agreement, predicative use, gradability, adverbial modifiability, and coordinability with an adjective (Grandi, Nissim, and Tamburini 2011, and §17.6.3). A Google-search (conducted on 25 March 2023) for *chiave* ‘key’ yields many (in some cases substandard) examples: *ricopre ruoli chiavi* plays roles keys ‘he/she plays key roles’, *l’indipendenza è chiave per la libertà* ‘independence is key to freedom’, *un ruolo molto chiave* ‘a very key role’, *un territorio già chiave* ‘an already key territory’, *un problema chiave e urgente* ‘a key and urgent problem’.

Another group consists of subordinate NN compounds displaying a head-complement relation. These constructions, which seem to be increasing in number, are variants of N P N sequences but without an explicit relational marker. They are typical of the compressed telegraphic style found in press headlines, advertising, marketing, as well as administrative and scientific texts. Scalise and Bisetto (2009) identify two subgroups depending on whether the head noun is an event-related nominal (‘verbal-nexus compounds’), or does not display an argument structure (‘ground compounds’). In ground compounds, the modifier can designate any type of specification with respect to the head, and the relationship between the constituents is not predictable (*posto auto* place car ‘parking space’). On the other hand, in verbal-nexus compounds, the relationship between the constituents is based on the argument structure, or on the valency frame of the verb underlying the head noun, and is predictable. In most verbal-nexus compounds, the argument corresponds to the direct object of the transitive verb underlying the head noun (*raccolta firme* collection signatures ‘signature collection’). Other patterns can be found, such as *uscita automezzi* exit motor_vehicles ‘motor vehicle exit’, in which the argument is the subject of an

unaccusative verb. Following Radimský (2015), in both verbal-nexus and ground compounds the head and/or the non-head slot can be filled by a syntactic construction, allowing the violation of lexical integrity. Most subordinate compounds are left-headed, while among the right-headed ones there are borrowings and calques (*ferrovia* iron_way 'railway'), and some Italian formations (*Salvini-pensiero* 'Salvini's way of thinking'). Gender is usually inherited from the head constituent. Plural marking can appear on the head; the non-head constituent alone can be plural without transmitting this feature to the compound (*rivendita tabacchi* sale tobaccos 'tobacconist's'). Like attributive-appositive compounds, subordinate compounds can also give rise to series based on the head or the modifier (*caro-benzina* 'high cost of petrol', *caro bolletta* 'high cost of bills' (Rainer 2022); *addetto stampa* 'press agent', *rassegna stampa* 'press review').

17.2.2.2 NA and AN compounds

Attributive nominal compounds involving an adjective can be divided into three groups: left-headed NA compounds (*terracotta* earth_baked 'terracotta'), right-headed AN compounds (*malasanità* bad_health(care) 'badly managed health service'), and exocentric constructions (*mezzacalzetta* half_sock 'little squirt'). As for the juncture between adjective and noun, some established AN compounds show a reduced form of the adjective (*gentile* + *donna* → *gentildonna* 'lady'). Although AN compounds exhibit internal gender agreement, these constructions are different from the corresponding NPs: the A cannot be modified by an adverb, nor can it be coordinated with another adjective (for the distinction between compounds and phrases, see Gaeta and Ricca 2009). The gender of the compound is determined by the N constituent, except in some exocentric formations denoting humans, where the gender depends on the sex of the referent (*manolesta*$_{M/F}$ hand_adroit 'light-fingered person'). Some highly integrated compounds take plural markers (Micheli 2018) on the right-hand constituent (*buonuscita/e* good_leaving 'retirement lump sum'); otherwise, both members are pluralized (*mezzobusto* / PL *mezzibusti* half_torso 'half-length', 'talking head (on TV)'). If the N constituent is plural on its own, the compound as a whole is invariable (*piedipiatti* feet_flat 'cop'). In

many cases, the same compound fluctuates between different pluralization strategies (*roccaforte* fortress_strong ‘stronghold’ / PL *roccheforti*, *roccaforti*).

17.2.2.3 VN compounds

VN compounds are usually described as yielding agent and instrument nouns, but Ricca (2010) has shown that VN adjectives are very productively formed, even if often they are not stored in the permanent lexicon (cf. §17.2.3.3). VN nouns denote instruments, chemical products, containers, items of clothing (*acchiappasogni* ‘dream catcher’, *scioglimacchia* dissolve_stain ‘spot remover’, *copricellulare* ‘mobile-phone case’, *scaldamuscoli* ‘leg warmer’); VN agent nouns were commonly formed in the past (*taglialegna* cut_wood ‘logger’); recent coinages are few, either jocular and/or slightly derogatory (*rompipalle* break_balls ‘pain in the neck [person]’), or denoting people who have jobs of low prestige and requiring little qualification (*guardamacchine* watch_cars ‘car-park attendant’). A few VN nouns denote events (*ammainabandiera* ‘lowering of the flag’) or can be interpreted as denoting locations (*battiscopa* hit_broom ‘skirting board’), but these types are not productive.

The status of the V base has been hotly debated, with advocates of three hypotheses: that it is a third-person singular present indicative form, a second-person singular imperative form, or a verb stem; the empirically adequate and theoretically most satisfactory option seems that of considering the V element a morphomic stem homophonous with the second-person singular imperative form, but devoid of any imperatival meaning. However, in the case of verbs taking *-isc*, a conflict arises between a strong tendency to favour disyllabic bases in VN compounds, and the morphomic condition of identity with the second-person singular imperative, since with such verbs this form is at least trisyllabic; therefore, some compounds are attested in two variants, which comply with only one of the conditions (*pulisciscarpe/puliscarpe* clean_shoes ‘shoe shining machine’); the short base is identical to the verb stem used in derivation (e.g., *pulitura* ‘cleaning’). A relatively limited number of V bases is responsible for the majority of VN types and hapaxes (Ricca

2010). The N base usually denotes the object of the verb, only very rarely the subject (*batticuore* beat_heart 'palpitations'); rarely, the V is followed by an adverb rather than a noun (*buttafuori* throw_out 'bouncer').

Number marking on the N element and on the whole compound has been thoroughly investigated by Pellegrini and Ricca (2019; see also Micheli 2016), who show that some VN compounds display overabundance in a systematic and productive way: when the action denoted by the V is performed on only one of the objects denoted by the N at a time, but typically on multiple occasions, the N element can be SG or PL both in the SG and particularly in the PL cell of the whole compound (SG and PL *fermacravatta/fermacravatte* stop_tie/s 'tiepin'). The N can be plural also to pluralize the whole compound, even when the N denotes a unique referent or is a mass noun, particularly in cases of opacification (*girasoli* turn_suns 'sunflowers', *portaceneri* carry_ashes 'ashtrays'). Gender congruity between the N member and the gender of the whole compound favours plural marking on the second member (*le portavoci* DEF.FPL carry_voices 'the spokespersons' is far more common than *i portavoci* DEF.MPL carry_voices, since *voce* 'voice' is feminine). The gender of the whole compound is congruent with the sex or gender identity of the referent when the compound denotes humans; it is usually masculine when it denotes inanimate entities, but there are some feminine VN compounds denoting machines and ships (*lavastoviglie* 'dishwasher(F)', *rompighiaccio* break_ice 'icebreaker(F)').

17.2.2.4 VV compounds

A few action nouns are VV compounds (e.g., *parapiglia* shield_take 'hubbub', *fuggifuggi* run_away_run_away 'stampede'); their origin is delocutive (Thornton 2008).

17.2.2.5 PN compounds

Exocentric nominal compounds formed productively by prepositions (some of them homophonous with prefixes, cf. §17.3) and nouns are masculine, regardless of the gender of the noun; some are invariable

(*dopoalluvione* after_flood ‘post-flood period’), while others can be inflected for number (*soprammobile* / PL *soprammobili* over_furniture ‘ornament’).

17.2.3 Adjectival compounds

17.2.3.1 AA compounds

Most compound adjectives involve two adjectives (D’Achille and Grossmann 2009; 2010; Grossmann and Rainer 2009).[1] There are also nonce-formations made up of more than two As that cannot be broken down into binary structures (*gestione amministrativo-economico-finanziaria* ‘administrative-economic-financial management’). Adjectival compounds typically have a compositional meaning, and cases of lexicalized constructions are rare. The constituents can be simplex (*agrodolce* ‘sweet-and-sour’), denominal (*argilloso-sabbioso* ‘clayey-sandy’), deadjectival (*rossiccio-verdastro* ‘reddish-greenish’), deverbal (*protestatario-rivendicativo* ‘protesting-claiming’), or compound (*sentimental-strappalacrime* ‘sentimental-tear-jerking’) adjectives. They can occur either as free morphological forms or with internal readjustment meant to signal conceptual unity by a formal marker. The most common strategies for obtaining two-item sequences with a higher degree of integration are as follows: (a) insertion of the linking vowel *-o-* in the case of first constituents of the *-o* class and, more rarely, of other classes (*occhi azzurro-verdi* ‘blue-green eyes’, *coproduzione belgo-italiana* ‘Belgian and Italian coproduction’);[2] (b) deletion of the final vowel of first constituents of the *-e* and, more rarely, *-o* class with stems ending in a sonorant (*clerical-conservatore* ‘clerical-conservative’, *salvinian-meloniano* ‘of Salvini and Meloni’); (c) suffix deletion in first constituents derived from bases with stems ending in a sonorant, with or without insertion of a linking *-o-* (*massonico-giudaico* → *masson-giudaico* ‘Masonic-Judaic’, *musicale-teatrale* → *musico-teatrale* ‘musical-theatrical’); (d) clipping of first constituents (*gastronomico-culturale* → *gastroculturale* ‘gastronomic-cultural’); (e) occurrence of specific combining forms as first constituents (*anglo-italiano* ‘English-Italian’); (f) haplology

(*eroico-comico* → *eroicomico* ‘mock-heroic’). Many constructions, with or without readjustment, occur in two variants (*aspetti giuridico-formali* vs *aspetti giuridici-formali* ‘legal-formal aspects’), which, however, do not appear to have the same frequency. Compounds with linking *-o-* or a modified first constituent have a single morphological locus for gender and number agreement at the end of the sequence, while others waver between agreement on the second A and an asyndetic pattern, close to syntax, with double inflexion. In the case of compounds with more than two constituents, the number of readjustments and morphological loci increases accordingly.

Most AA compounds are coordinate. The constituents are semantically at the same taxonomic level and independently and simultaneously modify the syntactic head. The constituent order is free in principle, but pragmatic and prosodic factors may play a role, as in the case of nominal compounds (the order conveys a difference in meaning if the syntactic head is a noun such as *dizionario* ‘dictionary’: *italiano-inglese* ‘Italian-English’ vs *inglese-italiano* ‘English-Italian’). If the adjectives are of the qualifying type, the compound can have either an additive reading (*ragazzo sordomuto* ‘deaf-mute boy’) or an intersective reading (*divisa grigioverde* uniform grey_green ‘olive-drab uniform’). However, most constituents of coordinate AA compounds are relational adjectives that express a relation to a noun rather than a property. In this case, there can be either an additive relationship (*considerazioni filosofico-politiche* ‘philosophical-political considerations’) or a ‘between’ relationship (*compromesso catto-comunista* ‘catholic-communist compromise’) between the referents of the two (or more) nominal bases. The choice between the two readings depends on the meaning of the syntactic head (compare *piano americano-italiano* ‘American-Italian plan’ with *accordo americano-italiano* ‘American-Italian agreement’).

Constructions with an attributive relationship between constituents are less frequent. These are semantically left-headed colour terms exhibiting fluctuation between agreement marking only on the first constituent, only on the second, on both, or on neither (Grossmann and D’Achille 2019). The modifiers can be simplex (*occhi azzurro-chiari* ‘light-blue eyes’), deadjectival (*chiazza rosso-*

bluastra ‘bluish-red stain’), or denominal (*capelli nero-corvini* ‘raven-black hair’) adjectives.

Newspaper corpora show subordinate AA constructions with relational adjectives: the right-hand adjective acts as modifier and has scope over the whole constituted by the head noun and the first constituent (*settore alimentare-dolciario* ‘food-confectionery sector’).

17.2.3.2 AN and NA compounds

Among adjectival compounds involving a noun and an adjective, the only productive pattern is the semantically left-headed AN type formed by a colour adjective and a noun specifying a shade (*verde bottiglia* ‘bottle green’). Usually, these constructions are invariable, but in corpora there are instances of agreement marking on the adjectival head (*occhi verdi smeraldo* ‘emerald-green eyes’). Right-headed NA compounds, such as *internet-dipendente* ‘internet addict’, which are probably calques on English models, are rarer.

17.2.3.3 VN compounds

Ricca (2010) has shown that in the corpus *la Repubblica* 1985–2000, containing issues of an Italian daily newspaper, among VN compounds in the low-frequency range about half of the hapaxes and low-frequency items are adjectives or noun modifiers (cf. §17.2.2.3). Among the sixty-one VN compounds listed by *Osservatorio neologico della lingua italiana* over half are adjectives, about one-third are listed as having both nominal and adjectival usage, and fewer than 10 are listed as nouns only. Often these are not stored in the permanent lexicon, but function as ‘reduced relative clauses’ (Ricca 2010:252); a particularly rich series is formed with *salva-* ‘save’ to modify nouns such as *legge* ‘law’ or *decreto* ‘decree’: *decreto salva Rai/salva-Venezia* ‘Save Rai/Venice decree’ (Ricca 2005a:481).

17.2.3.4 AdvA and PN compounds

Most right-headed AdvA compounds are formed by *ben*(*e*) 'well', *mal*(*e*) 'badly; ill', and a deverbal adjectival head (*benestante* 'well-to-do', *chiaroveggente* 'clear-sighted', *maleodorante* 'ill-smelling'). Adjectival PN constructions, such as *fuori forma* 'out of shape' show a certain productivity of the preposition *fuori* 'out' as the first constituent.

17.2.4 Verbal compounds

Verbal compounds, such as *capovolgere* head_turn 'overturn', are rare, and the NV pattern is no longer productive. A few established instances have the adverbs *ben*(*e*) 'well' or *mal*(*e*) 'badly; ill' as the first element (*benvolere* 'like', *maltrattare* 'mistreat'). Some newly coined verbs may appear as compounds (Iacobini 2014), but they are either back-formed from nominal compounds involving a combining form (*videoregistrare* 'videotape$_V$' ← *videoregistratore* 'videorecorder'; cf. §17.7), or formed by conversion from a compound noun (*fotocopiare* 'xerox$_V$' ← *fotocopia* 'photocopy'; cf. §17.6.4).

17.2.5 Compounds involving combining forms

The formation of compounds based on bound stems originating from Latin and Ancient Greek lexemes (often called 'neoclassical' elements), particularly to create technical terms in various sciences and technologies, has become common in Neo-Latin from the sixteenth century, and then spread to modern European languages, including Italian; these terms often have parallels in several languages (*psicologia* 'psychology', *cronometro* 'chronometer'). In Italian many such neoclassical compounds were formed (or calqued) mainly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These compounds are right-headed, while native endocentric Italian compounds are mostly left-headed (cf. §17.2.2); more than two elements can be concatenated, both in a coordinative and in a subordinative relation:

[[*epato*][*spleno*]*megalia*] ‘enlargement of liver and spleen’, [*elettro*[*cardiogramma*]] ‘electrocardiogram’ (Iacobini 2015). The most commonly used combining forms (such as *auto-*, *micro-*, *poli-*, *pseudo-*, *mono-*) appear in hundreds of lexemes (Radimský 2006:107). Some of these neoclassical compounds denote objects or concepts frequently encountered in everyday life (*fotografia* ‘photography; snapshot’, *frigorifero* ‘refrigerator’) and are in common usage; they are sometimes shortened to the shape of a minimal prosodic word, a disyllabic foot ending in a vowel (Thornton 1996): *fotografia* → *foto*, *frigorifero* → *frigo* (cf. §17.10). These shortened elements keep the meaning of the whole compound; they may or may not coincide in form with the initial neoclassical element (*foto* ‘snapshot’ = *foto-* ‘light’ but *frigo* ‘fridge’ ≠ *frigori-* ‘cold’). Sometimes the shortened form is used to form new compounds, in which it has the meaning of the whole shortened lexeme (*fotoamatore* ‘lover of photography’, not **lover of light); these ‘second generation’ combining forms (Iacobini 2004a:74) attach to native and even to borrowed lexemes (*fotoreporter* ‘press photographer’). In the non-technical lexicon, the formation of compounds from two neoclassical combining forms has decreased in the twentieth century, while the formation of right-headed compounds with a combining form (of either first or second generation) and a free form has increased (Iacobini and Thornton 1992:47); the most common type has an initial combining form, either neoclassical or newly created (*cardiofitness* ‘cardio workout’, *eurocomunismo* ‘eurocommunism’ with *euro-* from *Europa* ‘Europe’ or *europeo* ‘European’), but final combining forms are also used in combination with Italian lexemes: *birroteca* ‘pub’ ← *birra* ‘beer’ and *-teca*, extracted from neoclassical compounds such as *biblioteca* ‘library’ and used to form nouns of shops, restaurants, etc. specialized in selling or serving whatever is denoted by the first element (*scarpoteca* ‘shoes store’). The element combining with a final combining form of Greek origin usually ends in *-o*, and combining forms in *-o* are created to this end (*birro-* ← *birra* ‘beer’, *scarpo-* ← *scarpe* ‘shoes’); however, this is only a strong tendency, not an inviolable condition, cf. *cineteca* ‘film archives’. Similarly, final combining forms of Latin origin normally combine with initial elements ending in *-i*, either neoclassical or created from non-neoclassical lexemes (*ignifugo* ‘fire resistant’, *zanzarifugo* ‘mosquito

repellent' ← *zanzara* 'mosquito'). Initial combining forms can also combine with verbs: *teleguidare* 'to direct by remote control'.

17.2.6 Phrasal lexemes

Italian has a variety of multi-word items that have a distribution parallel to that of lexemes and a concept-labelling function, therefore contributing to lexical enrichment (Masini 2019:159), but whose structure parallels that of phrases rather than that of single lexemes, including compounds. These entities, which lie at an intermediate point on the morphology-syntax continuum, between compounds and phrases, are variously named in the literature; we will adopt the label 'phrasal lexemes', to emphasize both their phrasal structure and their lexical meaning. Striking differences between compounds and phrasal lexemes include, among others, the possibility of so-called 'minor' categories such as prepositions and articles acting as constituents of these lexemes, and the fact that phrasal lexemes belong not only to the major categories nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, but also to minor categories such as prepositions, conjunctions, and pronouns (*alla luce di* at.the light of 'considering', *dal momento che* from.the moment that 'since', *che cosa* what thing 'what'), although only phrasal lexemes belonging to major categories can be formed according to productive patterns (Masini 2019:164). Most phrasal lexemes are nouns (about 40 per cent of the types in LIP, and over 80 per cent of the types in *Gradit*), followed by verbs, adverbs, and adjectives (Voghera 2004b:57); phrasal lexemes belonging to minor categories have a much lower type frequency, but a relatively high token frequency. The most common patterns forming phrasal nouns are N A (*quota rosa* pink quota 'women's quota') and N P N (*reddito di cittadinanza* income of citizenship 'universal basic income'), followed by A N (*larghe intese* wide agreements 'coalition'). Phrasal lexemes compete with compounds for concept labelling; in diachrony, some phrasal lexemes are univerbated (SG *pomo d'oro* apple of gold 'tomato', PL *pomi d'oro* > SG *pomodoro*, PL *pomodori*); in synchrony, similar entities can be denominated by one or the other type of lexeme (*capogruppo* head_group 'parliamentary group leader' vs *capo dello stato* head

of.the state ‘President’). Since Italian has no productive verb-forming compounds, phrasal verbs are an apt strategy to enlarge the stock of verbs; the two main types are verb-particle constructions (*tirare su* pull up ‘raise; cheer up’) and light verb constructions (*fare squadra* make team ‘team up’). Phrasal adjectives and adverbs mainly have a PP structure, and often the same phrasal lexeme functions as both (*in nero* in black ‘under the table’ can modify both *pagare* ‘pay$_V$’ and *pagamento* ‘payment’).

17.3 Prefixation

Italian has a rich inventory of prefixes that attach productively to nouns, adjectives, and verbs (Iacobini 2004b; 2023; Montermini 2008). Factorization of prefixes with the same base (*medici pro- e antivax* ‘pro- and anti-vaccine physicians’), and recursive use (*anti-antipolitica* ‘anti-antipolitics’) are attested in the media; a small number of prefixes can be used as free morphemes (*gli anti sono sempre i più attivi* ‘the antis are always the most active’). Prefixes, unlike suffixes, do not shift the primary stress of the base; some of them can be written hyphenated, or separately. Phonotactic modifications at the boundary between prefix and base are infrequent: *in*^{1}- exhibits the allomorphs *il-* ~ *im-* ~ *ir-* when the base begins with /l/ ~ /b/, /m/, /p/ ~ /r/; some vowel-final prefixes, such as *contra-*, *sopra-* (*sovra-*), cause the lengthening of the base’s initial consonant. The most important phonological restriction concerns the prefix *s-*, which cannot occur with vowel-initial bases (Passino 2005). Prefixed lexemes inherit the lexical category of the base, and in the case of nouns also its gender. The base can be simplex, or complex (*battere* ‘beat$_V$’ → *battibile* ‘beatable’ → *imbattibile* ‘unbeatable’, *caro* ‘expensive’ + *vita* ‘life’ → *carovita* ‘high cost of living’ → *anti-carovita* ‘anti-high cost of living’), a proper noun (*sanzioni anti-Russia* ‘anti-Russia sanctions’), an acronym (*sindaco non-P*[*artito*]*D*[*emocratico*] ‘non-Democratic Party mayor’), or an established phrase (*l’Italia post-muro di Berlino* ‘post-Berlin Wall Italy’). The main semantic categories expressed by prefixation are

localization, quantitative and qualitative evaluation (see Chapter 18), oppositeness, iterativity, comitativity, reflexivity, and reciprocity.

The category with the largest number of semantic values and prefixes—with equivalents in other European languages—refers to spatial, temporal, and abstract localization (e.g., *ante-*, *anti*^{2}- (to be distinguished from oppositive *anti*^{1}-), *avan-*, *circum-*, *cis-*, *ex-*, *extra-*, *infra-*, *inter-*, *intra-*, *meta-*, *neo-*, *oltre-*, *paleo-*, *para-*, *post-*, *pre-*, *retro-*, *sopra-* (*sovra-*), *sotto-*, *su-*, *sub-*, *super-*, *tra-*, *trans-*, *ultra-*). Several prefixes with locative or temporal function select denominal relational adjectives as bases. In such cases the derivatives can also have a parasynthetic reading, and represent instances of a well-known bracketing paradox: formally, they consist of a prefix and a relational adjective, but semantically, the prefix refers to the nominal base of the adjective, and not to the adjective itself (*settimana* 'week' or *settimanale* 'weekly' → *infrasettimanale* 'midweekly'). The same types of meaning can also be conveyed by prefixed nouns used adjectivally ([*esercitazione*] *interforze* 'interservice [exercise]'). Another group of derivatives of uncertain classification, in this case between prefixation and PN compounding (cf. §17.2.2.5), consists of some exocentric nouns denoting a place or a period relative to the referent of the base noun. Many prefixes with originally locative meaning are productive mainly with intensifying function (see Chapter 18). Hierarchical relationships, including ascending or descending degrees of kinship, are indicated by prefixes such as *arci-*, *bis-*, *pro-*, *sotto-*, *sub-*, *vice-* (*bisnonno* 'great-grandfather', *sottosegretario* 'under-secretary').

A set of productive prefixes, namely *a-* (*an-*), *anti*^{1}- (to be distinguished from locative/temporal *anti*^{2}-), *contro-*, *de-*, *dis-*, *in*^{1}- (to be distinguished from *in*^{2}- which occurs in parasynthetic verbs), *non-*, *s-*, express various oppositive values, and form contraries, contradictories, reversatives, or counteractives of their bases. With the exception of *de-*, which selects only verbal bases, all can be added to nouns and adjectives, while the domain of *contro-*, *dis-*, and *s-* also includes verbs.

The most productive oppositive prefix is *in*^{1}-, which attaches to adjectives with a positive meaning. Derivatives can express a contrary (*felice* → *infelice* 'unhappy'), or a contradictory (*esistente* → *inesistente* 'non-existent') meaning depending on the gradability of

the adjectival base. The prefix frequently selects potential-passive adjectives in *-bile* as bases, cf. §17.5.3.2 (*affidabile* → *inaffidabile* 'unreliable'); in some cases the bases are unattested because they are pragmatically unnecessary, or they are attested later than the prefixed form (*immancabile* 'unfailing', *irresistibile* 'irresistible'). Contrary meaning can also be expressed by adjectives prefixed with *dis-* (*onesto* → *disonesto* 'dishonest'), and *s-* (*contento* → *scontento* 'dissatisfied'). There are a limited number of denominal nouns formed with *in*[1]-, *dis-*, and *s-* referring to the lack of what is denoted by the base (*successo* → *insuccesso* 'failure', *accordo* → *disaccordo* 'disagreement', *fiducia* → *sfiducia* 'mistrust'). Contradictory meaning is conveyed mainly by the highly productive prefix *non-* affixed to nouns and adjectives (*non docente* 'non-teaching', *non governativo* 'non-governmental'). Some derivatives with *non-* denote an entity characterized by the absence of the prototypical characteristics of the base noun's referent (*non-notizia* 'non-news'). The prefix *a-* (*an-*) forms derivatives belonging to learnèd registers, and technical and scientific terminologies (*alcolico* → *analcolico* 'nonalcoholic', *simmetria* → *asimmetria* 'asymmetry').

The prefixes *de-*, *dis-*, *s-* (for the various semantic values of *s-*, see von Heusinger and Schwarze 2006) when affixed to telic bases form reversative verbs encoding an egressive change of state. The basic meaning of these verbs is that of reversing a given state that is the result of a previous event (*cucire* → *scucire* 'unstitch', *penalizzare* → *depenalizzare* 'decriminalize'). If the base is atelic, the prefixed verb denotes a contrary state (*ubbidire* → *disubbidire* 'disobey'). Some verbs prefixed with *s-* encode a quantitative or qualitative evaluation of the event (*parlare* 'speak' → *sparlare* 'bad-mouth', *vendere* 'sell' → *svendere* 'undersell').

The prefix *anti*[1]-, when added to nouns, can have a counteractive meaning (*antiterrorismo* 'counterterrorism') and/or can denote, like some *non-* nouns, an entity with characteristics opposite to those of the referent of the base (*antidivo* 'unconventional star'). *Anti*[1]- has a counteractive meaning even when added to denominal (*anticoncezionale* 'contraceptive'), and deverbal (*antiappannante* 'demister') adjectives; in these cases the prefix refers to the nominal base of the adjective (i.e., *concezione* 'conception'), or to an action noun derived from the verbal base (i.e., *appannamento* 'steaming

up'). A highly productive pattern consists of adjectivally used nouns prefixed with *anti*[1]- (*anti-fannulloni* 'anti-do-nothings'); these types of derivative are often opposed to nouns with the prefix *pro-* meaning 'in favour of; supporting' (*anti-Meloni* vs *pro-Meloni*). Counteractive meaning is also conveyed by nouns, verbs, and, more rarely, relational adjectives prefixed with *contro-* (*controffensiva* 'counteroffensive', *contromanifestare* 'counter-demonstrate', *controfattuale* 'counterfactual').

The function of the prefix *ri-* (*re-*, *r-*), one of the most productive prefixes (Baroni 2007), is related to iterativity. It selects telic (*costruire* → *ricostruire* 'rebuild'), and atelic (*piovere* → *ripiovere* 'rain again') bases, and produces verbs denoting the repetition of an event (*eleggere* → *rieleggere* 're-elect'), return to a previous state (*caricare* → *ricaricare* 'reload; recharge'), or movement in a contrary sense (*dare* → *ridare* 'give back'). The repetitive, restitutive, and counterdirectional reading of the prefixed verb depends on the actionality of the base and the participants involved in the events. The prefix conveys reiterative and frequentative meanings when used recursively (*ri-riascoltare* 'listen again twice'), or in constructions such as *dire e ridire* 'say and say again'. Some derivatives have an intensifying value (*pulire* → *ripulire* 'clean again; thoroughly clean'). There are few nouns and adjectives prefixed with *ri-* (*re-*, *r-*), such as *ingresso* 'entry' → *reingresso* 'reentry', *pieno* 'full' → *ripieno* 'replete'.

Some productive prefixes belonging to other semantic categories are: (a) *co-*, which conveys comitative meaning (*coinquilino* 'flatmate'); (b) *auto-*, which denotes reflexivity, and autonomy (*autocitarsi* 'quote oneself', *autopulente* 'self-cleaning'); (c) *inter-*, which refers to reciprocity (*interagire* 'interact').

17.4 Parasynthesis

Parasynthesis is one of the three devices used to derive verbs from nouns and adjectives, alongside suffixation and conversion (cf. Iacobini 2004c; 2020, and §17.5.4, §17.6.4). Parasynthetic verbs are

formed by simultaneous prefixation and conversion; the presence of both a prefix and a suffix is rather rare (e.g., *detronizzare* 'dethrone' ← *trono* 'throne$_N$'). The bases, particularly adjectival ones, are mostly simplex. Numerous parasynthetic verbs undergo causative/inchoative alternation: the same verb can occur in a transitive construction with an agentive subject representing the external cause of the change and a direct object, and in an intransitive construction, often marked by a clitic in anticausative function, where the agent and the undergoer of the event coincide. The prefixes that most frequently occur with this type of verb are *ad-*, *in*^{2}- (to be distinguished from negative *in*^{1}-), *de-*, *dis-*, and *s-*.

Ad- and *in*^{2}-, unlike *de-*, *dis-*, and *s-*, only occur productively in the formation of parasynthetic verbs. Moreover, in contemporary Italian, only parasynthesis with these two prefixes, particularly *in*^{2}-, is productive in the formation of verbs of the *-ire* inflexional class. Phonotactic modifications at the boundary between prefix and base concern both *ad-*, whose consonant assimilates to the base-initial consonant, and *in*^{2}-, which exhibits the allomorphs already mentioned in §17.3. The semantic functions of the two prefixes overlap: outside a small number of denominal location verbs opposed by the feature [±inside] (e.g., *terra* 'earth; ground' → *interrare* 'bury' / *atterrare* 'land; knock down'), they cannot be associated with any systematic meaning difference. They do not even have specific semantic values compared to denominal and deadjectival verbs formed by suffixation or conversion, and only contribute to the transcategorization of the noun or adjective (for rivalry among verbs derived from the same base by parasynthesis, suffixation, or conversion, see §17.6.4).

Parasynthetic denominal verbs, like suffixed and converted verbs, can denote a wide variety of states of affairs in which the base noun's referent can play different roles. Referents of [–animate], [+concrete] bases can be the result object of the event itself, or a similar entity (*arco* 'arch$_N$' → *inarcare*/*inarcarsi* 'arch$_V$', *fetta* 'slice$_N$' → *affettare* 'slice$_V$'), can have the role of an instrument (*coltello* 'knife$_N$' → *accoltellare* 'knife$_V$'), of a located entity undergoing a change of location (*mobilia* 'furniture' → *ammobiliare* 'furnish'), or of a location that is the goal of the motion (*piatto* 'dish$_N$' →

impiattare ‘dish up’). Referents of [–animate], [–concrete] bases are psychological states representing the result of the event itself (*orgoglio* ‘pride’ → *inorgoglire*/*inorgoglirsi* ‘make/become proud’). Unlike suffixed and converted verbs, parasynthetics derived from [+human] bases (*fratello* ‘brother’ → *affratellare*/*affratellarsi* ‘fraternize’), or from metaphorical meanings of [+animate], [–human] bases (*vipera* ‘viper’ → *inviperire*/*inviperirsi* ‘get furious’) are few.

Parasynthetic deadjectival verbs, which can be causative (‘make A’) and/or inchoative (‘become A’), are mostly derived from qualifying adjectives. They indicate an ingressive change of state, and their meaning depends on the type of the incorporated adjective. If the adjective refers to a gradable property, the parasynthetic verb with *ad-* or *in*²- denotes the event of acquiring, or acquiring a higher degree of, that property (*ricco* ‘rich’ → *arricchire*/*arricchirsi* ‘enrich; get rich or richer’). If the adjective denotes a property not associated with scales, the verb denotes the event of acquiring that property (*vero* ‘true’ → *avverare*/*avverarsi* ‘fulfil; come true’). Unlike suffixed and converted verbs, parasynthetic deadjectival verbs are never stative.

Verbs formed with the prefixes *ad-* or *in*²- from other types of bases are few. There are deadverbials (*oltre* ‘forward$_{ADV}$’ → *inoltrare*/*inoltrarsi* ‘forward$_{V}$; advance$_{V}$’), denumerals (*zero* ‘zero’ → *azzerare*/*azzerarsi* ‘reduce/decrease to zero’), and some obsolete verbs derived from pronouns (*tuo* ‘your’ → *intuarsi* ‘penetrate your thoughts or feelings’).

The prefixes *de-*, *dis-*, and *s-*, which occur productively in verbal prefixation with a reversative meaning (see §17.3), also occur in verbs for which no corresponding denominal or deadjectival verbal base is attested. One group consists of verbs formed mostly with *s-*, which are apparently egressive, but, in fact, have an ingressive meaning. The base of most denominal verbs denotes the part of a whole as the result of the event itself (*briciola* ‘crumb’ → *sbriciolare*/*sbriciolarsi* ‘crumble’). Deadjectival verbs of this kind refer to the acquisition of a property as an exit from a previous state and are equivalent to *ad-* or *in*²- parasynthetic verbs or converted verbs derived from the same bases (*largo* ‘wide’ →

slargare/*slargarsi*, *allargare*/*allargarsi* ‘widen’, *secco* ‘dry$_A$’ → *disseccare*/*disseccarsi*, *seccare*/*seccarsi* ‘dry$_V$’). Another group consists of privative or ablative denominal and deadjectival verbs, which are opposites of *ad-* or *in*^{2}- parasynthetics (*fame* ‘hunger’ → *sfamare* ‘feed; appease hunger’ vs *affamare* ‘starve’). Yet other egressive verbs denote an event which undoes an intrinsic state or an inalienable condition; they could be considered derived through parasynthesis since the corresponding unattested verbal bases, though possible, are pragmatically implausible (*nocciolo* ‘stone$_N$; pit$_N$’ → *snocciolare* ‘stone$_V$; pit$_V$’).

A small number of verbs take other prefixes, such as *con-*, *stra-*, *tra-* (*centro* ‘centre’ → *concentrare*/*concentrarsi* ‘concentrate’, *ripa* ‘bank’ → *straripare* ‘overflow’, *vaso* ‘vessel’ → *travasare* ‘decant’); also *ri-* (cf. §17.3) occurs in some parasynthetic verbs that do not imply iteration of the event (*moderno* ‘modern’ → *rimodernare*/*rimodernarsi* ‘modernize’).

Finally, there are some denominal qualifying adjectives formed by parasynthesis denoting similitude (*mandorla* ‘almond’ → *ammandorlato* ‘almond shaped/flavoured’; cf. §17.5.3.1), or the lack of what the base refers to (*pietà* ‘pity’ → *spietato* ‘pitiless’). Furthermore, even a group of relational adjectives could be considered derived through parasynthesis (e.g., *matrimonio* ‘matrimony’ or *matrimoniale* ‘matrimonial’ → *prematrimoniale* ‘prenuptial’; cf. §17.3).

17.5 Suffixation

17.5.1 Introduction

Denominal and deadjectival suffixes are all vowel-initial; among deverbal suffixes, some are vowel-initial, some are uncontroversially consonant-initial (*-mento*), and some are analysed in different ways by different authors (cf. §17.5.2.3). There has been some debate in

the literature concerning the nature of the base to which vowel-initial suffixes attach: the obvious analysis seems to be that denominal and deadjectival suffixes attach to a stem devoid of inflexional endings; this stem coincides with the root when the base is underived (*forno* 'oven' → *fornaio* 'baker', *bello* 'beautiful' → *bellezza* 'beauty') but contains any previously attached derivational suffixes when the base is suffixed (*dente* 'tooth' → *dentista* 'dentist' → *dentistico* 'dentistical'). Scalise (1983), however, argued that the base of nominal and adjectival suffixation is the citation form, and that a final unstressed vowel (but not a stressed one) is deleted before vowel initial suffixes (*dolore* 'pain' → *doloroso* 'painful', but *virtù* 'virtue' → *virtuoso* 'virtuous'). This may seem an unnecessary complication, but it is true that final unstressed vowels are deleted even when they are not inflexional endings (therefore technically part of a lexeme's root), as in suffixation of onymic bases, numerals, and invariable lexemes (*Milano* 'Milan' → *milanese* 'of/from Milan', *venti* 'twenty' → *ventesimo* 'twentieth', *bene* 'well' → *benino* 'quite well'; cf. Montermini 2003). As for the base in deverbal suffixation, where the citation form is certainly not a viable option, consonant-initial suffixes attach to a verb stem containing a final vowel, coinciding with the thematic vowel for first- and third-conjugation verbs (for further details cf. §17.5.2.3); with vowel-initial suffixes one could still assume that the base is the verb's root (*lavare* 'wash$_V$', root *lav-* → *lavaggio* 'wash(ing)$_N$'), or assume that it is the verb's stem subject to deletion of the unstressed thematic vowel.

17.5.2 Nominal suffixation

17.5.2.1 Denominal nouns

Denominal nouns belong to several derivational categories: person-denoting nouns, instrument nouns, place nouns, status nouns, collective nouns; besides, some denominal nouns are semantically more heterogeneous and not easily classifiable in a specific derivational category. For evaluative nouns, see Chapter 18.

Italian has a fair number of suffixes for the derivation of person-denoting nouns (Lo Duca 2004a). Derivatives fall into two semantic groups. The first consists of classifying nouns denoting someone who carries out a professional activity, while the second includes 'characterizing' nouns denoting persons with distinctive characteristics or habits.

The most productive suffix in contemporary Italian is *-ista*, which selects as bases mainly common and proper nouns (*musica* 'music' → *musicista* 'musician', *Dante* → *dantista* 'Dante scholar'), nominalized adjectives resulting from ellipses ([*diritto*] *penale* 'criminal [law]' → *penalista* 'criminal lawyer'), and, rarely, adverbs (*pressappoco* 'roughly' → *pressappochista* 'careless person'), and verbs (*apprendere* 'learn' → *apprendista* 'apprentice'). Bases include derived and compound nouns (*negare* 'deny' → *negazione* 'denial' → *negazionista* 'denier', *borsa nera* 'black market' → *borsanerista* 'black marketeer'), established phrases or phrasal lexemes (*doppio lavoro* 'double job' → *doppiolavorista* 'moonlighter', *me ne frego* 'I couldn't care less' → *menefreghista* 'person who couldn't-care-less'), and acronyms (*P2* → *piduista* 'member of P2 Masonic lodge'). Unlike person-denoting nouns derived with other suffixes, those with *-ista* denote persons carrying out mainly modern, skilled, and technologically advanced professions. Base nouns can refer to the object or product (*avvolgibile* 'window blind' → *avvolgibilista* 'window blind repairer', *progetto* 'plan' → *progettista* 'planner'), instrument (*camion* 'truck' → *camionista* 'truckdriver'), material (*marmo* 'marble' → *marmista* 'marbler'), and place (*vivaio* 'plant nursery' → *vivaista* 'nurseryman') of the activity. Many derivatives denote persons engaged in activities such as writing (*saggio* 'essay' → *saggista* 'essayist'), research (*arabo* 'Arab' → *arabista* 'arabist'), music (*chitarra* 'guitar' → *chitarrista* 'guitarist'), arts (*ritratto* 'portrait' → *ritrattista* 'portrait painter'), sports (*veloce* 'fast' → *velocista* 'sprinter'). Nouns with *-ista* of the characterizing type denote persons who habitually adopt a favourable attitude towards ideas and movements in the political, economic, social, and scientific fields (*Lenin* → *leninista* 'Leninist'), who belong to groups and associations (*camorra* → *camorrista* 'member of the Camorra'), who support sports teams (*Inter* → *interista* 'Inter Milan fan'), or who have particular habits of behaviour (*allarme* 'alarm' → *allarmista*

‘alarmist’). Many *-ista* characterizing nouns also have adjectival uses (cf. §17.6.3), and a parallel *-ismo* derivative denoting the corresponding ideology, school of thought, or habitual behaviour.

Other suffixes that form person-denoting nouns are less productive. Derivatives with *-aio/a*, *-aiolo/a*, and their regional variants *-aro/a*, *-arolo/a*, refer to more traditional and/or less prestigious trades (compare *giornale* ‘newspaper’ → *giornalaio* ‘newsagent’ with *giornalista* ‘journalist’). They denote persons related to crafts and commercial activities (*benzina* ‘petrol’ → *benzinaio* ‘petrol pump attendant’, *pizza* → *pizzaiolo* ‘pizza chef’), or having stigmatized behaviour (*donna* ‘woman’ → *donnaiolo* ‘womanizer’). *-aro* shows some productivity, free of regional connotation, in the formation of names of new humble trades or of negatively connotated behaviour and habits (*kebab* → *kebabbaro* ‘kebab joint owner’, *panchina* ‘bench’ → *panchinaro* ‘bench warmer’).

A slightly productive suffix is *-iere/a* (the variant *-iero* today only forms denominal adjectives), used primarily to form nouns related to the military field (*fucile* ‘rifle’ → *fuciliere* ‘rifleman’), sailing (*gondola* → *gondoliere* ‘gondolier’), food preparation and/or sale (*salume* ‘cured meat’ → *salumiere* ‘pork butcher’), surveillance (*carcere* ‘prison’ → *carceriere* ‘warder’), and, more rarely, writing (*romanzo* ‘novel’ → *romanziere* ‘novelist’).

Most denominal person-denoting nouns derived with *-one/a*, a suffix whose most common function in contemporary Italian is the formation of augmentatives (see §18.2.2), and which is also used to form deverbal person-denoting nouns (cf. §17.5.2.3), are of the characterizing type. They refer to persons with very obvious deviant or uncommon physical features or behaving in a way that makes them ridiculous or controversial (*capello* ‘hair’ → *capellone* ‘longhair; hippie’, *farfalla* ‘butterfly’ → *farfallone* ‘flighty person’). Some widely used person-denoting nouns are formed with the suffixes *-ante* and *-ino/a*, which are otherwise barely productive in this function (*braccio* ‘arm’ → *bracciante* ‘farmhand’, *posta* ‘post’ → *postino* ‘postman’).

In recent times, social pressure to promote equal opportunities between men and women has boosted the creation of feminine role nouns denoting women who have roles or professions traditionally

reserved for men (or very occasionally vice versa); for traditionally feminine jobs and roles, specific nouns have existed for centuries. Various lexeme formation devices are used to this end. The creation of a feminine noun with singular in *-a* and plural in *-e* symmetrical to masculine nouns in *-o*, and to nouns in *-iere* and *-one*, is most common (*ministra* 'female minister', *ingegnera* 'female engineer', *beona* 'female heavy drinker'). Sometimes the same process applies to masculine nouns that denote humans by metaphor (*modello* 'model' → *modella* 'female fashion/artist's model'; but *campione* 'sample; champion' yielded *campionessa* 'female champion'); *capa* 'female boss' ← *capo* 'head; boss' and *membra* 'female member' ← *membro* 'limb; member' are still perceived as jocular or substandard. Symmetrical derivation is sometimes also applied to epicene nouns, mostly with political aims: *personaggio* 'character' → *personaggia* 'female character'. *Mammo* ← *mamma* 'mum' was created to denote 'a father who performs stereotypically maternal duties' (Thornton 2004a).

Traditionally, feminine role nouns were created by adding the suffix *-essa* to the corresponding masculine nouns (*profetessa* 'female prophet'). In the past, nouns in *-essa* often denoted wives of men having a given role (*generalessa* 'general's wife'). Nowadays, most nouns in *-essa* are perceived as derogatory, and guidelines (e.g., Sabatini, A. 1987; Robustelli 2012; Thornton 2020) for non-sexist usage of Italian prescribe, e.g., *la vigile* vs *vigilessa* 'DEF.FSG traffic policewoman', *avvocata* vs *avvocatessa* 'female lawyer', *la presidente* vs. *presidentessa* 'DEF.FSG president'. *Dottoressa* 'female doctor', *professoressa* 'female teacher/professor', *studentessa* 'female student' are not perceived as derogatory anymore—but they were in the past. To avoid derogatory overtones, which seem to be associated with almost all nouns denoting women in high-status roles when they first appear, several women prefer to use masculine nouns for self-denotation (e.g., *ministro* 'minister', *rettore* 'vice-chancellor').

Masculine nouns in *-tore* (see §17.5.2.3) have corresponding feminine nouns in *-trice* (*attore* 'actor' / *attrice* 'actress'); however, nouns in *-sore* do not have corresponding feminine nouns in *-srice* because /sr/ is phonotactically dispreferred (creations such as *difensrice* 'female defender' are attested but jocular or extremely substandard; cf. Thornton 2012a), and there is variation between

feminines in *-sora* derived from the corresponding masculine nouns (*difensora*) and feminines in *-trice* derived from a base verb (*difenditrice*). When no base verb exists, the only productive option is a feminine in *-a*: *assessora* '(female) councillor'. Compounds denoting roles can be used equally well to denote men and women: *il/la capotreno* 'train manager'.

To emphasize the stereotypically unexpected association between roles and sex, juxtaposition of role nouns and the nouns *uomo* 'man', *donna* 'woman' is sometimes used: *avvocato donna* 'female lawyer', *maschera uomo* 'male usher'. The nouns *maschio* 'male', *femmina* 'female' are sometimes used to create denominations for animals of a specific sex from epicene nouns (*la volpe maschio* 'DEF.FSG male fox(F)'); but some animals have nouns denoting females formed in ways parallel to those used to form nouns denoting women (*lupa* 'she-wolf' ← *lupo* 'wolf', *leonessa* 'lioness' ← *leone* 'lion').

Instrument nouns, i.e., nouns that designate inanimate entities habitually used to perform an action related to the base noun's referent, are primarily formed with the suffix *-iera* (Lo Duca 2004b). Most derivatives refer to peripheral members of the instrument category. These include names of household utensils and appliances (*bistecca* 'beefsteak' → *bistecchiera* 'gridiron'), furniture (*angolo* 'corner' → *angoliera* 'corner cupboard'), clothing that protects or supports body parts (*ginocchio* 'knee' → *ginocchiera* 'knee pad'), transport ships (*petrolio* 'oil' → *petroliera* 'tanker'). Several derivatives with *-iera* denote containers for storing or serving food (*sale* 'salt' → *saliera* 'saltcellar'), as well as other types of containers (*acquasanta* 'holy water' → *acquasantiera* 'aspersorium; holy water stoup'); names of containers can be interpreted both as instrument nouns and as place nouns. Some derivatives, e.g., *petroliera* 'tanker', are transcategorisations of denominal adjectives due to ellipsis of the head noun in a NP (*nave petroliera* 'tanker ship'). The role of other suffixes in the formation of instrument nouns, such as *-iere* (*brace* 'embers' → *braciere* 'brazier'), *-ale* (*pugno* 'fist' → *pugnale* 'dagger'), and *-aiolo* (*rame* 'copper' → *ramaiolo* 'ladle') is marginal. Lastly, it should be noted that there is a large set of nouns formed with evaluative suffixes (see Chapter 18) and lexicalized with instrumental meaning (*forno* 'oven' → *fornello* 'burner', *spalla* 'shoulder' → *spallina* 'shoulder pad; strap').

The most productive suffix for deriving place nouns is *-eria*, which also contributes to the formation of quality, status, and collective nouns (Lo Duca 2004c). One group of derivatives denotes places (shops, factories, workshops) used for the production, repair, and/or sale of the product indicated by the base noun or connected to it (*salume* 'cured meat' → *salumeria* 'charcuterie'), or the premises where N is prepared, sold, and/or consumed (*birra* 'beer' → *birreria* 'pub; brewery'). Another group indicates the places where the person denoted by the base noun performs his/her professional activity (*falegname* 'carpenter' → *falegnameria* 'carpenter's workshop'). Several derivatives with *-eria* also refer to the trade exercised and the set of products related to the activity (*pelliccia* 'fur' → *pellicceria* 'furrier's; furrier's craft; furs'). The domain of *-eria* also includes some verbs (*stirare* 'iron' → *stireria* 'ironing establishment/room'; see §17.5.2.3). The suffix *-ia* forms place nouns with similar meanings and, like *-eria*, also produces quality, status, and collective nouns; it selects nouns with *-tore* as bases (*friggitore* 'fried-food vendor' → *friggitoria* 'fried-food shop'). The suffixes *-aio* and *-aia* also contribute to the formation of place nouns. Most derivatives are midway between place nouns and collectives and denote the presence of plants, animals, or other entities in large quantities, as well as the places where they are usually found, live, grow, abound, or are stored or bred (*colombo* 'pigeon' → *colombaia* 'dovecoat', *ginepro* 'broom' → *ginepraio* 'broom thicket'). Some derivatives with *-iera* and *-ile* have similar meanings (*coniglio* 'rabbit' → *conigliera* 'rabbit hutch/pen', *gatto* 'cat' → *gattile* 'cattery').

Status nouns denote the role in a political, administrative, ecclesiastical, or military hierarchy or, in a broader sense, the social status or the state of the base noun's referent. Many exhibit metonymic extensions and indicate the seat or territory in which the office is held, its duration, the set of people who have the same role, or the activity performed. The main suffix occurring in status nouns is *-ato* (*assistente* 'assistant' → *assistentato* 'assistantship'). Other suffixes are barely or not at all productive. Among them, we find some whose main function is the formation of quality or action nouns, e.g., *-aggio* (*zitella* 'spinster' → *zitellaggio* 'spinsterhood'), *-anza* (*fratello* 'brother' → *fratellanza* 'brotherhood'), *-enza* (*-za*) (*preside* 'dean' or *presidente* 'president' → *presidenza* 'deanship;

presidency'), *-eria* (*paggio* 'page' → *paggeria* 'pagehood'), *-ia* (*barone* 'baron' → *baronia* 'barony'), *-ità* (*disabile* 'disabled' → *disabilità* 'disability'), *-ità* (*schiavo* 'slave' → *schiavitù* 'slavery'), *-itudine* (*casalinga* 'housewife' → *casalinghitudine* 'housewifeship').

Collective nouns are derived with a large number of different suffixes (Grossmann 2004a; Mihatsch 2021). However, few of them have the primary function of deriving collectives; the majority form nouns that belong to other semantic categories but can be used metonymically with a collective meaning. Among the typically collective suffixes, namely, *-ame*, *-ume*, *-aglia*, *-ime*, *-uglio*, *-iglia*, and *-iglio*, only the first three are productive. The base is usually a noun (*pollo* 'chicken' → *pollame* 'poultry'), an adjective, perhaps nominalized after ellipsis of the head of a NP (*trito* 'scrapped' → *tritume* 'scraps'), a verb (*accozzare* 'gather' → *accozzaglia* 'motley'), or a numeral (*terzo* 'third' → *terziglia* 'threesome'). Derivatives denoting sets of persons tend to have a negative connotation (*impiegato* 'employee' → *impiegatume* 'petty employees'). Nonce-formations derived from proper nouns, usually of politicians, designating the set of persons, reasoning, attitudes associated with them, also imply a derogatory evaluation (*Renzi* → *renzaglia*). Many collective nouns are semantic extensions of action nouns (*immigrare* 'immigrate' → *immigrazione* 'immigration'), result nouns (*sminuzzare* 'mince' → *sminuzzatura* 'fragments'), quality nouns (*criminale* 'criminal' → *criminalità* 'felonry'), and status nouns (*rabbino* 'rabbi' → *rabbinato* 'rabbinate'). Other suffixes can also have collective function, e.g., *-eria* (*rubinetto* 'tap' → *rubinetteria* 'taps'), *-istica* (*manuale* 'handbook' → *manualistica* 'manuals'), *-ario* (*scheda* 'card' → *schedario* 'card catalog'), *-iere* (*medaglia* 'medal' → *medagliere* 'collection of medals'), *-ata* (*cucciolo* 'puppy' → *cucciolata* 'litter'), and *-ismo* (*consonante* 'consonant' → *consonantismo* 'consonant system').

A group of semantically heterogeneous lexemes consists of the numerous derivatives with *-ata*, *-ismo*, *-istica*, *-ese*, and *-ite*. Derivatives with *-ata* from nouns or nominalized adjectives convey a great variety of derivational meanings related to each other, and sometimes exhibited by the same lexeme (Acquaviva 2005; D'Achille and Grossmann 2019). They can indicate a blow with or to N (*ginocchio* 'knee' → *ginocchiata* 'blow with/to the knee'), an act,

usually negatively valued and characteristic for N (*mascalzone* 'villain' → *mascalzonata* 'villainy'), an event connected to N (*spaghetti* → *spaghettata* 'spaghetti-based meal'), a quantity contained in/on/around N (*cucchiaio* 'spoon' → *cucchiaiata* 'spoonful'), food or drink based on N (*peperone* 'pepper' → *peperonata* 'pepper-based dish'), a series of N (*colonna* 'column' → *colonnata* 'colonnade'), an augmentative of N (*camera* 'room' → *camerata* 'dormitory'), and what is included in the timespan denoted by N (*giorno* 'day' → *giornata* 'all-day; daytime').

The suffix *-ismo* is among the most productive suffixes; it attaches to common and proper nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, and established phrases (for the distribution of *-ismo* with respect to *-esimo*, descendant from the same Latin base, see Rainer 2004a). Derivatives, partly loans and calques, denote political, philosophical, scientific, religious, artistic concepts (*dirigere* 'direct$_V$' → *dirigismo* 'dirigisme'), social phenomena (*ben altro* 'something quite different' → *benaltrismo* 'whataboutism'), sporting activities (*paracadute* 'parachute' → *paracadutismo* 'parachuting'), pathological states (*sonnambulo* 'sleepwalker' → *sonnambulismo* 'sleepwalking'), linguistic characteristics (*toscano* 'Tuscan' → *toscanismo* 'Tuscanism'). Many of them have a corresponding person-denoting noun in *-ista*.

Lexemes derived from nouns or adjectives with *-istica* sometimes correspond to relational adjectives in *-istico*; they refer to fields of study (*slavo* 'Slavic' → *slavistica* 'Slavonic studies'), literary genres (*saggio* 'essay' → *saggistica* 'non-fiction'), economic activities (*componente* 'component' → *componentistica* 'component production'), sports disciplines (*peso* 'weight' → *pesistica* 'weightlifting').

The suffixes *-ese* and *-ite* occur in many negatively connotated nonce-formations created with jocular intentions. The suffix *-ese* attaches to nouns and adjectives, and is productive for designating the jargon of a particular group, field, or media (*sindacale* 'related to trade unions' → *sindacalese*). The suffix *-ite*, used in medical terminology, occurs in derivatives referring metaphorically to certain 'diseases'. The base can be a noun, an adjective, or a verb (*sondaggio 'poll'* → *sondaggite 'poll mania'*, *imbecille* 'idiot' → *imbecillite* 'idiocy disease', *lamentarsi* 'complain' → *lamentite* 'complaining habit').

17.5.2.2 Deadjectival nouns

Deadjectival quality nouns have been thoroughly investigated by Rainer (1989). Around thirty suffixes are used in established quality nouns, but only a few are productive. The most productive and type-frequent one is *-ità* (*-età* after bases ending in /j/: *precario* → *precarietà* 'precariousness'); *-ità* has 'a close affinity to bases with Latinate suffixes or final sequences' (Rainer 2016:2722); among neologisms listed by the *Osservatorio neologico della lingua italiana*, most have bases in *-bile*, *-ale*, *-oso* (*tracciabilità* 'traceability', *genitorialità* 'parenthood', *talentuosità* 'talentedness'). Recently, *-ietà* tends to be used with bases in *-are* (*complementarietà* vs *complementarità* ← *complementare* 'complementary'); this tendency is stigmatized by grammarians and educated speakers, but the innovative type is gaining ground (https://tinyurl.com/38axeprx). The second most important suffix to form quality nouns is *-ezza*, a popular suffix which favours short, disyllabic bases, and bases ending in /t/, among which participles that have a lexicalized adjectival meaning (*bello* 'beautiful' → *bellezza* 'beauty', *alto* 'tall, high' → *altezza* 'height', *elaborato* 'elaborate'→ *elaboratezza* 'elaborateness'); there are not many neologisms with *-ezza* because this suffix has almost exhausted its domain (the *Osservatorio neologico della lingua italiana* lists *smagatezza* 'disenchantedness'). Compound adjectives with a neoclassical element of Greek origin as second member select *-ia* /ˈi.a/ (*misogino* 'misogynous' → *misoginia* 'misoginy', *omonimo* 'homonymous' → *omonimia* 'homonymy'). Two other suffixes, *-aggine* and *-eria*, are semantically specialized to refer to negative human qualities, propensities, or physical defects; Rainer (2004b:307–309) lists a number of semantic niches hosting several nouns formed with these suffixes to denote the qualities of being 'stupid', 'villain', 'stingy', and the like; a neologism is *broccaggine* ← *brocco* 'incapable' (especially applied to sportsmen).

17.5.2.3 Deverbal nouns

Italian has deverbal nouns in all the traditional derivational categories of *nomina actionis*, *agentis*, *instrumenti*, and *loci*. Rainer

(2016) states that there are thirty different suffixes to form action nouns, of which only seven are productive. Listing them is not unproblematic, since often the citation form of the suffix depends on theoretical assumptions about the nature of the verbal base to which the suffixes attach, a topic which has been widely debated in Italian morphology in the last decades (see Thornton 2015).

The most type-frequent of these suffixes is of learnèd origin, and entered Italian through learnèd or semi-learnèd borrowings from Latin such as *abolizione* 'abolition', *accensione* 'switching on'. Some of these can be synchronically analysed as formed by a verb stem and a suffix of the form *-zione* (*aboli-zione* ← *abolire* 'abolish'), but others do not lend themselves to this analysis. Some scholars (Scalise 1983; Dardano 1978) have suggested that the past participle stem is the formal base, with the intervention of a rule turning /t/ into /ts/ (spelled <z>) when followed by *-ione*, which is considered to be the form of the suffix: so *assumere* 'assume; hire', past participle stem *assunt-* → *assunzione*. This analysis, however, does not work for cases such as *accensione* (*accendere* 'switch on; light up', past participle stem *acces-*, ***accesione*), *ammissione* (*ammettere* 'admit', past participle stem *ammess-*, ***ammessione*) and many others, which can only be analysed as borrowings (Thornton 1990–1991). The most productive rule adds *-zione* to a verb stem that ends in a thematic vowel; this stem is a derivational stem, which is identical to the default verb stem used in inflexion for verbs of the first and third conjugations, but different from it for verbs of the second conjugation, where /e/ appears in the inflexional default stem but /i/ appears in the stem used in derivation (*perd-e-re* 'lose' but *perd-i-zione* 'perdition'). Learnèd borrowings formed on the Latin third stem (as defined by Aronoff 1994), or nouns formed on the basis of the Italian participial stem, or by analogy with previously attested Latin borrowings, continue to appear, particularly in technical terminology (Thornton 2015:794). Derivation of action nouns in *-zione* is favoured from verbs in *-ificare* and *-izzare*, while from bases containing *-eggiare*, the popular counterpart of learnèd *-izzare*, derivation with *-zione* is banned and action nouns are derived by means of the popular suffix *-mento*, or of conversion yielding masculine nouns in *-o* (cf. §17.6.2), and only marginally with the suffix *-tura* (*tinteggiatura* 'wall painting' ← *tinteggiare* 'paint walls').

Derivatives in *-mento* are based on the verb's derivational stem (exceptions such as *movimento* 'movement' ← *muovere* 'move' are very few), while derivatives in *-tura* display the same behaviour as those in *-zione*, with several nouns of Latinate origin displaying a participial stem followed by *-ura* (*chiusura* 'closing' vs *chiudere* 'close') alongside modern derivatives from the base verb's derivational stem (*prezzatura* 'adding a price tag' ← *prezzare* 'add a price tag'). Nouns in *-tura* usually denote technical operations, as do nouns in *-aggio*, formed on the base of the verb's root (or the verb's stem with subsequent deletion of its final vowel before a vowel-initial suffix); *-aggio* is often used in nouns which are adaptations of French nouns in *-age* or English nouns in *-ing*, or derived from loanwords (*finissaggio* < Fr. *finissage* 'finishing', *dopaggio* 'doping', *settaggio* 'setting' ← *settare* 'set').

Action nouns which are formally identical to the feminine form of the past participle denote single instances of the action denoted by the base verb (*lavata* 'a wash', *corsa* 'a run', *bevuta* 'a drink'); these 'semelfactive' nouns contrast with nouns in *-io* /ˈi.o/, which 'imply iterativity' (Rainer 2016:2723); these are formed from the verb's root (or stem, with the usual vowel deletion before a vowel-initial suffix) and often select as bases sound emission verbs (*mormorio* ← *mormorare* 'mutter'). On action nouns, see also Gaeta (2004).

The most productive suffix forming person-denoting nouns is *-tore/-ore*, which exhibits allomorphy parallel to that observed in *-zione/-ione*, with some derivatives adding *-tore* to the verb's derivational stem (*giocatore* 'player') and others, often in *-sore*, which are either (semi-)learnèd borrowings from Latin (*aggressore* 'aggressor'), sometimes also interpretable as formed on the base of the past participle stem (*oppressore* 'oppressor'), or formed on the stem of the action noun in *-ione* from the same verb, as convincingly shown by Rainer (2001): *estorsore* 'extortioner' (vs *estorcitore*, from the derivational stem of *estorcere* 'extort', *estortore* from the past participle stem) shares a stem with *estorsione* 'extortion'. This suffix is productive in forming nouns from verbs which select as subject an agent, which acts volitionally and intentionally, but not from verbs which select as subject an experiencer or theme. These yield person-denoting nouns formally identical to the present participle (*credente* 'believer', *perdente* 'loser'); however, this type can also be used to derive nouns that denote real agents (*cantante* 'singer'). When there

are two derivatives from the same base, usually the one in *-nte* denotes someone performing an action more occasionally and/or less volitionally than someone denoted by a parallel noun in *-tore* (e.g., *uditore* lit. hearer 'someone who attends classes, hence, hears lectures, without being formally enrolled' vs *udente* lit. hearing 'non-deaf').

Deverbal person-denoting nouns in *-one*, a suffix homophonous with an augmentative one (cf. §18.2.2) and a denominal one (cf. §17.5.2.1), denote people who carry on the action denoted by the verb to excess, and have a negative connotation, implying reproach (*mangione* 'big eater; glutton' ← *mangiare* 'eat'). Deverbal person-denoting nouns in *-ino*, a suffix homophonous with several others, including a diminutive suffix (cf. §18.2.1.2), one used to derive adjectives (cf. §17.5.3.1), and one used to derive denominal person-denoting nouns (cf. §17.5.2.1), denote either people having low-prestige jobs (*spazzino* 'street sweeper' ← *spazzare* 'sweep'), or people having some negatively evaluated habit (*lecchino* 'suck-up' ← *leccare* 'lick'). See Rainer (2024).

Lo Duca (2004e) has drawn attention to deverbal person-denoting nouns in *-tario*; these denote the third argument of a trivalent base verb, which has the role of beneficiary, and are mostly used as technical terms in law or banking, where precise definition of roles is required (*affidatario* 'trustee; foster parent' ← *affidare* 'trust', *aggiudicatario* 'contractor; successful bidder' ← *aggiudicare* 'award'). Other non-agentive person-denoting nouns are patient nouns: nouns in *-ndo*, homonymous with the gerund, denote someone about to undergo the action denoted by the verb, while nouns homonymous with the past participle denote someone who has undergone it (*battezzando* 'one soon to be baptized', *battezzato* 'one who has been baptized' ← *battezzare* 'baptize').

Deverbal instrument nouns can be formed with several suffixes, among which the most productive ones are *-tore*, *-trice*, *-toio*; much less productive is *-ino*; nouns homophonous with the present participle can also have instrumental meaning (*stampante* 'printer' ← *stampare* 'print'). Some of these suffixes are also used to form person-denoting (so-called agent) nouns; this coincidence has traditionally been ascribed to a metaphoric extension from agent to instrument, but Rainer (2004c) has shown that this is not correct.

Rather, since in several Italo-Romance dialects the continuants of Latin -TORE(M), which had only agentive meaning, and -TORIU(M), which had instrumental meaning, have merged due to phonetic change, in these dialects confusion between the two suffixes has ensued; this has been projected back to medieval Latin texts originating in these dialectal areas, and hence to standard Italian. In Tuscan the two suffixes remain distinct, as *-tore* and *-toio* (popular continuant of -TORIU(M); *-torio*, a learnèd outcome, is hardly ever used with instrumental meaning). So we have instrument nouns from the same base with different suffixes, denoting different objects (*stendere* 'stretch$_V$' → *stenditoio* 'clothes horse', *stenditore* 'tenter; fabric spreader'); besides, nouns denoting the same object can be formed from the same base with different suffixes or other lexeme-formation devices (*stendino*, *stenditoio*, and the VN compounds *stendibiancheria* stretch_laundry and *stendipanni* stretch_clothes are all used for 'clothes horse'). Lo Duca (2004d:364) observed that there are no rigid boundaries between the meanings and types of referents for which the various instrumental suffixes can be used, but some tendencies can be outlined. A very type-frequent suffix is *-trice*, whose instrumental meaning became productive after the industrial revolution; it is possible that the suffix was first used in adjectives modifying the noun *macchina* 'machine'; then these adjectives were nominalized after ellipsis of the head noun, and became a model for direct deverbal derivatives (e.g., *macchina motrice* lit. machine that moves is attested at least since 1821, *motrice a vapore* at least since 1837, *una motrice elettromagnetica* in 1846 and *una motrice* without further modifiers 'engine; locomotive' since 1854, according to searches on Google Books, 29 May 2023). According to Gaeta (2010:87) over three hundred nouns in *-trice* denoting instruments or machines are listed by Sabatini and Coletti (1997) as coined in the twentieth century. Deverbal instrument nouns in *-ino* (Rainer 2023) usually denote small household devices (*accendino* 'lighter' ← *accendere* 'light').

Deverbal place nouns are formed mainly with the learnèd suffix *-torio (dormitorio* 'dormitory'← *dormire* 'sleep'), which also appears in several opaque place nouns from Latinate stems (*obitorio* 'morgue'); a few nouns, sometimes ambiguous between place and instrument reading, contain the popular counterpart *-toio*

(*abbeveratoio* ‘drinking trough; watering place’ ← *abbeverarsi* ‘drink’ (of animals)). A few deverbal nouns denoting shops and workshops are formed by the mainly denominal (see §17.5.2.1) suffix *-eria* (*distilleria* ‘distillery’ ← *distillare* ‘distil’, and the occasional and jocular *mangeria* ← *mangiare* ‘eat’ and *beveria* ← *bere* ‘drink’).

17.5.3 Adjectival suffixation

17.5.3.1 Denominal adjectives

A number of suffixes form relational and qualifying adjectives from nouns (Rainer 2021a; Wandruszka 2004). Relational adjectives have a classifying or identifying function and, unlike qualifying adjectives, do not refer to the quality or property of the entity denoted by the modified noun, but indicate different types of relations that this entity establishes with the referent of the base noun. The classifying function is shared with prepositional phrases and some appositive nominal compounds (see §17.2.2.1). Wandruszka (2004) shows that establishing a systematic correspondence between the selection of certain suffixes and the qualifying or relational reading is difficult. This is mainly because many relational adjectives can be recategorized as qualifying (cf. *disturbo nervoso* ‘nervous disorder’ vs *persona nervosa* ‘nervous person’). However, the distinction between the relational and qualifying functions can differentiate adjectives derived from the same base but with different suffixes (*muscolo* ‘muscle’ → *muscolare* ‘relating to muscle’ vs *muscoloso* ‘having well-developed muscles’).

Among suffixes forming relational adjectives, the most productive are: *-ale* (*-are*), *-ario*, *-ico*, *-iero*, *-istico*, and *-ivo*. These adjectives, many belonging to technical and scientific terminologies, can refer to a wide range of relations depending on the meanings of the modified and the base noun, and on the speakers’ world knowledge. For example, the base noun can refer to an agent (*indagine poliziesca* ‘police investigation’), undergoer (*elezione presidenziale* ‘presidential election’), possessor (*palazzo vescovile* ‘bishop’s palace’), instrument (*inchiesta telefonica* ‘phone survey’), place (*navigazione costiera* ‘coastal navigation’), period (*pioggia*

settembrina ‘September rain’). An adjective can have different readings depending on the modified noun (*riforma universitaria* ‘university reform’ vs *vita universitaria* ‘university life’), and it can indicate two types of relationship even when combined with the same noun (*politica regionale* ‘politics of the region’ vs ‘politics regarding the region/regions’).

Most qualifying adjectives express similarity and/or possession and are derived with the suffixes *-aceo*, *-ato*, *-esco*, *-ino*, *-oso*, *-uto*, among others. In the case of similitudinal adjectives the modified noun’s referent is characterized as sharing some salient properties with the base noun’s referent (*gelatina* ‘gelatin; jelly’ → *gelatinoso* ‘gelatinous’). In the case of possessive adjectives, the modified noun’s referent is characterized by possessing something denoted by the base noun’s referent (*coraggio* ‘courage’ → *coraggioso* ‘brave’); adjectives derived from bases denoting inalienable properties indicate that an entity is endowed with N to an above-average degree (*pancia* ‘belly’ → *panciuto* ‘potbellied’). Another group consists of dispositional adjectives referring to a propensity towards an entity or a particular behaviour denoted by the base (*litigio* ‘quarrel’ → *litigioso* ‘quarrelsome’). Yet others are causative adjectives (*angoscia* ‘distress’ → *angoscioso* ‘distressing’). In fact *-oso* can produce adjectives belonging to all four groups. Some denominal adjectives are derived with the primarily deverbal suffixes *-bile* and *-evole* (see §17.5.3.2).

Adjectives indicating place of origin can be formed from place names by a wealth of suffixes (thirty-four from bases denoting Italian municipalities, according to Crocco Galèas 1991; further suffixes appear in derivatives from names of foreign cities and countries). The default, most productive suffix is *-ese*, which also has the highest type frequency (68 per cent of derivatives in Crocco Galèas’s corpus of derivatives from the names of 8,041 municipalities), followed by *-ino* and *-ano* (less than 8 per cent of derivatives each); various suffixes occur with almost equal type-frequency in the adjectives related to the main Italian cities: *rom-ano*, *milan-ese*, *fiorent-ino* (from a weakly suppletive stem for *Firenze* ‘Florence’), *napol-etano*. Quite commonly, besides a transparently derived ethnic another one derived from a suppletive stem, usually connected to an ancient name of the place, is used: *napol-etano/partenop-eo*, *bologn-ese/felsin-eo/petron-iano* (from St Petronius, the patron saint of

Bologna). The suppletive derivatives are used mainly in names of local institutions and companies, and to refer to players in local football teams (Crocco Galèas 1991:238). Double or multiple derivatives with different suffixes are common from names of relatively recently established countries (*ghanese/ghanense/ghaneano* 'Ghanaian'; see D'Achille 2021).

Deanthroponymic adjectives are mostly relational, but some also express similarity (*baudesco* 'behaving like Baudo' ← *Baudo*). In contemporary Italian the most productive suffix is *-iano*, with regular absorption of the glide after palatal consonants (*fallaciano* /fallaˈtʃano/ ← *Fallaci*).

17.5.3.2 Deverbal adjectives

The most productive suffix forming deverbal adjectives is *-bile*, which forms adjectives meaning 'that can/may be Ved' (and sometimes, by pragmatic extension, 'that should be Ved', particularly with base verbs that express an evaluation: *encomiabile* 'commendable' ← *encomiare* 'praise$_V$');[3] it attaches mainly to the default verb stem (*mangiabile* 'edible, eatable' ← *mangiare* 'eat'), but sometimes also to a participial stem (*divisibile* 'divisible' ← *dividere*, *divis-* 'divide'), or a partially adapted Latin stem (*comprensibile* 'understandable' ← *comprendere* 'understand', Latin stem COMPREHENS- ≠ Italian participial stem *compres-*), or to stems not corresponding to any verb (*commestibile* 'edible'); in these cases, the suffix appears as *-ibile*; there are also a few doublets (*estendibile/estensibile* 'extendable'). The suffix is so productive that it has also spread to take nominal bases, in these cases appearing mostly as *-abile* (*camionabile* '[road] suitable for trucks' ← *camion* 'truck', but *futuribile* 'that could happen in the future' ← *futuro* 'future'). When the feasibility of the action denoted by the verb is obvious, the adjective in *-bile* adds a connotation, which can be positive (*digeribile* '[food] easy to digest' ← *digerire* 'digest') or negative (*guardabile* 'barely good enough to be watched (of a film, etc.)' ← *guardare* 'look; watch'). Many adjectives in *-bile* contain the negative prefix *in*^{1}- (cf. §17.3), and convey information on a more salient or more informative property than the corresponding positive adjectives, sometimes even unattested or attested later than the

prefixed one (*imperdibile* ‘not to be missed (of a show or event)’ ← *perdere* ‘lose; miss’).

While *-bile* is a learnèd reflex of Lat. -(A/I)BILIS, Italian also has a popular descendant from the same Latin base, *-evole*, which is unproductive and semantically most often different from *-bile*; it appears in adjectives meaning ‘that (easily / habitually) Vs’ (*incantevole* ‘enchanting’ ← *incantare* ‘enchant’) or ‘that should be Ved’ (*notevole* ‘notable’ ← *notare* ‘notice’), and sometimes has a causative meaning ‘that makes one V’ (*vomitevole* ‘that makes one vomit’ ← *vomitare* ‘vomit’); it occasionally attaches also to nominal bases (*amichevole* ‘friendly’ ← *amico* ‘friend’).

Other suffixes forming deverbal adjectives are *-tore*, *-tivo*, and *-torio*, cited here in the form that appears in derivatives from the derivational stem of the base verb (cf. §17.5.2.3; e.g., *chiarificatore* ‘clarificatory’, *abrogativo*, *abrogatorio* ‘abrogatory’). All these suffixes can appear in a different form when the base is a participial stem (*corrosivo* ‘corrosive’, *divisore* ‘dividing’), a Latin stem (*cursorio* ‘cursory’), or the stem of the action noun in *-ione* from the same verb, shown by Rainer (2001) often to be used as formal base of these derivatives; some of these adjectives are also semantically interpretable as relational adjectives connected to a noun in *-ione* (e.g., *estorsivo* ‘related to extorsion’, *esattivo* ‘concerning tax collection’).

Adjectival *-tore* appears as *-trice* when agreeing with a feminine head (e.g., *potenze vincitrici* ‘victorious powers’); in these cases, a contextual inflexional meaning is cumulated with a derivational one, an atypical situation in Italian and in general (Ricca 2003). Forms homophonous with the present participle are also used as adjectives; they usually select as bases verbs whose subject is low on a scale of agentivity or control (e.g., a theme, as in *assorbente* ‘absorbing’), or psychological verbs which have an experiencer as syntactic object (*divertente* ‘amusing’) (Ricca 2004a).

17.5.3.3 Deadjectival adjectives

Deadjectival adjectives have evaluative meaning (see Chapter 18).

17.5.4 Verbal suffixation

Verbs from nominal and adjectival bases are productively derived by means of the first conjugation suffixes *-eggiare*, *-ificare*, and *-izzare* (Grossmann 2004b, 2004c); for deverbal verbs, see §18.2.1. Deadverbial verbs are rare (e.g. *indietro* 'backwards' → *indietreggiare* 'withdraw'). While derivatives with *-eggiare* are more commonly used in informal registers, and those with *-ificare* in learnèd registers, particularly in technical-scientific terminologies, derivatives with *-izzare*, the most productive suffix of the three, occur in all registers. Another difference concerns telicity: verbs with *-ificare* and *-izzare* are mostly telic, while those with *-eggiare* are mainly atelic. Like change of state verbs derived by parasynthesis or conversion (see §17.4, §17.6.4), suffixed verbs also allow for the causative/inchoative alternation, often using a clitic in an anticausative function for the inchoative verb. The bases can be simplex, derived, or compound. For the many cases of rivalry among verbs derived from the same base by parasynthesis, suffixation, or conversion, see §17.6.4.

As with parasynthetic and converted verbs, the interpretation of denominal suffixed verbs depends on the role of the base noun's referent in the state of affairs represented. From [+human] bases derive atelic verbs, particularly with *-eggiare*, which refer to an activity, habitual occupation, or usual way of acting or behaving (*capo* 'head$_N$' → *capeggiare* 'lead$_V$', *diva* 'star' → *diveggiare* 'act like a star'), or telic verbs which indicate a change of state (*Berlusconi* → *berlusconizzare*/*berlusconizzarsi* 'make/become like Berlusconi'). Verbs derived from metaphorical meanings of animal names exhibit a similar reading (*pavone* 'peacock' → *pavoneggiarsi* 'behave like a peacock'). The referents of [–animate], [+concrete] bases can represent an entity brought into existence as a result of the event itself (*burro* 'butter' → *burrificare* 'churn'), they can play the role of an instrument (*cannone* 'cannon' → *cannoneggiare* 'cannonade'), of a located entity undergoing a change of location (*vitamina* 'vitamin' → *vitaminizzare* 'vitaminize'), or of a location which is the goal (*gamba* 'leg' → *gambizzare* 'kneecap'), or, less commonly, the source (*borsa* 'bag' → *borseggiare* 'pickpocket'), or the path (*costa* 'coast$_N$'

→ *costeggiare* 'coast$_V$') of the motion. Verbs derived from [–animate], [–concrete] nouns denote a state resulting from the event (*danno* 'damage$_N$' → *danneggiare*/*danneggiarsi* 'damage$_V$'), a change of state (*merce* 'commodity' → *mercificare* 'commodify'), or an activity (*gara* 'competition' → *gareggiare* 'compete'). There are also a few meteorological verbs formed by suffixation (*lampo* 'lightning' → *lampeggiare* 'flash with lightning'). Note that the formation of instrumental and location verbs is more frequently attained by means of conversion.

Deadjectival verbs are primarily derived from qualifying adjectives or adjectives used as such. The majority consist of causative and/or inchoative verbs that refer to a telic state of affairs, and denote a change of state. If the adjective refers to a gradable property, the verb denotes the event of acquiring, or acquiring a higher degree of, that property (*veloce* 'quick' → *velocizzare*/*velocizzarsi* 'speed up'); if it denotes a non-gradable property, the verb denotes the event of acquiring that property (*legale* 'legal' → *legalizzare* 'legalize'). Intransitive verbs referring to non-telic states of affairs—states or activities—can also be derived from adjectival bases, particularly with the suffix *-eggiare* (*scarso* 'scarce' → *scarseggiare* 'be in short supply').

17.5.5 Adverbial suffixation

The suffix *-mente* is used to derive adverbs from adjectives; these derivatives can have a range of semantic values, from manner adverbs (*lentamente* 'slowly') to focalizers (*esclusivamente* 'exclusively'). The base to which *-mente* attaches is a morphomic stem of the adjective, which is homophonous with the feminine singular form; adjectives ending in *-le* and *-re* delete final /e/ before *-mente* (*facilmente* 'easily', *regolarmente* 'regularly'); final vowel deletion before *-mente* is sometimes extended to other adjectives whose stem ends in /l/ or /r/ (*leggero* 'light; slight'→ *leggermente* 'slightly'; *ridicolo* 'ridiculous' → *ridicolamente/ridicolmente* 'ridicolously'). For morphological and semantic restrictions, see Ricca (2004b).

Another suffix used to derive adverbs is *-oni*, found in both denominal and deverbal adverbs denoting atypical body positions or manners of motion (*gattoni* 'on all fours' ← *gatto* 'cat', *carponi* 'crawling' ← *carpare/carpire* 'grab', *balzelloni* 'hopping' ← *balzellare* 'hop'; see Corona 2012).

17.6 Conversion

17.6.1 Introduction

Canonical conversion is defined as a process that produces word-class change preserving formal identity (Valera 2015:326). In Italian, when conversion involves nouns and verbs formal identity must be relativized, since it applies neither to (all) the inflexional forms of both the base and the converted lexeme, nor to their citation forms, but to a morphological base (root or stem), which is then inserted into an inflexional class appropriate for the output word class: *arrivare* 'arrive' → *arrivo* 'arrival', *martello* 'hammer$_N$' → *martellare* 'hammer$_V$'.

A debated issue is whether conceptual and semantic changes without word class change should also be considered conversion. Candidates in Italian are cases such as *banana* 'banana' → *banano* 'banana tree', *informatica*$_1$ 'computer science' → *informatico* 'male computer scientist' / *informatica*$_2$ 'female computer scientist', *sindaco* 'male mayor' → *sindaca* 'female mayor'. These three types (fruit → tree, science → scientist, male X → female X, or vice versa) are productive. Cases of derivation of common nouns from anthroponyms or toponyms are better analysed as cases of antonomasia (*Mecenate* → *mecenate* 'maecenas'), or metonymy (*Gorgonzola* 'place name' → *gorgonzola* 'cheese produced in Gorgonzola').

17.6.2 Nominal conversion

Adjectives used as nouns are often the result of ellipsis of the head noun in a NP; the nominalized adjective inherits the noun's gender (*la Nazionale* < *Biblioteca Nazionale* 'National library', *il Comunale* < *Stadio comunale* 'City Stadium'). Some semantic types have become productive through analogy, and adjectives can be nominalized even in cases in which no full NP is previously attested; the most common cases take as bases ethnic adjectives to derive names of territories surrounding a city (*pisano* 'of Pisa' → *Pisano* 'territory around Pisa') and names of languages (*ariellese* 'of Arielli (CH)' → 'dialect of Arielli'). Ethnic adjectives (cf. §17.5.3.1) are also productively converted in nouns denoting citizens or inhabitants of the place denoted by the ethnic's base. Adjectives denoting salient human dispositions or physical properties (particularly non-prototypical or negatively evaluated ones) can be nominalized to denote persons exhibiting the property or disposition (*cieco* 'blind' → 'blind man'; cf. Rainer 1984).

Verbs can be converted into action nouns, which often develop further senses (result, instrument, place, patient, and even agent of the action). The most numerous and productive type creates masculine nouns in *-o/-i*: *arrivare* 'arrive' → *arrivo* 'arrival; finish line'. Bases are mainly first-conjugation verbs; there are several converted nouns from derived verbs in *-eggiare* (*parcheggio* 'parking'), many fewer from verbs in *-izzare* (*utilizzo* 'usage'), and only one from a verb in *-ificare* (*bonifico* 'bank transfer'). Feminine nouns in *-a/-e* also exist, and were productively formed in old Italian (*sostare* 'stop$_V$' → *sosta* 'stop$_N$') but are no longer productive; several feminine action nouns in *-a/-e* which formally appear as converted are better analysed as the result of clipping from a deverbal action noun in *-zione* (*verificazione* → *verifica* 'verification'; Thornton 1990; Montermini and Thornton 2014).

Nominalized infinitives retain many verbal properties, such as inflexion for TAM and government of arguments, and do not take nominal properties such as number inflexion (*lo scrivere lettere* 'DEF.MSG write.INF letters' / *l'aver scritto lettere* 'DEF.MSG have.INF write.PTCP letters' / ***gli scriveri lettere* 'DEF.MPL write.INF.PL

letters'); cases such as *i doveri* 'the duties' ← *dovere* 'must' are few and do not represent a productive process.

Specific verb forms have lexicalized to denote speech acts or legal documents, such as *proclama* 'proclamation' ← 'proclaim.3SG', *vaglia* 'money order' ← 'be.worth.SBJV.3SG'; these have been called *nomi cartellino* 'label nouns' by Migliorini (1975:222), and result from the nominalization of verb-forms which were graphically prominent in the type of document involved; similarly, names of some prayers result from nominalization of the first word(s) of a prayer (*credo* believe.1SG 'creed').

17.6.3 Adjectival conversion

Ethnic adjectives can be derived by conversion from place names whose root ends in a sequence homophonous to typical ethnic suffixes (*Montalcino* → *montalcino* 'from, of Montalcino'; cf. Migliorini 1957d). Nouns in *-ista* (cf. §17.5.2.1) denoting followers of doctrines and movements can be used also as adjectives. Migliorini (1931:980) stated that in *milite fascista* 'Fascist soldier' *fascista* is a noun in apposition that 'gets slightly close to an adjectival value', and in *propaganda fascista* 'Fascistic propaganda' it is 'a quasi-adjective'. Similar remarks apply to various cases of nouns used as modifiers of other nouns, in constructions such as *uomo rana* man frog 'frogman', *maglia albicocca* shirt apricot 'apricot-coloured shirt'. The adjectival function of nouns such as *rana* and *albicocca* has often been noted. Grandi, Nissim, and Tamburini (2011) call a number of nouns that are frequently used as modifiers, with specific metaphorical senses, 'noun-clad adjectives'. They show these to be parallel to the senses of the adjectives most frequently used to modify the same head nouns (e.g., *fiume* 'river' → 'long' in *riunione fiume* meeting river 'long, interminable meeting'). However, these modifiers do not always exhibit truly adjectival behaviour (e.g., agreement for gender, comparative and superlative forms); the constructions in which they appear are therefore better analysed as NN compounds (cf. §17.2.2.1), or as phrases in which a noun is used as an apposition, rather than as constructions including an adjective converted from a noun.

Varying degrees of typically adjectival properties are also exhibited by past participles used as modifiers; according to Bisetto (1994) past participles can be converted into adjectives only when the base verb implies a change of state (e.g., *colorato* 'coloured' vs *andato* 'gone', which can be used as an adjective only in the metaphorical sense 'gone bad, off' but not in its basic motion sense). Adjectives structurally identical to present participles also exist, but the verbal nature of present participles is questionable, so it is unclear whether these adjectives should be considered derived deverbal adjectives or conversions from present participles; they are more common when the base verb is durative, or denotes actions or processes that are repeated, or have long-lasting consequences (*sorridente* 'smiling', *abbagliante* 'dazzling').

17.6.4 Verbal conversion

Among the three possibilities for deriving verbs from nouns, i.e., parasynthesis (§17.4), suffixation (§17.5.4), and conversion, conversion is the most productive (Grossmann 2004d). As for adjectival bases, the relationship between the three devices is different: in contemporary Italian, A → V conversion is barely or not at all productive. As in the case of suffixed and parasynthetic verbs, there are a few derivatives from adverbs (*gattoni* 'on all fours' → *gattonare* 'go on all fours', *indosso* 'on' → *indossare* 'wear'). With some exceptions (*snello* 'slim$_A$' → *snellire*/*snellirsi* 'slim$_V$'), converted verbs are assigned to the *-are* inflexional class; verbs derived from the same base and distinguished only by the inflexional class are (partial) synonyms (*colore* 'colour$_N$' → *colorire*/*colorirsi*, *colorare*/*colorarsi* 'colour$_V$'). Bases, in particular nominal ones, can be morphologically complex. Like suffixed and parasynthetic change of state verbs, those formed by conversion allow causative/inchoative alternation often using a clitic in anticausative function for the inchoative verb.

Like parasynthetic and suffixed verbs, verbs formed by converting a noun can denote a wide variety of states of affairs where the referent of the base can play different roles. From [+human] bases

derive mainly atelic verbs referring to typical activities carried out by an agent (*piantone* 'guard$_N$' → *piantonare* 'guard$_V$'), or to his/her way of being or behaving (*ficcanaso* 'snoop$_N$' → *ficcanasare* 'snoop$_V$'); verbalization of a change of state is infrequent (*monaca* 'nun' → *monacare*/*monacarsi* 'put into a convent; become a nun'). Derivatives of [+animate], [–human] nouns exhibit similar patterns (*scimmiotto* 'young monkey' → *scimmiottare* 'mimic'). Referents of [–animate], [+concrete] bases can represent the result object of the event or a similar entity (*frantume* 'fragment$_N$' → *frantumare*/*frantumarsi* 'fragment$_V$', *velluto* 'velvet' → *vellutare* 'make velvety'), they can play the role of an instrument (*pugnale* 'dagger' → *pugnalare* 'stab'), of a located entity approaching or, more rarely, moving away from a location (*zucchero* 'sugar$_N$' → *zuccherare* 'sugar$_V$'; *cima* 'top' → *cimare* 'trim'), of a location that is the goal, or sometimes the source, of the motion (*cestino* 'bin$_N$' → *cestinare* 'bin$_V$'; *salina* 'salt pan' → *salinare* 'extract salt'). Some verbs are polysemous (*scaffale* → *scaffalare* 'furnish with shelves; place on a shelf'), while others have two opposite meanings (*schiuma* 'scum; foam$_N$' → *schiumare* 'skim; foam$_V$'). Referents of [–animate], [–concrete] bases denote psychological or pathological states that are the result of the event (*ossessione* 'obsession' → *ossessionare*/*ossessionarsi* 'obsess'), or refer to violent acts (*tortura* 'torture$_N$' → *torturare*/*torturarsi* 'torture$_V$'), or to an evaluative activity (*ispezione* 'inspection' → *ispezionare* 'inspect'). Meteorological and psychological verbs denote events and states (*nevischio* 'sleet$_N$' → *nevischiare* 'sleet$_V$'; *schifo* 'loathing' → *schifare* 'loathe').

Most deadjectival causative and/or inchoative verbs refer to a change of state. Depending on the gradability of the property designated by the base, the verb can denote the event of acquiring that property (*zitto* 'silent' → *zittire*/*zittirsi* 'make/fall silent'), or a higher degree of that property (*scuro* 'dark' → *scurire*/*scurirsi* 'darken'). Some verbs are atelic and refer to states or activities (*curioso* 'curious' → *curiosare* 'pry; snoop', *paziente* 'patient' → *pazientare* 'be patient').

Established verbs derived from the same base by parasynthesis, suffixation, or conversion are mostly (partial) synonyms distinguished by frequency of use or obsoleteness (e.g., *catasta* 'stack$_N$' → *catastare* 'stack$_V$', *sorso* 'sip$_N$' → *sorsare* 'sip$_V$', *giallo* 'yellow$_A$' → *giallire* 'yellow$_V$', *pepe* 'pepper$_N$' → *impepare* 'pepper$_V$', are much less used or are obsolete compared to the commonly used verbs *accatastare*, *sorseggiare*, *ingiallire*, *pepare*). Some of them are derived from different meanings of the base (*periodo* 'sentence; time period' → *periodare* 'form sentences' vs *periodizzare* 'periodize'), while others are distinguished by telicity (*verde* 'green$_A$' → *inverdire*/*inverdirsi* 'green$_V$' vs *verdeggiare* 'be/look green').

17.6.5 Adverbial conversion

In addition to suffixation with *-mente* (see §17.5.5), adverbs can also be formed by converting adjectives, which appear in a form homophonous with the citation form. These are manner adverbs that modify a predicate and not a sentence. This pattern is more common in colloquial registers, and involves a limited set of adjectives in combination with a restricted number of verbs (*giocare* / *lavorare* / *picchiare duro* 'play / work / hit hard', *parlare alto* / *basso* / *veloce* / *chiaro* / *schietto* 'speak loudly / softly / quickly / clearly / frankly').

17.7 Backformation

Backformation (the creation of a lexeme erroneously considered by speakers as the base of some existing lexeme) is not a productive process; it happens unpredictably on the basis of analysis or reanalysis of existing forms and analogy: e.g., from *prefazione* 'preface$_N$' < Lat. PRAEFATIONE(M), attested since the fifteenth century, *prefare* 'preface$_V$' and *postfazione* 'postface$_N$' were created in the twentieth century; the adjective *ubiquo* 'ubiquitous' was created from *ubiquità* 'ubiquity' < Lat. UBIQUITAS ← UBIQUE

‘everywhere’. It is common to backform nouns and adjectives that do not differ semantically from their base by eliminating a suffix or a sequence homophonous with a suffix (most often an evaluative one): *cappuccio* ← *cappuccino*. These forms are typical of colloquial or substandard varieties (D’Achille 2005a; Thornton 2007).

17.8 Reduplication

Reduplication (Thornton 2023) is not a major device in lexeme formation, but some lexemes do exhibit a reduplicated structure: ideophones (*pio pio* ‘sound emitted by chicks’, *cip cip* ‘sound emitted by little birds’), sometimes metonymically used as nouns in baby talk (*brumbrum* ‘car’ ← ‘vroom vroom’); some VV nominal compounds (*fuggifuggi* ‘stampede’, cf. §17.2.2.4); some interjections (*eh eh* ‘laugh’). Reduplication is also productively used for the intensification of adjectives and adverbs (*nero nero* ‘extremely black’, *subito subito* lit. at.once at.once ‘immediately’), and in this function it competes with affixes such as *-issimo*, *arci-*, *super-*, *stra-* (cf. §18.3.2). Some reduplicated nouns have lexicalized adjectival or adverbial meanings (*terra terra* earth earth ‘easy; low-quality’).

17.9 Blending

Blends are lexemes formed from parts (‘splinters’) usually of two bases which are not morphs. Prototypical blends are formed by an initial splinter from base 1 and a final splinter from base 2; phonological overlap between the final segments of the first splinter and the initial segments of the second one is a valued characteristic in blends, as in *for**ch**iaio* ‘spork’ ← *forchetta* ‘fork’ and *cucchiaio* ‘spoon’, *mand**ar**ancio* ‘clementine’ ← *mandarino* ‘tangerine’ and *arancio* ‘orange’. These examples show a frequent semantic characteristic of blends, i.e., denoting entities that are a mix or combination of the entities denoted by the two bases; blends are

therefore commonly used in denominating hybrid animals (*zebrallo* 'zebroid' ← *zebra* and *cavallo* 'horse'; cf. Thornton 1993). The preferred strategy appears to be a combination of an initial splinter with a full second base (as in *mandarancio*; *apericena* ← *aperitivo* 'aperitif; happy hour' + *cena* 'dinner'); this renders the boundary between blends and compounds with initial combining forms (cf. §17.2.5) somewhat fuzzy.

17.10 Clipping

Frequently used nouns (and sometimes adjectives) can be reduced to the size of minimal prosodic words, a disyllabic trochaic foot ending in a vowel (Thornton 1996). The shortened form sometimes coincides with an initial combining form which is a constituent of the base, but this is fortuitous and not necessary: *foto-grafia* → *foto*, but *bi-cicl-etta* 'bicycle'→ *bici*. The shortenings retain the meaning of their base, but are used in more informal or familiar contexts. Some of these evolve into second-generation combining forms (cf. §17.2.5).

Shortening is used also to form hypocoristics (*Fede* ← *Federica/o*, *Tore* ← *Salvatore*; see Thornton 1996).

17.11 Acronymy

Names of associations, institutions, and frequent technical or legal phrasal lexemes are often reduced to a single word, based on the initial letters of the source elements. When the resulting sequence of letters does not comply with phonotactic constraints, it is pronounced letter by letter (*RSA* /ˈɛrreˈɛsseˈa/ ← *Residenza Sanitaria Assistenziale* 'nursing home'); when it does, it can be pronounced as a single word (UDU /ˈudu/ ← *Unione degli universitari* 'University students' union'); with short consonant-final sequences there is some variation (*pec* /pɛk/ ← *posta elettronica*

certificata ‘certified e-mail’ but *ad* /adˈdi/, **/ad/ ← *amministratore delegato* ‘CEO’). Some reductions to sequences of initial strings of syllable size (*co.co.pro* ← ***Co**ntratto di **co**llaborazione a **pro**getto* ‘project-based contract’), or mixing of letters and syllable-size units (*daspo* ← ***D**ivieto di **a**ccedere a manifestazioni **spo**rtive* ‘prohibition to access sporting events’), are also attested (these are sometimes considered blends, see §17.9). The shortened version of the name of some contemporary political parties, used only in writing, comprises not only letters but also other symbols (*M5S* ← *Movimento Cinque Stelle* ‘Five Star Movement’, *+E* ← *Più Europa* ‘More Europe’); *MAXXI* ← *Museo delle arti del XXI secolo* ‘Museum of the arts of the twenty-first century’ is pronounced /ˈmaksi/, homophonous with the augmentative prefix *maxi-*, but the sequence <XXI> also stands for ‘twenty-first’.

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[1] Constructions such as *alto-medievale* ‘of the Early Middle Ages’ are cases of bracketing paradox since they formally appear to be made up of two As, but are actually adjectives derived from compound nouns, phrasal lexemes, or NPs.

[2] The adjective ‘Belgian’ is *belga*.

[3] According to Ricca (2004a:421) adjectives in *-bile* could be called ‘potential passive participles’.

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Chapter 18

Evaluative morphology

M. Silvia Micheli

18.1 Introduction

From its very beginnings, Italian has played a crucial role in the study of evaluative morphology. First, the great variety of evaluative affixes attested in Italian has attracted the attention of morphologists and allowed them to enrich the general discussion on the place of evaluative affixes within morphology. As noted by Grandi and Körtvélyessy (2015:3), it is no coincidence that the seminal study on the place of evaluative morphology with respect to inflexion and word-formation was by an Italian linguist (namely, Scalise 1984) and is based on Italian data. We owe to Scalise (1984) the first attempt to provide an overview of the defining features of evaluative suffixes, based on which evaluative morphology is defined as an independent category, namely a 'third morphology' distinct from inflexion and word-formation. The six properties that Scalise (1984:132–133) identified on the basis of Italian are:

i. evaluative suffixes change the semantics of the base word (e.g., *lume* 'lamp' > *lumino* 'little lamp');

i. evaluative suffixes can be applied to words already containing an evaluative suffix (e.g., *tavol-o* 'table-MSG' > *tavol-in-o* 'table-DIM-MSG' > *tavol-in-ett-o* 'table-DIM-DIM-MSG');

i. evaluative suffixes are always external with respect to other derivational suffixes and internal with respect to inflexional morphemes (e.g., *abit-azion-e* 'live-DER.SUF-FSG' > *abitazionc-in-a* 'dwelling-DIM-FSG');

iv. evaluative suffixes can be applied recursively (e.g., *car-o* 'dear-MSG' > *car-in-o* 'nice-DIM-MSG' > *car-in-in-o* 'nice-DIM-DIM-MSG');

v. evaluative affixes do not change the lexical category of the base they attach to (e.g., $gatto_{N}$ 'cat' > $gattino_{N}$ 'little cat');

i. evaluative affixes do not change syntactic features (such as transitivity in verbs; e.g., *giocare* 'to play' [-trans.] > *giocherellare* 'to play around' [-trans.]) or 'the subcategorization frame of the base' (e.g., *letto* 'bed' [-abstr.] > *lettino* 'little bed' [-abstr.]).

Although the criteria proposed by Scalise (1984) later proved not to be valid cross-linguistically but only for specific languages (see Stump 1993), his description of evaluative strategies has remained the starting point for later studies, and Italian has maintained its centrality in the literature on evaluative morphology.

This central role is confirmed by the seminal studies by Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1992; 1994) on Italian diminutives and augmentatives, where they pioneered a new approach to evaluative affixes by placing them within pragmatics. They pointed out that evaluative affixes include 'a pragmatic variable which cannot be suppressed in the description of [their] meaning' (Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi 1994:55; see also Schneider 2013 for a pragmatic view of evaluatives). The new framework proposed by these two scholars, called *morphopragmatics*, is mostly based on the analysis of Italian affixes (especially of diminutives) and their pragmatic features (such as fictiveness and non-seriousness). According to Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1986; 1989), besides evaluative suffixes, morphopragmatic values can also be expressed by another type of morphological element, which is quite characteristic of Italian evaluatives (especially of diminutives), namely, so-called *antesuffixal interfixes* (e.g., *top-ol-in-o* 'mouse-INTERFIX-DIM-MSG'; see §18.2.1).

From Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi onwards, it became clear that the study of evaluation should shift its focus from the form to the semantico-pragmatic functions (see Haspelmath 2007:127). Italian has contributed to enriching this research field as it possesses morphological strategies to express all the semantic functions identified by Grandi (2002; 2017b). According to Grandi (2002:31–34), the semantic functions performed by evaluative morphemes can be arranged into two classes, namely, quantitative evaluation and

qualitative evaluation. The former encompasses the two functions of 'diminution' and 'augmentation', which imply a descriptive evaluation based on objective properties. The latter includes a greater number of functions, namely, contempt, endearment, intensification, attenuation, approximation, and prototypicality, which express an evaluation based on a subjective and personal judgement by the speaker.

In what follows, I provide an overview of the system of Italian evaluative affixes, following the classification proposed by Grandi (2002; 2017b). For each evaluative function, I will analyse the morphological strategies attested in Italian as well as the word classes involved. My investigation will not only cover modern Italian, but will extend to earlier historical stages, specifically focusing on identifying points of continuity and discontinuity with Latin. Indeed, the extensive documentation of Italian and its ancestor makes it a suitable case study to examine the dynamism that characterizes evaluative morphology from a diachronic point of view (see Grandi 2002:166; 2011).

18.2 Quantitative evaluation

Here I describe the morphological strategies used in Italian to express a descriptive evaluation that relies on real, tangible features (e.g., size, shape). From a typological point of view, the morphological expression of augmentation is considered as marked compared to that of diminution, which is indeed more frequent in languages that have morphological strategies to convey evaluation (see Bauer 1997; cf. also Körtvélyessy 2015). Therefore, the occurrence of augmentative affixes in a language implies the presence of diminutive affixes. In Italian, diminution and augmentation are both expressed through morphological strategies. This may be through both prefixation and suffixation, according to what is called 'prefix-suffix neutrality' by Grandi and Montermini (2003). As will be seen, Italian has a richer repertoire of diminutive affixes (especially suffixes) than augmentative ones. Semantically, diminutive and augmentative affixes do not exclusively convey the

values ‘small X’ and ‘big X’, respectively, but, rather, a broader range of meanings, in that they also belong to the domain of qualitative evaluation (e.g., endearment, intensification).

18.2.1 Diminution

18.2.1.1 Formal and semantic properties

On the formal level, the literature on Italian diminutives has mostly focused on three aspects, namely the presence of interfixes, gender shift resulting from the addition of a diminutive suffix, and stem allomorphy. These properties are not limited solely to diminutive affixes but are more prominent there. As already mentioned, Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1989; 1994) were the first to provide a description of antesuffixal morphological elements in Italian diminutives.[1] They identified three interfixes, namely *-ic-* (e.g., *fiume* ‘river’ > *fium-ic-ell-o* ‘river-INTERFIX-DIM-MSG’), *-ar-/-er-* (e.g., *busta* ‘envelope’ > *bust-ar-ell-a* ‘evelope-INTERFIX-DIM-FSG (= bribe)’) and *-ol-* (e.g., *pesce* ‘fish’ > *pesci-ol-in-o* ‘fish-INTERFIX-DIM-MSG’), and considered them autonomous with respect to diminutive suffixes, mainly on the basis of functional properties. Indeed, they may convey a connotative meaning and express specific pragmatic values in context, such as affectivity (e.g., *pianta* ‘plant’ > *piant-ic-ina* ‘beloved plant’). Moreover, they may be functional in distinguishing otherwise homophonous words (e.g., *tub-ic-ino* ‘small pipe’ and *tub-ino* ‘sheath dress; bowler hat’). As pointed out by Merlini Barbaresi (2012) and more recently confirmed by Micheli and Pellegrini (2025), Italian interfixes are rather predictable since they tend to combine with specific suffixes. More specifically, *-ar-/-er-* combines more frequently with the diminutive suffix *-ello*, the interfixes *-ol-* and *-in-* often occur with *-ino*, while *-etto* never displays interfixes.

The phenomenon of interfixes should not be confused with the cumulation of suffixes. Indeed, in Italian, it is possible to apply diminutive suffixes cumulatively (e.g., *tavol-in-ett-o* ‘table-DIM-DIM-MSG’). As noted by Merlini Barbaresi (2004:276; 2012), *-ino* tends to occupy the most external position and is also the most easily combinable suffix,[2] even in the case of homophonous sound

sequences.[3] In order to intensify quantitative diminution, the same suffix may notably also be applied several times together with the inflexional vowel (e.g., *fett-in-a-in-a* 'slice-DIM-FSG-DIM-FSG'). Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:99) consider this as a case of recursiveness; they also noted that, albeit rarely, diminutive suffixes such as *-ino* or *-uccio* may acquire the status of words (such as in *È proprio ina* 'It is really tiny'; see Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi 1994:102).

From an inflexional standpoint, the addition of a diminutive suffix can result in a change of inflexional class. Specifically, all masculine nouns (and adjectives) become part of the most stable class of masculine nouns, i.e., those in singular *-o* and plural *-i* (e.g., *pied-e* 'foot-MSG' > *pied-in-o* 'foot-DIM-MSG'). Similarly, all feminine nouns once diminutivized go into the most stable class of feminine nouns, i.e., those in singular *-a* and plural *-e* (e.g., *man-o* 'hand-FSG' > *man-in-a* 'hand-DIM-FSG'). Although in most cases the insertion of a diminutive suffix does not lead to a gender change (e.g., *libro*$_{M}$ 'book' > *libretto*$_{M}$ 'small book'), Italian displays a great number of cases of gender shift both from masculine to feminine (e.g., *palazzo*$_{M}$ 'building' > *palazzina*$_{F}$ 'small building') and, much more frequently, from feminine to masculine (e.g., *bilancia*$_{F}$ 'scale' > *bilancino*$_{M}$ 'precision scale'). Often, but not necessarily, the gender change leads to a change in meaning and thus a lexicalization of the diminutive form (e.g., *camera* 'room' > *camerino* 'dressing room'). There is still no thorough discussion in the literature on why gender change is more frequently from feminine to masculine than vice versa, but it is generally assumed that the gender shift is oriented towards the default gender in Italian, i.e., masculine (see Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi 1994:95).

Finally, the stem allomorphy represents a formal aspect that has emerged in the description of Italian diminutives but still lacks systematic treatment. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994:94) mention some cases of stem variation due to the addition of diminutive affixes, among which the allomorphic rule whereby the affricate /ʧ/ is added before *-in-* and *-ell-* when the base ends with the string /on/, regardless of its morphological nature (e.g., *leone* 'lion' > *leoncino* 'little lion', *palla* 'ball' > *pallone* 'soccer ball (lit. big ball)' > *palloncino* 'balloon').[4]

From a semantic perspective, diminutives generally express the meaning ‘small X’. As noted by Rainer (1990), this value is then specified in more precise shades of meaning depending on the bases to which the diminutive suffix is attached, i.e., small size (e.g., *stanza* ‘room’ > *stanzetta* ‘small room’), young age (e.g., *ragazzo* ‘boy’ > *ragazzino* ‘young boy’), small surface (e.g., *bandiera* ‘flag’ > *bandierina* ‘small flag, pennant’), shorter length (e.g., *calzoni* ‘trousers’ > *calzoncini* ‘shorts’), limited number (e.g., *gruppo* ‘group’ > *gruppetto* ‘handful’), short duration (e.g., *passeggiata* ‘stroll’ > *passeggiatina* ‘short walk’), low intensity (e.g., *pioggia* ‘rain’ > *pioggerella* ‘drizzle’), little significance (e.g., *regalo* ‘present’ > *regalino* ‘little present’). In addition to the semantic value, Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994) identify a non-semantic, pragmatic feature [fictive], which is further specified as a character [non-serious]. The use of a diminutive may imply that ‘the speaker evaluates the speech act and the speech situation as non-serious, in the sense of non-formal, non-demanding, non-binding’ (Merlini Barbaresi and Dressler 2020:419).

A final aspect related to diminutive affixes concerns the semantic constraints they impose on bases. Rainer (1990:210) suggests that a useful parameter to explain the distribution of diminutives is the feature [+bounded], introduced by Jackendoff (1983; 1990) to distinguish among plural, countable, and uncountable nouns. This parameter explains why the words *gatto* ‘cat’ and *gruppo* ‘group’ can be diminutivized as *gattino* and *gruppetto*, respectively, while the non-bounded words *coraggio* ‘bravery’ and *fantasia* ‘imagination’ do not have a diminutive form. However, as noted by Grandi and Scalise (2001), the feature [+bounded] by itself is not sufficient to solve the puzzle, since even some [–bounded] (mass) nouns such as *zucchero* ‘sugar’ can combine with a diminutive suffix (i.e., *zuccherino* ‘sugar lump’ where the *-ino* suffix does not convey the meaning ‘small X’ but rather ‘conventional unit of X’). They therefore suggest that features [+delimitable], [+discrete], and [+animate members] should also be considered to identify which bases can be altered by the attachment of a diminutive suffix.

18.2.1.2 Diminutive affixes

In modern Italian, the inventory of productive diminutive affixes includes two prefixes (i.e., *micro-*, *mini-*; see Iacobini 2004b) and five suffixes (i.e., *-ello*, *-etto*, *-ino*, *-otto*, *-uccio/-uzzo*; see Merlini Barbaresi 2004). The two prefixes are mostly combined with nouns (e.g., *mini-gonna* 'mini-skirt', *micro-telecamera* 'micro-camera'; see Fabi 1968), more rarely with phrasal nouns (e.g., *mini-serie televisiva* 'mini-TV series'), in order to express smaller physical dimensions or more occasionally lower quality (e.g., *mini-riforma* 'minor reform'). As noted by Grandi (2002:196), diminutive prefixes primarily convey physical properties, lacking affective or expressive connotations, setting them apart from diminutive suffixes, which have received more extensive attention due to their richness and their many functions.

We first focus on *-ino* by virtue of its broad applicability to a large number of bases and its rich network of functions (including non-evaluative functions, on which see Chapter 17). In modern Italian, the suffix *-ino* mainly creates denominal nouns (e.g., *tavolo* 'table' > *tavolino* 'coffee table') and deadjectival adjectives (e.g., *caro* 'dear' > *carino* 'nice, pretty'). We find few examples of adverbs with the suffix *-ino* created from adverbial bases (e.g., *bene* 'well' > *benino* 'fairly well, not too badly in the circumstances')[5] and nouns created from numerals (e.g., *dieci* 'ten' > *decina* 'about ten, dozen'), while the use of *-ino* in the formation of deverbal verbs is absent. Semantically, the suffix *-ino* expresses all the shades of meaning mentioned above (small size, young age, etc.) and, according to Merlini Barbaresi (2004:276), it conveys diminution of the highest degree (whereas the other diminutive suffixes express intermediate degrees of diminution).

Notably, the Italian suffix *-ino* (cf. also Pt. *-inho*) is the outcome of the Latin suffix -INUS, which did not express diminution but rather a relational value in Latin (e.g., Lat. MARĪNUS 'relating to the sea'). As noted by Butler (1971:22f.), the very first occurrences of the suffix are attested in anthroponymy and refer to sons or daughters of the referent of the proper noun that serves as base (e.g., Lat. AGRIPPĪNA 'the daughter of Agrippa'). According to Grandi (2011:16f.), the shift from relational to diminutive meaning occurs first in some animate nouns indicating the young of animals (e.g., Lat. CASTOR 'beaver' > CASTORINUS 'young beaver'). More specifically, he hypothesizes that the semantic change towards the diminutive value goes through the

value of attenuation, on the basis that what is smaller is less developed (i.e., CASTORINUS 'resembling a beaver' > 'young beaver' > 'small beaver'; cf. Rohlfs 2021c:412). The extension of the diminutive function to cases where *-ino* attaches to inanimate bases is a rather slow process. In old Italian, the suffix *-ino* is still mostly used in anthroponymy (e.g., *Giovannino* 'son of Giovanni') and with bases referring to animate nouns (e.g., *caprino* used both as an adjective 'related to the goat' and as a noun 'small/young goat'), beside the first cases where a diminutive interpretation coexists with a relational one (e.g., *tamburino* 'little drum' and 'drummer' from *tamburo* 'drum').[6] The path exemplified by *-ino* from the meaning 'child' to 'little' is consistent with the representation of the semantic space of diminutives proposed by Jurafsky (1996:542), where the value 'child' (and not 'small') is located at the centre of the radial category of diminutive.

Besides *-ino*, the suffixes *-etto* and *-ello* are also frequently used in modern Italian to express diminution. Both suffixes attach to nouns (e.g., *regalo* 'present' > *regaletto* 'little present'; *paese* 'village' > *paesello* 'small village'), adjectives (e.g., *lungo* 'long' > *lunghetto* 'rather long'; *viziato* 'spoiled' > *viziatello* 'rather spoiled'), and verbs (e.g., *fischio* 'whistle' > *fischiettare* 'to whistle'; *salto* 'jump' > *saltellare* 'to hop'). More rarely, *-etto* can also combine with adverbs (e.g., *poco* 'little' > *pochetto* 'little bit'). Like *-ino*, the suffix *-etto* is also used as a derivational (non-evaluative) suffix to create instrument nouns (e.g., *seghetto* 'hacksaw' < *sega* 'saw'), while *-ello* occurs in some originally diminutive (but now lexicalised) instrument nouns (e.g., *carrozza* 'carriage' > *carrozzella* 'wheelchair').

However, the two suffixes differ in their origins. According to Hasselrot (1957), the ancestor of the Italian suffix *-etto* occurred in Latin in some hypocoristic forms of Celtic origin (e.g., *Gallitta*). Hence, the diminutive function was not attested in Latin but originated from the hypocoristic meaning. The Italian *-ello* comes from the Latin suffix *-llus* (e.g., Lat. LIBER 'book' > LIBELLUS 'little book', MISER 'poor' > MISELLUS 'wretched'),[7] which expressed diminution in Latin along with -CULUS (e.g., Lat. NAUIS 'ship' > NAUICULA 'small ship').[8] As shown by Brucale and Mocciaro (2020), in Plautus' texts the suffix was already widely used to express not only the meaning 'small X' but also other values (often with

pragmatic purposes) such as attenuation and approximation (e.g., Lat. MULIER 'woman' > MULIERCULA 'woman of little worth').

The repertoire of diminutive suffixes also includes other suffixes that exhibit low (or no) productivity, such as *-(a/i/u)cchio* (e.g., *rana* 'frog' > *ranocchio* 'frog', however without any diminutive value), *-otto* (e.g., *paese* 'village' > *paesotto* 'small village'), *-uccio/-uzzo* (e.g., *vena* 'vein' > *venuzza* 'thin vein', *caldo* 'hot' > *calduccio* 'warmth'), *-(u)olo* (e.g., *pezza* 'patch' > *pezzuola* 'handkerchief'),[9] and *-ucolo* (e.g., *gente* 'people' > *gentucola* 'people of little worth', always with a pejorative nuance). Among those, the suffixes *-(a/i/u)cchio*, *-otto*, and *-uccio/-uzzo* also create deverbal verbs (e.g., *dormire* 'to sleep' > *dormicchiare* 'to doze', *parlare* 'to speak' > *parlottare* 'to speak softly and continuously', *tagliare* 'to cut' > *tagliuzzare* 'to cut into small pieces'). As shown by the examples, when a diminutive suffix is attached to a verbal base, it generally attenuates its meaning. The attenuation may concern different aspects of the event expressed by the verb, such as intensity, duration, and engagement by the agent (see Tovena 2011 for an outline of verbal diminutives based on Italian data, and Audring, Leufkens, and Van Lier 2021 for a cross-linguistic perspective). Words containing diminutive suffixes with little or no productivity notably exhibit different degrees of transparency, some no longer being perceived as diminutive (e.g., *bandolo* 'the end of a skein of yarn' < *banda* 'strip').

As we shall see in the following sections, diminutive suffixes express not only the value 'little X' but also a set of qualitative evaluative meanings, even seemingly contradictory ones (e.g., both contempt and endearment).

18.2.2 Augmentation

In modern Italian, the value 'big X' is conveyed by a few neoclassical prefixes (i.e., *iper-* such as in *ipermercato* 'hypermarket', *macro-* such as in *macro-area*, *mega-* such as in *mega-stadio* 'mega-stadium', *maxi-* such as in *maxi-schermo* 'big screen'), and, most notably, through the suffix *-one*. Neoclassical prefixes are originally spatial prepositions or dimensional adjectives taken from Ancient Greek and Latin and first used in scientific terminology (e.g.,

megacefalia ‘megalencephaly’, *macrocosmo* ‘macrocosm’). These elements, whose spread is not limited to Italian but affects most languages of Europe, have also developed other evaluative meanings once they have entered everyday language (e.g., intensification; see §18.3.2).

The most widely used morphological strategy to express augmentation is by far the suffix *-one*, which combines with a wide array of bases, mostly nominal (e.g., *libro* ‘book’ > *librone* ‘large book’) and adjectival (e.g., *simpatico* ‘nice’ > *simpaticone* ‘likeable’), rarely adverbial (e.g., *bene* ‘well’ > *benone* ‘very well’). The suffix *-one* notably also occurs in combination with nominal or verbal bases in words (used both as nouns and adjectives) referring to a human being characterized by a certain physical/psychological feature which is out of the ordinary (e.g., *capello* ‘hair’ > *capellone* ‘someone with thick or very long hair, hippy’, *fifa* ‘fear’ > *fifone* ‘wimp’) or by a certain behaviour performed beyond the limit (e.g., *mangiare* ‘to eat’ > *mangione* ‘someone with a hearty appetite, trencherman’). In these cases, where the suffix proves to be capable of changing the lexical category of the base, the use of *-one* appears more derivational than evaluative.

Focusing on the inflexional properties, the addition of the augmentative suffix to masculine nouns results in the creation of nouns belonging to the inflexional class in singular *-e* and plural *-i*, regardless of the inflexional class of the base (e.g., *piatto* ‘plate’ > *piattone* ‘big plate’, *affare* ‘deal’ > *affarone* ‘major deal’, *problema* ‘problem’ > *problemone* ‘big problem’). When the suffix is attached to a feminine noun, the augmentative is a noun of the class in singular *-a* and plural *-e* (e.g., *fetta* ‘slice, piece’ > *fettona* ‘big slice, piece’). However, in some cases, the masculine form in *-one* can also be used instead of the feminine (therefore, the augmentative form for the noun *fetta*$_{\text{F}}$ ‘slice’ could also be the masculine noun *fettone* ‘big slice, piece’). Besides these cases where, for a female base, both augmentative forms (feminine and masculine) are possible, there are also cases where the gender change from feminine to masculine is the only possibility or at least the most frequent option (e.g., *porta*$_{\text{F}}$ ‘door’ > *portone*$_{\text{M}}$ ‘front door, main entrance’ and not ***portona*). As already observed for diminutives, the gender change is generally accompanied by lexicalization (e.g., *cena* ‘dinner’ > *cenone* ‘New

Year's Eve dinner'). The power to change the lexical category of the base is not the only formal property that *-one* shares with diminutive suffixes. Indeed, like *-ino*, the suffix *-one* can be applied recursively to a base to reinforce the meaning (e.g., *fett-ona-ona-ona* 'a very big slice') and used as an autonomous word (as in *Questo è proprio one* 'This is really super', see Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi 1994:434).

From a semantic perspective, *-one* represents the opposite end of the denotative scale of the 'small–big' dimension compared to *-ino*. Although the semantic core of *-one* is the value 'big X', the suffix may also convey a pejorative (e.g., *testa* 'head' > *testone* 'stubborn') or intensifying nuance (e.g., *professore* 'professor' > *professorone* 'bigshot professor'). As firstly discussed by Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994), *-one* may also perform pragmatic functions (e.g., tenderness, such as in *fratellone* '(beloved) big brother'). Indeed, the use of *-one* can confer to the entire utterance some pragmatic values related to the feature [fictive] and very similar to those expressed by diminutive suffixes. In some contexts, the use of a diminutive or augmentative suffix is equivalent from a pragmatic point of view, as they both have the effect of downgrading or upgrading the illocutionary force of the utterance (e.g., compare *Sei uno stupidino* and *Sei uno stupidone* both meaning 'you are an idiot').

As for the origin of the suffix *-one*, it represents the outcome of the Latin suffix -(I)O, -(I)ŌNIS, which was used to create masculine nouns referring to human beings characterized by a specific feature or displaying the tendency to act in an exaggerated manner (e.g., Lat. MISCELLUS 'mixed' > MISCELLIO 'muddler'; see Grandi 2011:10f.). In all these cases, the suffix expresses a relational meaning paraphrasable as 'someone who is/makes/has X to a high degree'. Indeed, Latin lacks morphological means to express augmentation. Italian has thus repurposed a suffix that originally lacked evaluative connotations but displayed relational semantics. Derivatives with the suffix *-one* have thus shifted from indicating a person who possesses a specific characteristic to the characteristic itself. Such a semantic shift took place gradually from late Latin and led to the emergence of a new, stable evaluative suffix in Italian, which, however, also retained the relational use of the Latin suffix (as in the already mentioned example of *capello* 'hair' > *capellone* 'someone with thick or very long hair, hippy').

The diachronic analysis of diminutive and augmentative suffixes in Italian offered by the numerous studies mentioned here has the merit not only of contributing to the description of the changes that occurred in the transition from Latin to Italian (and have led to a general enrichment of evaluative affixes) but also of bringing out the dynamism that characterizes the system of evaluative affixes as they convey highly expressive meanings that need regular renewal (Grandi 2002:166). Indeed, in both cases, the strategies for expressing diminution and augmentation have been renewed. On the one hand, Latin had a system of diminutive suffixes that Italian has expanded considerably. On the other, while Latin had no morphological markers for the expression of augmentation, Italian exploited a relational suffix which was productive in Latin for the expression of the value 'big X', though its original relational value was preserved. The expression of quantitative evaluation values through prefixation appears to be a more recent development, largely influenced by the introduction of neoclassical prefixes such as *micro-* and *mega-*.

18.3 Qualitative evaluation

Qualitative evaluation represents a generally less explored area of evaluative morphology, except for intensification, which has been the focus of several studies, including some based on Italian (see Grandi 2017a for an overview; Cacchiani 2011 for a comparison with English). As we will see, this semantic area exhibits more heterogeneity than quantitative evaluation. Indeed, it encompasses a range of diverse values, all sharing the common trait of expressing a subjective judgement of the speaker concerning a specific entity, quality, or event. The ways in which speakers can alter the meaning of words to convey their judgements are various and can be articulated into three pairs of opposing semantic operations, i.e., contempt and endearment, intensification and attenuation, approximation and prototypicality. In what follows, we shall see that the boundaries between these values are not always clear-cut. Instead, context is crucial in determining the accurate interpretation

of the evaluative affix. Italian uses both prefixes and suffixes to express such values; unlike what was observed for quantitative evaluation, prefixes play a significant role in the expression of qualitative values.

18.3.1 Contempt and endearment

Contempt and endearment express the speaker's pejorative/ameliorative attitude towards a given entity/person/event conveyed by the base. The morphological element most commonly used to express the value 'bad X' is the suffix *-accio* (and its variant *-azzo*, more frequent in southern Italy, as it is the form found in the dialects of the south).[10] It commonly combines both with nouns (e.g., *tempo* 'weather' > *tempaccio* 'bad weather') and adjectives (e.g., *povero* 'poor' > *poveraccio* 'very poor'), rarely with verbs (e.g., *bere* 'to drink' > *sbevazzare* 'to booze'),[11] or with adverbs (e.g., *male* 'badly' > *malaccio* 'not so bad/badly').[12]

The suffix comes from Lat. -ACEUS, which was used to express similarity in Latin (e.g., Lat. FOLIUM 'leaf' > FOLIACEUS 'having the form of a leaf', HERBA 'grass' > HERBACEUS 'having the colour of grass'). According to Rohlfs (2021c:366), the pejorative function was inferred from the similarity value, on the basis that what is similar is imperfect and therefore worse. The Latin suffix notably has two outcomes in Italian, namely *-accio*, which has undergone regular phonetic changes, and *-aceo*, which was taken from learnèd loanwords from Latin and has therefore retained its appearance. The latter suffix has preserved the original similative value in Italian (e.g., *perla* 'pearl' > *perlaceo* 'having similar characteristics to those of pearls') alongside which it has also acquired the attenuative one, as we see below.

The suffix *-accio* is not the sole similative suffix that has acquired a pejorative meaning. The suffix *-astro*, i.e., the outcome of the similative Latin suffix *-aster* (e.g., Lat. SURDASTER 'deaf-like'; see Mutz 2000:179–184 for a diachronic account), has acquired a pejorative function in Italian as well (e.g., *poeta* 'poet' > *poetastro* 'bad poet, poetaster'). The suffix retains its similative value in some

words (e.g., *fratello* 'brother' > *fratellastro* 'half-brother') and, as we shall see below, can also be used with an attenuative function.

Another source of pejoratives includes the collective suffixes *-aglia* (e.g., *studente* 'student' > *studentaglia* 'mob of students') and *-ume* (e.g., *politico* 'politician' > *politicume* ' rabble of politicians'), especially when they combine with animate bases (see Grossmann 2004a:245; Ricca 2005b:202f.). According to Mauri (2017), the collective suffix *-ame*, when attached to proper nouns, also conveys a pejorative nuance (e.g., [Silvio] *Berlusconi* > *berlusconame* meaning both 'people having to do with Berlusconi' and 'people, situations, attitudes that share Berlusconi as a common denominator'; cf. also Franco, Baldi, and Savoia 2020).

Finally, contempt can also be expressed by diminutive suffixes (e.g., *attrice* 'actress' > *attricetta* 'second-rate actress') and by an element that has acquired the properties of a prefix as a result of a grammaticalization process, namely *mal-* from *male* 'badly' and old Italian *malo* 'bad' (see Micheli 2019 for a diachronic account). It attaches to nouns (e.g., *tempo* 'weather' > *maltempo* 'bad weather') and verbs (e.g., *gestire* 'to manage' > *malgestire* 'to mismanage') to express a pejorative evaluation towards the entity or event conveyed by the base. Alongside the pejorative function, *mal-* has also developed a negative (e.g., *sano* 'healthy' > *malsano* 'unhealthy') and attenuative value (see §18.3.2).

Turning to endearment, it should be noted that genuine morphological amelioratives seem to be lacking cross-linguistically (cf. Jurafsky 1996). Italian supports this claim, since it lacks specific morphological elements for the expression of the value 'dear X' but mainly uses diminutive suffixes (e.g., *marito* 'husband' > *maritino* 'dear husband').

18.3.2 Intensification and attenuation

Although they have often been analysed separately,[13] both intensification and attenuation can be considered as operations by which speakers modulate the degree of a given entity, quality, or event.[14] Indeed, the former is used to express a high degree, while the latter indicates a downgrade. Italian expresses the two values

through morphological strategies that in some cases are not specific to intensification and attenuation but have another primary function (e.g., the superlative suffix *-issimo* for intensification; diminutive suffixes for attenuation). As pointed out by Grandi (2017a), intensification (and the same applies to attenuation) is not only expressed by affixes, albeit numerous, but also through syntactic strategies (e.g., adverbs, lexicalized collocations).

In modern Italian, intensification is conveyed by seven prefixes (i.e., *arci-*, *extra-*, *iper-*, *stra-*, *sopra-*, *super-*, and *ultra-*) and two suffixes (i.e., *-issimo* and *-one*).[15] All prefixes except for *stra-* and *sopra-* are of neoclassical origin and are commonly used in most of the languages of Europe. They are mainly used in combination with adjectives, to increase the degree of a quality expressed by the base (e.g., *arcinoto* 'very well known', *extrasensibile* 'very sensitive', *ipercritico* 'hypercritical', *supercomodo* 'super comfortable', *ultrarapido* 'ultrafast, high-speed'). The use of these neoclassical prefixes in combination with nouns is mainly restricted to specialized terminologies (e.g., *arcibasilica* 'major basilica', *extra-profitto* 'profit obtained beyond the normal/ordinary', *iperinflazione* 'hyperinflation', *superuomo* 'superman', *ultrasinistra* 'ultraleft'). However, as noted for other neoclassical elements (see Micheli 2023 on *para-*; also §18.3.3), their spread into everyday language has led some to acquire greater combinability and a strongly intensifying meaning even with nouns (independently of their being gradable or not).[16] In the following example, *super-* is used by the speaker,[17] together with the suffix *-issimo* (combined with the adjective *nervoso* 'nervous'), to emphasize the high degree of tension in the fight.[18]

2	Ieri	a	pranzo	ho	preparato	un
	yesterday	at	lunch	have.1SG	prepare.PTCP	an
	piatto	straveloce,	strafacile	e	strabuonissimo!	
	dish	*stra*-fast	*stra*-easy	and	*stra*-tasty-*issimo*	

'Yesterday at lunch I prepared a super-fast, super-easy, and super-tasty dish!'

The prefix *stra-* can be combined mostly with adjectives (e.g., *felice* 'happy' > *strafelice* 'extremely happy'), but also with verbs (e.g., *vincere* 'to win' > *stravincere* 'to win massively'), adverbs (e.g., *bene* 'well' > *strabene* 'very well'), and nouns (e.g., *guadagno* 'profit' > *straguadagno* 'huge profit'). More specifically, Napoli (2017) has shown that *stra-* attaches to nouns derived from verbs (e.g.,

vincitore 'winner' > *stravincitore* 'champion of champions'), to nouns referring to human beings or artefact nouns (e.g., *gelato* 'ice cream' > *stragelato* 'better-than-ordinary ice cream'), as well as to nouns that are part of multi-word expressions (e.g., *fare schifo* 'to be gross' > *fare straschifo* 'to be utterly gross'). The specific meaning of the prefix depends on the context in which it occurs; in some cases, it expresses the highest degree of a property connected with the noun (e.g., 'being tasty' for ice cream), in others it is used by the speaker more generically to emphasize the sentence it applies to. As noted by Napoli (2017), while the usage of adjectival and verbal bases with *stra-* has been documented since old Italian, its combination with nominal bases is a more recent phenomenon, specifically attested since the twentieth century.

The origin of *stra-* can be traced back to Lat. EXTRA, used in Latin as a preposition ('beyond') or as a locative adverb ('outside, externally'). Originally, the meaning of *extra* lacked evaluative connotations. Nevertheless, as highlighted by Napoli (2012), a secondary evaluative meaning (i.e., 'excessive') was already evident in Latin, in words such as EXTRAORDINARIUS 'out of the ordinary' (see also Rohlfs 2021c:353). Therefore, from the locative value of 'beyond', the value of excess and thus the value of high degree developed by inference, following a grammaticalization process known as *subjectification* whereby 'meanings tend to become increasingly situated in the speaker's subjective belief state or attitude toward the proposition' (Traugott 1989:31; 1995). Latin notably did not lack morphological elements for expressing intensification; rather, it possessed a set of prefixes, including, e.g., PRAE- (e.g., Lat. CLARUS 'famous' > PRAECLARUS 'very famous') and SUPER- (e.g., Lat. GLORIOSUS 'glorious' SUPERGLORIOSUS 'very glorious').

Prefixal intensification has undergone a significant renewal, not only between Latin and Italian but also within the trajectory of the history of Italian. Indeed, some prefixes previously employed as intensifiers in old and middle Italian have either lost their evaluative value or fallen into disuse. Grandi and Montermini (2005:278) identify the following prefixes used until a few centuries ago with intensifying value in combination with adjectives or present participles: *ogni-* (e.g., *ogniveggente* 'all-seeing', last attestation: 1747), *oltre-/oltra-* (e.g., *oltrapotente* 'very powerful', last

attestation: 1907), *per-* (e.g., *peracuto* 'very sharp', last attestation: 1561), *sopra-*/*sovra-*[19] (e.g., *sopraccontento* 'extremely happy', last attestation: 1907); *tra-* (e.g., *tramirabile* 'wonderful', last attestation: 1879). These prefixes, each in different ways, competed with *stra-* but then gradually lost their intensifying function. For example, *sopra-* already conveys a set of different meanings in old Italian, including the intensifying value, especially when combined with adjectives (e.g., *soprappieno* 'containing something to an exceptional extent', from *pieno* 'full') but also with verbs (e.g., *soprabbere* 'to drink excessively', from *bere* 'to drink'). As shown by the diachronic analysis provided by Micheli (2022), the intensifying function of *sopra-* gradually loses vitality and gives way to the other meanings conveyed by the prefix (especially the locative value 'upon, above', such as in *sovrastruttura* 'superstructure'). Some more recent uses of *sopra-* with an intensifying value are attested in calques based on English words containing the prefix *over-* (e.g., *sovrastimare* 'to overvalue').

In Italian, the suffix *-issimo* represents the specific marker for the expression of the absolute superlative,[20] also called *elative* (see Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi 1994:491 and Rainer 1983), whose function is to convey the utmost degree of a property (e.g., *felice* 'happy' > *felicissimo* 'extremely happy'). The suffix usually combines with non-relational adjectives, except in those cases where it is used in a non-relational sense (e.g., *cognome italianissimo* 'very / typical Italian surname'; see Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi 1994:493). Although *-issimo* is mainly attached to adjectives, it is also attested in combination with nouns (e.g., *offerta* 'offer' > *offertissima* 'great offer'), pronouns (e.g., *nessuno* 'nobody' > *nessunissimo* 'really no one, not a soul'), adverbs (e.g., *tardi* 'late' > *tardissimo* 'extremely late'), and past participles (e.g., *ascoltato* 'listened to' > *ascoltatissimo* 'extremely listened to'). As shown in the following example, the suffix *-issimo* may also be combined with an intensifying prefix for pragmatic purposes (i.e., to 'upgrade the illocutionary force in terms of commitment', as observed by Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi 1994:504).

3 a perché a questa età già mi sento semi-depressa
because at this age already me= feel.1SG semi-depressed
'[…] because at this age I already feel semi-depressed'.

b lo vede e in preda ad un quasi-svenimento viene salvata
him= see.3SG and in mercy at a quasi-faint come.3SG save.PTCP
dalle amiche.
by.the friends
'S/he sees him and nearly faints but is saved by her/his friends.'

Besides the affixes mentioned so far, intensification can also be expressed through augmentative affixes, such as *-one* (e.g., *festa* 'party' > *festona* 'big party').

Attenuation conveys the information of 'reduced degree of X' and allows speakers to downgrade the degree of a property, event, or entity. In Italian, this function is mainly performed by affixes that have a different core function, namely diminutive affixes (e.g., *-ino* in *giallo* 'yellow' > *giallino* 'yellowish', *magro* 'slim' > *magrolino* 'skinny'), the derogatory affix *-astro* (i.e., *rosso* > *rossastro* 'reddish'), and the similative affix *-aceo* (e.g., *viola* 'purple' > *violaceo* 'purplish'). As already mentioned, the prefixoid *mal-* can be used with an attenuative function, especially when it is combined with verbal bases (e.g., *malpagare* 'to pay little' < *pagare* 'to pay'; see Micheli 2019).

In addition, attenuative strategies include the prefix *semi-* (from Lat. SEMI- 'half'; cf. also the AGr. cognate *hemi-*) and the prefixoid *quasi-* (meaning 'almost'),[21] used by speakers to express a reduced degree of the category conveyed by the base, as shown by the following examples.

4 svolgono abusivamente questa professione dopo aver
carry.out.3PL illegally this job after have.INF
seguito qualche pseudo-corso di nutrizione.
follow.PTCP some pseudo-course of nutrition
'They illegally carry out this job after taking a few pseudo-courses in nutrition.'

As pointed out by Micheli (2023), the prefix *semi-* is inherited from Latin and initially appears only in learnèd loans in which it conveys the original meaning 'half', namely, a precise measurement. With this meaning, it is productively used in scientific terminologies (e.g., *semitono* 'semitone' in the field of music). From the eighteenth century onwards, it is also attested in non-scientific texts, where it is combined with words from everyday language and conveys the

attenuative meaning ‘partial/partially’ (e.g., *semi-accettazione* ‘partial acceptance’).

On the other hand, *quasi* ‘almost’ is an autonomous word in Italian, used as an adverb or conjunction. Notably, the use of *quasi-* as a bound element has been attested in the scientific language of physics since the 1970s (e.g., *quasiparticella* ‘quasiparticle’). Its integration into everyday language appears to be a more recent phenomenon, although further studies are necessary to confirm this claim.

As already observed in the case of intensifying prefixes, the use in everyday language of a morphological element originally occurring in scientific terminology leads to a semantic change (i.e., the subjectification process) that results in an evaluative meaning. In the next section, we will see that this phenomenon also affects the domain of approximation.

18.3.3 Approximation and prototypicality

Approximation and prototypicality deal with the membership of an entity within a category. While prototypicality expresses the core of a category by referring to its prototypical exemplars (i.e., the value ‘a true X’), approximation conveys the idea that a given entity lies outside (or on the far periphery of) a given category (i.e., the value ‘a sort of X’).

The morphological expression of approximation had been a rather neglected area of evaluation until the early studies on the suffix *-ish* in English (e.g., *warmish*; see, among others, Oltra-Massuet 2017; Eitelmann and Haumann 2023) and on the emerging prefixoid *simil-* in Italian (e.g., *luci simil-natalizie* ‘Christmas-like lights’; see Masini and Micheli 2020).[22] More recently, approximation has been the subject of a special issue of a journal (Masini, Norde, and Van Goethem 2023), devoted to the topic in different languages including Italian. In the literature on evaluative morphology, approximation has struggled to find its autonomy, as evidenced by the inconsistent terminology where it is associated with other values (mainly attenuation) or defined only in relation to other values (cf. ‘attenuation/approximation’ in Grandi 2017b and Rainer

2015:1346,[23] 'approximation/reduction/attenuation' in Grandi and Körtvélyessy 2015:9, 11, 'deintensification' in Körtvélyessy 2015:63, and 'non-prototypicality' in Cúneo 2015:630).[24]

Masini and Micheli (2020) provide the first description of the semantic and pragmatic domain of approximation based on the Italian prefixoid *simil-* (from the adjective *simile* 'similar') and other morphological markers it competes with (see below). What clearly emerges is that approximation does not represent a single value, but rather a domain that includes a set of meanings, each conveying a different shade that depends on the context and the semantics of the base. The boundaries between these values are often difficult to identify, and only the context provides the elements necessary to understand which value is conveyed by an approximating element. Masini and Micheli (2020:383f.) identify the following values expressed by *simil-* (where X is the base and Y is the output word containing the approximative marker):

i. 'fakeness' ('Y refers to an entity that is meant to imitate X (without being a genuine X) in order to be taken as an X', e.g., *similoro* 'imitation gold');

i. 'imitation' ('Y refers to an entity that is meant to imitate or reproduce X (without being a genuine X), the difference with (i) being that there is no intent for Y to be taken as an X', e.g., *similvita* 'pseudo-life', referring to the virtual life of a videogame character);

i. 'resemblance' ('Y refers to an entity that is merely similar to X without being an X'; e.g., *account simil-Amazon* 'Amazon-like account');

v. 'vagueness' ('Y refers to an entity whose nature is uncertain but somewhat associated to X, possibly as a peripheral member of the category X, having therefore to do with fuzzy category boundaries'; e.g., *simil-coppia* 'a sort of couple');

v. 'kin-categorization' ('Y results in a separate (established) entity closely related to X, in that it is defined starting from X and deviating from it', e.g., *sindrome simil-influenzale* 'flu-like syndrome').

All these values are expressed by the speaker to emphasize that a given entity is outside a category because it lacks certain properties (see also the notion of 'privativity' in Cappelle, Daugs, and Hartmann 2023). This complex domain is conveyed by a large set of affixes in Italian. Masini and Micheli (2020) identify nine prefixes/prefixoids (i.e., *falso-* 'false-', *finto-* 'fake-', *mezzo-* 'half', *non-* 'non-', *pseudo-* 'pseudo-', *quasi-* 'almost, quasi-', *simil-* 'similar', *semi-* 'semi-', *para-* 'para-') and three suffixes (i.e., *-oide* '-oid', *-esco* '-esque', and *-eggiante*).[25] The N-*non*-N construction (e.g., *sapone-non-sapone* lit. 'soap-NEG-soap (= soap-free cleanser)', identified by Masini and Di Donato (2023), should also be added to this set.

Approximating affixes mainly attach to nouns (e.g., *pseudo-lite* 'a sort of quarrel') and adjectives (e.g., *falso-cortese* 'fake-courteous') but in rare cases to other lexical categories as well, such as verbs (e.g., *simil-sorrideva* '(he was) sort of smiling', mentioned in Masini and Micheli 2020:383). When attaching to nouns, some of the prefixes (e.g., *para-* and *simil-*) may result in an attributive construction, though these cases are rather limited (e.g., *giaccone simil-pompiere* 'fireman-style jacket', mentioned in Masini and Micheli 2020:396).[26]

Italian approximative affixes exemplify almost all the different types of sources identified crosslinguistically by Masini, Norde, and Van Goethem (2023) for approximating markers. *Falso-*, *finto-*, and *pseudo-* (i.e., a neoclassical element taken from AGr. *pseudēs* 'false') are fake items typically expressing imitation and fakeness (but also other approximative values), as shown by the example in (4) where *pseudo-* conveys the idea that the courses referred to by the speaker are fake, illegal.

5	Proseguo	nella	lettura	e	scopro	che	il
	continue.1SG	in the	reading	and	discover.1SG	that	the
	frosting	è	in	realtà	una	quasi-meringa.	
	frosting	be.3SG	in	reality	a	quasi-meringue	

'I continue reading and discover that the frosting is actually a sort of meringue.'

Degree items (such as *semi-*, *quasi-*, and *mezzo-* in Italian) are another source for approximation. Since they originally indicate a reduced degree of a given entity, property, or event, they are mostly used to express attenuation, as already noted in the case of *quasi-* and *semi-* (see §18.3.2). However, besides the attenuative function, both *semi-* and *quasi-* can also be used to express some

approximating values, as in the example in (5) where *quasi-* conveys the value 'resembling X'.

1	Q	Dem	D	$Poss_1$	Num	Adj_1	Adj_2	N	$Poss_2$	Adj_3
a	tutti	(quei/)	i	miei	tre	bei	(nuovi)	quadri	(MIEI)	nuovi
b	all	(those/)	(the/)	my	three	nice	new	pictures	(of mine)	(**new)

'all my three new nice pictures / all those three new nice pictures of mine'

As shown by Masini, Micheli, and Huang (2018), similative items are frequently used as sources for approximation in many languages including Italian, where the prefixoid *simil-* and the similative suffixes *-esco* (e.g., *occhiaie pandesche* 'panda-like dark circles') and *-oide* (e.g., *intellettualoide* 'pseudo-intellectual') can be used to approximate a category (sometimes with a derogatory nuance in the case of *-oide*). Like *simil-*, the suffix *-oide* (originally meaning 'shape' in Ancient Greek) can also be used in both everyday language and scientific terminologies to create stable terms (e.g., *sindrome simil-influenzale* 'flu-like syndrome', *alcaloide* 'alkaloid'). Neoclassical elements occurring in specialized terminologies and more recently used with approximative values also include *para-*, originally expressing spatial proximity (from the AGr. preposition *pará* 'close to'; e.g., *ghiandole parauretrali* 'paraurethral glands', lit. 'glands located around the urethra'). In everyday language, *para-* conveys the value 'subordinate to X, unofficial X' (e.g., *parafarmacia* 'shop selling pharmaceuticals that do not require a medical prescription and other body care products') as well as the approximative value 'resemblance' (e.g., *intimidazione paramafiosa* 'mafia-like intimidation').

Finally, Italian displays a negation item expressing approximation, i.e., *non-* (e.g., *non-tram* 'unconventional tram'),[27] also involved in the N-*non*-N discontinuous reduplication (e.g., *bomboniera-non-bomboniera* 'unconventional party favour', exemplified in Masini and Di Donato 2023:131). Both constructions are used to refer to a non-prototypical entity that lacks certain properties and therefore is not fully considered as part of the category expressed by the base.

As noted in the case of *simil-*, each approximating element may express more than one value. A systematic and comparative analysis of the approximating markers described above is still lacking in the literature. What has emerged from the available studies is that the type of source from which the approximative marker develops may affect the value(s) expressed by the approximative marker, e.g.,

pseudo- frequently conveys values such as 'imitation' or 'fakeness' which are related to its original adjectival meaning in Ancient Greek.

The other side of the coin with respect to approximation is prototypicality, which is the value expressed when the speaker wants to emphasize that a given entity is the best exemplar of a category. In modern Italian, this value is mostly expressed through a syntactic strategy, namely reduplication (e.g., *caffè caffè* 'true coffee', see also Medici 1959 and Grandi 2017a:72). As noted by Grandi (2002:178), in some cases the suffix *-issimo*, alongside its intensifying function, can also express a value comparable to prototypicality (e.g., *finale* 'final match' > *finalissima* 'the very final match').

18.4 Conclusions

The overview outlined in this chapter has shown that Italian has made an essential contribution to the emergence and enrichment of theoretical studies on evaluative morphology, from the earliest stages of this field, when the focus was primarily on diminutives, to the latest developments, in which scholars' attention has turned to some values of qualitative evaluation.

Indeed, the picture reveals that Italian evaluative affixes represent a complex system encompassing some areas that seem more stable and others characterized by greater dynamism and innovations. Quantitative evaluation is found to be the most conservative area, and its values are stably expressed by a set of long-established suffixes. The only innovative feature witnessed since the second half of the twentieth century is the use of neoclassical elements to express diminution and above all augmentation. On the other hand, the area of qualitative evaluation is becoming more dynamic, so that new affixes are acquiring evaluative values. More specifically, the markers mostly affected by this semantic shift are neoclassical prefixes, which are entering the area of evaluation from scientific terminologies, where they perform the categorizing function. In the areas undergoing the most significant changes (particularly in approximation and intensification), prefixes are most frequently

repurposed, while suffixes seem less affected by these recent changes.

The outline presented here has also highlighted that morphological markers that are acquiring new evaluative values have different origins, and that the origin may to some extent determine or at least influence the type of evaluative value developed. Notably, among all types of sources, similative and relational affixes seem to have particular relevance. In the same way that in the transition from Latin to Italian, similative affixes had been paramount in the development of diminutive, augmentative, and derogatory markers, similative items are also employed in more recent changes affecting approximation.

Although the evaluative morphology of Italian is one of the most accurately described cases, there are still some issues that require further study. There are two directions towards which future research should be directed. From the diachronic point of view, we still lack a systematic picture of the changes that have occurred throughout the history of Italian that goes beyond the history of individual affixes and offers a deeper understanding of how affixes have acquired qualitative evaluation values. On the synchronic level, it is necessary to focus systematically on neoclassical elements, which are currently the main actors at play in the development of new evaluative markers.

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[1] Previously, the elements recognized as interfixes by Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi had received inconsistent treatment. Prati (1942) categorizes them as 'antesuffixes', while Migliorini (1976) considers elements like *-arello* and *-erello* as unitary suffixes.

[2] For the sake of readability, suffixes will be mentioned together with the final vowel representing the inflexional morpheme, except in cases where it is relevant to distinguish them.

[3] As noted by Rainer (1990), in Italian there is a tendency to avoid homophony between word final strings and suffixes (e.g., *letto* 'bed' > ***lett-ett-o* but also *rondine* 'swallow' > *rondinino* 'young swallow': see Merlini Barbaresi 2004:270 for other counterexamples).

[4] A more detailed picture is provided in Micheli and Pellegrini (2025), where stem allomorphy is represented in terms of alternation patterns between base-diminutive pairs automatically extracted.

[5] Notably, adverbs to which the suffix *-ino* can be attached are generally bisyllabic with the first syllable stressed (e.g., *forte* 'strong' > *fortino* 'fairly strong'). The absence of oxytone adverbs (e.g., *già* 'already') and adverbs created through the suffix *-mente* (e.g., *veloce* 'fast' > *velocemente* 'quickly') as bases suggests the presence of prosodic constraints, although systematic studies on prosodic factors in Italian evaluative morphology are still lacking.

[6] All the examples of old Italian are extracted from the *TLIO* dictionary, available at http://tlio.ovi.cnr.it/TLIOlemm/index.php (accessed 22 November 2023).

[7] The Latin suffix -LLUS is derived from the Indo-European suffix *-lo together with -OLUS and -ULUS with which it was originally in complementary distribution (see Haveling 2011). According to Brugmann (1904) and Magni (1999), *-lo does not express an evaluative meaning nor does it express that of 'child' assumed by Jurafsky (1996) but similarity to and/or belonging to an entity of a species or type. These values are synchronically encompassed within a more general relational value ('related to X'), also evidenced by Latin suffixes.

[8] Beside -LLUS, the other Latin diminutive suffixes also continue to express diminution in Italian in their outcomes *-olo* and *-ucolo* (see below).

[9] It should be noted that today *pezzuola* is mainly used in Tuscany and is therefore perceived as a regionalism.

[10] Historically *-accio* conveys an endearment value in Tuscany, as witnessed by the form *Wojtil**accio**ne* (combining both *-accio* and *-one*), addressed by the Tuscan actor Roberto Benigni to Pope John Paul II in 1980 (see also §1.4.3.2).

[11] As noted by Iacobini (2004b:159), in *sbevazzare* 'to booze', the prefix *s-* conveys an expressive value.

[12] It should be noted that *malaccio* does not convey a truly pejorative function in context. It can be used as adjective (in negative sentences such as *X non è malaccio* 'X is not all that bad') and as adverb (in negative sentences such as *Non abbiamo mangiato malaccio* 'We did not eat all that badly'. In the former case, the suffix *-accio* may have been attached to the adjective *malo* 'bad', which is no longer used today, rather than to the adverb *male*.

[13] It should be noted that attenuation is often associated with approximation rather than intensification (see, e.g., the classification proposed by Grandi 2017b). See §18.3.3 for a discussion on approximation.

[14] Bolinger (1972:17) gathers under the label of 'intensifiers' four types of degree modifiers (i.e., boosters, compromisers, diminishers, and minimizers), defined as 'any device that scales a quality, whether up or down or somewhere between the two' (see also Rainer 2015).

[15] Alongside these affixes, it is worth mentioning the modern combining form *turbo-* (i.e., a shortening of *turbina* 'turbine'; e.g., *turbo-ritardo* 'great delay'), which is acquiring an intensifying function, as highlighted by Verdelli (2023).

[16] As pointed out by Iacobini (2015), neoclassical elements begin to spread massively in everyday language from the second half of the twentieth century.

[17] We refer to Migliorini (1990b:152) for an in-depth examination of the prefix *super-*, whose fortune in Italian is said to be linked above all to the word *superuomo* 'superman'.

[18] Unless otherwise indicated, all examples mentioned in this chapter are extracted from the web corpus itTenten20 (Jakubíček et al. 2013).

[19] Both forms can be traced back to Lat. SUPRA- 'above', *sovra-* being a variant that has undergone the lenition of the occlusive (i.e., [p] > [v]). In modern Italian, *sovra-* only occurs as a prefix, while *sopra* can be used as a prefix, preposition, and adverb.

[20] We include *-issimo* among the morphological means by which Italian expresses intensification, although its nature is somewhat different from that of the other affixes described so far. Indeed, the nature of *-issimo* seems to lie somewhere between inflexion and derivation (see Gaeta 2003:45f. for a discussion). Here, we consider it a non-prototypical inflexional suffix, following Gaeta (2003) and Napoli (2013).

[21] We refer to *quasi-* as a prefixoid (and not as a prefix) because it is a lexical element that mainly occurs as an autonomous word and has not yet acquired the typical properties of a prefix. We regard it as being at the beginning of a grammaticalization process (see Booij and Hüning 2014 on prefixoids between compounding and derivation).

[22] On the other hand, approximation has been studied extensively in pragmatics and discourse studies, where it is commonly referred to by other terms, among them 'mitigation' (Caffi 2007), 'vagueness' (Mihatsch 2007), 'intentional vagueness' (Voghera and Collu 2017).

[23] It should be noted that Rainer (2015:1346) considers approximation and attenuation to be a single value and includes them in the wider category of intensification as a degree-modifying operation.

[24] Attenuation and approximation are often treated as a single value of qualitative evaluation (see Masini, Norde, and Van Goethem 2023 who place attenuation within the broader domain of approximation). Although they are very closely related, in this chapter we treat them separately. We consider attenuation as an operation of degree modification of a certain entity (which, albeit of a reduced degree, belongs to the category of the base), and approximation as an operation by which speakers indicate that an entity does not belong to a category.

[25] Adjectives containing *-eggiante* (e.g., *iPhoneggiante* 'iPhone-like') formally correspond to the present participle of *-eggiare* verbs.

[26] Hence, *para-* and *simil-* seem to belong to that set of prefixes that can change the lexical category of the base from noun to adjective (such as *anti-* and *multi-*).

[27] It should be noted that Italian *non-* (corresponding to both *non-* and *not* in English) performs the same functions as those identified by Dugas (2017) for French *non-*. The approximating function probably emerged on the basis of the word *nonluogo* 'non-place',

which is a calque of Fr. *non-lieu* ‘dismissed law case’, a term employed by the anthropologist Marc Augé to specifically indicate places without identity such as stations or shopping malls.

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Chapter 19

The nominal group

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19.1 Introduction

The present chapter presents an overview of the syntax of the nominal group in Italian and various aspects of its semantico-pragmatic properties.[1] Drawing systematic comparisons with English, Romance, and other languages families, the selection of phenomena discussed here includes the distribution, ordering, and combinatorial properties of the noun, the lexical head of the nominal group, and its modifiers,[2] which include articles, demonstratives, possessives and dependent genitives, adjectives, and numerals. A brief overview of the syntax of these nominal modifiers is provided in §§19.1–3, while §§19.4–5 focus on the properties of pronominals, the distribution of numerals, and proper names. Even though the aims of this chapter are mainly descriptive, in what follows we explore some of the salient aspects of the syntax of the nominal group in contemporary Italian from the perspective of generative grammar, from which we adopt two basic assumptions:

a. There exists a universal word order for the basic elements that make up the nominal group, viz. [Dem [Num [Adj [N]]]], which coincides with the most widely attested word order cross-linguistically, as summed up in Greenberg's (1966:87) 'Universal 20' and subsequent revisions discussed in Cinque (2005:321; 2010; 2014). Consequently, any (attested) surface deviation from this linear arrangement can be understood as a modification of this basic word order in accordance with the specific parametric requirements of the grammar of a given language (cf. Longobardi 2001a; Roberts 2012; 2019).

b. The leftmost part of the nominal group consists in an area dedicated to (definite) D(eterminer)s (cf. Abney's 1987 so-called DP-Hypothesis) which is responsible for the interpretation of the referential properties of the nominal head and for turning the nominal group into an argument of the verb. On this view, a parallelism can be established between the nominal group and the clause (cf. Chapter 21), in that they function in a similar way. The leftmost portion of the nominal group, dedicated to determiners and similar, and that

of the clause, the Complementizer-layer, hosting subordinators (and other elements in the clausal 'left-periphery'), show a number of structural parallels in that they are both responsible for the interpretation of their respective nominal and sentential complements (cf. Szabolcsi 1981; 1983; 1987; Bernstein 2001; Giusti 2006; 2015).

In this light, (1) compares the linear order of the elements that make up the nominal group in Italian (1a) and English (1b) in conjunction with common nouns (adapted from Cinque 2005).

2 a il / un / del vino
the.MPL a.M some.MSG wine.MSG
'the/a (type of)/some wine'

b i / dei vini
the.MPL some.MPL wine.MPL
'the/some wines'

While English shows the typologically most frequently attested linear order in (1b) (cf. assumption a, above), Italian exploits the second most frequently attested order, viz. D-Num-N-Adj, in (1b). In particular, the difference lies in the surface position of the noun with respect to (adpositional descriptive) adjectives, since modern Italian presents the unmarked order N-Adj, on a par with most Romance varieties, and unlike English Adj-N. However, Italian can also exploit the pre-nominal position with all classes of adjective to express specific semantic (e.g., evaluative, figurative, intrinsic) values and/or pragmatic functions which can also be restricted by the type and nature of the referent (cf. §19.3.2). In a similar fashion, Italian allows possessive adjectives to surface in both pre- and post-nominal position in accordance with unmarked and contrastive interpretations (cf. §19.3.1).

19.2 Determiners

19.2.1 Distribution of articles and bare nouns

In accordance with Greenberg's 'Universal 20', the Italian definite, (singular) indefinite, and *de*-partitive articles (Table 19.1) always occur in the left margin of the nominal group, as with the mass noun *vino* 'wine' (2) and count noun *sedia* 'chair' (3). The only element that can precede articles, as well as demonstratives (cf. §19.2.2)—but not the partitive article because of obvious semantic incompatibility—is the universal quantifier *tutto* 'all/every' (cf. 1a).

Table 19.1 Definite, indefinite, and partitive article forms in Italian

	definite		indefinite		partitive	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
SG	il, lo, l'	la, l'	un, uno	una, un'	del, dell'	della, dell'
PL	i, gli	le			dei, degli	delle

3 a la / una (/**della) sedia
the.FSG a.FSG some.FSG sedia.FSG
'the/a(/some) chair'

b le / delle sedie
the.FPL some.FPL chair.FPL
'the/some chairs'

4 a Mangio pane / biscotti.
eat.1SG bread biscuits
'I (am) eat(ing) bread / biscuits.'

b in città/ in città deserte
in town in towns deserted
'in town / in deserted cities'

In modern Italian the context of occurrence of articles is provided by the semantic features of the referent denoted by the head noun and their interpretation at the discourse-level: prototypically, definite articles are used with pragmatically [+given], discourse-old referents, while indefinite articles occur with [–given], discourse-new referents (Lepschy and Lepschy 1988:164f.). In contrast, the *de*-article is employed to express an indefinite quantificational value, i.e., 'some' (only compatible with mass nouns in the singular, cf. 2a vs 3a), irrespective of the givenness of the referent. In this respect, Italian patterns with French and contrasts with Spanish, inasmuch as Italian lacks plural forms of the indefinite article, e.g., ***uni vini*/*une sedie* (intended: 'some wines/chairs'), for which the *de*-article is employed; cf. (2b)–(3b).

The study of the distribution and interpretation of determiners across different language families has inspired many descriptions and analyses of the phenomenon in the literature. As observed in (2)–(3), Italian is among those languages that grammaticalized different types of article, which consequently implies a limited availability of bare nouns in comparison with other language families. With the notable exception of modern French, Italian patterns with Romance (Renzi 2001b; Longobardi 1994; 2001a:584; Crisma 1997; Chierchia 1998) in showing a syntactically and semantically more restricted distribution of bare nouns than in English and Germanic more generally. This is captured

by Chierchia's (1998) Nominal Mapping Parameter Hypothesis, which holds that the locus of parametric variation across typologically different languages can be linked to two binary functions of nouns, namely, whether, in a given language, they function as arguments or predicates, or as both. This insight determines the distribution of overt determiners: while Chinese and French show opposite behaviours in allowing only bare nouns and nouns accompanied by an overt determiner, respectively, English can exploit both options depending on the interpretation of the referent in context. In English, singular mass and plural nouns can surface in bare form in any syntactic position, while singular count nouns require an overt determiner. Italian, together with the majority of Romance varieties, belongs to a parallel subgroup in which kind-denoting bare nouns can only appear in complement position (Longobardi 1994:616), be that a verb (4a) or a preposition (4b). Consequently, a crucial difference between English and Italian is that bare nouns in Italian cannot appear in preverbal subject position, except when contrastively focused and, hence, placed in the left periphery of the sentence (cf. Benincà 1980). Non-contrastive preverbal subjects in Italian therefore require the presence of a semantically empty 'expletive' article (cf. Giusti 1997), witness the contrast in (5a–b).

5 a (**The) Tomatoes were introduced in Europe after 1492.

b **(I) pomodori furono introdotti in Europa dopo il 1492.
the tomatoes be.PST.PFV.3PL introduce.PTCP in Europe after the 1492

6 a Bevo sempre vino. (singular mass noun)
drink.1SG always wine
'I always drink wine.'

b Mangio patate. (bare plural noun)
eat.1SG potatoes
'I (am) eat(ing) potatoes.'

c Non c' era studente in giro. (NEG+singular count noun)
not there= be.PST.IPFV.3SG student in turn
'There wasn't a student around.'

Although we see that bare nouns are restricted to occurring in governed positions as the complement of a verb or preposition, their distribution in such positions is further restricted by the semantics of the nominal expression. For example, as the complement of a verb, a bare noun must be a singular mass noun (6a), a plural count noun (6b), or a singular count noun employed as a negative polarity item (6c) in the scope of a sentential negator (Benincà 1980; *apud* Longobardi 1994: 613).

7 a Dei dinosauri furono uccisi da cause misteriose.
some dinosaurs be.PST.PFV.3PL kill.PTCP.PL by causes mysterious
'Some dinosaurs were killed by mysterious causes.' (EXISTENTIAL)

b Un dinosauro fu ucciso da cause misteriose.
a dinosaur be.PST.PFV.3SG kill.PTCP.SG by causes mysterious
'A dinosaur was killed by mysterious causes.' (EXISTENTIAL)

In terms of their interpretation,[3] Italian (and Romance) bare nouns only convey indefinite readings on a par with indefinite determiners such as the indefinite and partitive articles (Longobardi 2001a:§3.2.2), and can never be interpreted as kinds (Alexopoulou, Folli, and Tsoulas 2013:306). This indefinite interpretation is linked to an existential reading which is unspecified for number (Longobardi 1994:618), paraphrasable as 'there exist(s) N(s)'. Indeed, the Italian *de*-partitive (7a) and indefinite (7b) articles convey the same indefinite, existential interpretations as their bare noun counterparts. By contrast, the singular (7c) and plural (7d) variants with the definite article would normally be ambiguous between a 'default' specific and a 'marked' generic/mass reading, but the referents in (7c–d) must necessarily be interpreted as generic (Longobardi 1994:614n7) since the existential, specific reading would only be felicitous if dinosaurs were not extinct.

c	Il	dinosauro	fu	ucciso	da	cause	misteriose.
	the.SG	dinosaur	be.PST.PFV.3SG	kill.PTCP.SG	by	causes	mysterious

'The dinosaur (species) was killed by mysterious causes.' (GENERIC)
#'The (specific) dinosaur . . .' (#EXISTENTIAL)

d	I	dinosauri	furono	uccisi	da	cause	misteriose.
	the.PL	dinosaurs	be.PST.PFV.3PL	kill.PTCP.PL	by	causes	mysterious

'(the species of) Dinosaurs were killed by mysterious causes.' (GENERIC)
#'the (specific) dinosaurs . . .' (#EXISTENTIAL)

8 a I only excluded old friends. (EXISTENTIAL & GENERIC)

b	Ho	escluso	solo	vecchi	amici. (EXISTENTIAL)
c	Ho	escluso	solo	i	vecchi	amici. (GENERIC (+ SPECIFIC))
	have.1SG	exclude.PTCP	only	the	old	friends

Italian therefore resolves the ambiguous existential vs generic/mass reading of English bare plurals (8a) by adding an overt definite article (8c) to disambiguate the generic (specific) reading from the existential reading (8b) (adapted from Longobardi 1994:630).

9 a	**(Un/Il)	grande	amico	di	Maria	mi	ha	telefonato.
	a/the	great	friend	of	Maria	me=	have.3SG	phone.PTCP

'A good friend of Maria's/Maria's good friend rang me.' (subject)

b	Ho	incontrato	**(un/il)	grande	amico	di	Maria.
	have.1SG	meet.PTCP	a/the	great	friend	of	Maria

'I met a good friend of Maria's/Maria's good friend.' (object)

c	Ho	parlato	con	**(un/il)	grande	amico	di	Maria.
	have.1SG	speak.PTCP	with	a/the	great	friend	of	Maria

'I spoke with a good friend of Maria's/Maria's good friend.' (PP)

d	Ha	telefonato /	è	venuto	**(un/il)	grande	amico	di	Maria.
	have.3SG	phone.PTCP	be.3SG	come.PTCP	a/the	great	friend	of	Maria

'A good friend of Maria's/Maria's good friend rang/came.' (VS-order)

The noun class that displays the strongest restrictions is singular count bare nouns, which are blocked in all argument positions (9a–d) and must be

introduced by an overt determiner (adapted from Longobardi 1994:612).

10 a Presidente e vice-presidente hanno fatto un discorso ottimistico.

b President and vice-president gave an optimistic speech.

11 a La novella indica una separazione fra autore e narratore.

b The short story signals a separation between author and narrator.

12 a Docenti e ricercatori lavorano troppe ore alla settimana.

b Lecturers and researchers work too many hours per week.

While singular count bare nouns can never appear in argument positions, e.g., *ho trovato* ***amico* 'I've found friend', they prove entirely grammatical in non-argumental functions such as vocatives, predicatives, and exclamatives (e.g., *Amico, come stai?* 'Friend, how are you?'), as well as following certain prepositions (cf. Lepschy and Lepschy 1988:170; Longobardi 1994:612f., 632) as part of a fossilized usage reflecting a conservative stage of the grammaticalization of definite articles (Ledgeway 2012a:107n33), e.g., *in giardino* lit. 'in garden (= in the garden)', *a letto* 'at bed (= in bed)', *in Europa* 'in Europe' (cf. also Lyons 1999:51).

Another context in which definite articles may be omitted in Italian (and English) is coordination structures with both singular and plural nouns, with no restrictions on their position and function (10–11, adapted from Heycock and Zamparelli 2003). While coordinated singular nouns are interpreted as definite (10a–b) or kind-denoting (11a–b), plural nouns also allow an indefinite interpretation (12a–b).

13 a Prima della cerimonia, professoressa e studenti
before of.the ceremony professor.FSG and student.MPL
hanno assistito a una rappresentazione teatrale.
have.3PL attend.PTCP to a representation theatrical
'Before the ceremony, professor and students attended a play.'

b Maestro e alunni rimangono spesso in contatto negli anni.
teacher.MSG and pupil.MPL remain.3PL often in contact in.the years
'Teacher and pupils often stay in contact over the years.'

Article-omission in coordinated structures is also allowed between a singular noun and a plural one, which allow both definite specific (13a) and kind-denoting (13b) interpretations depending on the broader context, as in (10)–(11).

14 a La birra e limonata è in frigo. (Heycock and Zamparelli 2005:211)
the beer and lemonade be.3SG in fridge
'The beer with lemonade is in the fridge.'

b **Ho visto il padrone e cane insieme.
have.1SG see.PTCP the owner and dog together
'**I've seen the owner and dog together.'

Interestingly, in the case of two coordinated singular nouns where only the first noun is introduced by the article, the complex can only receive a 'JOINT

reading' (Heycock and Zamparelli 2005:204), whenever available (14a–b). This means that both nouns and properties these identify must refer to a single entity, i.e., 'beer with lemonade' (14a) vs **'owner and dog' (14b), rather than two separate entities. The latter is referred to as a 'SPLIT reading', which is always unavailable in such contexts (**'beer, lemonade' and **'owner, dog').

15 Gli amici e nemici di Gianni si trovavano d' accordo
the friends and enemies of Gianni REFL= find.PST.IPFV.3PL of agreement
su un solo punto. (Heycock and Zamparelli 2005:214)
on a single point
'Gianni's friends and enemies were in agreement on a single point.'

However, in the case of plural nouns, Italian allows both JOINT and SPLIT interpretations (15).

16 (l') attribuzione (del) diritto di voto per (l') elezione (dell') organo di controllo
the conferment of.the right of vote for the election of.the organism of control
'conferment of right to vote for election of Board of auditors'

Finally, articles (as well as other functional categories) can also be omitted in bureaucratic, formal registers of Italian, as indicated by the bracketed occurrences of the article in (16).

17 eletto (il) presidente: emanato subito (il) decreto legge
elect.PTCP the president emanate.PTCP at.once the decree law
'President elected: Decree Law promulgate right away'

These expressions are formed by so-called deverbal nominal constructions, in which the first and main deverbal nominal head is derived from a transitive or an unaccusative predicate followed by its complement, e.g., *caduta massi*, lit. 'fall rocks (= beware of falling rocks)', and, unlike compounds, allows adjectival modification, e.g., [[*raccolta*$_{N}$ *differenziata* $_{A}$] *rifiuti*$_{N}$] 'selective waste collection' (Baroni, Guevara, and Zamparelli 2009:28f.). Indeed, unlike in everyday written and spoken Italian, these constructions display their own well-behaved syntax akin to that of 'headlinese', a telegraphic written style used in news, diaries, recipes, proverbs, etc. (cf. Lepschy and Lepschy 1988:172), as in (17).

18 a Mi cambio questa(/**quella) maglietta e partiamo.
me= change.1SG this that t-shirt and leave.1PL
'I'll change this t-shirt (I'm wearing) and we'll set off.'

b Sì, ma pulisciti questi/ quegli occhiali prima di guidare!
yes but clean.IMP.2SG=you these those glasses before of drive.INF
'OK, but clean those glasses (of yours) before you start driving!'

19.2.2 Demonstratives

The semantics of demonstratives have been classified according to the (concrete vs abstract) distance-based vs person-based deictic systems they encode:[4] proximal vs medial vs distal deixis, as opposed to the domains of the

speaker(s) [1] vs addressee(s) [2] vs non-discourse participant(s) [3]. Modern Italian employs a binary demonstrative system opposing *questo* 'this' and *quello* 'that' to respectively mark proximity and distance to/from the deictic centre, viz., the speaker (Maiden 1995a:125; Vanelli 2001b:324; Ledgeway 2004:67–70; 2015b; 2019b; 2020; Da Milano 2015; Ledgeway and Smith 2016:879–881; cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti 2015 on the internal structure of Italian demonstratives). These are presented in Table 19.2, which also includes *sto*, the clitic form of *questo* (a´) for which *quello* does not provide a parallel form, and the (Tuscan and) formal Italian *codesto* 'this (near you)' (c), as well as relative locative reinforcers for each demonstrative form.

Table 19.2 Italian demonstratives and reinforcers

	SG		PL			LOCATIVE
	M	F	M	F		REINFORCER
a [+1PERSON] [–SPEAKER]	questo	questa	questi	queste		qui/qua
a´ [+1PERSON] [–SPEAKER] (clitic)	sto	sta	sti	ste		qui/qua
b [–1PERSON] [–SPEAKER]	quel/ quello	quella	que(ll)i/ quegli	quelle		lì/là
c [+ 2PERSON] [+ADDRESSEE]	codesto	codesta	codesti	codeste		costì/costà

Indeed, the modern Italian demonstrative system only operates according to the deictic sphere of the [±SPEAKER] (18a) and does encode that of the [±ADDRESSEE], which may fall under either of the two terms in (18b).

19 questo /quel libro (**sul tavolo) qui / lì sul tavolo
this that book on.the table here there on.the table
'this book here/that book there on the table'

In (18b), while the proximal form *questi* 'these' is not ungrammatical, the distal form is preferred when referring to the domain of the addressee (here, also hinted at by the ethical dative *ti* 'for you(rself)'); nonetheless, in a speaker-oriented binary system, the interpretation of *quegli* is ambiguous and additionally means 'those glasses (elsewhere)'.

The rightmost column in Table 19.2 shows that Italian demonstratives *questo* 'this' and *quello* that' can optionally appear in combination with the locative adverbs *qui/qua* 'here' and *lì/là* 'there', respectively. These locative reinforcers must match the deictic features of their associated demonstrative (cf. ***questa* . . . *lì*/***quel* . . . *qua*) to form discontinuous expressions and further strengthen

the demonstrative's deictic force (19; cf. Bernstein 1997; Brugè 2002:37f.; Giusti 2002:§3.1; 2015:134; Guardiano 2012).

20	Questo	libro	(**qui)	vecchio	qui	non	deve	essere	venduto.
	this	book	here	old	here	not	must.3SG	be.INF	sell.PTCP

'This old book mustn't be sold.'

Reinforcers must always immediately follow the head noun, i.e., *libro* 'book' in (19), hence the ungrammaticality of inserting the prepositional phrase *sul tavolo* 'on the table' between the noun and the locative reinforcer *qui/lì* (cf. Brugè 2002:37). However, whenever the noun is modified by material internal to the nominal group, e.g., an adjective, the reinforcer must follow the latter (however, Brugè (2002:37) originally presents (20) as marginal, i.e., ?*questo libro vecchio qui* . . .).

21	(**il/)	questo	libro	(**questo)
	the	this	book	this

'this book'

In contrast to the binary system of everyday modern Italian, a tripartite system may still be found in formal registers of Italian (as well as in the regional variety spoken in Tuscany). As shown in Table 19.2c, this system further includes the addressee-oriented demonstrative *codesto* 'that (near you)' and the associated spatial adverbs and locative reinforcers *costì/costà* 'there (near you)'. Hence, in such a system, the form used in (18b) could equally have been *codesti occhiali (costì)*, as it refers to the addressee.

The tendency for demonstrative systems to undergo internal reorganization —both endogenous and contact-induced—from tripartite to bipartite systems is widely attested cross-linguistically,[5] and targets especially the expression of discourse participants, whilst the domain of the non-discourse participants appears to be more stable cross-linguistically.[6] A similar formal reduction is attested in the history of Italian, where the Tuscan-based tripartite system lost the addressee-oriented demonstrative form to yield the bipartite system of modern Italian (Maiden 1995a:115). At the same time, even in the 'apparent' ternary system of Tuscan Italian, the addressee-oriented form is used in a limited fashion, which highlights the predominantly bipartite nature of this system too (Ledgeway 2004:68–70). Indeed, *codesto* only survives in formal registers of Italian, and when 'borrowed' into spoken Italian encodes an evaluative (viz. pejorative) reading, thus expressing affective distance from the referent (on a par with its human-referring oblique cognate pronoun *costui*; Lepschy and Lepschy 1988:127; Maiden 1995a:177).

Syntactically, demonstratives in Italian always occur in pre-nominal position, unlike other Romance varieties, notably Spanish and Romanian, where demonstratives may also occur post-nominally (Brugè 2002:30; Giusti 2002:§3.1; 2006, 2015; Roberts 2011; Nicolae 2013:297–299). Hence, while so-called 'low-demonstrative' languages allow post- and pre-nominal demonstratives, 'high-demonstrative' languages such as Italian allow them only in the left margin of definite nominal expressions (21).

22	a	anaphoric (i.e., abstract):	questo/quell'anno 'this/that year'
	b	indexical (i.e., concrete):	questo/quel libro 'this/that book'
	c	empathetic (i.e., abstract):	(que)sto[7]/quello scemo 'this/that fool'

Even though demonstratives appear in complementary distribution with definite articles, the former show greater syntactic independence than the latter on account of their richer semantic import. While both express anaphoric relations (22a; Lyons 1999:113–116) and D-related features such as referentiality and identification (22b; Longobardi 1994; Lyons 1999:159), demonstratives additionally encode deixis—that mechanism whereby a linguistic expression requires extralinguistic information related to participant-, spatio-temporal-, and discourse-related coordinates in order to be interpreted (cf. Cinque 1976b:101; Vanelli 2001b:262f.). In particular, demonstratives express deictic information concerning the concrete or abstract proximity/distance of a given referent with respect to the deictic centre (the speaker) and other (non-)discourse participants (cf. Anderson and Keenan 1985). The concrete vs abstract distinction not only separates indexical (spatial) deixis from anaphoric (discourse) deixis, but also from the emotional (cf. Lakoff 1974) or empathetic (Lyons 1977) deixis (22c).

23	a	la	(**sua)	macchina	di Gianni
		the	his	car	of Gianni
		'Gianni's (**his) car'			
	b	la	sua	macchina	(**di Gianni)
		the	his	car	of Gianni
		'his car (**of Gianni)'			

7

It is this same deictic-meaning component that prevents demonstratives from licensing a kind-denoting generic interpretation, for which the semantically poorer definite article is required, e.g., **_quel/il genere umano_ 'that/(the) human kind'.

Pragmatically, and unlike articles, demonstratives can be used restrictively to identify a given referent under contrastive focus (cf. Lyons 1977:637), e.g., _QUEL libro (non un altro)_. 'THAT book (not another)' (Lyons 1999:18).

19.3 Adnominal possessives and adjectives

19.3.1 Possessives

Possessive structures express an (in)alienable predicative relation between a referent, the possessor, and a nominal entity, the possessed (Longobardi 1994; Hasplemath 1999; Longobardi and Silvestri 2013; cf. also §19.4). Similarly to demonstratives, possessive expressions are always referential and encode the person and number features of the possessor on a par with other referential/indexical pronouns (Table 19.3), whilst the number and gender of the possessed noun are expressed by inflexional agreement, except for the invariable 3PL *loro* 'their'.

Table 19.3 Possessive forms

	SG		PL	
	M	F	M	F
1SG	mio	mia	miei	mie
2SG	tuo	tua	tuoi	tue
3SG	suo	sua	suoi	sue
1PL	nostro	nostra	nostri	nostre
2PL	vostro	vostra	vostri	vostre
3PL		loro		

In Italian, possessive adjectives appear in complementary distribution with prepositional possessive complements (23; cf. Cordin 2001); in this section, we focus only on the syntactic and pragmatic behaviour of adnominal possessives.

24 a (**il) mio padre/ **(la) mia macchina
b (**the) my father/ (**the) my car

25 **(la/ una) mia macchina
the a my car
'my car/a car of mine'

Syntactically, possessive expressions either display the categorial behaviour of determiners occurring in complementary distribution with the definite article (cf. Jackendoff 1977), or behave like adjectival modifiers and hence are compatible with overt determiners (Lyons 1986; 1999:24). Examples (24a) and

(25) show that in Italian the distribution of possessive determiners vs adjectives is sensitive to the 'common' vs 'kinship' noun distinction (cf. Egerland 2013:70). While (24b) shows that English only employs the determiner-like strategy, (24a) shows that Italian only allows this option with core kinship terms, but not with common nouns. This is because Italian is among the Romance languages displaying the adjective-like possessive strategy with an obligatory determiner (25).

25 Ho parlato con tua madre / tuo padre.
have.1SG speak.PTCP with your.F mother your.M father
'I've spoken with your mother/father.'

Hence, while the 'default' adjectival possessive in (25) is the norm for most nouns in Italian, including plural and modified kinship terms (cf. 28c below), the determiner-like possessive structure (cf. 24a) is restricted to a closed class—no more than about twenty-five—singular kinship terms. These are unique, highly identifiable referents such as *madre/padre* 'mother/father' (25), *fratello/sorella* 'brother/sister', or *zio/zia* 'uncle/aunt'.[8]

26 a Ho parlato con [DP[Poss mamma] [NP~~mamma~~]].
have.1SG speak.PTCP with mum
'I've spoken with (my/our) mum.'

b Ho parlato con [DP [Poss mia] [NP mamma]].
have.1SG speak.PTCP with my.F mum
'I've spoken with my mum.'

Due to their highly referential interpretation, many of these kinship terms show a similar behaviour to proper nouns when it comes to the use of possessives and other determiners (cf. §19.5.2). On the one hand, *mamma/papà* 'mum/dad' may appear without a determiner (26a) whenever they receive a subject-oriented possessive interpretation—structurally, they may be argued to occupy the position of the determiner possessive, as do proper nouns (cf. §19.5.2). On the other hand, as shown by the contrast between (26a–b), some Italian speakers do allow the presence of an overt pre-nominal possessive, highlighting some considerable variation in this respect that is not always definable in purely diatopic terms (cf. Słapek 2021; Loporcaro 2023).

27 a il mio papà
the my dad
'my dad'

b **(il) mio Gianni
the my Gianni
'my Gianni'

Moreover, *mamma/papà* (27a) may also pattern with modified proper nouns (27b) and common nouns in allowing the co-occurrence of the definite article and possessive (cf. §19.5.2), inasmuch as they can be argued to involve a (lexical) diminutive form.

28 a (**la) mia zia
the my aunt
'my aunt'

b **(le) mie zie
the my aunts
'my aunts'

c **(la) mia giovane zia
the my young aunt
'my young aunt'

d (la) mia zia argentina
the my aunt Argentinian
'my Argentinian aunt'

e **(la) mia zietta
the my aunt.DIM
'my (sweet) auntie'

Other kinship terms lack such variations and can only resort to the determiner-possessive strategy, which can only appear in complementary distribution with the overt article (28a). In contrast, the possessive must co-occur with the definite article in Italian (except for vocative/exclamative contexts, cf. §19.2) whenever the kinship term is plural (28b), modified by a pre-nominal (28c) or post-nominal (28d) adjective, or by an evaluative suffix (28e), or whenever the possessive itself is post-nominal (28f). However, there is again room for diatopic variation in cases of post-nominal indirect adjectival modification (cf. §19.3.2) where the determiner possessive is also a grammatical option in southern regional varieties of Italian (28d).

f **(la) zia MIA
the aunt my
'MY aunt'

29 a la mia macchina
the my car
'my car'

b la macchina MIA
the car my
'MY car'

In contrast to pre-nominal possessive constructions with kinship and common nouns, which constitute the pragmatically unmarked order, the post-nominal order exemplified in (28f) conveys a contrastive/corrective focal interpretation on a par with post-nominal adjectives (Cardinaletti 1998; Bernstein 2001; Samek-Lodovici 2010), as further illustrated by the minimal pair in (29).

30 **(la) loro madre /**(il) loro padre
the their mother the their father
'their mother/father'

The only possessive adjective obligatorily requiring the article with all kinship terms is the invariable 3PL *loro* 'their' (cf. Lepschy and Lepschy 1988:123), as shown in (30).

31 a egli è morto **lo** mio padre e **la** mia madre
it.M be.3SG dead.PTCP the my father and the my mother
'my father and mother have died' (*Tristano*, ch. 63, p. 113, l. 3)

b tu ài morto mio padre e mia madre
you have.2SG dead.PTCP my father and my mother
'you have killed my father and my mother' (*Tristano*, ch. 63, p. 117, l. 9)

32 a Ov' è **il** tuo tesoro? (*Novellino*, p. 40, l. 21)

b Dov' è tuo tesoro? (*Novellino*, p. 40, l. 13)
where be.3SG the your treasure
'Where is your treasure?'

Historically, the distinct syntactic treatment of kinship terms and common nouns modified by possessives is not visible in early Romance (Lyons 1986:19, 22; Lombardi 2007; Ledgeway 2011a:417; 2012a:112), including in old Italian where kinship terms (31) and common nouns (32) are found both with and without the article (cf. Giusti 2010b; 2022).

33 la di loro legge
the of them law
'their law'

The determiner and adjectival uses of the possessive were therefore employed interchangeably in old Italian (cf. §10.1, §10.4.2), but in the course of time the former became progressively specialized to occurring with kinship terms and the latter with common nouns, giving rise to the structural split between these nominal classes that we see today.

Formal written Italian still allows some archaizing (and crystallized) syntactic tendencies, such as the placement of prepositional possessives [*di* 'of' +Poss] before the head noun in accordance with a Latinizing head-final tendency (33; cf. §10.1). Once again, this testifies to a diachronic difference between early and modern Italian in the surface position of the elements that make up the nominal group (see further §10.4).

34 Claudia$_1$ ha pagato un gelato a Stella$_2$
Claudia have.3SG pay.PTCP a ice-cream to Stella
con i propri$_1$(/suoi$_{\cdots 1/2/3}$) soldi.
with the own her/his money
'Claudia bought Stella an ice-cream with her own(/his/her (= someone else's)) money.'

35 Ognuno$_1$ è artefice del proprio$_{1/\cdots 2}$(/ suo$_{\cdots 1/2}$) destino.
each.one be.3SG maker of.the own her/his destiny
'Everyone is the maker of their (/someone else's') destiny.'

Additionally, Italian displays the third-person anaphoric possessive adjective *proprio* 'own' (Giorgi 2007) which can only be employed when its antecedent (the possessor) is the subject of the clause in which it is contained,[9] as with

referential *Claudia* and arbitrary/generic *ognuno* 'everyone' in (34)–(35), respectively. Indeed, as indicated by the subscript indices, the use of the third-person possessive *suoi* in (34), for example, would refer to an antecedent other than the subject *Claudia*, either *Stella* or some other discourse-prominent individual.

36 la mia/tua/sua/nostra/vostra/loro propria stanza (**propria)
the my/your/his-her/our/your/their own room own
'my/your/his-her/our/your/their room'

Moreover, *proprio* 'own' can also be used as an intensifier co-occurring with another overt possessive which obligatorily precedes *proprio* (36).

37 le (altrui) opinioni altrui
the of.other opinions of.others
'other people's opinions'

Similarly, invariable possessive adjective *altrui* 'someone else's/other people's', the oblique form of *altri* 'others' today 'encountered only in elevated styles' (Maiden and Robustelli 2007:165), can only identify 'alternative' third-person (human) possessors. It mostly appears after the noun, except in higher registers (mimicking an archaic, more permissive pre-nominal placement of adjectives; cf. §19.3.2); however, pre-nominal *altrui* does not imply any interpretative differences with respect to its post-nominal counterpart (37).

38 a $[_{DP}\ldots[_{NP}$ tavola $[_{AP}$ rotonda$]\ldots]]$
'round board/table'

b $[_{DP}\ldots[_{NP}$ tavola_{N} $\text{rotonda}_{Adj}]\ldots]$
table round
'round table (= discussion/Round Table)'

38 a′ tavola di legno rotonda (di legno)
table of wood round of wood
'round wooden board'

b′ (interessante) tavola (**interessante) rotonda interessante
table round interesting
'an interesting round-table discussion'

19.3.2 Adjectival positions

Adnominal adjectival modifiers can describe either an 'extension' of the original set of semantic properties predicated of the referent, or the 'intensional', i.e., inherent and prototypical, properties of the referent in accordance with the semantico-pragmatic relations they establish with the modified head noun. The two types of modification can be observed in the two meanings of the same noun-adjective pair that obtain with *tavola* 'table/board/plank' and *rotonda* 'round' (38). On the surface, the complex is

ambiguous between its 'literal' interpretation, whereby the adjective predicates an additional property of the 'board/table' being 'round-shaped' (38a), or as a tighter syntactic unit, a compound-like nominal structure with the 'translated' meaning of 'round table (discussion)' or proper noun referring to King Arthur's 'Round Table' as a uniquely identifiable entity (38b). Evidence of this different behaviour is that the 'translated' interpretation is not available whenever another element is interpolated to disrupt the compound-like structure (38b'), yielding the 'literal' meaning of the nominal expression and its constituents. This same ambiguity obtains pre-nominally in the English translation.

39 a il pacco **grosso** (predicative & attributive + rhematic & thematic)
the parcel big
'the big parcel (not another one/not previously introduced)'

b il **grosso** pacco (only attributive + thematic)
the big parcel
'the big parcel (which is inherently big/previously introduced)'

40 a Le lezioni **noiose** di Ferri (restrictive & non-restrictive)
the classes boring of Ferri
'Ferri's classes, all of which were boring/those which were boring'

b Le **noiose** lezioni di Ferri (only non-restrictive)
the boring classes of Ferri
'Ferri's classes, all of which were boring'

41 a un attaccante **buono** (intersective and non-intersective)
a forward good
'a good-hearted/skilled forward'

Table 19.4 lists a selection of the main 'dichotomic' semantic functions identified in the literature since Bolinger's (1967) work. These semantic relations depend on the nature of both noun and adjective and the syntactic relations these two establish. For this reason, they can conveniently be grouped into two coherent macro-classes as 'direct' and 'indirect' adjectival modification (cf. Bolinger 1967; Sproat and Shih 1988; 1991; Cinque 2010:6–16; 2014; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2010).

Table 19.4 Properties of direct and indirect modification

	modification	direct	indirect
a	(Bolinger 1967)	attributive (modifier)	predicative (reduced relative clause)

	modification	direct	indirect
b	(Bolinger 1967; Kamp 1975; Hawkins 1978)	non-restrictive (inherent)	restrictive (additional)
c	(Bolinger 1967; Kamp 1975; Siegel 1976)	non-intersective (adverbial/reference-modifying)	intersective (referent-modifying)
d	(Carlson 1980)	individual-level (enduring)	stage-level (temporal)
e	(Vincent 1986)	thematic (discourse-given)	rhematic (discourse-new)

Cross-linguistically, the two types of adjectival modification show distinctive language-specific morphosyntactic reflexes. While Chinese exploits dedicated morphological markers (Sproat and Shih 1988; 1991), Italian and, more generally, Romance express direct and indirect modification by exploiting different dedicated adjectival positions to yield the relevant interpretation.[10] This can be seen in the Italian minimal pairs in (39)–(42) which exemplify the contrast between the most salient indirect modification and direct modification properties in Table 19.4a–e, from which it emerges that both interpretations are available in post-nominal position, while only the direct modification interpretation is allowed pre-nominally (40–42; cf. Lepschy and Lepschy 1988:191; Cinque 2010: 7–11).

b un **buon** attaccante (only non-intersective)
a good forward
'a skilled forward'

42 a le stelle **invisibili** di Andromeda (individual-level or stage-level)
the stars invisible of Andromeda
'Andromeda's stars which are generally invisible/which happen to be invisible now'

b le **invisibili** stelle di Andromeda (only individual-level)
the invisible stars of Andromeda
'Andromeda's stars which are generally invisible'

43 a le famiglie **numerose**
the families numerous
'the large families'

b le **numerose** famiglie
the numerous families
'the many families'

44 a tutte le famiglie presenti sembrano essere **(davvero)** **(molto)** **numerose.**
all the families present seem.3PL be.INF really very numerous
'all families attending seem to be (really) (very) large/**many'

b le **(**molto)** **numerose** famiglie
the very numerous families

Even though direct and indirect modification properties may apply simultaneously (depending on the broader pragmatic context), we try to present these values individually in (39)–(42). The predicative vs attributive reading (39) implies that the former behaves like a modifier/adposition and the latter as a predicate of the noun; at the same time, this instance captures the thematic vs rhematic distinction, where pre-nominal adjectives introduce a previously mentioned property of the referent, whereas the post-nominal position presents a new discourse-new property of the referent. Similarly, the non-restrictive vs restrictive distinction (40) identifies whether the property described by the adjective is inherent to the referent or provides an additional (contrastive) property. The non-intersective vs intersective modification (41) implies that the given property modifies the reference, rather than the referent, receiving an 'adverbial' interpretation, as opposed to the referent-modifying counterpart which extends the set of properties referring to the noun. The individual-level vs stage-level distinction in (42) refers to the enduring vs transitory nature of the relevant property.

Based on such evidence, the two types of modification have been argued to derive from different syntactic sources, each responsible for the encoding and expression of direct modification vs indirect modification properties (cf. Cinque 2010 and references therein). Indirect-modification adjectives show semantic and syntactic autonomy and behave like a predicate of a reduced relative clause (viz. 'N (that is) Adj'), which is able to be modified and negated (44a, 45a). Direct-modification adjectives, in contrast, are characterized by reduced autonomy (44b, 45b, 46b), as they involve tighter cohesion with the head noun, giving rise to what, to all intents and purposes, can be considered a type of nominal 'compound' (46, 38b; cf. Vincent 1986).

45 a è una famiglia **non** **(troppo)** **numerosa.**
be.3SG a family not too.much numerous
'It's a family which is not (too) large.'

b **è una non (troppo) numerosa famiglia
be.3SG a not too.much numerous family

46 a il **[primo** ministro]
the first minister
'the prime minister'

b il giovane **[primo** (**giovane) ministro] (GIOVANE)
the young first young minister young
'the young prime minister'

47 a un' **[ottima** focaccia **barese]**
a excellent focaccia Barese
'an **excellent Barese-style** focaccia'

b una [focaccia **barese]** **OTTIMA**
'an excellent Barese-style focaccia'

c una [focaccia **ottima]** **BARESE**
'an excellent focaccia, Barese-style'

d un' **[ottima baresissima** focaccia]
'an excellent truly Barese-style focaccia'

e una **[(**baresissima)** **ottima** focaccia]
'a truly Barese-style excellent focaccia'

The different behaviour between the two types of adjectives within the nominal group has thus been understood as a structural reflex of the greater or lesser proximity of each adjective to the head noun, as shown in (47).[11]

48 $[_{DP}\,[_{RRC}$ I-Mod-Adj $[_{AP}$ D-Mod-Adj$_{\text{VALUE/QUALITY>SIZE>SHAPE>COLOUR>NATION}}$ [N]]]]

Indirect-modification adjectives, in small caps in (47), can be found further away from the head noun in the nominal structure and, thus, escape any ordering restrictions (47b–c), since they behave as complements of syntactically 'independent' reduced relative clauses (RRC). By contrast, direct-modification adjectives surface pre-nominally or post-nominally closer to the head noun (47b, f), and are claimed to follow the universal hierarchical order VALUE/QUALITY > SIZE > SHAPE/COLOUR > NATION (cf. Dixon 1982). These differences are illustrated in the structural representation in (48).

49 a Eng.: I-Mod-Adj … D-Mod-Adj … N (… I-Mod-Adj)

b It.: I-Mod-Adj … D-Mod-Adj … N ⇒ I-Mod-Adj … [N D-Mod-Adj] … ~~N~~

c It.: I-Mod-Adj … [N D-Mod-Adj] … ~~N~~ ⇒ [N D-Mod-Adj] …
I-Mod-Adj [~~N D-Mod-Adj~~] … ~~N~~

The main difference between English and Italian lies in the setting of the head-directionality parameter, with the former employing head-final structures (Adj-N, e.g., *the Red* ***Cross***) and the latter head-initial structures (N-Adj, e.g.,

la ***Croce*** *Rossa*). Hence, unlike English, we can assume that the head noun in Italian (and in Romance more generally) crosses the direct modification and indirect modification adjectival spaces in (48) to surface in various medial positions within the nominal group, thereby reversing the underlying pre-nominal I-Mod > D-Mod linear order in (48) as a snowball effect of the nominal first crossing the direct modification area (49b) before moving with the latter across the indirect modification space (49c) to produce the superficial mirror-image order of English (49a).

50 a ground Calabrian chilli pepper (Eng.)

b peperoncino calabrese macinato (It.)
chilli.pepper Calabrian ground

As a consequence of this parametric difference, both indirect- and direct-modification adjectives obligatorily precede the head noun in English (50a) (except for some post-nominal indirect modification participial adjectives), whereas in Italian both adjectival types follow the head noun (50b; cf. Vincent 2007:59).

51 a bella / brutta giornata
beautiful ugly day
'beautiful/horrible day'

b buona/ cattiva notizia
good bad news
'good/bad news'

c pover' uomo
poor man
'pitiful man'

The exceptions here are some classes of direct-modification adjective (cf. Guardiano and Stavrou 2019), e.g., *bello/brutto* 'nice/bad' (≠ beautiful/ugly), *buono/cattivo* 'good/bad' (≠ good/evil), *grande* 'great' (≠ big), *povero* 'pitiful' (≠ poor), *vecchio* 'long-standing' (≠ old) which surface pre-nominally in the unmarked case (51a–c).[12]

52 D-Mod-Adj$_{\text{VALUE/QUALITY>SIZE}}$ > N > D-Mod-Adj$_{\text{RELATIONAL>NATION>}}$ $_{\text{COLOUR>SHAPE}}$ > I- Mod-Adj

It thus follows that when in Italian all the available adjectival positions are simultaneously lexicalized, in the unmarked case the head noun appears in a medial position within the hierarchy of direct-modification adjectives, while indirect-modification adjectives are stranded in the rightmost margin of the nominal group. This is schematized in (52) and exemplified in Table 19.5 with different permutations of the various adjectival classes.[13]

53 uno schermo bello/ grande/ digitale/ italiano /nero /sottile/ rotto
a TV screen fancy big digital Italian black slim broken
'a broken / fancy / big / digital / Italian / black / slim TV screen'

Table 19.5 Ordering of Italian direct and indirect modification adjectival classes

	QUALITY>	SIZE>	N	>RELATIONAL	>NATION	>COLOUR	>SHAPE	>I-Mod-Adj
	bel	*grande*	*schermo*	*digitale*	*italiano*	*nero*	*sottile*	*rotto*
	fancy	big	TV screen	digital	Italian	black	slim	broken
a	Un bello schermo digitale nero rotto							
	'A broken, fancy black digital TV screen'							
b	Un bel grande schermo italiano sottile							
	'A fancy big Italian slim TV screen'							
c	Un grande schermo italiano nero rotto							
	'A broken, big Italian black TV screen'							
d	Un bello schermo digitale italiano rotto							
	'A broken fancy Italian digital TV screen'							
e	Un grande schermo digitale nero sottile							
	'A big slim black digital TV screen'							

We thus see that while direct-modification adjectives denoting relation, nationality, colour, and shape must obligatorily follow the head noun, direct-modification adjectives denoting value/quality and size may optionally surface both pre-nominally (cf. 51a–c), and post-nominally (53; cf. Cinque 1995:298).

54 a un gran(de) libro
a big book
'a great/**big book'

b un libro grande
a book big
'a big/**great book'

c il grande battaglione
the big battalion
'the large(/great) battalion'

The alternation between the pre- and post-nominal position of these direct-modification adjectives denoting value/quality and size correlates with specific

interpretative effects such as literal vs figurative or evaluative vs extrinsic readings (cf. 51). However, these semantic restrictions on the pre-nominal position in Italian can be violated in formal registers, reflecting, in Vincent's (2007) terms, a distinction between 'learnèd' and 'popular' syntax, with the result that virtually all adjectival classes can be preposed to the head noun under the right conditions.

By way of illustration, consider the size-adjective *grande* 'big' (cf. Ledgeway 2012a:53–55). In pre-nominal position (54a), *grande* licenses a figurative interpretation, namely, a speaker-oriented evaluation of the referent (viz. 'great'), rather than its actual size (viz. 'big') which, in contrast, is conveyed by the post-nominal position in (54b). However, in formal registers the literal size-interpretation 'big' is also available in pre-nominal position, pragmatically conveying discourse-given information (54c).

55 a Un' occasione per scoprire le ultime tendenze della moda e
an occasion for discover.INF the latest tendencies of.the fashion and
dell' eleganza italiana.
of.the elegance Italian
'An opportunity to discover the latest trends in fashion and Italian style.'

b Sfilava per le vie del centro con un' italiana eleganza.
parade.PST.IPFV.3SG for the streets of.the centre with a Italian elegance
'S/he paraded through the streets of the city centre with a typical Italian stylishness.'

In a similar fashion, Italian (cf. Vincent 2007; Ledgeway 2012a:51) allows the preposing of prototypically post-nominal adjectives denoting nation, colour, and shape when they convey inalienable, intrinsic, prototypical, or figurative properties of the referent, a usage particularly common in higher registers of (written) Italian. For example, the nationality adjective *italiana* 'Italian' can occur in post-nominal position with *eleganza* 'elegance, stylishness, refinement' (55a) to yield the literal interpretation 'Italian-style' as opposed to the style of, for instance, French designers. If placed in pre-nominal position (55b), however, the adjective predicates a stereotypical property of the referent, viz. 'typically Italian'. This adjectival preposing, however, does not work across the board, inasmuch as it requires extralinguistic and world-knowledge context to be felicitous. Hence, substituting pre-nominal *italiana* with pre-nominal *americana* in (55b), e.g., . . . *con un'americana eleganza*, would be likely to be perceived as ironic, since elegance and style are not prototypically associated with America and Americans.

56 a Io/** me, invece, non voglio andare alla riunione di oggi.
I me instead NEG want.1SG go.INF to.the meeting of today
'Actually, I don't want to attend today's meeting.'

b Tu parli bene il francese / Voi parlate bene il francese.
you.SG speak.2SG well the French you.PL speak.2PL well the French
'You speak French well.'

c Lei è arrivata tardi / Lui è partito presto.
she be.3SG arrive.PTCP late he be.3SG depart.PTCP early
'She arrived late / He departed early.'

The same considerations apply to relational/classificatory adjectives which, in the unmarked case, appear in post-nominal position (Vincent 2007:59). For example, *dolcezza materna* lit. 'tenderness maternal' describes a motherly type of tenderness which can potentially be contrasted with a fatherly type of tenderness, viz. *dolcezza paterna*. When, however, the adjective precedes, it is necessarily interpreted as an inherent property of its associated head noun, such that *materna dolcezza* refers to a kind of tenderness which is typical of mothers (see further Maiden and Robustelli 2007:49).

These instances of adjectival preposing in formal registers of Italian demonstrate that for discourse-related purposes the head noun can surface in a medial position within the hierarchy of direct modification adjectives. This is arguably a residue from earlier stages of the language, in which the access to the pre-nominal position was more permissive in the encoding of direct-modification and indirect-modification readings (cf. Rohlfs 2021c:327–329; Ledgeway 2007; 2009b:238–245; Vincent 2007; Thiella 2008; Giusti 2010b:599–609; cf. also §10.4.3 on old Italian).

19.4 Subject personal pronouns

Personal pronouns can be classified according to person, number, gender, and case, as shown in Table 19.6. In terms of case, the subject personal pronouns show distinct nominative forms only in the first and second singular persons (56a).[14] As for number, all personal pronouns exhibit a singular and plural distinction, but gender distinctions are restricted to the third singular (56c) and some of the forms of the third-person plural.

Table 19.6 Subject personal pronouns

		singular	plural

		singular	plural
first person		io	noi
second person		tu	voi
third person	masculine	lui, egli, esso	essi
	feminine	lei, ella, essa	esse
			loro

57 a Egli / Ella si presentava bene alla commissione esaminatrice.
he she REFL= present.PST.IPFV.3SG well to.the committee examining
'He/She presented him-/herself well to the examining committee.'

b La legge è cambiata ed essa ha cambiato anche
the.FSG law.FSG be.3SG change. PTCP.FSG and it.FSG have.3SG change.PTCP also
le abitudini della gente.
the habits of.the people
'The law changed and it also changed people's habits.'

The third person exhibits a range of competing forms. The pair *lui/lei* refers to animate referents (cf. 56c), while the pair *egli/ella* are today used only in formal, written contexts, are syntactically restricted to the preverbal position and refer exclusively to humans (57a). Finally, *esso/essa*, again much rarer than *lui/lei*, are rarely used in colloquial Italian and denote animate as well as inanimate referents (57b).

58 a Venite con noi in pizzeria?
come.2PL with us in pizzeria
'Will you come with us to the pizzeria?'

b Non prendevano mai il caffé.
NEG take.PST.IPFV.3PL never the coffee
'They never used to have coffee.'

c Ieri lei parlava con Mario.
yesterday she speak.PST.IPFV.3SG with Mario
'Yesterday she was speaking with Mario.'

d Voi dovreste parlare con il capo, non Paolo.
you.PL must.COND.2PL talk.INF with the boss NEG Paolo
'You should talk to the boss, not Paolo.'

e Siamo noi che mangiamo troppo, non loro.
be.1PL we that eat.1PL too.much NEG they
'It is us who eat too much, not them.'

Except for *lui/lei/loro*, the other three forms of the subject pronoun are today confined to formal and written registers and are no longer used in the spoken language.

As a null subject language, Italian also allows null subject pronouns (58a–b), which represent the default option. Consequently, overt subject pronouns are restricted to specific pragmatico-syntactic structures involving topic shift (58c), focalization (58d), and clefting (58e).

59 a Lei/ La maestra ci ha regalato un libro (lei / la maestra).
she the teacher us= have.3SG give.PTCP a book she the teacher
'She/The teacher gave us a book.'

Like most Romance languages, Italian exhibits three series of personal pronouns: strong, weak (or deficient), and clitic pronouns. From a syntactic point of view, strong pronouns have the same distribution as lexical NPs (59a), while clitics are bound to a specific syntactic position (59b).

b L' abbiamo vista (**la) alla posta.
her.ACC= have.1PL see.PTCP.FSG =her.ACC to.the.FSG post.office.FSG
'We saw her at the post office.'

60 a Noi e voi faremo grandi cose.
we and you.PL do.FUT.1PL great things
'We and you will accomplish great things.'

b Anche lui viene al mare (anche lui).
also he come.3SG to.the sea also he
'He too will come to the seaside.'

61 a **Ci e Vi hanno visto.
us= and you.PL= have.3PL see.PTCP
'They saw us and you.' (intended meaning)

b **Anche lo vedo.
a lso him= see.1SG
'I see him too.' (intended meaning)

Strong forms can be coordinated and modified with an adverb (60a–b), while clitic pronouns cannot (61a–b).

62 Mario l' ha incontrata ieri. /Mario ha incontrato LEI ieri.
Mario her= have.3SG meet.PTCP yesterday Mario have.3SG meet.PTCP her yesterday
'Mario has seen her/HER yesterday.'

Strong pronouns are also employed in cases of focalization (Cardinaletti and Starke 1999:23), a context in which clitics are naturally excluded.

63 a **Ho dato loro e a Gianni / a Gianni e loro la
have.1SG give.PTCP them.OBL and to Gianni to Gianni and them.OBL the
giaccia.
jacket

'I gave them and Gianni my jacket.' (intended meaning)

b **Ho dato anche loro la giacca.
have.1SG give.PTCP also them.OBL the jacket

'I also gave them my jacket.' (intended meaning)

c **Ho dato LORO la giacca, non a mio fratello.
have.1SG give.PTCP them.OBL the jacket NEG to my brother

'I gave the jacket to them, not to my brother.' (intended meaning)

Besides the distinction between strong and clitic pronouns, Cardinaletti and Starke (1999) identify a weak (or deficient) sub-class of pronouns, which share some properties with clitic pronouns while still exhibiting a different distribution. For instance, the dative weak pronoun *loro* behaves like clitic pronouns in that it cannot be modified, coordinated, or focalized (63). Yet, unlike clitics (64a), it must always occur in post-verbal position (64b).

64 a **Loro ho dato la giacca.
them.OBL have.1SG give.PTCP the jacket

b Ho (loro) dato (loro) la giacca.
have.1SG them.OBL give.PTCP them.OBL the jacket

'I gave them the jacket.'

65 a Tre miei amici di Bari sono venuti da noi in Calabria.
three my friends of Bari be.3PL come.PTCP at ours in Calabria

'Three friends of mine from Bari came to our place in Calabria.'

b Sono solo quattro gli invitati alla cena di domani.
be.3PL only four the guests at.the dinner of tomorrow

'There are only four guests at tomorrow's dinner.'

c i vostri cinque biglietti / le tue cinque dita
the your.PL five tickets the your.SG five fingers

'your five tickets / your five fingers'

d Ne abbiamo vista solo una di rondine.
PART= have.1PL see.PTCP.FSG only one.F of swallow.F

'We've only seen one single swallow.'

e Avrò mangiato un milione di polpette ieri!
have.FUT.1SG eat.PTCP a million of meat.balls yesterday

'I must have eaten a million meatballs yesterday!'

19.5 Variation in the lexicalization of the D(eterminer) position

In this section we focus on what in Italian can occupy the D(eterminer) position, namely, the topmost layer of the nominal group (or DP). Cross-linguistically, we typically find determiners in the D position, but the evidence to be discussed below shows that it can also be filled by demonstratives, possessives, and quantifiers (such as cardinal numbers). In addition, the D position can remain empty in some contexts, as we saw to be the case with bare nouns (cf. §19.2.1). However, Italian also presents the option in specific structural contexts for the head noun to lexicalize the D position. In what follows we provide syntactic evidence that supports the assumption that nominal elements that surface in D or are particularly sensitive to the presence of some other element in D.

19.5.1 Cardinals and indefinite adjectives

In Italian there is a class of numerals whose surface position is sensitive to the presence or otherwise of some element in D (65a). The cardinal numerals belonging to this class can occur as predicates (65b) and usually display an invariant form (65c), with the exception of 'one' (65d). Some cardinal numbers may also behave as nouns (65e).

66 a i /quei cinque /pochi /numerosi studenti
the that five few numerous students
'the/those five/few/numerous students'

b Abbiamo incontrato vari altri nuovi turisti.
have.1PL meet.PTPC various other new tourists
'We bumped into several other new tourists.'

c Ci sono dieci / numerosi scarafaggi in bagno.
there= are.3PL ten numerous cockroaches in bathroom
'There are ten/numerous cockroaches in the bathroom.'

To these we may add other elements with quantifying properties such as so-called value judgement cardinals (Keenan 2000), e.g., *molti* 'many', *pochi* 'few', as well as adjectives such as *numerosi* 'numerous' and *vari* 'various' (66). These quantifiers, alongside their canonical adjectival functions, may also be employed in a higher position within the nominal group that precedes all other pre-nominal adjectives (66b; Crisma 1991:86; 2012:498; cf. also §19.3.2). In terms of their distribution, all these items can be preceded by the definite article (66a).

67 a I / quei suoi cinque / pochi / numerosi studenti si sono laureati
the those her five few numerous students REFL= be.3PL graduate.PTCP
in fisica.
in physics

'Her /these five/few/numerous students graduated in physics.'

b I / quei cinque / pochi / numerosi suoi studenti…
the those five few numerous her students

'Her /these five/few/numerous students of his/hers…'

If a possessive adjective is also present, it can either precede (67a) or, as a more marked option, follow (67b) the quantifier. In the latter case, the possessive following the quantifiers produces a marked reading whereby the quantifiers bear informational focus.

68 a Cinque / pochi / numerosi suoi studenti…
five few numerous her students

'Five/few/numerous students of hers…'

b **Suoi cinque / pochi / numerosi studenti…
her five few numerous students

Crucially, however, these same quantifying elements are also able to surface in the leftmost portion of the nominal group (68a), crossing over possessives (68b).

69 a Roma antica affascina tutti.
Rome ancient fascinate.3SG all

b L' antica Roma affascina tutti.
the ancient Rome fascinate.3SG all

'Everybody is fascinated by ancient Rome.'

70 a Lorenzo tuo sorride sempre.
Lorenzo your.SG smile.3SG always

b Il tuo Lorenzo sorride sempre.
the your.SG Lorenzo smile.3SG always

'Your Lorenzo always smiles.'

In terms of standard assumptions about the structure of the nominal group, the observed variation in the position of the quantifier is to be thought of as a consequence of the latter being able to remain in a lower position, typically its base position, whenever a definite article or a demonstrative occurs in the left edge of the nominal group, namely, what we specifically refer to here as the D position. Yet, the same elements must surface in D whenever no other candidate fills the position (68a), hence the ungrammaticality of (68b) where the D position remains empty and the quantifier follows the possessive.

19.5.2 Proper names

Proper names denoting either non-human (69) or human referents (70) can overtly lexicalize the D position in the leftmost portion of the nominal group and, therefore, surface before adjectives and possessives. In this configuration the proper name is in complementary distribution with the article. Minimal pairs such as (69)–(70) show this pattern: more specifically, in the examples (69a) and (70a) the proper name occupies the D position, hence preceding all the other pre-nominal elements such as adjectives and possessives. By contrast, in the examples (69b) and (70b) the proper noun occurs in its lower base position within the NP, hence preceded by adjectives and possessives, and an expletive definite article is required to lexicalize the otherwise vacant D position.

71 a La sola Rita non ha partecipato all' evento.
the alone Rita NEG have.3SG participate.PTCP to.the event

b Rita sola non ha partecipato all' evento.
Rita alone NEG have.3SG participate.PTPC to.the event
'Only Rita/Rita alone did not attend the event.'

72 a Lo stesso Lorenzo non era convinto.
the same Lorenzo NEG be.PST.IPFV.3SG convince.PTPC

b Lorenzo stesso non era convinto.
Lorenzo same NEG be.PST.IPFV.3SG convince.PTPC
'Lorenzo himself was not convinced.'

These same principles explain how proper names in Italian can also cross over adjectives that typically occur very high in the structure such as *solo* 'alone, only' (71), *stesso* 'same' (72), as well as possessives (cf. 70a). In the examples (71a) and (72a) the D position is realized by the definite article and the proper name occurs in its base position following the relevant adjective, whereas in the examples (71b) and (72b) the absence of the article requires the proper name to move from its base position and to lexicalize the D position. Therefore, the proper name ends up preceding *solo* and *stesso*.

73 a La Rita non va a scuola domani. (Tsc.-It./NRIt.)

b Rita non va a scuola domani. (st.It./C-SRIt.)
the Rita NEG go.3SG to school tomorrow.
'Rita isn't going to school tomorrow.'

Following Longobardi (1994; 2005), proper names denote specific and uniquely individualized referents in the discourse universe. In order to be interpreted as an individual-referring nominal and to convey the semantic property of uniqueness and high referentiality, they therefore need to be structurally associated with the D position. This association can be realized through two different configurations: one where there is a syntactic correspondence between an expletive definite article that occupies the D position and the proper noun that occurs in a lower position, and the other where the proper noun itself surfaces in the D position, therefore impeding the

realization of the expletive article. Indeed, these two options are demonstrated by a comparison of the treatment of female proper names across the peninsula: whereas in northern and Tuscan regional usage female first names require the use of an expletive article (73a), in the standard and in most of central and southern Italy they occur without the article, presumably lexicalizing the D position (73b).

1	[$_{VP}$	Subject	Adverb	Verb	Adverb	Object(s)			Adjunct(s)]	
		Ida	forse	fumava	sempre	le	sigarette		in	bagno.
		Ida	perhaps	smoke.PST.IPFV.3SG	always	the	cigarettes		in	bathroom
		'Ida perhaps always smoked cigarettes in the bathroom.'								

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[1] This chapter is the result of close collaboration between the two authors. However, Andriani takes responsibility for §§19.1–3 and Silvestri for §§19.4–5.

[2] While we discuss 'agreement' of the noun with dependent genitive modifiers (§19.3), we do not directly address here 'concord', namely, agreement internal to the nominal group, for which we refer the reader to Giusti (2002) and Ledgeway (2016a:226f.).

[3] See Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018; 2020) and Pinzin and Poletto (2022) for discussion of regional Italian and other Italo-Romance varieties.

[4] See Lyons (1999) and Colasanti and Wiltschko (2019). For an overview and formal analysis for Romance and beyond, see also Ledgeway and Smith (2016) and Terenghi (2023) among others.

[5] See Lyons (1999:108–111) for English, while for Italian, Italo-Romance, and other Romance varieties, see Maiden (1995a:125); Maiden and Robustelli (2000:83); Ledgeway (2004:66; 2015b; 2019b; 2020); Da Milano (2015); Ledgeway and Smith (2016); Andriani, Groothuis, and Silvestri (2020); Terenghi (2023).

[6] However, changes in relation to, for instance, the visibility or otherwise of the distal referent are attested (cf. Colasanti and Wiltschko 2019:11).

[7] Note that the clitic form *sto* is particularly felicitous in expressive contexts (cf. *sto scemo!* vs ?*st'anno*), as it mainly surfaces in informal registers, except for fossilized temporal adverbs such as *stamattina/stamane/stamani* 'this morning', *stasera* 'this evening', *stanotte* 'tonight', and *stavolta* 'this time'.

[8] See Renzi (2001b:413); Bernardini and Egerland (2006); Giusti (2010a) and Loporcaro (2023). See also Słapek (2021) for a survey of the prescriptive and descriptive uses of (article +) possessive modifying kinship terms.

[9] One notable counterexample to this is found in subjunctive clauses (i), where *proprio* can only refer to the main clause subject *Stella*, rather than the subject of the embedded subjunctive clause *lei* 'she' in which *proprio* occurs.

i	Stella$_1$	pensa	che	lei$_2$	abbia	pagato	il	gelato	con	i	propri$_{1/*2}$	soldi.
	Stella	think.3SG	that	she	have.SBJV.SG	pay.PTCP	the	ice-cream	with	the	own	money
	'Stella$_1$ thinks she$_2$ paid for the ice-cream with her$_{1/*2}$ money'.											

[10] See Cinque (1995; 2005; 2010; 2014); Nespor (2001); Longobardi (2001a); Giusti (2002).

[11] See Sproat and Shih (1991:566); Cinque (1995; 2005; 2010; 2014). For a different approach, see Abels and Neeleman (2009).

[12] Within the analysis outlined in (49a–c) above, these pre-nominal uses of direct-modification adjectives can be understood to be the output of the head noun first moving to a medial position within the direct modification area sketched in the intermediate derivational step in (49b) before moving above the indirect modification space in the final stage (49c).

[13] Cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti (2010:75); Cinque (2010); Giusti (2016:548). Giusti (2016) further refines the hierarchy by proposing other types of D-Mod adjectival subclasses, such as composition/type and goals/destinations, which can appear lower than origin adjectives: Dem > Q > Num > Anaphoric > Evaluative > Dimension > Age > Physical property > Colour > Origin/agent > Composition/type > Goal/destination.

[14] Northern and Tuscan speakers also employ the oblique second-person singular form *te* in subject function (i) which, though not standard usage, is widely found in the relevant areas among all speakers.

i Non mi ascolti mai, te! (Lucca)
NEG me= listen.2SG never you.OBL
'You never listen to me!'

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Chapter 20

The verbal group

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20.1 Introduction: overview of the verbal group

The positions illustrated in the linear template in (1) make up what we can term the core verbal group (viz. VP), partially corresponding to the traditional notion of sentence, in which the lexical verb (*fumava*) is first combined with its complement (*le sigarette*) and then with any optional adjunct elements (*in bagno*). This complex constituent is, in turn, combined with any VP-adverbs (*forse*, *sempre*) under whose scope it falls, and ultimately with the subject (*Ida*).

2 a Ida forse fumava sempre.
Ida perhaps smoke.PST.IPFV.3SG always
'Ida perhaps always smoked.'

b Sul fuoco fumava una pentola di minestra.
on.the fire smoke.PST.IPFV.3SG a pot of soup
'On the stove a pot of soup was steaming away.'

The traditional semantic notions of subject (AGENT) and object (UNDERGOER) are unambiguously mapped onto two distinct positions to the left and right of the transitive verb, respectively. With intransitives, by contrast, the grammatical subject can be aligned with either of these positions in accordance with its semantic interpretation, allowing us to distinguish between unergative and unaccusative intransitive subjects: the former have an agentive interpretation and are to all intents and purposes identical to transitive subjects, even if there is no object, occurring in pre-verbal

position (2a), whereas the latter are interpreted as UNDERGOERS and consequently pattern with objects typically occurring in the post-verbal position (2b).

3 a [LP_1 _____ [[LP_2 _____ [$_{VP}$ S V (XP)]]]]

b [LP_1 NESSUNO [fuma più [LP_2 _____ [$_{VP}$ ~~nessuno fuma~~.]]]]
nobody smoke.3SG anymore

c [LP_1 _____ [Non fuma più [LP_2 NESSUNO [$_{VP}$ ~~nessuno fuma~~]]]]
NEG smoke.3SG anymore

'Nobody smokes any more.'

This mapping between syntax (surface linear order) and semantics (thematic interpretation) will be further investigated in §20.2 below where we will see that, in contrast to the core nominative-accusative alignment of the nominal group, the verbal group displays many morphosyntactic reflexes of a competing active-stative alignment in such phenomena as perfective auxiliary selection (§20.2.1) and participle agreement (§20.2.2).

The sentential core, however, extends beyond the lexical VP proper, the thematic domain where the verb and its arguments are generated, to include at least two further layers. The first is the VP left periphery which, on a par with the fine structure of the higher left periphery of the clause discussed in detail in §23.4, makes available a series of discourse-related positions available to host topicalized and focused constituents (cf. Belletti 2001; 2004b; 2005a; Poletto 2006; 2007; 2010a:71f., 73f.; 2014; Ledgeway 2021a). We can therefore identify within the clausal structure two left peripheries (LP), a higher one (LP_1) related to the clausal superordinate functional structure and a lower one (LP_2) related to the subordinate VP domain, whose left edges offer competing topic and focus positions (3a), as illustrated by the higher and lower positions of the focused quantifier *nessuno* 'nobody' in the near minimal pair (3b–c).[1]

4 [$_{IP}$ Subject Aux [$_{VP}$ Adverb Verb Adverb Object(s) Adjunct(s)]]
Ida ha forse fumato sempre le sigarette in bagno.
Ida have.3SG perhaps smoke.PTCP always the cigarettes in bathroom

'Ida has perhaps always smoked cigarettes in the bathroom.'

This lower left periphery and its use in different diachronic and diatopic varieties of Italian will be further explored in §20.3.

The second layer immediately above the lexical VP is the Infl(exional) domain (viz. IP). The latter represents the locus of verbal inflexion, hosting such elements as the perfective auxiliary *ha* in (4) which licenses through subject-verb agreement the subject *Ida* situated to its left in the dedicated preverbal subject position.

5 a Ida [$_{\text{MoodEp.}}$ [$_{\text{Adv}}$ **probabilmente**] Ø [$_{\text{VP}}$ lavora per i servizi segreti.]]
Ida probably work.3SG for the services secret

b Ida [$_{\text{MoodEp.}}$ [$_{\text{Adv}}$ Ø] **deve** [$_{\text{VP}}$ lavorare per i servizi segreti.]]
Ida must.3SG work.INF for the services secret

'Ida is probably/must be working for the secret services.'

6 a come [$_{\text{AspHab.}}$ [$_{\text{Adv}}$ **solitamente**] Ø [$_{\text{VP}}$ accade]]
as usually happen.3SG

b come [$_{\text{AspHab.}}$ [$_{\text{Adv}}$ Ø] **suole** [$_{\text{VP}}$ accadere]]
as be.wont.3SG happen.INF

'as usually happens'

Following the seminal work of Cinque (1999) building on the earlier Split-Infl Hypothesis of Pollock (1989) and Belletti (1990), both, in turn, influenced by the pioneering observations of Emonds (1978), Infl is now commonly interpreted as a general label for the rich inflexional area of the clause (the I-domain) made up of a series of distinct functional projections dedicated to marking various temporal, aspectual, modal, and voice distinctions ranging over the lexical verb, its arguments, and possible adjuncts which can also be identified by the semantically corresponding adverbial modifiers they host in their so-called Spec(ifier) positions (cf. also Cinque 2002; 2006; Belletti 2004a; Rizzi 2004a). Consequently, the semantically related adverb and auxiliary contrasts in epistemic modal and habitual aspect in examples such as (5)–(6) can now be understood as distinct positional reflexes (namely, specifier and head positions) of the same underlying functional projection.[2]

7 [$_{\text{IP}}$ S (Aux) [$_{\text{LP}}$ (Foc/Top) [$_{\text{VP}}$ (S) V O (XP)]]]

In §20.4 we shall review a number of areas where the postulation of such a richly articulated pre-VP space can be shown to provide some enlightening and revealing solutions to a number of issues related to the order of adverbs (§20.4.1) and the position of the verb (§20.4.2).

In summary, the structure of the chapter is organized according to the three main layers of the verbal group illustrated in (7), beginning with a consideration of the lexical VP (§20.2) before progressively extending the investigation to the functional layers of the extended VP with an examination of the lower left periphery (§20.3) and the inflexional core (§20.4).

8 a **Ida** (A) ha suonato il **campanello.** (O)
Ida have.3SG ring.3SG the doorbell
'Ida rang the doorbell.'

b **Ida** (S) ha suonato, ma non ha risposto nessuno.
Ida have.3SG ring.PTCP but NEG have.3SG reply.PTCP nobody
'Ida rang, but nobody answered.'

c È suonato il **campanello.** (S)
be.3SG ring.PTCP the doorbell
'The doorbell rang.'

20.2 Reflexes of active-stative alignment

Despite displaying a predominantly nominative-accusative orientation in its morphosyntax, Italian also shows unmistakable signs of an active-stative (or active-inactive) alignment in various areas of the grammar including auxiliary selection and participle agreement. Following a widely accepted typological distinction (Comrie 1989:110–116; Dixon 1994:6–8), we can distinguish three core sentential participants labelled A and O (8a), the subject and object, respectively, of a transitive construction, and S (8b–c), the subject of an intransitive construction:

9 a in ea prouincia pecunias magnas collocatas habent
in that.ABL province.ABL money.ACC.,FPL big.ACC.FPL place.ACC.FPL have.3PL
(Lat., Cic., *Leg. Man.* 18)
'they have large sums invested in that province'

b Inimicorum in manibus mortuus est (Lat., Cic. *Inv.* 1, 108)
enemy.GEN.PL in hand.ABL.PL die.PTCP be.3SG
'He died in the hands of the enemies'

In a number of cases the Italian verbal group makes a further distinction between two types of intransitive S(ubject), namely between: (i) an S with an agentive interpretation (8b) and hence, to all intents and purposes, identical to A(gent), bar the presence of an O(bject); and (ii) an S with an UNDERGOER interpretation (8c) and hence, to all intents and purposes, identical to O(bject), bar the presence of an A(gent). The former we call S_A and the latter S_O (cf. also 2a–b). To varying degrees, languages make available the means to encode these three core participants through nominal marking systems (case, adpositions), verb marking systems (agreement, auxiliaries, and voice distinctions), and through sentential word order (La Fauci 1988:54). Together, these three mechanisms of argument marking variously place the three nuclear sentential participants into one of the following three typological organizations (La Fauci 1997:12; Ledgeway 2012a:312–352):

i. A is formally distinguished from O and, in turn, shares the same formal marking as $S_{A/O}$;

i. O is formally distinguished from A, and, in turn, shares the same formal marking as $S_{A/O}$;

i. A is formally distinguished from O, but the formal marking of S is split between A (= S_A) and O (= S_O).

The arrangement described in (i) is traditionally termed a nominative-accusative alignment, while the arrangement described in (ii) yields an ergative-absolutive alignment. The third alignment, active-stative, represents a compromise between the two preceding alignments, in that S is formally aligned in part with A and in part with O. It is doubtful that the full grammatical apparatus of any language can be consistently described in terms of just one of these three alignments (La Fauci 1988:31f.), although it is often possible to associate particular languages with one predominant orientation. Indeed, Italian displays a nominative-accusative orientation in the nominal system (cf. *Ho parlato* ***io***/*******me*** 'have.1SG speak.PTCP I/me' vs *Hanno visto* ***me***/*******io*** 'have.3PL see.PTCP me/I'), but combines this with an active-stative orientation in certain areas of the verb group to which we now turn.

20.2.1 Auxiliary selection

Latin displayed two principal periphrases: an originally resultative aspectual periphrasis formed with HABERE 'have' and the passive past participle of a transitive predicate (9a), and a perfective periphrasis proper formed with ESSE 'be' and the participle of a deponent or passive verb (9b) which, through time, also came to absorb active intransitive verbs with UNDERGOER subjects, namely unaccusatives.[3] The overall result of these developments is a split in the perfective forms of the verb between a periphrasis with auxiliary HABERE 'have' for transitive/unergative predicates with AGENT/EXPERIENCER subjects on the one hand, and a periphrasis with auxiliary ESSE 'be' for unaccusative and passive predicates with UNDERGOER subjects on the other. In short, the verb system of late Latin and, in turn, Italian develops an active/stative orientation (also termed 'split intransitivity'; cf. Ledgeway 2012a:319–327; 2019b) in which intransitive subjects are formally distinguished according to their S_A vs S_O characterization (La Fauci 1988:51f.).

10 a Ida **ha** investito (molti fondi) in quella regione.
Ida have.3SG invest.PTCP.MSG many.M fund.MPL in that region
'Ida has invested (large sums) in that region.'

b Sono **stati** investiti molti fondi in quella regione.
be.3PL be.PTCP.MPL invest.PTCP.MPL many.M fund.MPL in that region
'Large sums were/have been invested in that region.'

c È morta Ida.
is die.PTCP.FSG Ida
'Ida has died.'

With remarkable faithfulness, this distinction continues essentially unchanged into modern Italian, where transitives and unergatives select auxiliary *avere* 'have' in compound perfective paradigms (10a), and passives and unaccusatives select auxiliary *essere* 'be' (10b–c).

11 a [$_{IP}$ [Ida$_i$] **ha** [$_{VP}$ [~~Ida~~]$_i$ investito (molti fondi) in quella regione.]]

b [$_{IP}$ [pro$_i$] Sono **stati** [$_{VP}$ investiti [molti fondi]$_i$ in quella regione.]]

c [$_{IP}$ [pro$_i$] È [$_{VP}$ morta [Ida]$_i$.]]

From a synchronic perspective, this distributional split in the selection of the two auxiliaries was first analysed by Perlmutter

(1978) within the multistratal framework of Relational Grammar, where the relevant distinction was formalized in terms of whether individual predicates license an initial subject relation (an initial 1: transitives/unergatives) or whether the superficial subject is the result of the advancement of an initial object relation (2 > 1: unaccusatives/passives). Perlmutter's Unaccusative Hypothesis was soon adopted by other frameworks, most notably by Burzio (1986) in his Government-Binding analysis of Italian unaccusativity and auxiliary selection where the relevant distinction was reformulated in terms of whether the subject is base-generated as the external argument (transitives/unergatives) in the periphery of the VP (viz. SpecVP) or as the internal argument (unaccusatives/passives) in the verb's canonical object position (viz. V,DP). In the latter case, the inability of the verb to assign accusative Case to its internal argument, although marking it with the typical UNDERGOER role associated with complements, requires the internal argument to move to, or be co-indexed with, the vacant canonical subject position in the sentential core (viz. SpecIP) where it can be assigned nominative case. Under this view, selection of *essere* 'be' is interpreted as a surface reflex of a binding relation between the verb's complement position and the dedicated preverbal subject position SpecIP (11b–c), whereas *avere* represents the default auxiliary which surfaces when no such binding relation obtains (11a).[4]

12 a Le autorità non si **sono** [$_{VP}$ vergognate ~~le autorità~~
the.FPL authority.FPL NEG REFL= be.3PL shame.PTCP.FPL
minimamente.]
minimally

'The authorities felt no shame at all.'

b Tu ti **eri** [$_{VP}$ alzato ~~tu~~ all' alba.]
you yourself= be.PST.IPFV.2SG raise.PTCP.MSG at.the dawn

'You had got up at dawn.'

c [I due]$_i$ si$_i$ **erano** [$_{VP}$ ~~i due~~ guardati [pro$_i$] durante la partita.]
the two REFL= be.PST.IPFV.3PL watch.PTCP.MPL during the match

'The two had looked at one another during the match.'

d Loro$_i$ non si$_i$ **sono** più [$_{VP}$ ~~loro~~ telefonati [pro$_i$] dopo la lite.]
they NEG REFL= be.3PL more telephone.PTCP.MPL after the quarrel

'Since they fell out, they've stopped ringing one another.'

13 a Questi due cavalieri s' **aveano** longamente amato (OIt., *Nov.* 34)
these two knights REFL= have.PST.IPFV.3PL long.time love.PTCP.MSG

'These two knights had long loved each other'

b Bito [...] s' **avea** messa la più ricca roba
Bito REFL= have.PST.IPFV.3SG put.PTCP.FSG the.FSG more rich.FSG robe.FSG
di vaio (OIt., *Nov.* 96)
of squirrel.fur

'Bito [...] had put on his finest fur coat'

Also relevant here is the behaviour of reflexives, which invariably select *essere*. In the case of inherent (12a) and middle (12b) reflexives, the UNDERGOER reading of the subject undoubtedly identifies the latter's base position with that of the verbal complement on a par with non-reflexive unaccusatives, hence the S_O characterization of the subject and the concomitant selection of auxiliary *essere*. In the case of argumental reflexives, by contrast, the subject, although an AGENT, is nonetheless co-indexed with the verb's complement position hosting a coreferential UNDERGOER argument licensed by the reflexive clitic. The result is a composite reading of the subject which is simultaneously characterized as an AGENT (A) and as an UNDERGOER (O). We might *a priori* then expect either auxiliary in these cases, inasmuch as the selection of *avere* 'have' would follow from the presence of both an external and internal argument in a canonical transitive structure, whereas the

selection of *essere* 'be' would be licensed by the co-indexation of the complement and subject positions under the relevant coreferential reading. Indeed, whereas *essere* has emerged under standardization as the sole auxiliary selected with argumental reflexives in the modern language (12c–d), *avere* was also found as an auxiliary for these same predicates until the seventeenth century (13a–b; La Fauci 2004; Jezek 2010:122).

14 a Ida invitò due [**amici**] ⇒ Ida **ne**$_i$ invitò due [~~**amici**$_i$~~].
Ida invite.PST.PFV.3SG two friends Ida of.them= invite.PST.PFV.3SG two
'Ida invited two friends ⇒ Ida invited two of them.'

b Tornarono due [**amici**] ⇒ **Ne**$_i$ tornarono due [~~**amici**$_i$~~].
return.PST.PFV.3PL two friends of.them= return.PST.PFV.3PL two
'Two friends returned ⇒ Two of them returned.'

c Due [**amici**] telefonarono ⇒ ** Due [~~**amici**$_i$~~] **ne**$_i$ telefonarono.
two friends telephone.PST.PFV.3PL two of.them= telephone.PST.PFV.3PL
'Two friends phoned ⇒ Two of them phoned.'

15 a Tengono **animali** in casa.
keep.3PL animals in home
'They keep animals at home.'

b Quest' inverno sono morti **animali.**
this winter be.3PL die.PTCP.MPL animals
'Animals died this winter.'

c ****Animali** attaccano (i turisti).
animals attack.3PL the tourists
'Animals are attacking (the tourists).'

Whether from a diachronic or a synchronic perspective, auxiliary selection reduces then to a distinction in argument structure and, in particular, to whether the surface subject can be understood as a subject at all levels of representation (SpecVP ⇒ SpecIP: *avere* 'have') or whether at an underlying level it should be associated with the verb's complement position (V,DP ⇒ SpecIP: *essere* 'be'). Consequently, auxiliary selection turns out to be nothing more than one of the many overt surface reflexes of the transitive-unaccusative split that permeates the morphosyntax of Italian. Indeed, this active-stative split extends beyond the choice of auxiliary to include other structural differences between transitives/unergatives on the one

hand and unaccusatives/passives on the other (for participle agreement, see the discussion in §20.2.2). For instance, while the subjects of transitives/unergatives occur in preverbal position in the unmarked case (cf. 1, 2a, 8a–b, 10a), the subjects of unaccusatives/passives pattern with the objects of transitives surfacing in post-verbal position (cf. 2b, 8c, 10b–c) to yield a classic A/S_A versus O/S_O split which, ultimately, can only be explained in terms of the different base positions of the relevant nominals (see, however, Bentley 2006:363–396; 2016:830f.). Other areas in which the active-stative orientation surfaces include the distribution of *ne*-cliticization (Burzio 1986; Loporcaro 1998:35f.; cf. however Bentley 2006:251–321; 2016:824f., 827f.), bare plurals (Alsina 1996:105–108; Bentley 2016:830), and absolute participles (Loporcaro 1998:35f.; 2003; Bentley 2006:323–361; 2016:830). In all three cases, the licensing of the phenomenon in question is exclusively linked to the complement position, thus grouping together O and S_O and contrasting these with A and S_A. Consequently, only transitive objects (cf. (a) examples) and unaccusative subjects (cf. (b) examples), but not unergative/transitive subjects (cf. (c) examples), can be cliticized by *ne* 'of it/them' (14), can surface as bare nominals without a determiner (15), and can be modified by absolute participles (16).

16 a Invitati gli amici, Ida cominciò i preparativi.
invite.PTCP.MPL the.MPL friend.MPL Ida begin.PSTP.PFV.3SG the preparations
'Having invited her friends, Ida began the preparations.'

b Tornati gli amici, Ida cominciò i preparativi.
return.PTCP.MPL the.MPL friend.MPL Ida begin.PST.PFV.3SG the preparations
'The friends having returned, Ida began the preparations.'

c **Telefonato(/-i) gli amici, Ida cominciò i preparativi.
telephone.PTCP.MSG(PL) the.MPL friend.MPL Ida begin.PST.PFV.3SG the preparations
'The friends having phoned, Ida began the preparations.'

17 a Le bollette, non le avrà pagate/**-o ancora.
the.FPL bill.FPL NEG them.F= have.FUT.3SG pay.PTCP.FPL/MSG yet
'As for the bills, he probably hasn't paid them yet.'

b Voi uomini, non vi ho mai capiti/-o.
you.PL men NEG you.PL= have.1SG never understand.PTCP.MPL/MSG
'I've never understood you men.'

c Se tu hai trovati o veduti [...] di questi uccelli (OIt., *Nov.* 33)
if you have.2SG find.PTCP.MPL or see.PTCP.MPL of this.MPL bird.MPL
'[Tell me] whether you have found or seen [...] any such birds'

d Ho poi conosciuti alcun' altri (OIt., Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano* 8)
have.1SG then know.PTCP.MPL some other.MPL
'I then met some others'

e Abbiamo riservate delle poltrone per le Signorie Vostre.
have.1PL reserve.PTCP.FPL of.the.FPL seat.FPL for the graces your.PL
'Madam, Sir, we have reserved some seats for you.'

20.2.2 Past participle agreement

A further reflex of the active-stative split witnessed above in relation to auxiliary selection surfaces in the distribution of participle agreement. According to traditional accounts, agreement of the participle is licensed in two distinct environments. In the first, the participle is said to agree with a preceding direct object, now restricted in the modern language to direct object clitics (17a–b),[5] but also including pre- and post-verbal full lexical objects in previous stages of the language (17c–d) according to a usage which survives to the present day in very formal and deliberately archaicizing registers (17e), as well as substandardly in some central-southern regional varieties of Italian (17f).[6]

f Dopo che avevo lavati i panni (SRIt., D. Maraini,
after that have.PST.IPFV.1SG wash.PTCP.MPL the.MPL cloth.MPL
Memorie di una ladra, 1973)
'After I had done the washing'

18 a Sono affondati i pescherecci.
be.3PL sink.PTCP.MPL the.MPL fishing.trawler.MPL
'The fishing trawlers have sunk.'

b Sono stati affondati i pescherecci.
be.3PL be.PTCP.MPL sink.PTCP.MPL the.MPL fishing.trawler.MPL
'The fishing trawlers have been sunk.'

c La marina ha affondato/**-a i pescherecci.
the.FSG navy.FSG have.3SG sink.PTCP.MSG/FSG the.MPL fishing.trawler.MPL
'The navy has sunk the fishing trawlers.'

d I pescherecci hanno navigato/**-i in acque internazionali.
the.MPL fishing.trawler.MPL have.3PL sail.PTCP.MSG/MPL in waters international
'The fishing trawlers have been sailing in international waters.'

In the second, the participle agrees with the subject of those verbs that select auxiliary *essere* 'be', namely unaccusatives (18a) and passives (18b), but not with the subjects of *avere*-taking verbs, namely transitives (18c) and unergatives (18d).

19 a **La famiglia** è [VP [[~~la famiglia~~]$_i$ partita$_i$] [~~la famiglia~~].]
the.FSG family.FSG be.3SG leave.PTCP.FSG
'The family has left.'

b **Le** ho [VP [[~~le~~]$_i$ contattate$_i$] [~~le~~].]
them.F= have.1SG contact.PTCP.FPL
'I've contacted them.'

c Ho [VP contattato/**-e$_i$ [le due sorelle]$_i$.]
have.1SG contact.PTCP.MSG/FPL the.FPL two sister.FPL
'I've contacted the two sisters.'

This traditional disjunctive interpretation of Italian participle can, however, clearly be subsumed into a single rule in light of our preceding discussion of auxiliary selection and the Unaccusative Hypothesis in §20.2.1. In particular, the correct empirical generalization is that participle agreement can only be controlled by a nominal which at some level of representation is formally associated with the verb's complement position, be that a transitive object (O) or an unaccusative subject (S_O). In his classic analysis, Kayne (1989) captures the fact that in varieties like modern Italian participial agreement is licensed exclusively by unaccusative subjects (19a) and clitic objects (19b) by assuming that movement of the internal argument to its surface position in the sentential core in

such cases must transit through the participle (viz. SpecAgr_OP), whereupon the internal argument enters into a (Spec-Head) agreement relation with the participle.[7] On this view, the failure of the participle to agree with full lexical objects follows naturally from the failure of the latter to overtly move through the participle (19c), although we must assume that covert movement (or, in its more recent guise, long distance Agree) must suffice to license overt agreement in cases like (17c–f) in order to accommodate the observed diachronic, diaphasic, and diatopic variation in this regard.[8]

20 a [LP_1 quando TUTTO [$_{IP}$ ebbe [LP_2 _____ [$_{VP}$ dato ~~tutto~~]]]] (OTsc., *Nov.*)
when all have.PST.PFV.3SG given

b [LP_1 ch' _____ [$_{IP}$ avea [LP_2 TUTTO [$_{VP}$ donato ~~tutto~~]]]] (OTsc., *Nov.*)
that have.PST.IPFV.3SG all given

'[…] when/that he had given everything'

20.3 VP left periphery: topic and focus

On a par with the fine structure of the higher left periphery of the clause (cf. §23.4), we noted in §20.1 that the VP also makes available a lower left periphery to host various topicalized and focused constituents. Exemplifying from old Tuscan, we can therefore identify a higher left periphery (LP_1) related to the clausal superordinate functional structure and a lower one (LP_2) related to the subordinate VP domain, whose left edges offer competing topic and focus positions, as illustrated by the higher and lower positions of the focused quantifier *tutto* 'everything' in the near minimal pair (20a–b).[9]

21 a Chi sparò / cadde? — Sparò / Cadde **Ida.**
who shoot.PST.PFV.3SG fall.PST.PFV.3SG shoot.PST.PFV.3SG fall.PST.PFV.3SG Ida
'Who opened fire/fell over? —Ida opened fire/fell over.'

b Cosa poi fece Ida? — Sparò, Ida / Cadde, Ida.
what then do.PST.PFV.3SG Ida shoot.PST.PFV.3SG Ida fall.PST.PFV.3SG Ida
'What did Ida end up doing? —Ida, she opened fire/fell over.'

Thus, by assuming within the sentential domain two left peripheries at the level of the clause and the VP, we can explain a certain degree of optionality and variation in the syntactic distribution of topicalized and focused constituents in old and modern Italian and across its many regional varieties. Consider, for instance, the examples of post-verbal subjects in (21)–(22).[10]

22 a Ida sparò **lei** / Ida cadde **lei.**
Ida shoot.PST.PFV.3SG she Ida fall.PST.PFV.3SG she
'Ida herself opened fire/fell over.'

b Ida sparò, lei / Ida cadde, lei.
Ida shoot.PST.PFV.3SG she Ida fall.PST.PFV.3SG she
'As for Ida, she opened fire/fell over.'

23 a [(Ida) sparò/cadde [$_{LP2}$ [$_{Foc}$ **Ida/lei**] [$_{VP}$ ~~Ida/lei sparò / cadde Ida/lei.~~]]]

b [(Ida) sparò/cadde, [$_{LP2}$ [$_{Top}$ Ida/lei] [$_{VP}$ ~~Ida/lei sparò / cadde Ida/lei.~~]]]

As indicated by the question-answer pairs in (21), the post-verbal lexical subject *Ida* variously receives an informationally focused (21a) and a topicalized (21b) reading, conveying new and old information, respectively. A slightly different reading characterizes the post-verbal subject *lei* in the strong pronoun doubling examples in (22): in (22a) the pronoun assumes a focalizing function serving to convey new information through its intensifying value ('in person', 'personally') about the known topic represented by the pre-verbal lexical subject *Ida*, whereas in (22b) *lei* serves to mark the old/given nature of the preverbal lexical subject in the same way that an object clitic marks the thematic interpretation of the object in a canonical left-dislocation structure (cf. *Ida, la vedo* lit. 'Ida, her= see.1SG'). Significantly, in both (21b) and (22b) the topicalized interpretations are further marked at the prosodic level by an intonational pause (orthographically by a comma) between the verb and the post-verbal subject.

In view of the marked status of post-verbal subjects which receive either a focused or a topicalized reading, it is natural to interpret this

pragmatic effect as a direct reflex of a particular structural configuration which licenses the observed interpretations. In the particular cases at hand, we can take the apparently low position of the subject to indicate that it has moved to a focus or topic position in the lower left periphery.

24 a (?)Spiegherà (**Ida) bene **Ida** al direttore.[11]
explain.FUT.3SG Ida well Ida to.the director
'Ida will explain (it) properly to the manager.'

b Spiegherà (**Ida) bene, Ida, al direttore.
explain.fut.3SG Ida well Ida to.the director
'Ida, she will explain (it) properly to the manager.'

Evidence that the post-verbal subject occupies a low position in the clausal structure is provided by examples like (24), where the post-verbal subject clearly precedes the verbal prepositional complement which remains *in situ* within the VP. At the same time, the obligatory position of the lexical subject to the right of adverbs like *bene* 'well', which we will argue below (§20.4.1.2), marks the right margin of the inflexional core, provides clear proof that the subject sits immediately above the VP in the lower left periphery.

25 a Chi risponde al telefono? — Risponde **Ida** al telefono (,**non io).
who reply.3SG to.the telephone reply.3SG Ida to.the telephone not I
'Who answers the phone? — Ida answers the phone(, not me).'

b (**Chi risponde al telefono? —) IDA risponde al telefono, non io.
who reply.3SG to.the telephone Ida reply.3SG to.the telephone not I
'(Who answers the phone? —) It's IDA who answers the phone, not me.'

[11]

Although there appears to be a strong parallelism between the discourse functions of the lower and higher peripheries, according to Belletti (2004b; 2005a) the lower and higher focus positions are not interchangeable. Whereas the former aligns with informational focus (25a), the latter licenses a contrastively focused reading (with concomitant marked intonational contour), typically correcting a previous assertion (25b). Consequently, only the lower position is available to host the subject in answer to the question *Who answered the phone?*, and only the higher position is compatible with the correction of a previous assertion.

26 a UNA MARGHERITA Sandra voleva, non una quattro stagioni. (SRIt.)
a margherita Sandra wanted not a quattro stagioni

b Sandra voleva UNA MARGHERITA, non una quattro stagioni. (NRIt.)
Sandra wanted a margherita not a quattro stagioni

'Sandra wanted a margherita pizza, not a quattro stagioni.'

However, there are some apparent regional differences in the use of the two focus positions. While contrastive focus is readily expressed in the higher left periphery in southern regional Italian varieties (26a), many northern regional varieties prefer what appears to be a lower, clause-internal position (26b).[12]

27 Pronto, chi è?
hello who be.3SG

'Hello, who's speaking?' (answering the telephone)

Informational focus is also subject to diatopic variation in modern Italian. Notable in this respect are the regional varieties of Italian spoken in southern Italy, especially Sicily, and in Sardinia where, under the influence of the underlying dialects,[13] informational focus is standardly licensed in the higher left periphery. Thus, whereas in answer to the questions in (27) and (28) standard and northern Italian varieties place the requested new information in a focus position within the lower left periphery ((a) examples), southern and Sardinian regional varieties of Italian place the same constituent in a focus position within the higher left periphery ((b) examples):

a Sono **Ida.** ((NR)It.)

b **Ida** sono. (SRIt., Srd. reg. It.)
Ida be.1SG Ida
'It's me, Ida.'

28 Che cosa regali a tua moglie?
what thing gift.2SG to your wife

'What are you going to give your wife as a present?'

a Le regalo **un bel gioiello.** ((NR)It.)

b **Un bel gioiello** le regalo. (SRIt., Srd. reg. It.)
a nice jewel her.DAT= gift.1SG a nice jewel

'I'll give her a nice piece of jewellery.'

29 a 'Qual è il maestro, di voi tre?' [...] 'Messere, io sono' (OIt., *Nov.* 19)
which be.3SG the master of you three my.sire I be.1SG
'"Which of you three is the master?" [...] 'Sire, it is I'

b **grande prova** ho veduto della tua sapienzia (OIt., *Nov.* 3)
great proof have.1SG see.PTCP of.the your knowledge
'I have witnessed great proof of your wisdom'

Although in the standard language orders such as (27b, 28b) are systematically excluded, in the medieval language informational focus systematically targeted the higher periphery under Verb Second (29a–b),[14] thereby highlighting an important difference in the grammars of old and modern Italian.

30 a Quand' ebbero [$_{LP2}$ [così] ordinato [$_{VP}$ ~~ordinato così~~]] (OIt., *Nov.* 99)
when have.PST.PFV.3PL thus arrange.PTCP
'When they had thus arranged matters'

Finally, another significant difference between old and modern Italian concerns the position of constituents of the VP in participial and infinitival clauses in conjunction with perfective auxiliary and restructuring predicates, respectively. Whereas in modern Italian all constituents standardly remain within the non-finite VP (31a–c), in old Italian such constituents could frequently precede the participial and infinitival verb (30a–c; cf. also 20b), a fact which Poletto (2006; 2007; 2010a; 2014) has convincingly interpreted as a case of Verb Second (cf. also Ledgeway 2009b:761–765): in the same way that the higher left periphery is characterized by a V2 requirement, this same requirement percolates down to the lower left periphery which also regularly attracts the non-finite verb and any pragmatically salient constituents. It follows that when V2 was lost in the higher periphery, it was correspondingly lost in the lower periphery giving rise to the obligatory modern orders in (31a–c).

b intanto potea bene [LP2 [ad agio] dormire
meanwhile can.PST.IPFV.3SG well at ease sleep.INF
[VP ~~dormire ad agio~~]] (OIt., *Nov.* 31)
'meanwhile he could sleep soundly at his own ease'

c Puosese in cuore di volere [LP2 [TUTTO] dispendere
put.PST.PFV.3SG=self in heart of want.INF all spend.INF
[VP ~~dispendere tutto~~]] (OIt., *Nov.* 30)
'He resolved to spend all he possessed'

31 a Quando ebbero [VP ordinato così] (modIt.)
when have.PST.PFV.3PL arrange.PTCP thus

b intanto poteva dormire bene [VP ~~dormire~~ a suo agio] (modIt.)
meanwhile can.PST.IPFV.3SG sleep.INF well sleep.INF at his ease

d Decise di voler [VP spendere TUTTO] (modIt.)
decide.PST.PFV.3SG of want.INF spend.INF all

32 a [IP Ida [MoodEp. [Adv Ø] lo **deve** [VP ~~Ida~~ sapere.]]]
Ida it= must.3SG know.INF

b [IP Ida [MoodEp. [Adv **probabilmente**] lo sa [VP ~~Ida~~ ~~sa.~~]]]
Ida probably it= know.3SG

c [IP Ida [MoodEp. [Adv Ø] lo **saprà** [VP ~~Ida~~ ~~saprà.~~]]]
Ida it= know.FUT.3SG
'Ida surely knows.'

20.4 VP-related functional projections

In §20.1 we observed how the Infl domain situated above the lexical VP (cf. 4) is commonly interpreted as a general label for a rich functional area of the sentential core made up of a series of functional verb positions variously marking temporal, aspectual, modal, and voice distinctions ranging over the VP, which can also be identified by the semantically corresponding adverbial modifiers they license (Cinque 1999). This can be clearly seen in the near-synonymous sentences in (32) where epistemic modality can be expressed either through the modal verb *dovere* 'must' (32a) or

through the corresponding adverb *probabilmente* 'probably' in conjunction with the lexical verb (32b). There is also a third option, inasmuch as the relevant verb position lexicalized by the modal in (32a) can also be filled by raising the lexical verb to this same position. Consequently, as an alternative to the epistemic use of *dovere* 'must' to express supposition in (32a), the modal position may be lexicalized directly by the verb *sapere* 'know' as in (32c) where we see that supposition is now formally licensed by the epistemic use of the future.

33 a Ida **deve** **continuare** a [$_{VP}$ ~~Ida~~ suonare il piano.]
Ida must.3SG continue.INF to play.INF the piano

'Ida must continue playing the piano.'

b Ida **deve** **ancora** [$_{VP}$ ~~Ida~~ suonare il piano.]
Ida must.3SG still play.INF the piano

'Ida must still play the piano.'

Armed with these basic assumptions, we can now explore the range and order of functional projections contained within the sentential core. We begin by considering the near-synonymous pair (33a–b) where the verb phrase is variously embedded under the predicate *continuare* 'to continue' and the adverb *ancora* 'still', both of which can be assumed to lexicalize dedicated functional positions encoding continuative aspect, under whose scope the verb and its arguments fall.

34 a Ida **deve** (**aver** **voluto** (**smettere** **di**)) **continuare** **a** (**provare** **a**)
Ida must.3SG have.INF want.PTCP finish.INF of continue.INF to try.INF to
[$_{VP}$ ~~Ida~~ suonare il piano.]
play.INF the piano

'Ida must (have wanted to (stop)) continue(-ing) (to try to) play(ing) the piano.'

b**Ida **vuole** **aver** **dovuto** . . . / **continua** **a** **smettere** **di** . . . /
Ida want.3SG have.INF must.PTCP continue.3SG to finish.INF of
prova **a** **dover** [$_{VP}$ ~~Ida~~ suonare il piano.]
try.3SG to must.INF play.INF the piano

However, it is clear that a simple Infl-VP model is unable to accommodate the lexical material contained in these examples, inasmuch as the lexical verb contained within the VP complex is embedded under as many as two functional items, namely, the deontic modal of obligation *deve* 'must' and *continuare/ancora* 'to continue/still'. This does not exhaust all possibilities, witness the variations on (33a) presented in (34a) in which the lexical verb can

be embedded under an increasing number of functional predicates. Although such examples containing so many functional predicates in a single sentence are, in practice, unlikely, their fixed order is further revealed by the sharp ungrammaticality produced by reversing the order of (subsets) of these predicates (34b).

35 a Ida allora non mi amava (**già) mica già.
Ida then NEG me= love.PST.IPFV.3SG already not already
'At that time Ida didn't already love me.'

b Ida allora non mi amava (**più) mica (**più) già più.
Ida then NEG me= love.PST.IPFV.3SG anymore not anymore already anymore
'Ida already stopped loving me by then.'

To these observations, we can add that adverbs also appear to occur cross-linguistically in a rigidly fixed order, as evidenced by the representative ordering restrictions in (35a–b):

36 $[_{HAS}$ S Adv … $[_{LAS}$ Adv … $[_{v\text{-}VP}$ ~~S~~ $V_{lexical}$ O]]]

Following Cinque (1999), facts like these lead us to assume that different adverb classes are distributed in a strictly ordered sequence in Italian (and indeed across all languages), in turn mirrored by a rigidly fixed sequence of functional predicates. This transparent semantic relationship between the fixed order of adverbs on the one hand and of functional predicates on the other can be taken as evidence that each adverb position corresponds to the modifier (viz. Specifier position) of a functional category. The result is a highly articulated clause structure, considerably richer in functional projections than has been traditionally assumed.

20.4.1 Adverb classes and positions

The various adverbs and their associated functional projections making up the inflexional core of the clause above the lexical VP can be broadly divided into two 'spaces', here termed the Higher Adverb Space (HAS) and the Lower Adverb Space (LAS), as represented schematically in (36):[15]

37 a [HAS Ida apparentemente **allora** [LAS diceva **già**
Ida apparently then say.PST.IPFV.3SG already
sempre [VP ~~diceva~~ bugie.]]]
always lies

'Ida apparently in those days was already always telling lies.'

b [HAS Ida (**sempre) **apparentemente** [LAS diceva
Ida always apparently say.PST.IPFV.3SG
sempre [VP ~~diceva~~ bugie.]]]
always lies

'Ida apparently always told lies.'

Broadly speaking, the HAS comprises modal categories variously spelt out by speaker-oriented adverbs marking such categories as evidential (e.g., *apparentemente* 'apparently') and epistemic (e.g., *presumibilmente* 'presumably') modality, whereas the LAS principally includes aspectual categories lexicalized by adverbial classes including perfective (e.g., *sempre* 'always') and retrospective (e.g., *appena* 'just') aspects, with temporal adverbs (e.g., past *allora* 'then', anterior *già* 'already') variously scattered across both spaces (37a). Excluding, of course, marked word orders such as topicalization and focalization, this straightforwardly explains why adverbs merged in the HAS precede those generated in the LAS (37b):[16]

38 a La trasmissione (**deliberatamente) **di solito** **deliberatamente** evita tali
the programme deliberately of usual deliberately avoid.3SG such
temi.
themes

'The programme usually deliberately avoids issues like this.'

b La stimo più di quanto (**di solito) **forse** **di solito**
her= esteem.1SG more of how.much of usual perhaps of usual
riesco a dimostrare.
manage.1SG to show.INF

'I respect her more than I perhaps usually succeed in showing.'

c Uno dei bambini deve (**forse) **ora** **forse** chiedere scusa.
one of.the children must.3SG perhaps now perhaps ask.INF apology

'One of the children must now perhaps apologize.'

Examining from top down the various orders and respective combinatorial possibilities of different adverb classes, we plot below

in some detail the finer structure of the HAS and LAS within the verbal group.

20.4.1.1 Higher adverbs

Beginning with the HAS, (38a) highlights how subject-oriented adverbs like *deliberatamente* 'deliberately' must follow habitual aspectual adverbs like *di solito* 'usually', itself preceded by the irrealis modal adverb *forse* 'perhaps' (38b) which, in turn, follows deictic temporal adverbs anchored to the speech time such as *ora* 'now' (38c).

39 a (**Forse) **probabilmente** avevo **forse** frainteso le
perhaps probably have.PST.IPFV.1SG perhaps misunderstand.PTCP the
regole del gioco.
rules of.the game
'I had probably perhaps misunderstood the rules of the game.'

b (**Probabilmente) **apparentemente** potrà **probabilmente** dimettersi.
probably apparently can.FUT.3SG probably resign.INF
'Apparently he can probably resign.'

c (**Apparentemente) **purtroppo** **apparentemente** gli è morta
apparently unfortunately apparently him.DAT= be.3SG die.PTCP
la zia.
the aunt
'Unfortunately his aunt has apparently died.'

d (**Purtroppo) **francamente** ci sono **purtroppo** rimasto male.
unfortunately frankly LOC= be.1SG unfortunately remain.PTCP bad
'Frankly I was unfortunately upset by it.'

These initial observations allow us then to sketch a preliminary map of the functional space and corresponding adverbs comprising the lower portion of the HAS as follows: *ora* ($T_{Past/Future}$) > *forse* ($Mood_{Irrealis}$) > *di solito* ($Asp_{Habitual}$) > *deliberatamente* ($Mod_{Volitional}$). Extending this map further upwards, we see that all these higher adverbs of the lower portion of the HAS are typically preceded by epistemic adverbs like *probabilmente* 'probably' (39a), in turn, preceded by evidential (e.g., *apparentemente* 'apparently'; 39b), evaluative (e.g., *purtroppo* 'unfortunately'; 39c), and pragmatic (e.g., *sinceramente* 'sincerely'; 39d) adverbs:

40 [$_{\text{MoodSpeechAct}}$ *francamente* 'frankly' [$_{\text{MoodEvaluative}}$ *purtroppo* 'unfortunately' [$_{\text{MoodEvidential}}$ *apparentemente* 'apparently' [$_{\text{ModEpistemic}}$ *probabilmente* 'probably' [$_{\text{TPast/Future}}$ *ora* 'now' [$_{\text{MoodIrrealis}}$ *forse* 'perhaps' [$_{\text{ModAlethic}}$ *necessariamente* 'necessarily' [$_{\text{AspHabitual}}$ *di solito* 'usually' [$_{\text{AspRepetitive(Event)}}$ *ancora* 'again' [$_{\text{AspFrequentative(Event)}}$ *spesso* 'often' [$_{\text{ModVolitional}}$ *deliberatamente* 'deliberately' [$_{\text{AspCelerative(Event)}}$ *piano* 'slowly' [. . .

Putting these facts together, the fine structure of the HAS can be sketched as in (40), including some additional functional projections and associated adverbs that were omitted from the discussion above for reasons of space (others will be introduced in due course below):

41 a

Ida	(**mica)	**solitamente**	non	beve	**mica**	l'	alcol.
Ida	not	usually	NEG	drink.3SG	not	the	alcohol

'Ida in any case doesn't usually drink alcohol.'

b

Non	avrai	(**già)	**mica**	**già**	finito,	no?
not	have.FUT.2SG	already	not	already	finish.PTCP	no

'You surely haven't already finished, have you?'

It must be borne in mind that the projections and positions given above are still subject to ongoing research and probably are not exhaustive and, in some cases, might also be amenable to conflation into a single projection. At the same time, the adverbs given above are not to be understood as the only lexical items able to lexicalize the relevant specifier positions, but merely represent one of many other semantically related adverbs belonging to the same class (to name but a few, $\text{Mood}_{\text{SpeechAct}}$: *sinceramente* 'sincerely', *onestamente* 'honestly'; $\text{Mood}_{\text{Evaluative}}$: *(s)fortunatemente* '(un)fortunately', *miracolosamente* 'miraculously'; $\text{T}_{\text{Past/Future}}$: *allora* 'then', *adesso* 'now'; $\text{Asp}_{\text{Habitual}}$: *normalmente* 'normally', *generalmente* 'generally'; $\text{Mod}_{\text{Volitional}}$: *apposta* 'deliberately', *saggiamente* 'wisely').

20.4.1.2 Lower adverbs

Applying these same criteria to the LAS, we can identify a class of adverbs termed by Cinque 'lower pre-VP adverbs' which occupy a syntactic space delimited to the left by the 'higher' adverbs of the HAS and to the right by arguments of the VP. Starting top down, the highest position is that lexicalized by (presuppositional) adverbial negators such as *mica* '(in any case . . .) not' (41a; Cinque 1976a;

Penello and Pescarini 2008) and *affatto* 'not at all' (41d; though cf. Ledgeway 2017b), which, in turn, obligatorily precede adverbs of anterior temporal reference such as *già* (41b), itself followed by adverbs expressing terminative (e.g., *più* 'anymore'; 41c), continuative (e.g., *ancora* 'still'; 41d),[17] and perfective (e.g., *sempre* 'always'; 41e) aspects.

c Non andava (**più) già più a scuola da anni.
not go.PST.IPFV.3SG anymore already anymore to school from years
'He had already stopped going to school many years before.'

d Non volevamo (**ancora) affatto ancora studiare.
not want.PST.IPFV.1PL still not.at.all still study.INF
'We didn't at all want to carry on studying.'

e Credi (**sempre) ancora sempre in te, è l' unica arma!
believe.IMP.2SG always still always in you be.3SG the only weapon
'Continue to always have faith in yourself, it's your only defence!'

42 a Il bar ha (**appena) sempre appena chiuso quando mi finiscono
the bar have.3SG just always just close.PTCP when me= finish.3PL
le sigarette.
the cigarettes
'The bar's always just closed when I run out of cigarettes.'

b Avevamo (**quasi) appena quasi capito tutto senonché…
have.PST.IPFV.1PL almost just almost understand.PTCP all except
'We had just almost got our heads around it, except that…'

c Ti era (**completamente) quasi completamente sfuggito.
you= be.PST.IPFV.3SG completely almost completely escape.PTCP
'It had almost completely slipped your mind.'

d Avevano (**tutto) completamente ideato tutto da soli.
have.PST.IPFV.3PL all completely think.out.PTCP all by alone.3MPL
'They had entirely come up with the whole idea on their own.'

e Aveva già ricopiato (**bene) tutto bene, Ida.
have.PST.IPFV.3SG already recopy.PTCP well all well Irene
'Ida had already written everything up correctly.'

To this partial map of the LAS based on the adverbial classes (*solitamente*) > *mica* ($Neg_{Presuppositional}$) > *già* ($T_{Anterior}$) > *più* ($Asp_{Terminative}$) > *ancora* ($Asp_{Continuative}$) > *sempre* ($Asp_{Perfective}$), we can further identify moving downwards a series of aspectual

positions licensing adverbs of retrospective (e.g., *appena* 'just'; 42a), prospective (e.g., *quasi* 'almost'; 42b), singular completive (e.g., *completamente* 'completely' 42c), and plural completive (e.g., *tutto* 'everything'; 42d) aspects. Finally, sandwiched between these lower aspectual projections and the VP complex is a position dedicated to Voice whose corresponding modifier position licenses manner adverbs such as *bene* 'well' (42e).

43 [$_{\text{Neg1Presuppositional}}$ *mica* 'not' [$_{\text{TAnterior}}$ *già* 'already' [$_{\text{AspTerminative}}$ *più* 'anymore' [$_{\text{AspContinuative}}$ *ancora* 'still' [$_{\text{AspPerfect}}$ *sempre* 'always' [$_{\text{Neg2}}$ *amalappena* 'hardly' [$_{\text{AspRetrospective}}$ *appena* 'just' [$_{\text{AspProximative}}$ *presto* 'soon' [$_{\text{AspDurative}}$ *brevemente* [$_{\text{AspGeneric/Progressive}}$ *tipicamente* 'typically' [$_{\text{AspProspective}}$ *quasi* 'almost' [$_{\text{AspSgCompletive}}$ *completamente* 'completely' [$_{\text{AspPlCompletely}}$ *tutto* 'everything' [$_{\text{Voice}}$ *bene* 'well' [$_{\text{Asp Celerative(process)}}$ *rapidamente* [$_{\text{AspRepetitive(process)}}$ *di nuovo* 'again' [$_{\text{Asp Frequentative(process)}}$ *spesso* 'often' [$_{\text{Asp SgCompletive(process)}}$ *completamente* 'completely' [$_{\text{VP}}$ . . .

To sum up, the overall map of the LAS based on the rigid order of lower pre-VP adverbs (including, once again, a number of additional projections and associated adverbs that could not be discussed above) can be represented as follows:

44 a Ida non ha **più** **sempre** / ***sempre** **più** vinto, da allora.
Ida NEG have.3SG anymore always always anymore win.PTCP from then
'Since then, Ida hasn't always won anymore.'

b Ida non ha ***più** **mai** / **mai** **più** vinto, da allora.
he NEG have.3SG anymore never never anymore win.PTCP from then
'Since then, Ida has never won anymore.'

As with the HAS, the individual adverbs given in (43) are to be understood as representative of a much wider selection of adverbs from the same class including, for example, Neg1: *nemmeno/neppure/neanche* 'not even'; T_{Anterior}: *poi* 'then', (*non . . .)ancora* '(not . . .) yet'; $\text{Asp}_{\text{SgCompletive}}$: *interamente* 'entirely', *parzialmente* 'partially'; Voice: manner adverbs in *-mente* '-ly' and measure adverbs (e.g., *molto* much', *poco* 'a little'). In this respect, it is interesting to compare the differential behaviour of *sempre* 'always' and *mai* '(n)ever' which, despite lexicalizing opposite values of $\text{Asp}_{\text{Perfective}}$, and hence in complementary distribution, display differing orders in conjunction with the higher terminative aspectual adverb *più* 'anymore':

45 non accetterò **più** **mai** un uffizio pubblico. (Settembrini 1890:394)
NEG accept.FUT.1SG more never a office public
'I will never again accept a public office.'

Following Cinque (1999:9f.), we can take the unexpected modern Italian linearization *mai* + *più* in (44b) to be a derived order obtained from the regular underlying order *più* + *mai* through incorporation of *mai* into *più* (viz. . . . *non ha* ***più mai*** *vinto* ⇒ . . . *non ha* [[***mai***] ***più***] ~~***mai***~~ *vinto*). Indeed, in earlier stages of the language the expected order *più* + *mai* is regularly attested, as shown in the nineteenth-century example from Settembrini in (45). At the appropriate level of abstraction, then, the relevant difference between modern and earlier stages of Italian is that in the former, but not the latter, *mai* obligatorily incorporates into *più*.[18]

46 a	Non	ho	**mica**	**ancora**	capito.	
	NEG	have.1SG	not	yet	understand.PTCP	
b	Non	ho	**[[ancora]**	**mica]**	~~**ancora**~~	capito.
	NEG	have.1SG	yet	not		understand.PTCP
	'In any case I haven't yet understood.'					

This same solution can be applied to the competing orders in (46a–b), with the latter derived from incorporating *ancora* 'yet' into *mica* 'not'.[19]

47	Non	ho	**[([**ancora])**	**affatto]**	**ancora**	capito.
	NEG	have.1SG	yet	not	yet	understand.PTCP
	'I haven't yet understood at all.'					

It must be stressed, however, that all such incorporations are ultimately licensed by the properties of individual lexical items, rather than the structural positions they occupy, since different adverbs of the same class do not generally permit the same operation, witness the ill-formedness of incorporation of *ancora* into *affatto* 'not at all' in (47), despite *affatto* and *mica* lexicalizing the same specifier position:

b	Qua	non	ci	sta	**nessuno**	**più.** (SRIt.)	
	here	NEG	there=	stand.3SG	nobody	any more	
	'There's nobody else left here.'						
c	E	non	caccio	**manco**	**un**	**soldo**	**più.** (SRIt.)
	and	NEG	remove.1SG	not.even	a	coin	any more
	'And I'm not gonna pay another penny.'						

20.4.2 Verb movement

20.4.2.1 Finite verbs

Exploiting the fixed positions of adverbs reviewed above as a diagnostic for identifying different positions within the extended verbal group offers a highly natural way to interpret observed differences across languages in terms of the differing extent of verb movement.[20] For example, we saw above how lower pre-VP adverbs such as ALWAYS can be taken to signal the left edge of the lexical VP such that we can now straightforwardly distinguish between overt verb-raising languages such as standard Italian (48a), where the finite verb raises to the I-domain to the left of *sempre*, and languages such as English (48b), where the verb remains *in situ* to the right of *always* and the I-domain is not overtly lexicalized in the syntax. At the same time, this also allows us to formally understand microvariation between different regional varieties of Italian (cf. Ledgeway and Lombardi 2005; 2014; Ledgeway 2009a; 2022a; Schifano 2015b; 2018:7–61) where northern and central speakers tend to align with standard Italian (cf. 48a) displaying high(er) verb placement than in southern varieties which, similarly to English, tend to prefer lower placement of the verb (48c).

48 a	[$_{IP}$	Ida	**fumava**	[$_{VP}$	sempre	~~**fumava**~~.]] (It./N-CRIt.)
b	[$_{IP}$	Ida	Ø	[$_{VP}$	always	**smoked**.]] (Eng.)
c	[$_{IP}$	Ida	Ø	[$_{VP}$	sempre	**fumava**.]] (SRIt.)
		Ida	smoke.PST.IPFV.3SG		always	smoke.PST.IPFV.3SG
	'Ida always smoked.'					

Indeed, armed with our assumptions from the previous section about a universal fixed hierarchy of adverb positions and corresponding functional projections, we can now establish a much more nuanced interpretation of Italian verb movement than the familiar broad-brush treatments which classify Romance *tout court* as having overt verb movement. In particular, Cinque (1999:49–51) observes that Italian finite verbs do not occupy a fixed position in the clause but, rather, may occupy a variety of positions. For instance, finite auxiliary verbs may occupy any of the head positions within the Higher Adverb Space, as demonstrated by the representative permutations in (49):[21]

49 [HAS Avevo francamente (avevo) purtroppo (avevo)
have.PST.IPFV.1SG frankly have.PST.IPFV.1SG unfortunately have.PST.IPFV.1SG
forse (avevo) stupidamente (avevo) [LAS bevuto troppo
perhaps have.PST.IPFV.1SG stupidly have.PST.IPFV.1SG drink.PTCP too.much
[VP ~~bevuto~~.]]]
'Frankly I unfortunately had perhaps stupidly drunk too much.'

By contrast, finite lexical verbs cannot freely target positions within the HAS (50a; Cinque 1999:31, 180n80). In the unmarked case, they raise at least to the left of the presuppositional negator *mica* (50b; Cinque 1999:152), to target a clause-medial position situated within the lower portion of the HAS. As illustrated in (50c), this position must be higher than that associated with volitionality, since the verb obligatorily precedes subject-oriented adverbs such as *apposta* 'deliberately' which lexicalize volitional modality, and lower than habitual aspect since it obligatorily follows adverbs such as *generalmente* 'usually' (50d).[22] Sandwiched thus between *apposta* to its right and *generalmente* to its left, we can squarely locate the unmarked position of the finite lexical verb with the head position associated with $Asp_{Habitual}$, as sketched in (50e):

50 a **[HAS Ida non dorme purtroppo [LAS mica [VP ~~dorme~~.]]]
Ida NEG sleep.3SG unfortunately not

b [HAS Ida purtroppo [? non dorme [LAS mica [VP ~~dorme~~.]]]]
Ida unfortunately NEG sleep.3SG not
'But in any case Ida unfortunately isn't sleeping.'

c La spia parlava apposta (**parlava) [VP ~~parlava~~ con un accento.]
the spy speak.PST.IPFV.3SG deliberately speak.PST.IPFV.3SG with an accent
'The spy deliberately spoke with an accent.'

d Ida (**capiva) generalmente capiva [VP ~~capiva~~ la
Ida understand.PST.IPFV.3SG usually understand.PST.IPFV.3SG the
metafisica]]
metaphysics
'Ida usually understood metaphysics.'

e [HAS ... [AspHabitual [generalmente] V [ModVolitional [apposta] [LAS *mica* ... [VP ~~V~~]]]]]

In more careful (and typically archaic-sounding) styles, however, Cinque (1999:214f.n7) notes that finite lexical verbs may also target particular positions within the LAS (51a–b), although they can never occur to the right of such adverbs as *bene* 'well' and *presto* 'early' (51d), and to a certain extent for some speakers nor to the right of

completamente 'completely' (51c), all of which occur in the lowest portion of the LAS.

51 a Ida di solito [$_{LAS}$ **mica** / **sempre** prende [$_{VP}$ ~~prende~~ il treno.]] ((SR)?It.)
Ida of usual not always take.3SG the train
'Ida usually doesn't take / always takes the train.'

b Ida [$_{LAS}$ **subito** / **ancora** mi avvertiva [$_{VP}$ ~~avvertiva~~ quando non
Ida at.once still me= warn.PST.IPFV.3SG whenever NEG
veniva.]] ((SR)?It.)
come.PST.IPFV.3SG
'Ida would warn me at once / still warn me whenever she couldn't make it.'

c Ida [$_{LAS}$ distrusse **completamente** (?distrusse) [$_{VP}$ ~~distrusse~~ il
Ida destroy.PST.PFV.3SG completely destroy.PST.PFV.3SG the
quadro.]] ((SR)?It.)
painting
'Ida completely destroyed the painting.'

d Ida [$_{LAS}$ fece **bene** / **presto** (**fece) [$_{VP}$ ~~fece~~ tutti i
Ida do.PST.PFV.3SG well early do.PST.PFV.3SG all the
compiti.]] ((SR)?It.)
duties
'Ida performed all her duties well / quickly performed all her duties.'

Whereas in standard modern Italian sentences such as (51a–c) are considered very marked and rare—largely restricted to careful, stilted styles according to Cinque (cf. *se* ***ben*** *mi ricordo* 'if **well** I remember')—insofar as finite verbs generally move to a position associated with $Asp_{Habitual}$ above the LAS, in southern regional varieties of Italian (including the underlying dialects; Ledgeway and Lombardi 2005; 2014; Ledgeway 2020b; 2022b; Ledgeway and Schifano 2022:652–656), structures such as (51) prove very natural and are anything but rare in everyday spontaneous speech. Indeed, in these southern varieties finite verbs need not, and generally do not, raise so high within the clause (although the standard pattern of verb movement to a clause-medial position in the lower HAS is not excluded), typically only moving to a position within the LAS (though raising at the very least to the left of the aspectual projection hosting (unstressed) *tutto* 'everything' and *niente* 'nothing'). This explains why, in employing the presuppositional negator *mica* '(in any case . . .) not', central and northern Italians typically produce structures such as (52a) with the verb preceding the negator *mica*, whereas

southerners most naturally produce the variant in (52b) with the verb following the negator.

52 a Ida non piange [LAS **mica** [VP ~~piange~~]], ha un' infezione agli occhi.
b Ida [LAS **mica** piange [VP ~~piange~~]], ha un' infezione agli occhi.
Ida NEG cry.3SG not cry.3SG have.3SG an infection to.the eyes
'But Ida isn't crying, she's just got an eye infection.'

20.4.2.2 Non-finite verbs

Turning now to non-finite verb forms, Cinque (1999:143–146) notes, following Belletti (1990:70f.), that infinitives in Italian raise at least as high as finite verbs. Thus, parallel to the finite lexical verb in (53a), in the infinitival relative (53b) the infinitive raises past lower adverbs like *sempre* 'always'. Surprisingly, however, whereas we have just seen (cf. 51a–c) that in careful and archaic-sounding styles (as well as more generally in southern regional Italian) finite verbs may optionally raise to a position within the LAS (though always above adverbs such as *bene* 'well') as in (53c), infinitives can never appear within the LAS (53d):

53 a Cerca quello su cui [AspHab conta [LAS **sempre** [VP ~~conta~~ in tempi difficili.]]]
seek.3SG that.one on who count.3SG always in times difficult

b Cerca qualcuno su cui [AspHab contare [LAS **sempre** [VP ~~contare~~ in
seek.3SG someone on who count.INF always in
tempi difficili.]]]
times difficult

c Cerca quello su cui [LAS **sempre** conta [VP ~~conta~~ in tempi
seek.3SG that.one on who always count.3SG in times
difficili.]] ((SR)?It.)
difficult
'He's looking for that man who he always counts on in difficult times.'

d **Cerca qualcuno su cui [LAS **sempre** contare [VP ~~contare~~ in tempi
seek.3SG someone on who always count.INF in times
difficili.]]
difficult
'He's looking for someone to always count on in difficult times.'

Even more striking is the behaviour of infinitives in subject and control clauses which, in contrast, must raise to the highest available head within the HAS (54a), a position to which only auxiliary finite

verbs (54b), but not lexical finite verbs (54c), can otherwise optionally raise:[23]

54 a Mi dispiace [HAS annunciarvi [MoodSpeechAct **francamente** (**annunciarvi)**
me= displease.3SG announce.INF=you frankly announce.INF=you
[VP ~~annunciarvi~~ una tale notizia.]]]
a such news

'I'm sorry to frankly announce such news to you.'

b Mi dispiace che [HAS vi abbia [MoodSpeechAct **francamente** (vi abbia)
me= displease.3SG that you= have.3SG frankly you=have.3SG
[VP annunciato una tale notizia.]]]
announce.PTCP a such news

'I'm sorry that frankly he has announced such news to you.'

c Mi dispiace che [HAS (**vi annunci) [MoodSpeechAct **francamente**
me= displease.3SG that you= announce.SBJV.3SG frankly
[AspHab vi annunci [VP ~~vi annunci~~ una tale notizia.]]]]
you= announce.SBJV.3SG a such news

'I'm sorry that frankly he's announcing such news to you.'

Like infinitives, present participles (55a) and gerunds (55b) are equally reported by Cinque (1999:150f.) to be able to reach the highest available head position, as shown by their ability to precede higher adverbs such as the evaluative *fortunatamente* 'fortunately'. However, in contrast to infinitives, present participles and gerunds can also occur in a clause-medial position lexicalizing $Asp_{Habitual}$, and may, on a par with finite lexical verbs in careful styles (cf. 51a–d), also appear within the upper portion of the LAS to the left of such adverbs as *bene* 'well' (56a–b) (all following examples from Cinque 1999:150f.):

55 a [HAS Gli aspetti riguardanti [MoodEval **fortunatamente** [AspHab/LAS (riguardanti) [VP
the aspects regard.GER fortunately regard.GER
~~riguardanti~~ il nostro caso]]]]
the our case

'The aspects fortunately concerning our case'

b Me ne andai [HAS non sospettando [MoodEval **fortunatamente**
me= thence= go.PST.PFV.1SG NEG suspect.GER fortunately
[AspHab/LAS (non sospettando) [VP ~~sospettando~~ nulla.]]]]
NEG suspect.GER nothing
'I left fortunately not suspecting anything.'

56 a I documenti [LAS già riguardanti [VP ~~riguardanti~~ il nostro caso]]
the documents already regard.GER the our case
'The documents already concerning our case'

b Cominciava [LAS già travisando [VP ~~travisando~~ lo spirito dell' inziativa.]]
start.PST.PFV.3SG already distort.GER the spirit of.the initiative
'He began by already misrepresenting the spirit of the initiative.'

20.4.2.3 Summary

We summarize in Table 20.1 the various positions targeted by different Italian verb forms under movement in terms of the three clausal spaces HAS (high sentential core), $Asp_{Habitual}$ (clause-medial position), and LAS (low sentential core).

Table 20.1 Verb placement in Italian

	HAS	$Asp_{Habitual}$	LAS
Finite Auxiliary V	+	+	–
Finite Lexical V	–	+	(+)
Wh-infinitival V	–	+	–
Infinitival V	+	–	–
Present Participial V	+	+	+
Gerundival V	+	+	+

Now, in the literature there is no general consensus regarding the correct interpretation of verb placement in different clausal positions (for an overview, see Schifano 2011; 2015a; 2015b; 2016; 2018; Roberts 2019:342–418), although traditionally there have been many unsuccessful attempts to relate the extent of movement to the richness or otherwise of the inflexional agreement of the verb (for an overview, cf. Ledgeway and Lombardi 2014).[24] A possible explanation, however, for the variable placement of Romance verb forms is to be sought in the licensing of their distinct temporal, aspectual, modal, and voice interpretations in relation to the different functions and interpretations that a given morphological verb form can license. Some evidence for this view can be seen, for instance, in Cinque's (1999:184n8) observation that in Italian analytic perfective paradigms the position of the participle with respect to the perfective adverb *sempre* 'always' correlates with significant interpretative distinctions: when the participle follows the adverb (57a) it yields a non-perfective reading, but licenses both a perfective and non-perfective reading when it precedes (57b):

57 a Ida ha **sempre** fumato.
Ida have.3SG always smoke.PTCP
'Ida has always smoked (and still does).'

b Ida ha fumato **sempre**.
Ida have.3SG smoke.PTCP always
'Ida has always smoked.'

Interpretive differences like these highlight how the variable extent of verb movement around adverbs often serves to discriminate which of the various head projections has been licensed.[25] A not too dissimilar explanation accounts for the contrast in (58a–b), where otherwise identical lexical adverbs may assume distinct interpretations in accordance with the different functional projections they lexicalize.

58 a La matematica [AspContinuative(/Perfect) **sempre** mi interessa [VP ~~interessa.~~]]
the mathematics *sempre* me= interest.3SG
'I'm still (/always) interested in mathematics.'

b La matematica [AspHabitual mi interessa [Asp(Continuative/)Perfect **sempre** [VP ~~interessa.~~]]]
the mathematics me= interest.3SG *sempre*
'I'm always (/still) interested in mathematics.'

As can be seen from the translations in (58a–b), the adverb *sempre* allows two different aspectual readings, namely STILL

($Asp_{Continuative}$) and ALWAYS ($Asp_{Perfect}$). Both qua continuative adverb and qua perfective adverb *sempre* occurs within the higher portion of the LAS (cf. 43), through which the verb generally raises to reach the $Asp_{Habitual}$ position. The sequence [$_{AspHabitual}$ V [$_{LAS}$ *sempre* ~~V~~ . . .]] (and in careful styles and in southern varieties [$_{AspHabitual}$ · · · [$_{LAS}$ *sempre* V [$_{v\text{-}VP}$ ~~V~~]]]) might therefore be expected to prove ambiguous. In most cases, however, no such ambiguity arises, irrespective of verb movement, in that the inherent aspectual properties of individual predicates tend to favour one of the two readings (e.g., *vive* ***sempre*** *dalla mamma* 'he still/?always lives with his mother' vs *dorme* ***sempre*** *fino alle undici* 'he always/?still sleeps until 11 o'clock'). Nonetheless, there do arise some genuine cases of potential ambiguity between the two available readings, as witnessed in (58a–b). In such cases, verb movement serves, albeit partially, to discriminate between both interpretations. Although the perfective reading is not excluded, the preferred interpretation of *sempre* in (58a), in which the finite verb occurs to its right, is that of the continuative aspectual adverb. This finds a natural interpretation in the assumption that the verb is most readily interpreted in (58a) as having raised to $Asp_{Continuative}$ whose associated modifier position (viz. $SpecAspP_{Continuative}$) hosts *sempre*. In (58b), by contrast, the reverse interpretation generally obtains. In this case speakers appear to most naturally interpret the movement of the verb to the left of *sempre* as an indication of *sempre* lexicalizing the modifier adverb position associated with $Asp_{Perfect}$.

Additional evidence for this semantically driven view of verb movement is also to be found in Italian contrasts like (59a–b), where the active interpretation of the participle correlates with a higher position than that of its passive counterpart.[26] However, temporal interpretation is also relevant here: whereas the lower position of the passive participle proves grammatical in generic temporal contexts such as (59b), it is excluded in examples like (59c) where the specific temporal reference of the clause licenses and requires a higher position of the passive participle.[27]

59 a Hanno [LAS **sempre** ~~accolto~~ **bene** (**~~accolto~~) [VP il suo spettacolo.]]
have.3PL always receive.PTCP well receive.PTCP the his performance
'They always received his performance well.'

b Il suo spettacolo è stato [LAS **sempre** (~~accolto~~) **bene**
the his performance be.3SG be.PTCP always receive.PTCP well
(~~accolto~~) [VP . . .]]
receive.PTCP
'His performance was always well received.'

c Ieri il suo spettacolo era stato [LAS ~~accolto~~ **bene**
yesterday the his performance be.PST.IPFV.3SG be.PTCP receive.PTCP well
(**~~accolto~~) [VP . . .]]
receive.PTCP
'His performance was received well yesterday.'

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[1] Below and in what follows we indicate the base and intermediate positions of displaced elements with strikethrough.

[2] The exact position of the finite lexical verb in these examples will be explored fully in §20.4.

[3] For an overview, see Vincent (1982), Salvi (1982; 1987), Tuttle (1986), Pinkster (1987), Zamboni (2000:127f.), Bentley (2006:59–61, 64–69; 2016:823f.), Ledgeway (2012a:130–134; 2019b), Adams (2013:614–646), Roberts (2013), and Loporcaro (2016a:812–818).

[4] D'Alessandro and Roberts (2010:49–53) retain the essence of this analysis in their minimalist analysis of auxiliary selection, as does Ledgeway (2020b; 2022a) who links the availability of an active-stative driven HAVE-BE alternation across (Italo-)Romance to the height of verb movement.

[5] Agreement is optional in the case of the first-person (*mi* 'me', *ci* 'us') and second-person (*ti* 'you.SG', *vi* 'you.PL') clitics, but obligatory with the third-person clitics *lo* 'him, it.M', *la* 'her, it.F', and *li/le* 'them.M/F'.

[6] See Lucchesi (1962–1963), Rohlfs (2021c:116), Salvi (2001:239; 2010b:563–565), Egerland (1996:37–68), Loporcaro (1998:12, 64, 79f., 196f.; 2016a:803–812), Bentley (2008a:91), Ledgeway (2020b:47f.), and Ledgeway and Schifano (2022:640–642).

[7] In the case of post-verbal unaccusative subjects, we assume that the CHAIN formation between the subject and a pre-verbal pro in the canonical subject position is mediated via SpecAgr$_O$P.

[8] More recently the basic tenets of this analysis have been given a novel phase-based reinterpretation by D'Alessandro and Roberts (2008) and Ledgeway (2020b:47f.).

[9] In what follows we indicate topicalized constituents with underlining, contrastively focalized constituents with small capitals, and all other types of focus (e.g., informational) with bold.

[10] See Cardinaletti (1997; 2004), Cecchetto (1999), Belletti (2001; 2004b; 2005a).

[11] As Belletti (2004b) observes, the mildly deviant nature of V+S+PP sentences with an informationally focused subject, hence the '?' in parentheses in (24a), is no doubt due to a strong tendency for the subject to receive a narrow focus interpretation (*Chi spiegherà bene al direttore?* 'Who will explain (this) properly to the director?') which, in accordance with the Nuclear Stress Rule (Cinque 1993; Zubizarreta 1998), most naturally favours the clause-final position of the subject (*Spiegherà bene al direttore Ida*).

[12] However, as Belletti (2004b) convincingly argues, in cases like (26b) the contrastively focused object also targets the higher left periphery, but surfaces to the right of the verb and its subject on account of the whole sentential core (IP) undergoing remnant movement across the object to a higher Topic position within the higher left periphery (i). On this view, the relevant difference between southern and northern varieties of Italian is not then a question of which of the two focus positions they target, but whether IP remnant movement is preferred (north) or not (south).

i $[_{FocP}$ UNA MARGHERITA $[_{IP}$ Sandra voleva [~~una margherita~~]]] ⇒ $[_{TopP}$ $[_{IP}$ Sandra voleva [~~una margherita~~]] $[_{FocP}$ UNA MARGHERITA $[_{IP}$ ~~Sandra voleva~~ [~~una margherita~~]]]]

[13] Cf. Jones (1993:332–335), Cruschina (2006; 2008; 2010), Bentley (2007; 2008a:89–91), Ledgeway (2010a:114), Mensching and Remberger (2010a, 2010b), Zanini and Damonte (2010).

[14] Vanelli, Renzi and Benincà (1985), Vanelli (1986; 1999), Benincà (1995; 2006), Lombardi and Middleton (2004), Salvi (2004; 2005:430f.), Poletto (2007; 2010a; 2014), Ledgeway (2008; 2011a:406f., 425–427; 2012a:64–71), and Wolfe (2018).

[15] Unfortunately, limitations of space prevent us from considering here the full range of evidence discussed in the literature, for which the reader is referred to the detailed discussions in Cinque (1999; 2002; 2004; 2006), Ledgeway (2009a; 2012a:140–150; 2017b), Ledgeway and Lombardi (2005; 2014), Schifano (2011; 2015a; 2016; 2018:7–61), and Ledgeway and Schifano (2022:652–656).

[16] Note that in all following examples flat, neutral intonation is assumed throughout. Sequences which are judged ungrammatical under the neutral interpretation may be perfectly grammatical under a marked order produced with a distinct intonational contour.

[17] While semantic incompatibility may provide a general explanation for the impossibility of combining the continuative aspectual adverb *ancora* 'still' with anterior temporal (*già* 'already') and terminative aspectual (*più* 'anymore') adverbs, inasmuch as a state or activity which continues to obtain cannot in most cases be simultaneously portrayed as having already occurred or terminated, it is possible to construct examples like (i.a) where the act of 'no longer speaking to each other' continues to obtain and hence falls under the scope of

ancora 'still'. Significantly, however, in such cases the expected linearization *più* + *ancora* proves ungrammatical and must be expressed by fronting of *ancora* to a higher left-peripheral position, where it can take scope over the entire event. The ill-formedness of the order *più* + *ancora* presumably follows from the interpretive ambiguity of *ancora* which, in conjunction with a pre-verbal *non* 'not', is most readily interpreted as lexicalizing $T_{Anterior}$ (viz. '(not . . .) yet') rather than $Asp_{Continuative}$ ('still'), which necessarily places it before, rather than after, *più* generated in the lower $Asp_{Terminative}$ (namely, *non* . . . *ancora*-$T_{Anterior}$ > *più*-$Asp_{Terminative}$ > *ancora*-$Asp_{Continuative}$). Indeed, this order, albeit somewhat degraded, is recorded by Cinque (1999:9), but, crucially, only with the anterior temporal reading of *ancora* (i.b).

i a **Ancora** non si parlano **più** (****ancora**), per quanto ne sappia io.
still NEG REFL= speak.3PL anymore still for what of.it= know.SBJV.1SG I
'They are still no longer on speaking terms with each another, as far as I know.'

b ?Non ha **ancora** **più** ricevuto nulla.
NEG have.3SG yet anymore receive.PTCP nothing
'He hasn't yet received anything else.'

[18] A similar superficial distortion of underlying patterns is found in many southern regional varieties of Italian where, under the influence of the corresponding dialects (cf. Ledgeway 2009b:696f.; 2017b; Ledgeway and Schifano 2022:652–656), the standard orders *più* 'anymore' + *niente* 'nothing' and *più* + negative quantifiers *nessuno* 'not one' and *manco* 'not even' (cf. standard *nemmeno*) are frequently reversed (i.a–c), suggesting that incorporation into *più* in these varieties proves more liberal than in the standard (namely, *più* + *niente/nessuno/manco* ⇒ [[*niente/nessuno/manco*] *più*]).

i a Di te non me ne importa **niente** **più**. (SRIt.)
of you NEG me= thereof= matter.3SG nothing any more
'I couldn't care less about you.'

[19] Unlike in the standard (cf. 41b), Norma Schifano (p.c.) reports that in her northern (viz. Lombard) variety of Italian *già* 'already' can also incorporate into *mica* (i), which suggests that in the relevant northern varieties all adverbial lexicalizations of $T_{Anterior}$ (whether *ancora* 'yet' or *già* 'already') may incorporate into *mica*:

i Non avrai [$_{Neg}$ [[**già**] **mica**] [$_{TAnterior}$ ~~già~~ [finito]]], no? (NRIt.)
NEG have.FUT.2SG already not finish.PTCP no
'You surely haven't already finished, have you?'

[20] See Cinque (1999), Ledgeway and Lombardi (2005; 2014), Ledgeway (2012a:140–150; 2020b), Schifano (2011; 2016; 2018:7–61), Ledgeway and Maiden (2022:25–27), and Ledgeway and Schifano (2022:652–656).

[21] In the following examples, adverbs appear in bold-type and verbs are underlined.

[22] Observe that the post-verbal position of *generalmente* in (50d) is grammatical, but gives rise to a manner-oriented interpretation of the adverb (namely, 'in general': 'Ida had a general understanding of the problems of metaphysics'), squarely placing the adverb in the LAS and hence to the right of the finite lexical verb.

[23] Irrelevant here is the grammatical order in (54a) in which *francamente* 'frankly' apparently precedes the infinitive (i.a), but which can only be interpreted as occupying a right-dislocated position in the main clause where it modifies the matrix predicate *mi dispiace* 'I'm sorry'. Equally irrelevant here is the grammatical order in (54c) in which *francamente* follows the finite lexical verb (i.b), a position in which it assumes an event-oriented manner reading ('in a frank manner'):

i a	[Mi	dispiace	**francamente**	[annunciarvi	una	tale	notizia.]]
	me=	displease.3SG	frankly	announce.INF=you	a	such	news
	'Frankly I'm sorry to announce such news to you.'						
b	Mi	dispiace	[LAS	annunciarvi	**francamente**	una	tale	notizia.]
	me=	displease.3SG		announce.INF=you	frankly	a	such	news.
	'I'm sorry to announce frankly such news to you.'							

[24] Roberts (1985), Lightfoot and Hornstein (1994), DeGraff (1997), Rohrbacher (1997), Vikner (1997), and Koeneman and Zeijlstra (2014).

[25] Unlike in standard Italian and northern Italian regional varieties, in southern varieties the apparent distinction between examples such as (57a–b) is neutralized, inasmuch as participles and infinitives typically precede lower pre-VP adverbs (Ledgeway 2009b:777–781), including negative polarity elements such as *mai* 'never' and *più* (Parry 1997:184). Consequently, whereas in standard Italian and northern Italian varieties such adverbs occur in pre-verbal position in the unmarked case, in southern varieties they occur in post-verbal position, suggesting that active participles and infinitives raise higher in these latter varieties.

i a	Non	ho	fumato$_{SRIt.}$	**mai**	fumato$_{(NR)It.}$	[VP ~~fumato~~	in	questa	casa.]
	NEG	have.1SG	smoke.PTCP	never	smoke.PTCP		in	this	house
	'I've never smoked in this house.'								
b	Non	posso	fumare$_{SRIt.}$	**mai**	fumare$_{(NR)It.}$	[VP ~~fumare~~	in	questa	casa.]
	NEG	can.1SG	smoke.INF	never	smoke.INF		in	this	house
	'I can never smoke in this house.'								

[26] Cinque (1999:102f., 147f.), Belletti (2005b), and D'Alessandro and Roberts (2008:481f.).

[27] See, however, Schifano (2011; 2015a; 2015b; 2016; 2018) for convincing arguments why Romance verb movement cannot be considered semantically driven. She maintains that the extent of movement should instead be related to the varying paradigmatic instantiation of the Mood, Tense, and Aspect functional fields of the clause in different Romance varieties.

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Chapter 21

The clause

Eva-Maria Remberger

21.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the Italian clause. Although it largely avoids discussion of marked syntactic structures, since these are specifically dealt with in Chapter 23 on information structure, there is inevitably some overlap, especially in §21.2.1. Similarly, some of the phenomena discussed in the context of relative clauses (§21.3.5) are also relevant to Chapter 19 on the nominal group.

21.2 Basic word order in simple main clauses

Main clauses are independent, both semantically and syntactically. However, they are also pragmatically embedded in the discourse. In order, therefore, to observe the pragmatically most independent word order one must consider contextually neutral examples (viz. out-of-the-blue utterances) and discard all possible information-structural divisions.

21.2.1 Declarative clauses

Declarative clauses are characterized by a neutral intonation and the main finite verb usually occurs in the indicative or conditional (cf. Squartini 2010c:24); in some cases, the predicate can also be expressed by an infinitive or the verb can even be entirely absent (cf. Fava and Salvi 2001:49f.).[1] Beginning with canonical declarative transitive main clauses which are information-structurally neutral,[2] Italian is an SVO language. This neutral order is possible in an out-of-the-blue utterance or as an answer to the question *Che è successo?* 'What (has) happened?', namely, in thetic sentences with broad focus (cf. Sasse 1987). With ditransitive verbs the indirect object usually follows the direct object in accordance with the unmarked order S-V-DO-IO:[3]

1	Bruno	ha	dato	il	disegno	a	sua	nonna.
	Bruno	have.3SG	give.PTCP	the	drawing	to	his	grandmother

'Bruno gave his grandmother a picture.'

The position of the verb here includes both auxiliary and main participle verb. Yet Pollock (1989) uses the position of main and auxiliary verbs with respect to negation on the basis of comparative data from English and French, as well as Italian, to develop the idea that inflexion, namely, tense (expressed by the suffix *-v-* in *ave-v-a* in 2a) and subject agreement (third-person singular in 2a) have different syntactic properties in English and Romance: In English, in the case of the presence of sentential negation, an inflected form of the support verb *do* must appear, whereas in Italian no support verb occurs and the inflexional behaviour of the negated verb is unaffected. This idea was taken up and modified by Belletti (1990) who, on the basis of Italian evidence, consequently proposed that the Italian participle, which is inflected for perfective aspect (expressed by *-t-* in *guarda-t-a* in 2b) and can also potentially be inflected for agreement with an object (see the feminine singular ending *-a* on the participle), is therefore syntactically quite different from English participles.

2	a	Bruno	non	aveva	ancora	guardato	la	pallina	nuova.
		Bruno	NEG	have.PST.IPFV.3SG	yet	look.at.PTCP	the	ball.FSG	new.FSG

'Bruno hadn't looked at the new ball yet.'

b	Non	l'	ha	mai	guardata.
	NEG	it.FSG=	have.3SG	ever	see.PTCP.FSG

'He has never looked at it.'

(2) shows the canonical SVO order of Italian. It also shows that the auxiliary verb (in this case *aveva*, with imperfective inflexion and

subject agreement) and the participle do not need to be adjacent. Functional adverbs such as *ancora* 'yet' (2a) and *mai* 'ever' (2b) are one of the possible elements that may intervene between auxiliary and main verb. The participle agrees with the object in (2b) because of the presence of the feminine singular clitic *la* (proclitic to the finite auxiliary) (cf. also §20.2.2; for an early well-known generative analysis of object agreement, see Kayne 1989; for an approach in terms of relational grammar, see Loporcaro 1998).[4] Example (2b) also shows that, in Italian, subjects can remain unrealized whenever they are recoverable from the context and not focused; indeed, verbs with no arguments, such as metereological verbs, cannot have subjects, not even expletive subjects (e.g., *piove* '(it) rains').

Subsequently, relying on a universal hierarchy of adverb positions, Cinque (1999) extends the positional flexibility of verbal forms showing that in Italian the finite verb and even the participle can occur in several different positions along the hierarchy. Consider in this respect the hierarchies in (3a) and (4a) where 'X' indicates the various positions available to the finite verb and the (active) participle, respectively. The examples in (3b) and (4b) show possible applications of (parts of) these hierarchical orders (to the extent that such a number of adverbs is semantically possible in one clause) (cf. Cinque 1999:42–51):[5]

3 a	…	X francamente	X purtroppo	X evidentemente	X probabilmente
	'…	X frankly	X unfortunately	X obviously	X probably
		X allora	X forse	X saggiamente …	
		X then	X maybe	X wisely …'	

b	(Mi ero)		francamente	(mi ero)		purtroppo	
	me=be.PST.IPFV.1SG		frankly	me=be.PST.IPFV.1SG		unfortunately	
	(mi ero)		evidentemente	(mi ero)		formato	una
	me=be.PST.IPFV.1SG		obviously	me=be.PST.IPFV.1SG		form.PTCP	a
	pessima	opinione	di voi.				
	awful	opinion	of you				

'Frankly I unfortunately had clearly formed a very bad opinion of you.'

4 a	…X solitamente	X mica	X già	X più	X sempre	X completamente	X tutto bene …
	'…X usually	X *mica*	X already	X more	X always	X completely	X all well …'

b Da allora, non hanno (rimesso) solitamente (rimesso) mica
from then NEG have.3PL restore.PTCP usually restore.PTCP NEG
(rimesso) più (rimesso) sempre (rimesso) completamente
restore.PTCP anymore restore.PTCP always restore.PTCP completely
(rimesso) tutto bene in ordine.
restore.PTCP all well in order

'Since then, they haven't usually any longer always put everything properly in order.'

Turning now to unaccusative verbs, the canonical word order in thetic contexts is not SV but, rather, VS. This is in line with the Unaccusative Hypothesis developed by Perlmutter (1978), according to which there are two different classes of intransitive verb, namely, unergatives such as *dormire* 'sleep' whose subject behaves on a par with the subject of transitive verbs, and unaccusatives such as *arrivare* 'arrive', where the subject behaves in many respects like the object of a transitive verb and the subject of a passive (cf. 5a, b and 6a). In Italian, the distinction between the two classes of intransitives is most visible in the selection of auxiliaries in compound tenses (cf. Perlmutter 1989), with unaccusatives selecting *essere* 'be' in contrast to *avere* 'have' as found with transitives and unergatives (see also §20.2.1):[6]

5 a È arrivato Bruno.
be.3SG arrive.PTCP Bruno

'Bruno (has) arrived.'

b È scoppiato un incendio nella fabbrica di birra.
be.3SG break.out.PTCP a fire in.the factory of beer

'A fire has broken out in the beer factory.' (Giurgea and Remberger 2012:63)

6 a È stata distrutta la fabbrica di birra.
be.3SG be.PTCP destroy.PTCP the factory of beer

'The beer factory has been destroyed.'

b La fabbrica di birra è stata distrutta da un incendio.
the factory of beer be.3SG be.PTCP destroy.PTCP by a fire

'The beer factory has been destroyed by a fire.'

As for passive constructions such as (6), which are also unaccusative by definition, the presence of the reactivated agent in (6b) makes it more natural in the unmarked order to have the subject in pre-verbal position (cf. Poletto 2021:160). Unaccusative structures in Italian include not only passive verbs, but also copula

clauses, and all types of reflexive verb—reflexives proper, ergative-reflexives, inherent reflexives, and passive-medial constructions (cf. Burzio 1986:ch. 6; Remberger 2006:88–99)—involving a reflexive clitic, since the reflexive clitic in Italian has the role of an unaccusativizing morpheme. These data on unaccusatives gave rise to Burzio's Generalization (Burzio 1986:178f.; 184), which states that a verb that cannot take a direct object in the accusative lacks a thematic role for an agentive subject.

However, post-verbal subjects in unmarked simple clauses are not only conditioned by unaccusativity, but also other factors (cf. note 2). Furthermore, sentences with a pre-verbal subject in unaccusative structures such as (7a) (and 6b above) can have broad focus under certain conditions:

7	a	Bruno	è	arrivato	all'	asilo nido.			
		Bruno	be.3SG	arrive.PTCP	at.the	nursery school			
		'Bruno arrived at the nursery school.'							
	b	**Un	incendio	è	scoppiato	nella	fabbrica	di	birra. (broad focus)
		a	fire	be.3SG	break.out.PTCP	in.the	factory	of	beer
		'A fire has broken out in the beer factory.'							

In (7a), there is an explicit goal, which in (5a), by contrast, remains implicit. An implicit goal (as inherently encoded in the verb *arrivare* 'arrive') provides a spatio-temporal anchoring for the clause.[7]

The implicit goal, which was called 'stage' (in the sense of Erteschick-Shir 1997 and her stage-topic) in Giurgea and Remberger (2012), is the aboutness-topic of the predication in the sense of Reinhart (1981) and subsequent work by Erteschik-Shir (1997).[8] According to Erteschik-Shir, semantically, every clause needs to have an Aboutness-Topic. This is different from the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) introduced by Chomsky (1982) which stipulates that every clause must have a syntactic subject. In any case, aboutness-topics naturally occur in pre-verbal position (whether directly generated or moved there, although there are other elements that can also satisfy this syntactic requirement), with the result that the UNDERGOER argument of an unaccusative predicate is most naturally found in post-verbal position. An explicit GOAL in post-verbal position in a thetic clause is not identified with the 'stage topic' and therefore the UNDERGOER argument can appear in pre-verbal position, but only if definite. In (7b) above, however, with an

indefinite UNDERGOER argument in pre-verbal position, we cannot have an unmarked order in the sense of an out-of-the-blue broad focus (thetic) reading, since the subject has a definite reading (namely, 'one of the fires already mentioned in the discourse').

Furthermore, the presence of a 'stage topic' is a necessary condition for a post-verbal subject in an unaccusative structure. Predicates that do not have or cannot host a 'stage', since their argument structure does not include an implicit or explicit spatial-temporal argument, do not allow a post-verbal subject even if the verb is unaccusative:

8 a È morto Fellini. (broad focus)
be.3SG die.PTCP Fellini
'Fellini died.' (Pinto 1997:23)

b**Si è abbronzato Marco. / **È invecchiato Marco. (broad focus)
REFL= be.3SG tan.PTCP Marco be.3SG is age.PTCP Marco
'Marco got a suntan.' / 'Marco has aged.'

In (8a), *morire* 'die' is a predicate that necessarily includes a temporal argument since a particular death has to occur at a particular time. Therefore, it does include a spatial-temporal anchoring inasmuch as a stage topic is possible (Giurgea and Remberger 2012: 59–60). By contrast, both *abbronzarsi* 'get a suntan' and *invecchiare* 'become old' in (8b) are unaccusative predicates, but since they are not goal-oriented and do not include a spatial-temporal anchoring in the sense of a possible 'stage', a broad focus reading is excluded.

Similarly, a 'stage topic' is only possible with episodic, but not with generic readings, and therefore (9) cannot have a broad focus reading:

9 **Arriva Bruno ogni fine settimana. (broad focus)
arrive.3SG Bruno every end week
'Bruno turns up every weekend.'

Moreover, not only unaccusatives, but also unergatives (10) can exhibit SV order in thetic clauses with broad focus if they allow implicit goal/spatio-temporal anchoring:

10 Ha telefonato Beatrice.
have.3SG phone.PTCP Beatrice
'Beatrice phoned here.' (Pinto 1997:23)

If the unergative predicate does not include such an implicit argument, only the SV order is felicitous in Italian, whereas VS is not

allowed (cf. 11; note again that the subject is definite):

11 a Beatrice ha pianto. (cf. Pinto 1997:18)
Beatrice have.3SG cry.PTCP

b **Ha pianto Beatrice. (broad focus; cf. Pinto 1997:16)
have.3SG cry.PTCP Beatrice
'Beatrice cried.'

Traditionally, the possibility of post-verbal subjects in broad focus constructions was described as 'free subject inversion' and was identified as one of the parameters allegedly correlated with the null-subject property (cf. Chomsky 1981:§4.3; cf. Haegeman 1995:325–329 following Burzio 1986:ch. 2). However, rather than 'free inversion', we have seen that there are specific conditions placed on the availability of post-verbal subjects in thetic clauses, and these do not depend on the null-subject parameter, but rather on verb class, argument structure, aspect, and definiteness.

The proposal put forward by Giurgea and Remberger (2012) is that in unmarked thetic VS orders there must always be a stage argument to serve as an aboutness-topic (cf. Erteschick-Shir 1997), and this stage topic can be either implicit (as in 5a, 6a, 8b, 10) or explicit (as in 5b).[9]

Without a stage topic there are still other arguments that can occur in pre-verbal position while the subject remains in post-verbal position in Italian thetic clauses, as illustrated in the examples in (12):

12 a In questa casa ha abitato Giacomo Leopardi.
in this house have.3SG live.PTCP Giacomo Leopardi
'In this house Giacomo Leopardi lived.' (Pinto 1997:22)

b In questa università hanno studiato molti linguisti.
in this university have.3PL study.PTCP many linguists
'Many linguists studied in this university.' (Pinto 1997:64)

c Per questo piccolo paese hanno lottato molte generazioni.
for this small village have.3PL fight.PTCP many generations
'Many generations have fought for this small village'. (Giurgea and Remberger 2012:70)

All these sentences have an element in the pre-verbal field that acts as an aboutness-topic such that all these sentences can be understood to convey a broad focus and license a post-verbal subject (Giurgea and Remberger 2012:69f.).[10]

Indirect EXPERIENCER objects also often occur as the aboutness-topic of the clause in pre-verbal position as in (13a–b). The order could be also the opposite with the agreeing subject in pre-verbal position, in which case it would then be interpreted as the aboutness-topic of the clause:

13 a A Giovanni piace Maria.
to Giovanni please.3SG Maria
'Giovanni likes Maria.' (Salvi and Vanelli 2004:33)

b Mi preoccupa la salute di Maria.
me= worry.3SG the health of Maria
'Maria's health worries me.' (Salvi and Vanelli 2004:33)

As for the order of other post-verbal elements and UNDERGOER subjects, the usual order is S+V+PP (as with SVO in conjunction with transitives), but under particular circumstances the orders V+PP+S and V+S+PP are also possible:

14 a È entrato dalla finestra un ladro.
be.3SG enter.PTCP by.the window a thief
'A thief came in through the window.' (Belletti 2001:79)

b All' improvviso è entrato un uomo dalla finestra.
at.the unforeseen be.3SG enter.PTCP a man by.the window
'Suddenly a man came in through the window.' (Belletti 1988:9)

In (14), in a thetic context, the post-verbal subject is not in narrow focus, but the PP is context-given (Giurgea and Remberger 2012:66). In both examples according to Belletti (1988) the post-verbal subject must be indefinite in order to be licensed. Pinto (1997:48f.), however, shows that the important feature is not indefiniteness: if a unique referent for the post-verbal subject can be retrieved (e.g., if the referent of the subject is well known), it can also be definite (e.g., *il cane* 'the dog'). Both examples in (14) contain a covert 'stage topic', with (14b) featuring an additional frame setter *all'improvviso* 'suddenly' (cf. §23.4.1). In any case, VSO order in thetic clauses with a transitive verb is not possible in Italian, unlike in Romanian and Spanish (cf. Giurgea and Remberger 2012:63):

15 **Ha rovesciato un gatto il vaso. (**VSO with broad focus)
have.3SG turn.over.PTCP a cat the vase

Italian data that apparently seem to contradict the ungrammaticality of VSO orders can always be explained by

information structural factors, inasmuch as they involve marked word orders, not thetic sentences.[11]

A particular construction involves copula constructions with *essere* 'be'. In copula clauses with an adjectival predicate, the adjective always agrees with the subject of *essere*. As for the basic structure of copula clauses, Moro (1993; 1997; 2000), with the help of Italian data, investigated the distinction between canonical (16a) and inverted (16b) copula clauses:[12]

16 a L' arrivo del nipotino Bruno è stato l' evento
the arrival of.the nephew.DIM Bruno be.3SG be.PTCP the event
centrale della giornata.
main of.the day

b L' evento centrale della giornata è stato l' arrivo
the event main of.the day be.3SG be.PTCP the arrival
del nipotino Bruno.
of.the nephew.DIM Bruno

'The main event of the day was the arrival of little nephew Bruno.'

In this type of clause, the predicate clearly is *l'evento centrale della giornata*, since only this element can be replaced by the invariable pronoun (or better: pro-predicate) *lo*. Either the subject, in the canonical copula clause (16a), or the predicate, in the inverted copula clause (16b), can appear in pre-verbal position, but the latter only if the predicate is a definite nominal group, namely, referential.

Other clause types involving the copula are locative predicates (17) and existential clauses (18) (cf. also Salvi and Vanelli 2004:64f.), where definiteness effects can be observed, although they are not always so clear in Italian (Pinto 1997:ch. 2) as in other Romance languages such as Sardinian.

17 a Bruno è in giardino. (locative)
Bruno be.3SG in garden
'Bruno is in the garden.'

b (In giardino,) c' è Bruno (, in giardino).
in garden LOC= be.3SG Bruno in garden
'(In the garden) there is Bruno (in the garden).'

18 a C' è un bambino (in giardino). (existential)
LOC= be.3SG a child in garden
'There is a child (in the garden).'

b Ci sono bambini che sorridono sempre.
LOC= be.3PL children that smile always
'There are children who are always smiling.'

In (17a), *Bruno* is the subject of a locative predicate, which is expressed by the locative clitic pronoun in (17b). (18a), on the other hand, is an existential, which introduces a new entity (the *pivot*, here the necessarily indefinite *un bambino*), and the PP *in giardino* only restricts (again as a framesetter) the space for which the existence of this new entity is predicated. As can be seen in (18b), a locative element is not necessary, inasmuch as the existential verb is not represented by the copula alone, but the pronominal verb *esserci*.[13]

Copula clauses are usually analysed as small clauses, with the predicate being non-verbal and the copula itself having a pure auxiliary status. Non-auxiliary verbs that select small clauses are also possible in Italian and in this case the subject of the small clause is assigned accusative (cf. the accusative clitic *lo* in 19), an instance of so-called exceptional case marking (ECM; cf. also §21.3.3.2) to the subject of the predication in the small clause by the main verb:[14]

19 Considero Bruno / Lo considero il monello più bello del mondo.
consider.1SG Bruno him= consider.1SG the rascal most beautiful of.the world
'I consider Bruno/him to be the finest rascal in the world.'

On a par with copular clauses, the predicate of the small clause agrees with the accusative marked subject;[15] another verb frequently found in small clauses is *sembrare* 'seem', but in this case the subject of the small clause is raised to become the subject of the finite verb as in the copular construction:

20	Bruno	è	/	sembra	bravissimo.
	Bruno	be.3SG		seem.3SG	very.good

'Bruno is / seems very good.'

21.2.2 Non-declarative illocutionary force

Non-declarative clauses can be subdivided into interrogative clauses, imperative clauses, exclamative clauses, and optative clauses. These clause types often have a particular word order and since they convey the speaker's attitudes and intersubjective instruction, they are also relevant for issues pertaining to information structure (cf. Chapter 23).[16] Beginning with partial questions, word order is never unmarked since there is a wh-phrase that introduces a variable carrying question focus in a pre-verbal position in the left periphery. In this case the subject must be post-verbal, probably in a right-dislocated position (cf. §23.5), independently of considerations relating to unaccusativity, argument structure, and the presence of a 'stage topic':

21	Cosa	(**Bruno)	ha	(**Bruno)	trovato	in	giardino	Bruno?
	What	Bruno	have.3SG	Bruno	find.PTCP	in	garden	Bruno

'What did Bruno find in the garden?'

Interrogative pronouns introduced by a preposition can also appear sentence finally, with the effect of an echo-question, thus yielding a pragmatically marked order (cf. Schwarze 1995:390f.).

Polar questions, by contrast, mimic the canonical verb order of declarative clauses and mark interrogation by intonation alone. Consequently, pre-verbal subjects are possible, but are never found between the finite auxiliary and the participle, as happens in languages such as English:

22	(Bruno)	ha	(**Bruno)	trovato	qualcosa	in	giardino	(Bruno)?
	Bruno	have.3SG	Bruno	find.PTCP	something	in	garden	Bruno

'Has Bruno found something in the garden?'

Furthermore, in non-canonical, special questions, including rhetorical, biased, surprise-disapproval, *I-can't-find-the-value* questions (cf. Obenauer 2006), Italian presents several strategies. For example, in (23a) the presence of *che* conveys a dubitative value (cf. Giurgea and Remberger 2016:867) and (23b) presupposes a

negative answer on account of the negation (cf. Salvi and Vanelli 2004:317):

23 a Che Bruno si sia addormentato?
that Bruno REFL= be.SBJV.SG fall.asleep.PTCP
'Has Bruno (really) fallen asleep?'

b Non avrà sonno, Bruno?
NEG have.FUT.3SG sleep Bruno
'Won't Bruno be sleepy?'

Turning to exclamative force, only exclamatives proper (i.e., not clauses marked just by exclamative markers or intonation alone) are considered here, which are factive and convey that something is noteworthy to a greater degree than usual (cf. Zanuttini and Portner 2003). They follow a pattern parallel to interrogative clauses: in partial exclamatives a wh-element (and only one) appears in the left periphery (obligatorily, in contrast to some interrogatives) and pre-verbal subjects are not allowed:

24 a Ma come / quanto (**Bruno) è grande Bruno!
but how how.much Bruno be.3SG big Bruno
'How big Bruno is!'

b Quanti giocattoli (**Bruno) ha (Bruno)!
how.many toys Bruno have.3SG Bruno
'Gosh, Bruno has so many toys!'

c Dove (**Bruno) si è nascosto (Bruno)!
where Bruno REFL= be.3SG hide.PTCP Bruno
'Who knows where Bruno has hidden!

d Ma che intelligente che (**Bruno) è (Bruno)! / Ma che intelligente!
but what intelligent that Bruno be.3SG Bruno but what intelligent!
'How intelligent is Bruno!' / 'How intelligent!'

In (24a) expletive *non* is possible. In (24d) the complementizer *che* 'that' can appear, whereas the first *che* modifies the predicative adjective (as it could modify a noun or an adverb; on the syntax of *che*, cf. Fava 2001b:141f.). *Che* exclamatives can also appear without a verb, but the copula is still understood (24d). *Che* also appears in partial exclamatives based on relativization (cf. Fava 2001b:134f.):

25 La forza che ha questo bambino!
the strength that have.3SG this child
'What strength this child has!'

Exclamatives can naturally be introduced by interjections (26a). Total exclamatives are introduced by *se* 'if' (and can include expletive negation, cf. Fava 2001b:132), as in (26a), or by *che* 'that' followed by the subjunctive (26b). They can also appear as infinitival root clauses (26c) and as such are often introduced by *e* 'and' (Fava 2001b:149–151):

26 a Caspita se (non) è un monello, Bruno!
gosh if NEG be.3SG a rascal Bruno
'Gosh, what a rascal Bruno is!'

b Che Bruno si sia addormentato!
that Bruno REFL=be.SBJV.3SG fall.asleep.PTCP
'Bruno has fallen asleep!'

c (E) chiudere l' asilo proprio adesso!
(and) close.INF the nursery right now
'Close the nursery school right now!'

Positive imperative clauses (cf. Salvi and Borgato 2001) with morphological imperatives exist only in the second-person singular and the first- and second-persons plural and are, with the exception of the second person singular of the first conjugation (*canti* 'you sing' vs *canta*! 'sing!'), mainly identical with the corresponding forms of the indicative. However, imperative clauses are identifiable by the position of the clitic, which is enclitic to positive morphological imperatives. If the imperative has a generic addressee (cf. Salvi and Borgato 2001:153), it can also occur in the infinitive (27b). Imperatives usually do not have overt subjects (unless focused), but the subject can be expressed by a vocative (27a):

27 a Addormentati, Bruno!
fall.asleep.IMP.2SG=you.SG Bruno
'Fall asleep, Bruno!'

b Allacciare le cinture!
fasten.INF the seat.belts
'Fasten your seat belts!'

Negated imperatives allow both proclitic and enclitic pronouns, with diatopic differences (28a).[17] In the second-person singular negated imperatives occur in the infinitive, but unlike other uses of the infinitive, in this case the clitic is proclitic (28b), in contrast to infinitives in exclamatives and in generic positive/negative imperatives where the clitic is always enclitic:

28 a Non lo invitate! / Non invitatelo!
NEG him= invite.2PL NEG invite.2PL=him

b Non lo invitare!
NEG him= invite.INF

'Don't invite him!'

Polite imperatives occur in the subjunctive, there being no dedicated morphological third-person imperative:

29 a Se ne vada subito!
REFL= from.here= go.SBJV.SG immediately

'Go away immediately!' (polite form)

b Che tutti siano felici!
that all be.SBJV.3PL happy.PL

'That everybody shall be happy!'

Optative clauses (cf. Borgato and Renzi 2001) have the form of irrealis conditional clauses used as main clauses:

30 a Se solo avessi più tempo per Bruno!
if only have.PST.SBJV.1SG more time for Bruno

'If I only had more time for Bruno!'

b Andasse a letto sempre così presto!
go.PST.SBJV.3SG to bed always so early

'If only he would always go to bed that early!'

21.3 Complex clauses

Complex clauses contain more than one predicate.[18] They can consist of two main clauses or a main and subordinate clause. Subordinate clauses can be finite or non-finite.[19] Subordinate finite clauses can appear in different moods, namely indicative or subjunctive. Subordinate clauses can be subdivided into argument clauses, adverbial clauses, and relative clauses. Mood distinction cuts across these categories. Temporal anchoring plays a role in sequence of tense rules. In non-finite clauses, the main predicate is either expressed by a non-finite verbal form (infinitive, participle, gerund), or, in the case of small clauses, also a non-verbal predicate. With complex clauses, the boundary between monoclausal and biclausal

structures is not always clear-cut (cf. discussion of restructuring verbs in §21.3.34), also because the boundary between lexical and functional verb meaning is scalar (cf. modal verbs).

21.3.1 Complex clauses without subordination

Complex clauses consisting of more than one main clause in a relation of parataxis are either coordinated by an additive conjunction such as *e* 'and', *sia . . . sia/che* 'both . . . and', *né . . . né* 'neither . . . nor' (3a)—or even asyndetically by just a comma (intonation)—a disjunctive coordination such as *o* 'or', *o . . . o* 'either . . . or' (3b), or by an adversative conjunction such as *ma* 'but' (3c).

31 a Bruno era già a letto e il padre stava
Bruno be.PST.IPFV.3SG already to bed and the father stay.PST.IPFV.3SG
leggendo il giornale.
read.GER the newspaper
'Bruno was already in bed and his father was reading the newspaper.'

b Bruno era già a letto o era uscito con
Bruno be.PST.IPFV.3SG already to bed or be.PST.IPFV.3SG exit.PTCP with
il nonno.
the grandfather
'Bruno was already in bed or had gone out with his grandfather.'

c Il nonno era già stanco, ma Bruno era
the grandfather be.PST.IPFV.3SG already tired but Bruno be.PST.IPFV.3SG
ancora sveglio.
still awake
'His grandfather was already tired, but Bruno was still awake.'

However, coordination can be also interpreted as a semantic dependency on account of the linearity of linguistic utterances. Thus, the second conjunct in (31a) could also be interpreted as a consequence or temporally posterior to the first conjunct. Paratactic structures often show ellipsis of identical parts due to linguistic economy. The study of elliptical structures has proved to be very insightful for the syntactic status of linguistic elements; witness the difference between Italian and English auxiliaries in (32).

32 a John has seen/can see Mary, and Peter has/can, too.

b Bruno ha visto / può vedere Teresa, e Simone (**ha / **può), pure.
Bruno have.3SG see.PTCP can.3SG see.INF Teresa and Simone have.3SG can.3SG too

'Bruno has seen / can see Teresa and Simone, too.'

As shown by Zagona (1988) for Spanish, elliptic VPs are possible in English, but impossible in Romance. Consequently, in Italian it is the whole finite verb structure, including the auxiliary (or modal), that has to be elided on account of the fact that finite verbs in Italian occur in a higher position than in English (cf. also the seminal work by Pollock 1989).

Another interesting case of parataxis involves parenthetical structures such as (33) (cf. Borgato and Salvi 2001), as well as the integration of direct speech in discourse (34). These cases go beyond parataxis, since they seem to be located on two different discourse levels:

33 Bruno non voleva – noi avevamo provato veramente di tutto — andare a letto.
Bruno NEG want.PST.IPFV.3SG we have.PST.IPFV.1PL try.PTCP really of everything go.INF to bed

'Bruno didn't want—we'd really tried everything—to go to bed.'

34 Il padre gli disse: 'Tu adesso te ne vai a letto.'
the father DAT.3(MSG)= say.PST.PFV.3SG you now you.SG= from.here= go.2SG to bed

'The father said to him: "You go to bed now!"'

With parenthesis, the content of the clause in which the parenthetical clause is embedded appears to be at issue and commented on by the parenthetical clause. With direct speech, the verbs of communication introduce a further speech-act context with its proper coordinates, which make direct speech completely independent from the speech context of the speaker.[20] In both cases, there are intermediate stages of integration (e.g., parenthetical clauses developing into discourse markers; free indirect discourse and phenomena of evidential marking).

21.3.2 Finite subordinate argument clauses

Argument clauses can be either subject clauses or complement clauses. All the illocutionary types mentioned above can also appear as subordinate finite complement clauses. Argument clauses are usually introduced by the complementizer *che* 'that' (35), but indirect polar interrogatives are headed by *se* 'if' and partial interrogatives by a wh-item.

35 a Era chiaro che Bruno doveva andare a letto.
be.PST.IPFV.3SG clear that Bruno must.PST.IPFV.3SG go.INF to bed
'It was clear that Bruno had to go to bed.'

b Che Bruno doveva / dovesse andare a letto
that Bruno must.PST.IPFV.3SG / must.PST.SBJV.3SG go.INF to bed
era chiaro.[21]
be.PST.IPFV.3SG CLEAR
'That Bruno had to go to bed was clear.'

[21]

As for subject clauses, as demonstrated in (35) these can appear either after or before the verb/predicate. Since copula constructions are unaccusative and a stage topic is possible in (35a), the subordinate introduced by *che* could count as a post-verbal subject.

Complement clauses are usually post-verbal (at least in unmarked order). Their internal unmarked order usually corresponds to the unmarked order of main clauses. Italian does not have a dual complementizer system (cf. Ledgeway 2016b) and indiscriminately introduces complements to declarative and intensional predicates with *che* 'that', or, in the case of subject identity, uses an infinitive construction. However, intensional predicates (36b) and clauses including operator scope (36c) such as negation and interrogation obligatorily select the subjunctive:

36 a La madre ha detto che Bruno deve andare a letto subito.
the mother have.3SG say.PTCP that Bruno must.3SG go.INF to bed immediately
'The mother said that Bruno has to go to bed immediately.'

b La madre vuole che Bruno vada a letto subito.
the mother want.3SG that Bruno go.SBJV.SG to bed immediately
'The mother wants Bruno to go to bed immediately.'

c Non credo che sia il momento giusto.
NEG believe.1SG that be.SBJV.SG the moment right
'I don't believe that it is the right moment.'

d Sembra che arriverà / arrivi anche Bruno.
seems that arrive.FUT.3SG arrive.SBJV.SG also Bruno
'It seems that Bruno will also come.'

In some cases, the subjunctive is interchangeable with the future tense (cf. 36d, with the evidential verb *sembrare* 'to seem', but not in 36b, with the modal verb *volere* 'to want', whose finite complement clause must contain a subjunctive verb form). For the multiple complex clauses possible with *sembrare* 'seem', cf. also (20), (54), (55), (56). However, the subjunctive is not always lexically selected (as happens with the intensional/volitive subjunctive in 36b), but it can also be semantically selected and have interpretational effects (cf. the epistemic-dubitative subjunctive in 37; cf. also 78 for relatives):

37 Molti credono che i bambini sono / siano dei piccoli adulti.
many believe.3SG that the children be.IND.3SG be.SBJV.3PL of.the little adults
'Many believe that children are little adults.'

In (37), the presence of the subjunctive can be said to be the default mood, because it marks the complement clause of the epistemic verb as dependent on the external argument (the sentient referent) of this verb. This has the effect that a dubitative meaning anchored to the speaker of the utterance arises. With the indicative there seems to be no such epistemic-dubitative effect.

Furthermore, there is the thematic-factive subjunctive after *verba sentiendi*, which entails presuppositional effects (Wandruszka 2001; Salvi and Vanelli 1992:146–151; Squartini 2010c; Salvi and Vanelli 2004:267) and is subject to considerable variation since there are often also multiple factors at play:[22]

38	Il	padre	è	molto	contento	(del fatto)	che	Bruno	abbia	delle
	the	father	be.3SG	very	satisfied	of.the fact	that	Bruno	have.SBJV.SG	of.the
	buone	maniere.								
	good	manners								

'The father is very satisfied with the fact that Bruno has good manners.'

In (38), the subjunctive clearly indicates that the speaker's stance towards the content of the complement clause is as neutral as it can be in such an assertion, since its content is presupposed.

The complementizer can be deleted with some verbs in particular contexts, but only if the verb in subordinate clause is in an irrealis form (subjunctive, future, or conditional; Wandruszka 2001:426, 453, 428–431; Ledgeway 2016b:1021); the subject is usually in post-verbal position, with the exception of the second person singular pronoun *tu* 'you', which is generally accepted in pre-verbal position:

39	Credo	sia	/	**è	felice,	mio	padre.
	believe.1SG	be.SBJV.3SG		be.IND.3SG	happy	my	father

'I believe that my father is happy.'

In the context of complement clauses, Italian qualifies as one of the languages that allows extraction from the complement clause in constituent questions leaving the complementizer *che* undeleted (i.e., it does not respect the *Doubly Filled Comp Filter* introduced by Chomsky and Lasnik 1977 on the basis of English data), as do certain southern varieties of German (cf. Bayer 1984). It was on the strength of data from Italian such as (40) that the original idea that in the case of wh-movement out of a subordinate complement clause the complementizer could not be overt (cf. Eng. *Who do you think (**that) is coming?*) had to be modified:

40	Chi$_i$	credi	che	~~chi~~$_i$	verrà	~~chi~~$_i$?
	who	believe.2SG	that	who	come.FUT.3SG	who

'Who do you believe will come?' (Rizzi 1982:117)

Indirect interrogative clauses can also trigger the subjunctive; witness (41b–c) and (43). With wh-elements in partial questions, a pre-verbal subject is only possible with the subjunctive (41c), albeit with a marked intonation (cf. Acquaviva et al. 2001:675–720):

41 a Non sapeva più quanto costava l' ingresso.
NEG know.PST.IPFV.3SG more how.much cost.PST.IPFV.3SG the entrance

b Non sapeva più quanto costasse l' ingresso.
NEG know.PST.IPFV.3SG more how.much cost.PST.SBJV.3SG the entrance

c Non sapeva più quanto l' ingresso costasse.
NEG know.PST.IPFV.3SG more how.much the entrance cost.PST.SBJV.3SG

'S/he didn't know any more how much the entrance cost.' (Acquaviva et al. 2001:713)

Pre-verbal subjects are not possible when the indirect question is introduced by *che* (42); however, pre-verbal subjects are possible with embedded polar questions (43):

42 a Non so che fa Piero.
NEG know.1SG what do.IND.3SG Piero

b **Non so che Piero fa / faccia.
NEG know.1SG what Piero do.IND.3SG do.SBJV.3SG

'I don't know what Piero does.' (Acquaviva et al. 2001:714)

43 Non sapeva più se l' ingresso costava / costasse.
NEG know.PST.IPFV.3SG anymore if the entrance cost.PST.IPFV.3SG
cost.PST.SBJV.3SG

'He didn't know anymore whether you had to pay to enter.' (Acquaviva et al 2001:714)

Indirect interrogative clauses are a subcase of indirect discourse introduced by *verba dicendi* (cf. also Mortara Garavelli 2001). Declarative clauses, introduced by *che*, and the interrogatives exemplified in (41)–(43), also need to follow the sequence of tense rules (Vanelli 2001a; Salvi and Vanelli 1992:155–159):

44 a Gli disse che non sarebbe più tornato.
DAT.3= tell.PST.PFV.3SG that NEG be.COND.3SG more return.PTCP

'He told him that he would not come back again.' (Vanelli 2001a:624)

b Gino mi ha detto che eri / sei malato.
Gino me have3SG tell.PTCP that be.PST.IPFV.2SG be.2SG ill

'Gino told me that you were/are ill.' (Vanelli 2001a:616)

In (44a), we see the use of a form of the conditional for a future-in-the-past; however, in Italian, in a context where the main clause is in the past and the event predicated in the subordinate clause is posterior to the speech event encoded in the main clause, the sequence of tense rule translates this not into the simple conditional, but into the analytic form of the conditional. This newly developed

analytic form, according to Maiden (1996a), originally conveyed an epistemic value of certainty with respect to the reported event. In (44b), with the compound perfect in the main clause, both the imperfect past as well as the present tense are possible but give rise to different readings: with the past tense, the event encoded by the verb of saying and the state in the embedded clause are simultaneous, but with the present tense in the embedded clause, the state continues to hold at the time of the speech event of the utterance itself.

21.3.3 Infinitival clauses

Infinitives in complex clauses can be argumental, adverbial, or relatives (cf. §21.3.5) on a par with finite clauses.[23] In argument clauses, infinitival (partial/polar) interrogatives (45) and imperative clauses (46) are also possible.

45 a La direttrice si chiedeva come risolvere il problema.
The director REFL=ask.PST.IPFV.3SG how resolve.INF the problem
'The director wondered how to resolve the problem.'

b Non sapeva se ridere o piangere.
NEG know.PST.IPFV.3SG whether laugh.INF or cry.INF
'She didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.'

46 Ti dico di prenderti cura di Bruno.
you.SG= say.1SG COMP take.INF=you.SG care of Bruno
'I'm telling you to take care of Bruno.'

Embedded interrogatives with the infinitive cannot be anterior to the main verb event and therefore receive a modal interpretation. The subject of infinitive clauses is unexpressed in most cases in Italian (but cf. §21.3.3.5), giving rise to so-called control structures and other structurally complex phenomena. Below we discuss control infinitives (§21.3.3.1), infinitival clauses with verbs of perception and causation involving Exceptional Case marking (ECM; §21.3.3.2), raising structures (§21.3.3.3), and restructuring constructions (§21.3.3.4). Another point of interest is the distribution of explicit subjects in infinitival clauses (§21.3.3.5). Control

infinitives and infinitives with explicit subjects can also be adverbial. Many of the phenomena presented in this section were studied, on the basis of Italian data, by Rizzi (1982), which remains an important reference work for the topics presented in the section below.

21.3.3.1 Control

Verbs licensing control infinitivals are lexically specified in terms of whether the understood subject of the infinitival clause is interpreted as coreferentially controlled by the matrix subject (47a–b), object (47c), or indirect object (47d). As non-finite forms, infinitives usually do not allow overt nominative subjects (with a few exceptions to be discussed in §21.3.3.5), but they are still interpreted as licensing a subject argument.

47 a Bruno ha promesso di non scappare più.
Bruno have.3SG promise.PTCP COMP NEG escape.INF more
'Bruno promised not to escape any more.'

b La madre si pente di aver sgridato Bruno.
the mother REFL= repent.3SG COMP have.INF scold.PTCP Bruno
'The mother regrets having told Bruno off.'

c Il padre aiuta Bruno a salire sul triciclo.
the father help.3SG Bruno to climb.INF on.the tricycle
'The father helps Bruno get on the tricycle.'

d La madre gli ha raccomandato di non scappare più.
the mother DAT.3(MSG)=have.3SG recommend.PTCP COMP NEG escape.INF more
'The mother warned him not to escape anymore.'

Infinitival subject clauses can also be controlled, provided that there is an appropriate controller available in the main clause (cf. *ci* 'us' in (48)); otherwise, control is arbitrary with the result that the thematic subject of the infinitive receives an indefinite or generic interpretation:

48 Giocare con Bruno (ci) rende sempre felici.
play.INF with Bruno us= make.3SG always happy.MPL
'Playing with Bruno always makes people (/us) happy.'

Control infinitivals are either bare, as with the subject clause in (48), or are introduced by *di* 'of' or *a* 'to'. Whereas *di* is either a complementizer (cf. 47a, d), where it cannot be substituted by the pronominal clitic *ne*, but only by the accusative object clitic (*Bruno*

*lo/**ne ha promesso* 'Bruno promised it'), or a preposition (cf. 47b), where it can be substituted by the clitic *ne* (*La madre se ne pente* 'The mother repents for it'), *a* in control clauses (cf. 47c) is always a preposition since it cannot be substituted by an accusative object clitic (Salvi and Vanelli 2004:229–231; for *a* as an infinitival introducer with raising verbs cf. §21.3.3.3).

Infinitival adverbial clauses (cf. Skytte et al. 2001:553–557) are introduced by *per* 'in order to' (final), *fino a* 'until', *prima di* 'before', *dopo (di)* 'after' (temporal), *senza* 'without' (privative), *da* lit. 'from' (consecutive), and *a* 'to' (final, causal, conditional, instrumental). They are used when subject identity between main and subordinate clauses obtains, thereby yielding subject control structures where the controller is the subject of the main clause (49), or the reactivated agent in a passive construction (50). Otherwise, e.g., without *da noi* 'by us' in (50), the controller is understood to be an arbitrary agent:

49 Siamo venuti per aiutarti / senza avvisarti / prima
be.1PL come.PTCP for help.INF=you.SG without notify.INF=you.SG before
di chiamarti.
of call.INF=you.SG
'We came here in order to help you / without notifying you / before calling you.'

50 I soldi sono stati raccolti (da noi) per aiutarti /
the money.MPL be.3PL be.PTCP collected.PTCP by us for help.INF=you.SG
senza avvisarti / prima di chiamarti.
without notify.INF=you.SG before of call.INF=you.SG
'The money was collected (by us) in order to help you/ without notifying you / before calling you.'

21.3.3.2 Constructions with verbs of perception and causation

Constructions with verbs of perception and causation show distinct behaviours (cf. Skytte et al. 2001:511–513; Guasti 1993; 1996; 2006; Ciutescu 2013a, 2013b). In both the finite verb exceptionally case marks the subject of the embedded infinitive, but, in the causative construction, this subject must follow the infinitive; witness the contrast between (51a) and (52a):

51 a Ho visto Bruno giocare. / Ho visto giocare Bruno.
have.1SG see.PTCP Bruno play.INF have.1SG see.PTCP play.INF Bruno
'I have seen Bruno playing.'

b Ho visto Bruno spacchettare il regalo.
have.1SG see.PTCP Bruno unwrap.INF the gift
'I have seen Bruno unwrap the gift.'

52 a Ho fatto dormire Bruno. /**Ho fatto Bruno dormire.
have.1SG make.PTCP sleep.INF Bruno have.1SG make.PTCP Bruno sleep.INF
'I made Bruno sleep.'

b Ho fatto spacchettare il regalo /**Bruno / a Bruno.
have.1SG make.PTCP unwrap.INF the gift Bruno to Bruno
'I have made Bruno unwrap the gift.'

c Ho fatto spacchettare il regalo da Bruno.
have.1SG make.PTCP unwrap.INF the gift by Bruno
'I had the gift unwrapped by Bruno.'

d Gliel' ho fatto spacchettare.
DAT.3=it= have.1SG make.PTCP unwrap.INF
'I made him unwrap it.'

Furthermore, causative constructions yield a verbal complex that only allows one direct object. As a consequence, in the case of an embedded transitive structure the subject of the infinitive must appear in the dative (cf. 52b) or as an oblique as in passive structures (cf. 52c), since the causative verb and infinitive form a complex verb and, as such, can only assign accusative case once, with the result that the infinitival subject necessarily follows the complex predicate.[24] Analytic causative constructions thus come in three types: with intransitive infinitives (52a), with transitive infinitives (52b and c) that display variation in accordance with whether the infinitival subject is realized as the indirect object (52b), in which case the infinitive receives an active interpretation, or as a *by*-phrase adjunct (52c), in which case the infinitive receives a 'passive' reading (Salvi and Vanelli 2004:235). When realized as the indirect object, the infinitival subject in examples such as (52b) is usually interpreted as 'affected'. Clitics obligatorily appear before the verbal complex (cf. 52d), but in ditransitive constructions, for example, only one dative clitic can appear, either referring to the causee with the dative argument of the infinitive being overt, or referring to the

dative argument of the infinitive with the causee realized by a *by*-phrase. Reflexive clitics belonging to the infinitive are not realized (53a). In contrast, in perception constructions clitics dependent on the infinitive can attach to the infinitive and reflexive clitics are allowed (53b) (Salvi and Vanelli 2004:241).

53 a Ho fatto alzare / **alzarsi Bruno.
have.1SG make.PTCP get.up.INF wonder.INF=REFL Bruno
'I made Bruno get up.'

b Ho visto Bruno alzarsi.
have.1SG see.PTCP Bruno get.up.INF=REFL
'I saw Bruno getting up.'

21.3.3.3 Raising

Raising infinitivals are found after certain aspectual and evidential verbs:[25]

54 a Bruno sembra amare il colore giallo.
Bruno seem.3SG love.INF the colour yellow
'Bruno seems to love the colour yellow.'

b Bruno comincia a fare il birichino.
Bruno start.3SG to make.INF the prankster
'Bruno starts to behave like a little rogue.'

The main verb takes the infinitive as its only argument and the subject of the infinitive raises to the subject position of the finite raising verb since it cannot be case-marked by the infinitival verb. Note that the verb *sembrare* is polyfunctional in that it can function as a raising verb (54a), a control verb (55), as well as an impersonal verb taking a finite subject clause in the subjunctive, conditional or future (56), and as an ECM verb governing a small clause from which the subject is raised (cf. 20 above).

55 Mi sembra di averlo visto.
me= seem.3SG COMP have=him see.PTCP
'It seems to me (= I believe) that I have seen him.'

56 Sembra che Bruno ami il colore giallo.
seem.3SG that Bruno loves.SBJV.3SG the colour yellow
'It seems that Bruno loves the colour yellow.'

21.3.3.4 Restructuring

In Italian, modal verbs have a stronger, less auxiliary-like status than English modals. They appear in seemingly biclausal verb + infinitival complement structures, but the two clauses can also merge into a more reduced structure. This ability to appear in a still complex but monoclausal structure has been termed 'restructuring' (Rizzi 1982; Burzio 1986; cf. also Skytte et al. 2001:513–522) and many of the properties of these verbs, which not only include modal verbs (*potere* 'can', *dovere* 'must', *volere* 'want', cf. 57), but also some aspectual verbs (*finire* 'finish', *cominciare* 'begin', cf. 58), conative verbs (e.g., *riuscire* 'succeed', *provare* 'try'), and verbs of movement (e.g., *andare* 'go', *venire* 'come'), were first studied for Italian. The main reflexes of restructuring in Italian are clitic climbing, auxiliary selection in compound tenses according to the class of the infinitival verb, and long NP-movement (Rizzi 1982; Burzio 1986):

57 a Anna non avrebbe voluto esserci andata.
Anna NEG have.COND.3SG want.PTCP be=LOC go.PTCP.FSG
'Anna wouldn't have wanted to have gone there.'

b Anna ci sarebbe voluta andare.
Anna LOC= be.COND.3SG want.PTCP.FSG go.INF
'Anna would have wanted to go there.'

58 a Anna comincia a non crederci più.
Anna start.3SG to NEG believe.INF=LOC anymore
'Anna starts not to believe this any more.'

b Anna ci ha cominciato a credere.
Anna LOC= have.3SG begin.PTCP to believe.INF
'Anna has started to believe this.'

In (57a) and (58a) we find a biclausal structure, which could also be treated as subject-control since the overt subject of *volere* 'to want' or *cominciare* 'to begin' is coreferential with the covert subject of the embedded infinitive. In (57a), the main clause is negated; however, in a biclausal structure, it would also be possible to negate the embedded clause, as you can see in the non-restructured version of (58a); in both sentences, it would also be possible to have a compound infinitive in the embedded clause. Auxiliary selection in

the main clause is conditioned by the finite verb and the locative clitic *ci* appears in enclisis on the embedded infinitive. In the restructured version (57b), by contrast, auxiliary selection is conditioned by the infinitival verb, yielding *essere* 'be' since *andare* is unaccusative, together with participial agreement with the surface subject; the clitic occurs in proclisis to the finite modal, as if modal and infinitive form a verbal complex. The same holds for (58b), where auxiliary selection of the verbal complex is conditioned by the verb *credere* 'to believe'. Indeed, in the restructured cases, negation can only appear before the finite verb form and the infinitive cannot be compound. As for long NP-movement, another restructuring reflex, this is found in so-called passive-medial constructions:

59 a Finalmente si comincerà a costruire le nuove case
finally REFL/IMPERS= begin.FUT.3SG to build.INF the new houses
popolari / a costruirle.
popular to build.INF=them
'Finally, one will begin to build the new council houses.' (Rizzi 1982:1)

b Finalmente le nuove case popolari si cominceranno a costruire.
finally the new houses popular REFL/IMPERS= begin.FUT.3PL to build.INF
'Finally, the new council houses will be built.'

In (59a),[26] the finite verb has an impersonal subject (the clitic *si*) and the complement of the embedded infinitive is a direct object (cf. the object clitic *le* 'them'). However, the sentence in (59b) is clearly restructured, a clause union process that allows the direct object of the infinitive to raise to the subject position of the finite verb, agreeing with it in a passive-medial construction. This case of NP-raising is only possible with restructuring verbs, but not with others (e.g., *ottenere* 'to obtain, cf. Rizzi 1982:1).

21.3.3.5 Overt subjects in infinitival clauses

In high register written language, infinitives can occur with explicit nominative subjects under certain conditions (cf. Rizzi 1982:ch. 3; Skytte et al. 2001:537–529; Salvi and Vanelli 1992:139f.):

60 Suppongo non essere la situazione suscettibile di ulteriori miglioramenti.
suppose.1SG NEG be.INF the situation susceptible of further improvements
'I don't think that the situation is likely to see further improvements.' (Rizzi 1982:79)

These overt subjects are only found after certain epistemic verbs or verbs of communication (*supporre* 'suppose', *affermare* 'maintain',

ritenere 'consider') and only with certain types of infinitive, namely those of a restricted set of verbs (*essere* 'be', *avere* 'have', *dovere* 'must', *potere* 'can', *trattarsi* 'be about', *esistere* 'exist', *spettare* 'be due (to), fall (to)'; cf. Skytte et al. 2001:528). Moreover, there is no overt complementizer *di* introducing the infinitival clause and the nominative subject must follow the infinitive (cf. Rizzi 1982; also Mensching 2000:86–89). Rizzi (1982) analysed the construction as a case of Aux-to-Comp, namely, involving movement of the infinitival verb to the vacant complementizer position which, in turn, enables nominative assignment (a mechanism found also in other environments),[27] but restricted to the subordinating verbs mentioned above. Mensching (2000:135–139) proposes, based on Rizzi (1990) and Roberts (1993), that not only the relevant communicative and epistemic verbs can select a certain empty complementizer that attracts auxiliaries, but that this complementizer position contains features which make nominative assignment to an infinitival subject possible.

Other infinitives with overt subjects include examples like the following where an infinitive appears to be converted to a noun (cf. presence of the article in 61) but still keeps its verbal properties (nominative assignment to a post-verbal subject, presence of a complement clause). In (61) the infinitive functions as a subject clause and in (62) as an adverbial clause.

61 L' aver lui affermato che ti vuole aiutare non implica
the have.INF he.NOM confirm.PTCP that you.SG= want.3SG help.INF NEG imply.3SG
che sei fuori dei guai.
that be.2SG out of.the troubles
'That he confirmed that he wants to help you doesn't imply that you are out of trouble.'
(Rizzi 1982; Mensching 2000:87)

62 Il giudice è stato sospeso per aver suo figlio commesso
the judge be.3SG be.PTCP suspend.PTCP for have.INF his son commit.PTCP
una grave imprudenza.
a serious imprudence
'The judge was suspended on account of his son having committed a serious act of imprudence.' (Rizzi 1982; Mensching 2000:87)

To sum up, these cases belong to a stylistically formal register of Italian and seem to be the only infinitive structures in Italian where control is disabled.

21.3.4 Adverbial clauses

Some types of adverbial clause were already discussed in the chapter on infinitives; in this section finite adverbial clauses as well as adverbial clauses involving participles and gerunds are discussed.

21.3.4.1 Finite adverbial clauses

Finite adverbial clauses are distinguished with respect to their semantic function, which can be causal or final (63), temporal (64), conditional (65), concessive (66), consecutive (67), or comparative (68). The order of main and subordinate clause is more flexible than with complement clauses (as is also the position of adverbs and adverbials). Particularly in the case of embedded conditionals (65) and concessives (66), the order of the two clauses can be changed without any interpretative effects (cf. Acquaviva et al. 2001, from which examples (63–68) are taken):

63 L' ho invitato perché anche lui è / sia al corrente.
him= have.1SG invite.PTCP because also he be.IND.3SG be.SBJV.3SG informed
'I invited him because he is informed as well /in order him to be informed as well.'

64 Da quando è caduta non vuole più andare in bicicletta.
since when be.3SG fall.PTCP NEG want.3SG more go.INF by bike
'Ever since she fell off she doesn't want to go cycle anymore.'

65 Se piovesse uscirei con l' ombrello.
if rain.PST.SBJV.3SG exit.COND.1SG with the umbrella.
'If it were to rain, I would go out with an umbrella.'

66 Benché il treno fosse partito in orario, siamo arrivati
although the train be.PST.SBJV.3SG leave.PTCP in time be.1PL arrive.PTCP
in ritardo.
in delay
'Although the train had left on time, we arrived late.'

67 Luigino non è mai andato a scuola cosicché è stato bocciato.
Luigino NEG be.3SG ever go.PTCP to school so.that be.3SG be.PTCP fail.PTCP
'Luigino never went to school with the consequence that he failed.'

68 Sono più intraprendenti di quanto il loro direttore non creda.[28]
be.3PL more enterprising than the their director NEG believe.SBJV.SG
'They are more enterprising than their director thinks.'

[28]

In conditional clauses, standard Italian uses the indicative in real conditionals, the past subjunctive in the protasis and the present conditional in the apodosis in present counterfactuals, and the pluperfect subjunctive in the protasis and the past conditional in past counterfactuals. However, in informal Italian imperfect and pluperfect indicative forms can also appear in both clauses (for past counterfactuals; cf. Acquaviva et al. 2001; Mazzoleni 2001a:753–760;[29] Squartini 2010c:240–243).

21.3.4.2 Participial constructions

Adverbial clauses in Italian can also appear in the so-called absolute participle construction (Bertuccelli Papi et al. 2001:593–604), as in (69), where the subject of the transitive participle *vista* 'seen' usually (but not necessarily) is coreferential with the subject of the finite clause (i.e., control is possible). With unaccusative verbs, the subject of the participial clause can also be overtly realized in the nominative (70–71) or otherwise remain null (72). Absolute participial constructions are only possible with transitive and unaccusative verbs and the participle always agrees with the UNDERGOER argument, be that the transitive object or the unaccusative subject. The constructions with overt nominative have been explained as another case of movement to the vacant complementizer position, since the nominative subject cannot appear before the participle. These adverbial participial clauses are interpreted as anterior and telic and they cannot be negated:

69 Vista la nonna / vistala, Bruno si rallegrò.
see.PTCP.FSG the grandmother see.PTCP.FSG=her Bruno REFL= rejoice.PST.PFV.3SG
'Having seen the grandmother/having seen her, Bruno cheered up.'

70 Arrivata la zia / arrivata io, Bruno si rallegrò.
arrive.PTCP.FSG the aunt arrive.PTCP.FSG I.NOM Bruno REFL= rejoice.PST.PFV.3SG
'Once the aunt/I arrived, Bruno cheered up.'

71 Spariti i biscotti, Bruno li andò a cercare.
vanish.PTCP.MPL the biscuits Bruno them = go.PST.PFV.3SG to search.INF
'Since the biscuits had vanished, Bruno went to look for them.'

72 Una volta spariti, li andò a cercare.
one time vanish.PTCP.MPL them = go.PST.PFV.3SG to search.INF
'Once they had vanished, he went to look for them.'

Besides a purely temporal interpretation, the meaning of these adverbial clauses can also be causal (71), concessive, or conditional.

21.3.4.3 Gerund constructions

Gerunds are invariable and do not inflect. Simple gerund clauses (Lonzi 2001) differ from participial clauses in that they are usually interpreted as simultaneous to the event or reference time of the main clause (but see 75). Gerunds can represent a predicate, as in (73), where the subject of the gerund is controlled by the main clause (either by the subject, or the experiencer in the dative, or arbitrarily controlled, cf. Lonzi 2001:573f.; in the case of a passive gerund as a predicate, the controller can also be the oblique agent, cf. Lonzi 2001:581). Their interpretation can be that of temporal, manner (73b), or instrumental adverbials (73a). Otherwise they build adverbial phrases as in (74) and (75). Only in this case are overt nominative subjects, especially if disjoint from the main clause subject, possible but only if they follow the gerund (75b).[30] Gerund adverbial phrases are interpreted as temporal—simultaneous for the simple gerund (74) and anterior for the compound gerund (75)—causal, hypothetical, or, by adding *pur* 'even', they receive an additional concessive meaning (75a):

73 a Bruno chiuse il cancello sbattendolo.
Bruno close.PST.PFV.3SG the gate slam.GER=it
'Bruno closed the gate by slamming it.'

b Bruno chiuse il cancello sorridendo.
Bruno close.PST.PFV.3SG the gate smile.GER
'Bruno closed the gate with a smile.'

74 Tornando dalla cucina, Bruno si imbatté nel nonno.
come.back.GER from.the kitchen Bruno REFL= run.into.PST.PFV.3SG in.the grandfather
'Coming back from the kitchen, Bruno ran into his grandfather.'

75 a (Pur) avendo trovato i biscotti, Bruno non smise di lamentarsi.
even have.GER find.PTCP the biscuits Bruno NEG stop.PST.PFV.3SG COMP complain.INF=REFL
'Even after having found the biscuits, Bruno didn't stop complaining.'

b Avendo Bruno / tu trovato i biscotti, ci siamo arresi.
have.GER Bruno / you.NOM find.PTCP the biscuits us= be.1PL give.up.PTC
'As Bruno/you had found the biscuits, we gave up.'

In some contexts, gerund clauses can also be interpreted as a temporal sequence, as if they were coordinated with the main clause ('coordinated gerunds', cf. Lonzi 2001:588f.):

76	Bruno	si	svegliò		presto	arrivando	al	letto	dei
	Bruno	REFL=	wake.PST.PFV.3SG		early	arrive.GER	at.the	bed	of.the
	genitori	verso	le	sei.					
	parents	around	the	six					

'Bruno woke up early and arrived at the bed of his parents at around six.'

21.3.5 Relative clauses

Italian relative clauses (cf. Cinque 2001) also come in finite and non-finite variants. Relative clauses which modify a nominal element (which can also be empty, cf. 79–80, 82b) can be subdivided into restrictive and appositive (also called explicative) relative clauses. Non-finite relatives are always restrictive.[31] Relative clauses usually immediately follow the element in the superordinate clause, to which they refer. The relative pronouns, or wh-elements, immediately following the correlate are *chi* 'who', *il/la quale* 'which' (and their respective plural forms) as well as the oblique pronoun *cui* and, for locative elements, *dove* 'where'. In finite relative clauses, in which the relativized element is not a complement to a preposition, the general complementizer *che* 'that' is used (cf. Salvi and Vanelli 2004:289). As in interrogative clauses, wh-elements move to the left periphery and cannot stay in their original base position. However, relative clauses, in contrast to interrogative clauses, allow pre-verbal subjects. Restrictive relative clauses further identify and specify the possible referents, whereas descriptive relative clauses offer additional information in relation to their correlate. Therefore, ambiguity may arise which usually is, however, resolved by comma intonation (as in English):

77 a	Gli	italiani,	che	mangiano	sempre	pasta,	sono	simpatici.
	the	Italians	that	eat.3PL	always	pasta	be.3SG	likeable

'Italians, who always eat pasta, are likeable.'

b	Gli	italiani	che	mangiano	sempre	pasta	sono	simpatici.
	the	Italians	that	eat.3PL	always	pasta	be.3PL	likeable

'The Italians [and only those] who always eat pasta are likeable.'

In (77a) the relative clause is appositive and adds additional information to the statement of the main clause, namely that Italians are likeable; in (77b), the relative clause is restrictive and thus the interpretation is that only those Italians who always eat pasta are likeable. Among restrictive relative clauses one can further distinguish a semantic effect in accordance with the use of the indicative or subjunctive:

78 a Sto cercando un piccolo cane che pesa meno di
stand.1SG search.GER a small dog that weigh.IND.3SG less than
cinque chili.
five kilos
'I'm looking for a dog who weighs less than five kilos.'

b Sto cercando un piccolo cane che pesi meno di cinque chili.
stand.1SG search.GER a small dog that weigh.SBJV.SG less than five kilos
'I'm looking for a dog who should weigh less than five kilos.'

In (78), with the indicative, the dog sought is a specific dog (e.g., one that might have escaped from home), whereas with the subjunctive the dog is not existentially bound, but could be any dog, as long as it weighs less than five kilos (e.g., the speaker might want to take it on a plane).

A particular case of a restrictive relative clause is the free relative clause as exemplified in (79) and (80).[32] These involve relative clauses without an overt correlate in the superordinate clause (cf. 82b for an infinitival free relative; cf. Skytte et al. 2001:524):

79 Chi legge conosce il mondo.
who read.3SG know.3SG the world
'Whoever reads/is reading knows the world.'

80 Incontravo sempre chi sorrideva.
meet.PST.IPFV.1SG always who smile.PST.IPFV.3SG
'I always met people who smiled.'

Relative clauses can also be expressed by non-finite clauses, introduced either by a relative pronoun (81) or by *da* 'from' (82):

81 Cerco un essere umano con cui dividere il tempo.
search.1SG. a being human with whom share.INF the time
'I'm looking for a human being to spend time with.'

The embedded infinitive clause has a modal meaning and its subject is controlled by the subject of the main clause. The reference of the object of the intensional verb is clearly non-specific and

therefore the meaning of (81) and (82) could also be reproduced by a finite subjunctive relative clause. (82b), which is usually classified as a fixed expression, contains a free relative introduced by *da* (lit. 'from, by'):

82 a Cerco un piccolo cane da portare con me.
search.1SG a little dog from take.INF with me
'I'm looking for a little dog to take with me.'

b Abbiamo da ridere con Bruno.
have.1SG from laugh.INF with Bruno
'We have things to laugh about with Bruno.'

21.4 Conclusion

In modern grammatical theory the contribution of Italian to the development of linguistic theory has been enormous. Beginning with the discovery of unaccusativity by Perlmutter (1978; 1989), essential interpretations of Italian data that have had an influence on our understanding of grammatical theory include Rizzi (1982), Burzio (1986), Belletti (1990), Rizzi (1997), Cinque (1999), and many others. The phenomena illuminated by Italian data are not only unaccusativity (cf. Burzio's Generalization), but restructuring and other constructions involving infinitives, Aux-to-Comp, absolute participial and gerund constructions, and the property of allowing null subjects in correlation with other parameters. Textbooks that offer an introduction to general syntactic theory cannot do without examples from Romance, and it is Italian in particular that is most prevalent in such works (cf., for example, Haegeman 1995; Puglielli and Frascarelli 2011).

[1] The examples given by Fava and Salvi (2001) for declaratives without a finite verb include (i) and (ii).

i E noi tutti a ridere.
and we all to laugh.INF

'And we all started laughing.' (Fava and Salvi 2001:50)

ii Oggi niente primo, ragazzi. (Fava and Salvi 2001:50)
today nothing first boys

'Today no first course, boys.'

For more examples and a detailed description of the narrative and descriptive infinitive as in (i), see Fava and Salvi (2001:53–55), and for nominal predication as in (ii), see Fava and Salvi (2001:55f.).

[2] For general overviews on the basic word order of Italian, cf. Salvi (2001); Fava and Salvi (2001); Salvi and Vanelli (1992); Schwarze (1995:370–386); Giurgea and Remberger (2012); Cruschina and Ledgeway (2016); Leonetti (2017); Bentley and Cruschina (2018); for post-verbal subjects, cf. in particular Pinto (2007); a short overview of the Italian simple clause and the basic notions involved is given in Poletto (2021).

[3] Other orders depend on a multitude of factors that are mainly concerned with information structure and the lower left periphery, namely, the left periphery of the verbal group from a cartographic approach. Many of the factors concerning post-verbal argument order are handled with the notion of *scrambling*. Another factor playing a role in this context are the referential properties of the nominal groups involved. So, for instance, in order to explain the definiteness effects that often arise in unaccusative constructions, Belletti (1988) proposes that unaccusative predicates assign partitive case.

With an indefinite argument, the indirect object can also appear immediately after the verb (i); the same is true with heavy nominal groups (ii), even when definite:

i Bruno ha dato alla nonna un disegno.
Bruno have.3SG give.PTCP to.the grandmother a drawing

'Bruno gave the grandmother a drawing.'

ii Bruno ha regalato alla nonna il disegno che rappresenta l'
Bruno have.3SG gift.PTCP to.the grandmother the drawing that represent.3SG the
impressione che gli ha fatto la stazione di lavaggio per le
impression that DAT.3= have.3SG do.PTCP the station of washing for the
macchine.
cars

'Bruno gave his grandmother the drawing that sums up the impression he got from the car wash.'

However, Salvi and Vanelli (2004:301), among others, show that the unmarked order is always direct object + indirect object.

[4] Italian clitic pronouns are proclitic to finite verbs and enclitic to all non-finite verb forms as well as to the imperative (with the exception of the negated imperative, where both proclisis and enclisis, are possible, cf. 28a).

[5] For an even more detailed view of verb movement in Italian and its regional varieties (and other Romance varieties), cf. Schifano (2018) and §20.4.2; for an overview on adverbs and verb-positions in Romance in general, cf. Cruschina and Ledgeway (2016).

[6] For other criteria concerning the distinction between unaccusatives and unergatives in Italian (and other languages), cf. Sorace (2000); Bentley (2006). For a thorough overview of auxiliary selection and participle agreement in Romance, see Loporcaro (1998; 2016a).

[7] Bentley and Cruschina (this volume, §23.3.2) identify this implicit goal for the spatio-temporal anchoring more specifically as speaker-oriented deixis, which can act as a silent 'subject of predication' (cf. also Bentley and Cruschina 2018). Leonetti (2017:895), too, suggests an implicit goal argument (cf. also the contrast for many speakers between [*What is happening?*] *Arriva Bruno*. 'Bruno is coming.' ?*Parte Bruno*. 'Bruno is leaving.'). Salvi and Vanelli (2004:34) identify the subject of what they call eventive-predicative clauses as a deictic or anaphoric element.

[8] Note that aboutness-topics in this sense are not necessarily context-given nor must they be completely new. They are just what the content of the clause is about; with an empty 'state topic', as discussed here, the content of the clause is said about this stage (cf. Giurgea and Remberger 2012:53). This corresponds to the 'logical subject' in Bentley and Cruschina (2018). For 'subject of predication' vs grammatical subject (in the generative tradition termed EPP), cf. also Cardinaletti (2004).

[9] Cf. also Pinto (1997); Tortora (2001); Sheehan (2007; 2009), who assume a null locative, for some of these cases; cf. also Giurgea and Remberger (2012:65n25).

[10] The same is valid for the following sentences, where the aboutness-topic is additionally [Given]. As can be seen from clitic left dislocation in (i) and the contextual question in (ii), these are not unmarked, but information-structurally derived orders (cf. Chapter 23):

i	Il	libro,	l'	ha	portato	qualcuno	alla	biblioteca.
	the	book	it=	have.3SG	bring.PTCP	somebody	to.the	library
	'As for the book, someone took it to the library.'							
ii	(Cosa è successo	a	Maria?)	L'	ha	arrestata	la	polizia.
	('What happened	to	Maria?)	her=	have.3SG	arrested.PTCP.FSG	the	police
	'What's happened to Maria? She was arrested by the police.'							

[11] See the following examples:

i	Non	stima	Gianni	nessuno.	
	NEG	appreciate.3SG	Gianni	nobody	
	'Gianno doesn't appreciate anybody.'				
ii	Ha	comprato	Gianni,	il	giornale.
	have.3SG	buy.PTCP	Gianni	the	newspaper
	'The newspaper was bought by Gianni.'				

(i) is a case of information-structural re-ordering where the subject *Gianni* occurs in a lower Focus projection; and (ii) is a case of marginalization (in contrast to right dislocation where we would have clitic doubling), in which the object occurs in a different intonational phrase (for an overview, cf. also Giurgea and Remberger 2012:82–92). For more details on post-verbal subject-positions that are conditioned by information-structure, see also Cardinaletti (2018).

[12] In Salvi and Vanelli (2004) the canonical copula clause is called 'predicative' and the inverted copula-clause is called 'specificational'. A further instance would be the

identificational copula clause (cf. Salvi and Vanelli (2004):62f.), which does not really have a subject-predicate structure.

[13] Existentials and locatives have been intensively studied for Italo-Romance; cf. La Fauci and Loporcaro (1997); Leonetti (2008); Remberger (2009); Bentley, Ciconte, and Cruschina (2015); Bentley et al. (2015); Cruschina (2014; 2015a).

[14] Another context for small clauses is secondary predication as in (i), where the direct object of the main verb is also the subject of the predicative adjective:

i	Bruno	mangiava	tutto	crudo.
	Bruno	eat.PST.IPFV.3SG	all	raw
	'Bruno ate everything raw.'			

[15] The same content can also be expressed by a subordinate finite subjunctive clause (cf. also Salvi and Vanelli 2004:218):

i	Tutti	considerano	che	Bruno	sia	bravissimo.
	all	consider.3PL	that	Bruno	be.SBJV.3SG	very.good
	'Everybody thinks that Bruno is very good.'					

[16] For non-declarative sentence mood, cf. the overview in Schwarze (1995:387–398); an overview of illocutionary force in Romance with many examples from Italian is given in Giurgea and Remberger (2016). For Italian interrogative clauses, see Fava (2001b), for exclamative clauses, Benincà (2001), for imperative clauses, Salvi and Borgato (2001), and for optative clauses, Borgato and Renzi (2001).

[17] In the south the pronoun is always enclitic, whereas in the north it tends to be proclitic.

[18] A short overview on complex clauses in Italian is given in Remberger (2021).

[19] Cf. Acquaviva et al. (2001) for a comprehensive description of Italian subordinate clauses.

[20] The main reference for reported speech in Italian is Mortara Garavelli (2001).

[21] When the subject clause is fronted before the predicate, the subjunctive is required in more formal registers of Italian.

[22] In the formal standard language, the subjunctive is used in the complement of *credere* 'believe' even if it is not in the operator scope of negation and interrogation (in contrast to Spanish, Catalan, and French). However, colloquial varieties tend to use the indicative (cf. Quer 2016:961f.), a tendency which is widespread in the spoken varieties of southern Italy.

[23] Besides relative clauses, infinitives that are complements or modifiers to the nominal group are not considered in this section.

[24] For the post-verbal embedded subject in (52a) the interpretation as ECM is controversial (cf. Ciutescu 2018:ch. 2).

[25] Another raising construction concerned with adjectives, where objects can raise out of infinitives modifying adjectives, namely the so-called *tough*-constructions, will not be discussed here.

[26] This kind of impersonal construction with transitive verbs is not accepted by all Italian speakers, cf. D'Alessandro (2007:42f.) for regional variation.

[27] Cf. Rizzi (1982:84) for hypothetical clauses without *se* 'if', and see Rizzi (1982:83), and Roberts (1993) for gerunds, as well as (73b) below. For nominal-infinitival constructions see (61) below.

[28] In comparative clauses, too, an expletive negation can appear.

[29] According to Mazzoleni (2001a:754), in substandard varieties of Italian the imperfect can also be used for present counterfactuals.

[30] Examples like (75b) with a compound gerund have been interpreted as another case of movement to the vacant complementizer position (cf. Rizzi 1982:83; Roberts 1993).

[31] Reduced relative clauses in the form of participles that are attributive to nouns (cf. Cecchetto and Donati 2020) will not be discussed in this chapter.

[32] For the special construction of cleft sentences, which are always restricted relative clauses, and their relevance for information structure, see §23.3.4.

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Chapter 22

Pragmatics

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22.1 Introduction

In close relation to text-linguistics, pragmatics has awakened growing interest in Italian linguistics since at least the 1960s,[1] from both a synchronic and, more recently, a diachronic perspective (on the latter, see Palermo and Visconti 2022). The focus of pragmatic exploration centres on the way language is used by speakers, considering the interaction between speaker and addressee(s) along their social, psychological, and cultural axes, both as individuals and with respect to each other. Discourse participants' intentions, beliefs, and perception of each other's mental states and actions come to the fore: context in its discoursive, interactional, and cognitive dimensions is fundamental to the successful interpretation of language, whether explicit or implicit.

Since embracing all the multiple facets of a pragmatic approach to Italian is not possible within the remit of this volume, the purpose of this chapter is to focus on phenomena that fall into central areas of pragmatics research. We shall start with traditional concerns of pragmatics such as mitigation and politeness,[2] implicit communication, and pragmatic markers. The latter are explored both synchronically and diachronically, offering an insight into how the intersubjectively managed strategies underlying the use of language in context are a driving force for language change.

22.2 Mitigation and politeness

Mitigation is representative of the notable interdisciplinarity of pragmatics, a field that explores communication on a psychological, social, and cultural level. Communication is intrinsically rooted in a social context that involves interaction between individuals and, as such, is subject to cultural constraints. The basis of this interaction is the assumption that participants in a conversation cooperate with one another in order to communicate successfully (Grice's 'Cooperation Principle': Grice 1975). As well as pertaining to aspects that make communication conform to given standards in terms of content, e.g., contributing truthful, informative, relevant, and clear information, which Grice (1975) formalizes as his *Four Conversational Maxims*, cooperation is also expressed at the social level through a complex system of linguistic choices aimed at strengthening the social cohesion between participants.

It is generally accepted that saying something corresponds to performing an action (the so-called illocutionary act: Austin 1962): an utterance can perform a request, a warning, an offer, a promise, an apology, etc. When the celebrant of a civil wedding service utters *Vi dichiaro in nome della Legge marito e moglie* 'In the name of the law, I pronounce you husband and wife', the celebrant is not simply stating that the couple are husband and wife: with that utterance, the celebrant is performing the act of marrying the couple by the power conferred upon him/her by law (cf. also Fava 2001a:19–48). The illocutionary force of the celebrant's utterance is explicit, making it clear how it is to be interpreted: this is a 'direct illocutionary act'.

However, there can be a mismatch between the illocutionary act of an utterance and its formal structure: a command, for example, is often uttered without using an imperative, but may take the form of a question such as *Potresti chiudere la porta?* 'Could you close the door?', which is not questioning the interlocutor's ability to close the door, but it is a polite request for them to close it. These are instances of so-called 'indirect illocutionary acts' (Searle 1975), in which the literal meaning of a sentence and what the speaker intends by it are not aligned, usually due to reasons originating in politeness

and a desire to avoid potentially compromising situations (i.e., mitigation).

These reasons are related to the notion of 'face', that is, 'the positive social value a person effectively claims' for themselves by expressing their views about a given situation and their evaluation of the other participants through both their verbal and non-verbal communication (Goffman 1967:5). It goes beyond linguistic behaviour, including issues such as status, honour, dignity, reputation, etc., and it is heavily informed by cultural values and social norms: it is the basis on which participants to a conversation form an opinion of each other. Maintaining a positive self-image is of paramount importance, and participants go to great lengths to ensure their 'face', as well as that of their communicative partner(s), is preserved in its integrity, employing a number of strategies to minimize any potential conflict and favouring a cooperative and harmonious verbal exchange: mitigation and politeness play a crucial role in this endeavour.

There is a complex system of politeness maxims and rules aimed at establishing, maintaining, and strengthening the rapport between speaker and addressee(s). Although what constitutes polite behaviour is subject to considerable cross-cultural differentiation, it has been suggested that the principles underlying politeness have a universal status (most notably Lakoff 1973a and Brown and Levinson 1978). Lakoff (1973a:298) suggests three 'politeness rules' that, alongside Grice's maxims, regulate interactions:

- Don't impose (to be interpreted both in terms of imposing one's own views and of imposing on others' availability/goodwill);
- Give options (i.e., let your interlocutor make their own decisions, leaving options open for them);
- Make them feel good—be friendly (make the interlocutor(s) feel good by creating a sense of camaraderie between you and them).

These principles can be seen at play in the following examples, all performing the illocutionary act of a command, and presented in increasing degrees of politeness: the lessening of an imposition is achieved by the use of a verb in the conditional mood, and the choice of a question; the addition of the phrase *se hai tempo* 'if you have the

time' opens up an option for the interlocutor to decline the request without losing face; the use of a hypothetical sentence increases bonding with the interlocutor and makes them feel valued (adapted from Benincà et al. 1977:524f.).

1 a Telefona alla libreria (per favore)!
'Call the bookshop (please)!'

b Vorrei che tu telefonassi alla libreria.
'I would like you to call the bookshop.'

c Telefoni alla libreria se hai tempo?
'Will you call the bookshop if you have the time?'

d Telefoneresti alla libreria?
'Would you call the bookshop?'

e Ti dispiace telefonare alla libreria se hai tempo?
'Do you mind calling the bookshop if you have the time?'

f Ti dispiacerebbe telefonare alla libreria?
'Would you mind calling the bookshop?'

g Ti sarei grato se telefonassi alla libreria.
'I would be grateful to you if you called the bookshop.'

As well as maintaining and preserving the public image that they wish to portray of themselves, speakers also resort to a variety of strategies that help avoid confrontations, favouring a harmonious interaction, and create a strong bond with their interlocutors.

Subsuming the notion of politeness, the macro-category of mitigation comprises all those devices that aim at decreasing the risk of interactional conflict (cf. Brown and Levinson 1978:60–71), be it about the speaker themself, the propositional content of their utterances or their interlocutor(s). These include a large array of expressions to minimize the imposition of a request (and increase the chances of a positive response) such as *se posso chiederle* 'if I may ask you', morphological means such as the use of diminutives *Ah, c'è anche un'altra piccola* ***cosetta*** *che devo chiederle* 'Ah, there is also another **tiny little thing** that I need to ask you' (Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi 1994:247, in Waltereit, 2001:1408), and the use of euphemisms when discussing issues that are considered 'forbidden topics' (often money, religion, politics, bodily functions, etc.), such as

the *passare a miglior vita* lit. 'to pass to better life' instead of *morire* 'to die', or *urinare* 'urinate' rather than *pisciare* 'to piss', etc.

Mitigation strategies have been extensively studied by Caffi (1999; 2007), who has recast issues of weakening within a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon in both psychological and rhetorical terms. Her work, based on doctor (D)—patient (P) interactions in Italian, has shaped the field, and her theory of mitigation has become a landmark in pragmatics.

Caffi (1999:888; 2007:ch. 3) classifies mitigation strategies according to the level at which they are operative: she distinguishes the propositional content, the illocutionary force, and the deictic origin of the utterance, and extending Lakoff's original metaphor (Lakoff 1973a) labels them as 'bushes', 'hedges', and 'shields' respectively. More than one of these levels can be affected at any one time by the same mitigating device or by the use of more than one device. With the understanding that the boundaries between these three different types are not clear-cut and that each category is represented by a rather heterogeneous mixture of devices, let us now offer some examples.

So-called bushes act at the propositional level, modifying the directness of a message by making it, for example, less precise. The result is a weakened utterance, in which the speaker does not fully commit to what they are saying. Members of this category are also known as 'approximators' (Caffi 1999:890), and can be expressed via the use of diminutives (2a), understatements (2b), or even distal demonstratives, or, as in (2c) by a combination of them (examples from Caffi 1999:890–892).

2 a D: Le do uno **sciroppino** da prendere.

'I'll give you **a little cough medicine** to take.'

b D: La sua **non è una vera e propria ernia**. [. . .] solo un pochino:=

'Yours **is not a real and proper hernia** [. . .] just a little bit of one:='

P: =una **puntina**.

'= **a little spot**'

D: una **puntina**.

'**a little spot**.'

c D: Ma **quello** è un **problemino**. [. . .] non è mica un problema grosso.

'But **that** is a **small problem**. [. . .] it is not a big problem at any rate.'

We also find expressions that contribute to making the content vaguer, such as *una sorta di* 'a type of', *più o meno* 'more or less', *in un certo senso* 'in a sense', *circa* 'roughly', etc., or adverbs that restrict the context in which what follows holds (cf. Domaneschi 2014:259) such as *legalmente* 'legally' (3):

3 Legalmente, non potresti guidare. (Domaneschi 2014:259)

'Legally, you could not drive.'

'Hedges' impact the illocutionary force of an utterance, granting the speaker some distance from it, through the use of devices such as the use of the conditional mood (*propongo* 'I suggest' is much stronger than the conditional *proporrei* 'I would suggest'), the addition of expressions such as *se vuole* 'if you like / if you are in agreement', possibly also providing extra information as to the reasons behind such decisions. All these are shown in (4) from Caffi (1999:892):

4 D: Io le proporrei se vuole una medicina apposta per vedere se riesco a farla dormire.
'I would suggest, if you agree, a medicine specifically to see if I can manage to make you sleep.'

As Caffi notes, in this example the doctor is clearly assuming a position of power by asserting that if there is a positive outcome he is to take the merit (*se riesco a farla dormire* 'if I can manage to make you sleep'), but he mitigates his directive by dressing it up as a proposal, also making it subject to the patient's agreement (*se vuole* 'if you agree'), and hence lessening the possible invasive and imposing nature of their suggestion.

Bushes and hedges often co-occur, amplifying the overall mitigation on the propositional content of the sentence, as in (5), from Caffi (1999:894):

5 D: magari è un periodo così—va' a sapere—qualcosa del genere.

'Maybe it is a phase—who knows—something like that.'

Here we can identify a hedge in *magari* 'forse' and *va' a sapere* 'who knows', both signalling lack of commitment to the truth of the proposition, and *un periodo così* 'a phase' and *qualcosa del genere* 'something like that' are bushes, adding vagueness to the content of the utterance.

Through the use of shields, mitigation is achieved indirectly: rather than using specific lexical items or phrases, the speaker chooses to alter the syntax of their utterance exploiting operations such as dislocation, de-focalization, or even deletion in order to background the source of the utterance (Caffi 1999:895) and shift its

'deictic centre' away from themselves, hence decreasing their responsibility in that assertive act. To this end, we often find impersonal clauses (with no overtly identifiable subject, cf. 6a), passive constructions, hypotheticals (shifting the plane under discussion to the irrealis world), and as well as the omission of 'I', the first-person pronoun identifying the speaker (*c'è scritto qui* 'it is written here/it says here' rather than, for example, '*I see* that . . .'), there is often an avoidance of addressing the addressee directly by using the second-person pronoun 'you' (*c'è un'iperplasia estrogenica* 'there is an estrogenic hyperplasia' rather than '*You have* . . .', cf. 6b):

6 a Si dice che Marco tradisca Chiara. (Domaneschi 2014:260)
'It is rumoured that Marco is being unfaithful to Chiara.'

b D: C'è un'iperplasia estrogenica—c'è scritto qui. (Caffi 1999:896)
'There is an estrogenic hyperplasia—it is written here.'

We now turn to further aspects of indirect communication, implicitness, and presuppositions.

22.3 Implicitness

An important area of pragmatics is concerned with the empirical observation that speakers often mean more than what they say, that is, more than what their utterances literally mean (see, for example, Sbisà 2007; 2021; Caffi 2002; Ferrari 2014:59–79). Inferences activated or evoked by language contribute to the semantic-pragmatic content of texts, and play an important role in their structuring, which is essential for achieving various communicative purposes.

Within pragmatics, scholars distinguish two important types of implicit content: implicatures and presuppositions (cf. Levinson 1983). Implicatures that arise from inferential reasoning guided by the rational principle of cooperation between speakers are commonly known as conversational implicatures (Grice 1975:41–58). Other implicatures, known as conventional implicatures, result from the conventional meaning of certain linguistic expressions used in the text. For instance, in (7) the implicature *Di solito, chi è basso non è*

bravo a basket 'Usually, short people are not good at basketball' is generated by the conventional meaning of the connective *ma* 'but'.

7 Gianni è basso ma è bravo a basket.

'Gianni is short but he's good at basketball.'

Presuppositions, on the other hand, encompass all implicit meaning that is assumed to be true in relation to an utterance and taken for granted (e.g., Caffi 2002:76–82; Ferrari 2014:63). For example, by uttering *Il cane ha fame* 'The dog is hungry', we presuppose that there is a dog, while in *Gianni ha smesso di fumare* 'Gianni stopped smoking', the presupposition is *Gianni fumava* 'Gianni used to smoke'.

In contrast to implicatures, presuppositions are linked to an inventory of linguistic devices. Besides definite descriptions such as *il cane* 'the dog' above, activating an existential presupposition, and change of state verbs such as *smettere* 'to cease', *interrompere* 'to interrupt', also mentioned above, or *tornare* 'to return', *riprendere* 'to resume', *divorziare* 'to divorce', *svegliarsi* 'to wake up', which presuppose a preceding event or state of affairs, an inventory of the main presuppositional triggers includes (cf. Caffi 2002:78; Domaneschi 2014:54–160; Levinson 1983:181–185):

- Factive verbs such as *realizzare* 'to realize', *rimpiangere* 'to regret', *sapere* 'to know', presupposing the truth of the embedded clause:

8 Marta **si è pentita** di avere bevuto la birra fatta in casa da Gianni. > Marta ha bevuto la birra fatta in casa da Gianni.

'Marta **regretted** drinking Gianni's home brew.' > 'Marta drank Gianni's home brew.'

- Iteratives such as (*ri*)*tornare* 'return', *di nuovo*, *un'altra volta* 'again', presupposing an event or state of affairs that took place at least once before:

9 Carter **è tornato** al potere. > Carter era al potere in precedenza.

'Carter **returned** to power.' > 'Carter had been in power before.'

- Temporal clauses such as *prima di* X 'before X', *da quando* Y 'since Y', which have a factive function:

10 **Prima** ancora **che** Strawson nascesse, Frege aveva notato le presupposizioni. > Strawson è nato.

'Even before Strawson was born, Frege had noticed presuppositions.' > 'Strawson was born.'

- Cleft sentences, e.g., *è stato x che/a* Y 'it was x that Y', and pseudo-cleft constructions:

11 È stato Enrico a baciare Rosa. > Qualcuno ha baciato Rosa.

'It was Enrico that kissed Rosa.' > 'Someone kissed Rosa.'

12 Quello che Gianni ha perso è il portafoglio. > Gianni ha perso il portafoglio.

'What Gianni has lost is his wallet.' > 'Gianni has lost his wallet.'

- Comparisons and contrasts (marked by prosodic, morphosyntactic, or lexical means):

13 Carolina è **più brava** *di* Barbara come linguista. > Carolina è una linguista.

'Carolina is a **better** linguist than Barbara.' > 'Carolina is a linguist.'

- Non-restrictive relative clauses, presupposing the truth of the subordinate clause:

14 I Proto-Harappani, **che fiorirono tra il 2800 e il 2650 a.C.**, furono grandi costruttori di templi. > I Proto-Harappani fiorirono tra il 2800 e il 2650 a.C.

'The Proto-Harrappans, **who flourished 2800–2650 BC**, were great temple builders.' > 'The Proto-Harrappans flourished 2800–2650 BC.'

- Counterfactual conditionals, presupposing the negation of the antecedent:

15 **Se Annibale avesse avuto solo dodici elefanti in più**, oggi non esisterebbero le lingue romanze. > Annibale non aveva dodici elefanti in più.

'If Hannibal had only had twelve more elephants, today the Romance languages would not exist.' > 'Hannibal did not have twelve more elephants.'

Finally, a category of triggers abundantly discussed in the literature on presuppositions is that of additive focus adverbs (*anche*, *persino* 'too, even'), presupposing the truth of a syntactically parallel proposition in which the focused element is replaced by an indefinite pronoun (De Cesare 2022):

16 **Anche** Elena adora la focaccia. > Qualcuno diverso da Elena adora la focaccia.

'Elena **too** loves focaccia.' > 'Someone other than Elena loves focaccia.'

To this list of devices, Palermo (2020b), collecting ideas already in D'Addio (1988) and Pecorari (2017), adds anaphoric encapsulators, cohesive devices by which a noun phrase functions as 'a resumptive paraphrase for a preceding portion of a text' (Conte 1999:107) such as *fatto* 'fact', *situazione* 'situation', *innovazione* 'innovation', *risultato* 'result', etc. Within this category, Caffi (2002:98) identifies general nouns such as *fatto* 'fact' or *questione* 'question'; deverbal' encapsulators such as *il progetto* 'the project' or *l'innovazione* 'the innovation'; axiologically neutral abstract nouns such as *tale atteggiamento* 'such an attitude', *questa prospettiva* 'this perspective'; evaluative phrases such as *questo declino* 'this decline' or, with an increased evaluative component, *questo increscioso episodio* 'this regrettable episode', *questa delicata congiuntura* 'this delicate situation', *questo scandalo* 'this scandal', *la tragedia* 'the tragic event'.

As shown by (17), the reconstruction of implicit content plays an important role in their interpretation, as does the activation of the 'hidden' presupposition *un'alleanza Renzi-D'Alema è una sciagura* 'a Renzi-D'Alema alliance is a calamity' in the example:

17 Un'alleanza Renzi-D'Alema? Risparmiateci almeno questa *sciagura*. (in Palermo 2020b:86)

'A Renzi-D'Alema alliance? At least spare us this calamity.'

Among the many facets of implicit communication, presuppositions have seen in linguistic studies on Italian a recent surge of interest in relation to their persuasive function.

As shown by recent research work, including experimental research, content that is not explicitly asserted is less likely to be challenged or even questioned by addressees (cf., for example, Lombardi Vallauri, Cominetti, and Masia 2022 and references therein). Presuppositions, in particular, by presenting the content as shared, as belonging to common ground, have—in the words of Reboul—'all the features that allow a speaker to eschew or bypass epistemic vigilance, that is, the mechanisms that speakers and hearers have developed to avoid deception and manipulation' (Reboul 2017:91).[3]

The persuasive function of presupposition is related to the mechanism of accommodation, whereby the presupposition

underlying the utterance is generally accepted (see, for example, Sbisà 2007:54). This happens, as Caffi (2002:81) has written:

> Because there is a kind of pact between speaker and interlocutor, which Grice partly captured with his principle of cooperation. Everything that is somehow, overtly or surreptitiously, placed in the discourse, in its continuation comes to be presupposed, it becomes a package of information that is built up as it goes along in the discourse and that, if it is not contested, it is increasingly difficult to spot and counter. (our translation)

Thus, in the example in (18) a subjective statement (*esiste un impatto umano sull'ambiente* 'there is a human impact on the environment') is presented as if it were information given and shared by the reader, thus potentially removed from discussion, because it is not asserted.

18 È tuttavia possibile, con un certo margine di errore, elaborare una valutazione quantitativa dell'**impatto umano sull'ambiente globale.** (Sbisà 2007:75),

'It is nevertheless possible, with some margin of error, to develop a quantitative assessment of **human impact on the global environment.**'

While extensive use of presuppositional devices is made in advertising, political, and journalistic communication (cf., for example, Pecorari 2017; Palermo 2020b; Lombardi Vallauri, Cominetti, and Masia 2022), recent research highlights that the phenomenon also plays an important role in legal discourse (cf. Sbisà 2017; Ferrari and Pecorari 2021; Pecorari 2022:103–134; Visconti 2023). On the one hand, the property of presupposition surviving denial and questioning (see, for example, Domaneschi 2014:161–165) makes it a particularly insidious tool in cross-examination, where witnesses, in response to questions containing a false presupposition such as *Ha smesso di picchiare sua moglie?* 'Did you stop beating your wife?', tend to answer the question nevertheless, rather than to declare the invalidity or falsity of the presupposition.[4]

On the other hand, as investigated by Visconti (2023) on the basis of a newly created corpus of court defence proceedings, the *AttiChiari* database (https://attichiari.unige.it/), lawyers extensively employ implicit communication strategies in their persuasive efforts. For instance, through the frequent use of definite descriptions, as in (19) *il suo comportamento persecutorio e violento* 'his persecutory and violent behaviour', or change of state verbs (*desistere* 'desist'), the defence counsel is able to insert into the text,

and into the case, a number of elements given for granted, thus removing them from potential refutation.[5]

19 Solo l'intervento dei Carabinieri di Capracotta, con il tentativo di rintracciare il Mongiu, datosi alla macchia dopo l'ultima aggressione dell'1/10/2013, ha consentito di **far desistere** lo stesso *dal suo comportamento persecutorio e violento*. (*AttiChiari*, in Lombardi and Visconti 2024)

'Only the intervention of the Capracotta law enforcement, with the attempt to locate Mongiu, who had gone into hiding after the last attack on 1/10/2013, prompted him to **desist from his persecutory and violent behaviour**.'

22.4 Pragmatic markers

A core area of pragmatics, pragmatic markers (It. *segnali discorsivi* lit. 'discourse signals'),[6] are typical of the spoken interaction but are also found in informal writing, draw their meaning from the context, and do not form a morphological or lexical class but, rather, are defined by their function. They are 'procedural' in nature in that they provide 'instructions to hearers on how the conceptual meanings expressed in an utterance should be combined and processed' (Hansen 2008:20). They express information that is extra-linguistic, pertaining to the speaker's attitude towards the propositional content of their own utterances, as well as to the relation between speaker and addressee. Their quintessential property is multifunctionality, both at the syntagmatic level, by simultaneously expressing more than one function in the same context (cf. 20a, in which *diciamo* 'let's say' is strengthening the cohesion between participants by including the hearer, and at the same time it signals uncertainty or difficulty in finding a word, especially when it cooccurs with a hesitation or a pause), and paradigmatically by being able to express different functions according to context, syntactic position, intonation, and the cooccurrence with other elements in the same stretch of discourse (cf. the different interpretations of *magari* in (20b), uttered with an exclamative intonation, meaning 'I wish', and in (20c), uttered with a parenthetical intonation meaning 'possibly').

20 a Ci sono eh **diciamo** prospettive diverse.

'There are, **let's say**, different prospects.'

b **Magari** fosse così semplice! (Masini and Pietrandrea 2010:108)

'**I wish** it were that simple!'

c [...] dovrei parlarvi di vini, **magari** toscani. (Masini and Pietrandrea 2010:110)
'I should speak to you about wines, **possibly** Tuscan ones.'

Bazzanella captures their richness in defining them as 'those elements that having in part lost their original meaning, take on additional values that contribute to structuring the discourse, linking elements within and between clauses, as well as outside, and collocating the utterance on an interpersonal dimension, highlighting the interactive structure of conversation' (Bazzanella 2001a:225).

Pragmatic markers are drawn from various grammatical categories: in Italian we find lexical elements that were originally conjunctions (e.g., *ma* 'but', *cioè* 'that is'), adverbs (e.g., *praticamente* 'practically, basically', *appunto* 'precisely, exactly', *poi* 'then'), verbs (e.g., *diciamo* 'let's say', *guarda* 'look', *capisci* 'you understand'), nouns (e.g., *tipo* 'like'), some adjectives (*certo* 'certain', *sicuro* 'sure', *esatto* 'exact'), as well as phrasal expressions (e.g., *nel senso* 'in the sense', *per (così) dire* 'so to speak', *per favore* 'please'). Furthermore, they can also be combined with each other (e.g., *cioè nel senso*, *ma guarda*, *diciamo praticamente*, etc.). It is generally the case that they exist alongside their lexical counterpart, but they crucially differ from it in expressing meanings that go beyond the propositional level, such as speaker's psychological state and cognitive processes. Consider (21a–b) below:

21 a Pensavo di poter andare, **ma** alla fine ho dovuto dire di no.

'I thought I could go, **but**, in the end, I had to say "no"'.

b **Ma** guarda 'sto scemo! (uttered at a moped rider who pulls out in front of the speaker without looking)

'(lit. **But**) Look at this idiot!'

The conjunction *ma* in (21a) functions as a coordinator, linking two propositions ('I thought I could go' and 'In the end I had to say "no"'), and indicating at the same time that the two are in opposition to each other. In (21b), there is only one proposition, so *ma* does not have an overt linking function. However, it conveys an opposition at

the abstract level: there is what has been defined as a 'denial of expectations' (cf. Lakoff 1971; Blakemore 1989). In this case, *ma* signals a deviation from what is stipulated by the highway code, and also clearly expresses the speaker's disapproval (see also Marconi and Bertinetto 1984a and Bazzanella 2006:451).

Similarly, *non so* 'I don't know' in (22a–b) from Sansò (2020:13) expresses, respectively, the speaker's lack of knowledge of Giorgio's whereabouts, and that violence in stadiums is one of the possible topics (also reinforced by the conditional mood):

22 a **Non so** proprio dove sia sparito Giorgio.
'I really **don't know** where Giorgio has disappeared to.'

b L'argomento potrebbe essere **non so** . . . la violenza negli stadi . . .
'The topic could be **I don't know** . . . violence in stadiums . . .'

While *non so* is used in its literal meaning in (22a), in that Giorgio's whereabouts are not known, in (22b) it clearly is not since the speaker *does* know what the topic could be. Instead, it instructs the listener to understand what follows as one of a number of possible suitable topics, but not the only one. In both (21b) and (22b) omitting the pragmatic markers does not impact the meaning of the sentences, which remain fully grammatical and semantically complete. However, as noted by Sansò (2020:9), omitting them from a stretch of discourse makes it appear inauthentic and lacking in flow.

As Bazzanella's definition highlights, the procedural function of pragmatic markers can be applied at three different levels: metatextual (pertaining to the organization of the message conveyed, cf. (23a) in which *comunque* does not have its adversative value of 'anyway', but indicates the continuation of the discourse, albeit with a slight change of focus), cognitive (generally expressing the speaker's modulation of the content of their message, such as mitigation or strengthening, signalling the path to its correct interpretation, etc., cf. (23b) in which *per così dire* 'so to speak, as it were' indicates a lack of the speaker's complete commitment to what follows), and interactional (from both perspectives of the speaker, e.g., turn maintenance/yielding, request attention, etc., cf. *senti un po'* 'listen here' in (23c) requesting attention, and addressee, e.g., interrupting, expressing agreement/disagreement confirming

attention, etc., cf. *Lei dice?* 'You think?' in (23d), expressing disagreement).

23 a L'agente Cooper non avrebbe mai mangiato una crostata di fragole, e **comunque** dobbiamo ricordare a tutti coloro che vogliono saperne di più dell'agente Cooper che prossimamente uscirà questa autobiografia. (Bazzanella 2001a:247)

'Agent Cooper would have never eaten a strawberry tart, and **then** we need to remind all those who would like to know more about agent Cooper that soon this autobiography will be published.'

b Mi è sembrato, **per così dire**, piuttosto sgarbato.

'He seemed to me, **as it were**, rather rude.'

c **Senti un po'**, ma il tuo presidente di cosa si occupa? (Bazzanella 2001a:236)

'**Listen here**, what does your president do?'

d A: Siamo riusciti a risolvere brillantemente la situazione.
B: **Lei dice?** (Bazzanella 2001a:243)
'A: We managed to resolve the situation brilliantly.'
'B: **You think?**'

22.4.1 Synchronic studies: *tipo*, *praticamente*

Pragmatic markers have increasingly aroused a keen interest from linguists over the past thirty years or so. There is a large body of publications on their synchronic properties and diachronic development,[7] and a considerable number of pragmatic markers have been investigated to date.[8] In the rest of this section, we discuss two pragmatic markers which have developed relatively recently, namely, *tipo* (lit. 'type') and *praticamente* (lit. 'practically'). As noted by Sansò in his discussion of *cioè* 'that is' (2020:75–78), pragmatic markers are particularly vulnerable to obsolence (cf. also Bazzanella 2005:225). A pragmatic marker among Italian adolescents of the 1970s–1980s, *cioè* (lit. 'that.is') saw a sharp decrease in usage for two main reasons. Its extremely frequent use (and even abuse) led to its semantic bleaching to the extent that it has become a filler, that is, an element that is used, much like a hesitation such as 'ehm', to fill the silence and maintain a speaking turn while looking for the right word

or thinking of how to structure the subsequent stretch of discourse. Furthermore, its strong association with the teenagers of those decades to the point of being a distinctive trait of that generation, made it particularly sensitive to 'going out of fashion'. It was replaced in all its functions by *tipo*, which was already dominating the linguistic repertoire of Italian youth in the 2010s (cf. Ghezzi 2012:223). Originally a noun meaning 'type', *tipo* developed a series of non-nominal usages in the twentieth century, stemming from its meaning of 'model' and 'kind/class' (cf. Voghera 2013b:290–294), much along the lines of 'like' in English, which extended its original lexical meaning into 'having the qualities of' or 'an approximation to the sense of the word to which it is added' (Romaine and Lange 1991:244f.). Unlike other pragmatic markers which have completely moved away from their original lexical source meanings, *tipo* has retained all its uses, which are all found, albeit in different proportions and relevance, in contemporary Italian (Voghera 2013a; 2013b:304). Although the developmental path of evolution for *tipo* shows typical traits of a process of grammaticalization, its newly developed uses display an increase in pragmatic value: its non-nominal uses feature more prominently in spoken texts, especially dialogues (Voghera 2013b:306), suggesting language use as a clear driving force in its evolution.[9]

Tipo as a non-nominal can function as a preposition (24a), as an adverb (24b), and as a clausal connector in collocation with *che* 'that' (24c). It has also developed further usages as a pragmatic marker: acting as an approximator mitigating the illocutionary force of an utterance (cf. also Ghezzi 2022:60–62; 24d), or as a non-contrastive focalizer meaning *per esempio* 'for example' (24e), both expressing lack of precision/vagueness, or, in collocation with *che* 'that', as a focus marker and/or an opening at the beginning of a conversational turn, signalling 'personal involvement', found increasingly frequently in highly informal online chats (Voghera 2013b:304; 24f).

24 a La trattava **tipo** segretaria insomma. (Voghera 2013b:298)
'In short, he treated her **like** a secretary.'

b Taylor è **tipo** 1.70–1.72. (Voghera 2013b:299)
'Taylor is, **like** 170–172 [centimetres] tall.'

c Non credete alle statistiche **tipo che** il nord è più ricco del sud. (Voghera 2013b:301)
'Do not trust statistics **like (the fact) that** the North is richer than the South.'

d Ma **tipo** prova a cliccare sul nome e riportalo per spam. (Voghera 2013b:302)
'**Why not** try to click on the name and mark it as spam?'

e Ma **tipo** se faccio un caffé? (Voghera 2013b:303)
'If I **for example** make coffee?'

f **Tipo che** se tu fossi cibo io sarei obesa. (Voghera 2013b:303)
'If you were food, I would be obese.'

A similar mitigatory function is also the main usage of *praticamente*, originally an adverb meaning 'practically, basically', which in its lexical usage expresses the opposite of 'theoretically'. As a pragmatic marker, the most frequent use of *praticamente* is to lexicalize uncertainty, as well as a lack of speaker's commitment to the propositional content of their utterance (Bazzanella 2001a:255–257; 25a), that is, it expresses mitigation either at the propositional level or by weakening the illocutionary force of the utterance. Along with other adverbs and adverbial phrases, *praticamente* is 'particularly suitable for approximating downgradable adjectives which can be interpreted only in relation to a shared standard which establishes a comparison between a correct theoretical norm and an approximated and hedged praxis' (Ghezzi 2022:213f.). (25b) exemplifies the weakening effect on gradable adjectives, and (25c) a similar downgrading on the telicity of the verb, by indicating an almost reached result:

25 a Saussure è **praticamente** vissuto nel millenovecento . . . (silence). (Bazzanella 2001a:238)
'Saussure **basically** lived in the 1900 . . . (silence).'

b MAR lei (.) è è rimasta per ultima (.) **praticamente** volontaria no? cioè (.) mi sembrava. (adapted from Ghezzi 2022:214)
'MAR: She remained last, **practically** voluntary, didn't she? that is, it seemed tome.'

c ANN hh (.) in in Florida è **praticamente** proibita o meglio vogliono proibirlo. (adapted from Ghezzi 2022:214)
'ANN: In Florida (it) is **practically** prohibited, or or rather, they want to prohibit it.'

This hedging function is often pushed to the extreme, so that *praticamente* becomes a filler and is often repeated a number of times within the same utterance (26a). In these cases, it is possible to

see a contrast between *praticamente* and other elements in the sentence: in (26b) the second instance of *praticamente* is a filler, confirmed by the categorical use of *sempre* 'always', which conveys certainty.

26 a […] si era scoperto che **praticamente** le lingue romanze derivavano dal latino […] i dialetti si formano **praticamente** per il contatto […] è un continuo **praticamente** mutamento […]. (Bazzanella 2001a:256)

'[…] it had been discovered that **basically** the Romance languages derived from Latin […] the dialects are formed **basically** from contact […] it is a continuous **basically** change.'

b […] e **praticamente** quindi si nutre dell'allontanamento poi effettivo dell'uomo e della donna che **praticamente** è stato sempre utilizzato (Bazzanella 2001a:256)

'And so **basically** it feeds on the actual distancing of the man and the woman that **basically** has always been used'.

Similarly to other pragmatic markers that express mitigation, *praticamente* shows a parallel between the weakened illocutionary force of the utterance it modifies and its function at the propositional level that indicates the existence of a 'potentially more precise alternative' (Ghezzi 2022:217). *Praticamente* is mostly found in the clausal left periphery (Ghezzi 2022:280), and just like *tipo*, it is mainly used by young people. Its most recent development as a filler, indicating an even further advanced level of semantic bleaching, added to its association with a given generation may provide a particularly effective combination of powerful factors that could expedite its obsolescence, just like in the case of *cioè*, in the next few decades. Once again, we see the effects of language use as an important trigger for language change: lexical items shift from expressing primarily content-level meanings to increasingly speaker-based (or context-level) functions. This is in line with Traugott's observation (Traugott 2010) that the early stages of grammaticalization lead to pragmatic strengthening and an increase in the expression of subjectivity. We now turn to the exploration of the diachronic development of *anzi* and *mica* and to the specific mechanisms that are at play in such semantic and pragmatic expansions.

22.4.2 Diachronic studies on Italian pragmatic markers

Research on the historical dimension of pragmatic markers in Italian is strongly influenced by Traugott's *Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change* (e.g., Traugott and Dasher 2002). Semantic change is seen in this perspective as 'arising out of the pragmatic uses to which speakers or writers and addressees or readers put language, and most especially out of the preferred strategies that they use in communicating with addressees' (2002:xi). This perspective has been fruitfully applied to Italian starting, to quote the earliest works, with Bazzanella (1999; 2003) on pragmatic markers in general and in particular on *anzi* 'rather, on the contrary'; Visconti (2003; 2004) on *qualora* 'whenever', *perfino* 'even', and *addirittura* 'even'; Mazzoleni (2006; 2007) on *(sì) come* 'since, because', *secondo che* 'as' and the domain of causality; Ricca (2008) on the subjectification of evidential and epistemic adverbs in *-mente*; Mauri and Ramat (2008; 2009) on the development of *tuttavia* 'however' and other markers of contrast, Bazzanella and Miecznikowski (2009) on *allora* 'then'.

Within this framework, a tendency has been identified for elements developing into pragmatic markers to shift from expressing primarily concrete, lexical, and objective meanings to serving increasingly abstract, pragmatic, interpersonal, and speaker-based functions: from contributing to the propositional content of the utterance, they come to have a procedural meaning, that is, as 'processing instructions intended to aid the hearer in integrating the unit hosting the marker into a coherent mental representation of the unfolding discourse' (Hansen 1998:236).

Subjectification, in particular, that is, the encoding over time, in a lexeme or construct, of components relating to the speaker's attitude (Traugott and Dasher 2002:30), has been identified as a powerful heuristic in Italian, while intersubjectification, 'the development of meanings that encode speaker/writers' attention to the cognitive stances and social identities of addressees (Traugott 2003:124), is conceived as a possible next step.[10]

In the remainder of the chapter, we discuss two case studies on the development of *anzi* and *mica* which highlight fundamental questions in research on pragmatics such as the role of context, intersubjectification, dialogicity, and modality.

22.4.2.1 *Anzi*

Subjectivity and intersubjectivity, as well as their diachronic counterparts, are the concepts at stake in the case of Italian *anzi*, a discourse marker indicating 'reformulation' in present-day Italian, in particular 'correction' (Bazzanella 2001a:248; cf. also Sainz 2014:147f.).

27 Le sue idee si erano un po', **anzi** si erano profondamente trasformate. (Bazzanella 2001a:248).

'His ideas had changed a little, **or rather** had changed profoundly.'

Old Italian (Tuscan) *anzi*, on the other hand, presented both temporal uses such as (28) and uses that Bazzanella defines as 'contrastive-corrective' as in (29):[11]

28 pregò Domenedio e disse: Segniore Dio io ti prego, che tu mi facci due cose **anzi** ch'io muoia (Andrea da Grosseto, 1268 [*TLIO*]).

'He prayed to the Lord and said: Lord I pray thee, that thou make me two things **before** I die.'

29 ché quelli che non teme Dio non è forte, **anzi** è pazzo. (Egidio Romano volg., 1288 [*TLIO*])

'because he who does not fear God is not strong **but** is foolish.'

The contrastive-corrective use (*TLIO* speaks of 'adversative') is realized in the construct 'not p, but q', in which the negation typically bears on an entity or proposition already present in the discursive universe, someone else's point of view, which is refuted and replaced with q. In this use, which is also found in OFr. *ainz* (Melander 1916:55) and medieval Cat. *ans* (Cuenca and Visconti 2017:91), *anzi* can be paraphrased by adversative conjunctions such as *ma* 'but', *bensì* 'rather', or with *al contrario* 'on the contrary'.

In contrast to these shared Romance properties, two phenomena are peculiar to It. *anzi*: the first concerns the spread of the 'corrective' construct 'q, *anzi* p', that is, the use devoid of negation on p:

30 Non ti maravigliare se li uomini vanno a Dio, ché Dio venne alli uomini, **anzi** ne li uomini (Fiori di filosafi [*TLIO*])

'Do not marvel if men go to God, for God came to men, **or rather**, in men'

31 E però sono utili, **anzi** utilissime ad asegnare e mostrare l'uomo le ragioni de le cose altrui. (Giordano da Pisa [*TLIO*])

'And therefore they are useful, **or rather** very useful to assign and show to men the reasons of the things of others.'

In this use there are no opposing states of affairs or predicates, one of which is negated, as in examples of the previous type (29), but rather a more appropriate formulation is proposed to replace the first one, or an addition for further specification. Paraphrase with 'but', 'rather', or 'on the contrary' is no longer possible. From a first survey of *Letteratura Italiana Zanichelli* data (cf. Visconti 2015), the construct devoid of negation on p remains in the minority until the fourteenth century and then spreads rapidly from the fifteenth century (cf. also Musi 2016:13), the corrective-reformulative meaning appearing, as we said, to be the prevailing value in modern Italian. The conventionalization of this value is accompanied by an evolution of the relationship towards a more metalinguistic correction.[12]

In addition to the corrective-reformulative value, which, as mentioned, is a feature of It. *anzi*, another construction is distinctive of its most recent development. This is the use that Visconti (2015) calls 'suspended', in which *anzi* functions as an emphatic signal of polarity reversal:

32 anche perché voi state in difetto ha capito * non è una questione di # che uno non ve vuole aiuta' **anzi** (De Mauro et al. 1993)[13]

'also because you are at fault you understand * it is not a question of # that one does not want to help you, **on the contrary**…'

33 LEO <perché io> mi ricordo che / che / da Davoli / che fra l'altro non è neanche tra i più economici che esistano a i' mondo/ **anzi**… (Cresti and Moneglia 2005)

'<because I> remember that / that / at Davoli's / which by the way is not the cheapest in the world /**on the contrary**…'
GPA [.] mh //
LEO entrò una ragazza /voleva comprare
'a girl came in / she wanted to buy'

13

Analysing the intonational contour of the suspended uses, the result is surprising: as the spectrograms in Visconti (2021:202) show, *anzi* is preceded by a pause, i.e., not integrated in p, and the curve is that of conclusive segments, with descending intonation, as if the speaker did not intend to continue. This intonational curve suggests an evolution towards an 'isolated' or 'truncated' use (in the terminology of Izutsu and Izutsu 2014), rather than 'suspended'.

Both novel uses, as argued by Visconti (2021), involve the concept of (inter)subjectification. As we said above, if subjectivization refers to the encoding over time, in a lexeme or construct, of components relating to the speaker's attitude, intersubjectivization is conceived as a possible next step, when, in subjectivized lexemes or constructs, aspects of meaning are conventionalized that are indicative of the speaker's attention to the interlocutor; in Traugott's (2003:124) terms: 'the development of meanings that encode speaker/writers' attention to the cognitive stances and social identities of addressees'.

In the case of *anzi*, Bazzanella (2003) considers its development as an instance of 'modal drift', proceeding from spatial and temporal values to the values of comparison, then contrast, while the notion of subjectification is explicitly mentioned by Musi (2016:25f.), who argues that 'the process of subjectification at work in the emergence of contrastive meanings involves not only reference to the shift from external to internal described situations, but also to meanings that play a role in the author's text (especially in the case of corrective contrast) and in discourse management'. In our view, however, the theoretical concept that adequately captures the development of *anzi* over time is that of intersubjectivization. In addition to the aforementioned process of subjectivization, which had already taken place in old Italian (Visconti 2018a:618f.), the data point to a further development: many instances of corrective-reformulative *anzi*, as we have seen, are precisely of the metalinguistic type, that is, they indicate a moment of reflexion by the locutor on their own expression, which is clarified, specified, and enriched in aid of the interlocutor:

34 Eccola dunque la verità, **anzi**, più modestamente, la realtà. . . . (*la Repubblica*)

'Here then is truth, **or rather**, more modestly, reality. . . .'

35 Valeria Valeri e Paolo Ferrari interpretano questa commedia leggera, **anzi** leggerissima, quasi trasparente (*la Repubblica*).

'Valeria Valeri and Paolo Ferrari play this light, **indeed** very light, almost transparent comedy.'

Isolated constructions also exhibit an intersubjective component, functioning mainly in the interpersonal domain, as a discursive signal, to ratify a previous position, as a phatic signal with exclamatory intonation: all functions that express the speaker's or writer's attention to the needs of the addressee and that focus on the interlocutors as protagonists of the communicative event, rather than on their roles as referents in the situation described.

To sum up, the evolution of *anzi* from a temporal and contrastive value in old Italian to reformulative and emphatic values in contemporary Italian can be seen as an instance of (inter)subjectivization, that is, a shift from more 'objective' meanings (temporal), related to eventual reality, to more 'subjective' meanings, related to the locutor's attitude (contrast), and finally to functions of an interpersonal, 'intersubjective' kind, that is, centred on the locutor-interlocutor interaction.

22.4.2.2 *Mica*

Key pragmatic notions such as presupposition, common ground, information, and discourse status, are involved in the analysis of the Italian negator *mica* and, more in general, in the development of particles derived from negative minimizers, which have been intensively studied in a grammaticalization perspective as representatives of Jespersen's Cycle.[14]

As shown already by Cinque ([1976] 1991), some of these forms may specialize in various pragmatic functions, which he connects to the notion of 'presupposition'. For Zanuttini too (1997:61), 'the occurrence of *mica* is pragmatically restricted to those contexts in which the non-negative counterpart of the proposition expressed by the sentence is assumed in the discourse'.[15] 'Emphasis' is another trait typically associated with such negators (cf. Bernini and Ramat, 1992:65; 1996; Paoli 2020b:1024). Schwenter (2006), on the other

hand, proposes an information structural account (see also Schwenter 2003:1001; 2005:1429–1442), according to which the proposition negated by non-canonical negation is 'discourse-old' (as defined by Prince 1992) and contextually 'activated' (in the sense of Dryer 1996), though not necessarily believed by any of the interlocutors (Schwenter 2005:1428).

Following these suggestions, Visconti (2007) and Hansen and Visconti (2009) outline the development of these 'reinforced' negative structures in (French and) Italian as the gradual loss of dependency on discourse-old information. Thus, in the earliest texts, the contexts of occurrence of *non . . . (né) mica* exhibit a good fit with the hypothesis that it is used to mark propositions that are both discourse-old and salient; in particular, *mica* is found in denials of part of the preceding text (36), in repetitions, or paraphrases (*andare pronta e ardita* 'to go prompt and brave'—*no impagorenno* 'not fearing'), that is synonymy or contiguity relationships (37), or in denials of a presupposition, as in (38):

36 E poi li disse: "Siri, se Dio vi salvi, che v'è aviso di me? Sono io ora quello T., che voi solete tanto dottare? Non vero, collui non sono **mica.** (Tristano Ricc. [*OVI*])

'And then he said to him: "Sire, may God save you, what is your opinion of me? . . . Am I now that T. that you are used to fear so? Not true, that man I am **not**.'

37 Andò pronta et ardita, no impagorenno **mica.** (Buccio di Ranallo, S. Caterina 1330 [*TLIO*])

'She went prompt and brave, **not** fearing.'

38 Paura dice: 'Quello omo ave molto grande avere'. Sicurtade risponde: 'Ciò non è **mica** omo, ma è uno grido pieno di voci.' (Trattato di virtù morali, XIII/XIV [*TLIO*])

'Fear says: "That man has great possessions." Wisdom replies: "That is **not** a man, but a cry full of voices.'"

Furthermore, Visconti (2009) shows how discourse constraints prove to be relevant also in the development of *mica* to the present day. In data from subsequent periods, in particular, it is the way in which discourse-old status is achieved that acquires importance. Two main trends can be identified: an increase in contexts involving dialogue, parallel to a decrease in contexts involving monologue, and a decrease in cases where the link with the preceding co-text is explicitly activated, as opposed to being prompted by inferable elements of the preceding co-text. For instance, in (39) the negated inference 'we waste time having fun' is licensed by the interlocutor's

echoed question regarding how many gyms, cinemas, and theatres there are in the area:

39 Palestre? Cinema? Teatro? Cinema tre o quattro, teatro uno, palestre nescio. Qui si lavora, **mica** si perde tempo a divertirsi, neh?

'Gyms? Cinemas? Theatre? Cinemas [we have] three or four, theatre one, gyms I don't know. We work hard over here, we **don't** waste time enjoying ourselves, see?'

From a set of monologue contexts in which p is discourse-old by virtue of explicit textual evocation, data turn to a cluster of dialogue cases in which an increasing amount of inferencing on behalf of the interlocutors is required. The development appears to follow a shift from a 'textual' mode, pertaining to the level of text-construction, to an 'interpersonal' mode, centred on the locutor-interlocutor interaction. This shift would reflect an increase in 'intersubjectivity', in the sense defined above of an increasing coding of the speaker's awareness of the interlocutor's attitudes and beliefs. The identified trend culminates in the acquisition of a mitigating function in modern Italian interrogative contexts such as (40), as mitigation is conceived as indexing 'the speaker's attempt to tune in to their interlocutor' (Caffi 2007:7). Indeed, in these cases a nuance of politeness is introduced by suggesting that the interlocutor is free to reply negatively, thus free from the obligation to fulfil the request (cf. Manzotti and Rigamonti 2001:284):

40 Non hai **mica** una sigaretta?

'**Don't** you have a cigarette?'

Focusing on the occurrence of *mica* in direct questions, Squartini (2017) argues that, as well as including management of information flow with respect to what is directly activated by discourse elements or retrievable through inferential processes, the occurrence of *mica* within these marked illocutionary structures foregrounds the 'modal' role of speakers, who can express their reactions to the degree of novelty of the relevant information. The speaker is thus considered not only responsible for managing information flow with respect to the hearer's expected knowledge, but also as a source of 'mirative' reactions. The notion of mirativity would thus complete the picture, in which polarity and modality, in the sense of the speaker's reactions to the degree of novelty, interact with discourse and speech act constraints.

Discourse participants' intentions, beliefs, perceptions of each other's mental states and actions come to the fore in the use and

evolution of *mica*, as does context, in its discoursive, interactional, and cognitive dimensions.

22.5 Conclusions

The adoption of a pragmatic perspective in this chapter shows the fundamental role played by contextual factors, both discursive and interactional, in shaping language and linguistic change.

Italian data have crucially contributed to refining our understanding of key areas of pragmatics, such as politeness, mitigation, presuppositions, and discourse marking. At the same time, the intersubjectively managed strategies underlying the uses of language in context have been shown to be a driving force in shaping large domains of Italian. The speaker-addressee interaction in dialogue, in which meaning is constantly negotiated in light of previous context, speaker's inferences, addressee's assumed inferences, as well as their individual attitude towards the propositional content expressed, has proved fundamental in diachronic investigation too, where principles, patterns, and clines recently identified in general semantic change theory find their test bed. On the empirical side, pragmatic notions such as discourse management, (inter)subjectivity, dialogicity, modality, or inferences add novel insights into the analysis of pragmatic markers in Italian and into mechanisms and motivations behind their evolution and offer a systematic set of tools that enable the prediction of developmental trajectories within the linguistic system. From this perspective, language in use and, therefore, pragmatics feed into the shaping of grammatical categories and, therefore, language structure (Traugott 2010). Further work will no doubt contribute fruitful insights, lead to more powerful generalizations, and advance our understanding of both language and the mechanisms active in language change.

[1] For an overview of the birth and development of pragmatics in Italy, see Bazzanella (2016:244–253); Conte (1983); Caffi (2007); Venier (2007); Calaresu (2009). As argued by Caffi (2005; 2007) and Spitzer (1922), one of the first studies dedicated to the study of the dialogic and interactional dimension of spoken Italian, centred on the categories of speaker, interlocutor, and situation, may have foreshadowed the assumption of a pragmatic perspective.

[2] For a general overview of politeness, see Mariottini (2007) for a synchronic perspective, and contributions in Alfieri, Alfonzetti, and Motta (2020:289–504) for a diachronic perspective.

[3] Sperber et al. (2010:359–393); see the critical outline in Lombardi Vallauri, Cominetti, and Masia (2022); Sbisà (2007); Domaneschi and Penco (2016).

[4] On the manipulative use of questions in Italian trials, cf., for example, Bellucci and Torchia (2013).

[5] Cf. Lombardi and Visconti (2024) for an overview of the persuasive use of presuppositions in Italian counsel proceedings.

[6] Among other labels used in the Italian literature, we find *connettivi procedurali* 'procedural connectives', *connettivi testuali* 'textual connectives' (Berretta 1984a); *marcatori pragmatici* 'pragmatic markers' (Stame 1994); *marcatori del discorso* or *marcatori discorsivi* 'discourse markers' (Contento 1994); *segnali discorsivi* 'discourse signals' (Mara 1986; Bazzanella 2001a; Sansò 2020); and *segnali funzionali* 'functional signals' (Ghezzi 2014; Molinelli 2017). However, these are not necessarily interchangeable, as pointed out by Ferrari (2021) and Ghezzi and Lo Baido (2024).

[7] There are several edited volumes (and individual papers) that include chapters on Italian and/or regional Italian pragmatic markers from both a synchronic (Andorno 2007a; 2007b; Khachaturyan 2011; Degand, Cornillie, and Pietrandrea 2013; Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2015; Fedriani and Sansò 2017; Lo Baido and Mauri 2022) and diachronic perspective (Marconi and Bertinetto 1984b; Waltereit 2002; 2006a; Bazzanella and Miecznikowski 2009; Visconti 2009; 2015; 2018a, 2018b; 2021; Bazzanella 2011; Voghera 2013b; Ricca and Visconti 2013; 2014; Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a; 2021; Fedriani and Miola 2014), as well as whole monographs (Andorno 2000; Fiorentini 2017; Sansò 2020; Ghezzi 2022).

[8] For an overview of existing synchronic studies on some Italian pragmatic markers, we recall here *allora* (Bazzanella et al. 2007; Miecznikowski, Gili Fivela, and Bazzanella 2008; Bazzanella and Borreguero Zuloaga 2011; Molinelli 2018; Badan and Romagnoli 2019; Sansò 2020:29–34; De Cristofaro et al. 2022); *che poi* (Casiraghi 2015; Sansò 2022); *cioè* (Berretta 1984a; Bazzanella 1985; 2001a; 2011; Manzotti 1999; Fuchs 2004; Siemianow 2006; Dal Negro and Fiorentini 2014; Fiorentini 2016; Ghezzi 2018; 2022:290–306); *diciamo* (Bazzanella 2001a:238; 250f.; Khachaturyan 2002; 2011; Hölker 2005); *ecco* (Bazzanella 2001a:251–253; De Cesare 2010a); *guarda / guarda te* (Manili 1983; Mara 1986; Bazzanella 2001a:230, 235; Waltereit 2002; 2006b; Fagard 2010; Fuschi 2013; Tanghe and Jansegers 2014; Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014b; Badan 2020; 2021); *insomma* (Sansò 2020:38–40); *ma* (Marconi and Bertinetto 1984a; Bazzanella 2006:451; Fedriani and Molinelli 2019); *nel senso* (Casiraghi 2015; Fiorentini and Sansò 2017; Sansò 2020:34–

37); *no?* (Bazzanella 1990:631; 2001:240f.; Stame 1994; Ghezzi 2012; Fiorentini 2020); *(e) niente* (Bazzanella 1994; Berretta 1984a:248; Casiraghi 2015; De Stefani 2016; Sansò 2022); *per (così) dire / direi* (Bazzanella 2001a:238); *per favore* (Fedriani 2019); *però* (Fiorentini 2014:92); *poi* (Bazzanella 2001a:226; Conti and Carella 2022); *(come) sai / sapete* (Bazzanella 1994; 2001a:237, 253–255); *senti* (Manili 1983; Khachaturyan 2001; Ziccolella 2007; Fuschi 2013; Badan 2021); *scusa* (Ceković and Janićijević 2017; Ghezzi and Molinelli 2019); *sì* (Kenda 2008); *solo* (not as a focalizer, Favaro 2019); *vedi* (Manili 1983; Tanghe and Jansegers 2014; Badan 2021; Miecznikowski, Battaglia, and Geddo 2023).

[9] Spoken discourse is particularly rich in so-called dialogicity (cf. Roulet 1984:41; Schwenter 2000:260), that is, the presence of multiple points of view and perspectives, explicitly evoked, or implicitly hinted at. Dialogicity reflects the constant negotiation of common ground by speakers and addressees in order to get each other to listen, exchange information, or to behave in certain ways. Speaker and addressee constantly negotiate meaning through dynamic, interactive discourse. Dialogicity, alongside turn-taking, has also been recognized to play a crucial role in language change (cf., e.g., Traugott 2008b; 2010; Paoli 2020b), and in explaining the motivation for change.

[10] Both subjectification and intersubjectification have fostered much debate; on the former, cf. the overview in López Couso (2010) and Visconti (2013), and, on the latter, cf. Ghesquière et al. (2012).

[11] On the diachrony of *anzi*, cf. Bazzanella (2003); Visconti (2015; 2018a; 2018b); Musi (2016).

[12] Common to these types of examples is the presence of a component of gradation, of scalarity, between the two predicates or between the two states of affairs (cf. also Sainz 2014:155–158).

[13] The symbols <*> and <#> in example (32) are used in the *LIP* corpus to indicate specific prosodic features.

[14] For a general survey see, for example, Parry (2013). Given the pragmatic focus of the chapter, we shall focus on functional approaches; furthermore, in accordance with the orientation of the volume, we shall not consider diatopic variation (on which cf., for example, Parry 1996; Ledgeway 2020b; Cerruti 2018).

[15] Cf. also Manzotti and Rigamonti (2001:284); Parry (1996:225f.); Penello and Pescarini (2008).

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Chapter 23

Information structure

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Silvio Cruschina

23.1 Introduction

Information structure is the way in which the information contained in an utterance or text is presented or 'packaged' according to aspects of communication such as the temporary mind state and the background knowledge of the interlocutors or, in the written language, the readers (Halliday 1967; Chafe 1976; Lambrecht 1994). Central constructs in the theory of information structure are topic and focus, as well as the related and complementary notions of givenness and newness. Scholarship on the Italian language has made a significant contribution to knowledge and understanding of these constructs and how they are encoded in morphosyntax and prosody. In the present chapter, we first define the relevant notions against the backdrop of the philosophical debate that engendered them (§23.2). We then introduce the word orders which are pragmatically marked in Italian, examining a range of constructions which are characterized by morphosyntactic and lexico-aspectual constraints that are motivated in information structural terms (§23.3). Assuming a cartographic model of syntax (Rizzi 1997), in §23.4–5 we discuss the principal syntactic and prosodic readjustment processes which underlie the expression of topic and focus in Italian. We draw some brief conclusions in §23.6.

23.2 Historical background and definitions

The study of the structuring of information in linguistic expression originated from a philosophical inquiry on the typology of judgements. Developing ideas by the German philosopher Franz Clemens Brentano (1838–1917), Swiss-born philosopher of language Anton Marty (1847–1914) investigated the relation between logical judgements and linguistic statements while he was a professor in Prague in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Marty drew a distinction between *single statements*, or impersonals, which are expressions of acceptance/existence or rejection/non-existence, and *double statements*, which predicate an instance of acceptance or rejection of existence of a subject term (Rollinger and Janoušek 2019). The Brentano-Marty philosophy has since had a profound influence on linguistic theory (see, among others, Sasse 1987), including Italian scholarship, as will become apparent below. And yet, the distinction between the two types of judgement, known as *thetic* and *categorical*, poses non-trivial challenges when applied to the linguistic domain (see Kuroda 1972:156f.; Sornicola 1995:73). On the one hand, assuming thetic statements do not have a logical subject, or a term whose existence is given, is not the same as establishing that such statements lack a grammatical subject. On the other hand, the very notion that an utterance may lack a logical subject is challenged by both theoretical and empirical considerations.

To address the problems raised by the thetic/categorical distinction it is essential to identify a level of linguistic analysis that is in principle distinct from the semantic level, that of discourse or information structure. An early contribution in this direction was Weil's (1844) study of the communicative function of variation in the order of the words in the sentence. This work influenced Hans Georg von der Gabelenz (1840–1893) and, in the first half of the twentieth century, the Prague Linguistic Circle (see, e.g., Mathesius 1929). Thus, the dichotomies of *theme* vs *rheme* and *topic* vs *comment*,

whether intended as clines (Firbas 1971) or as discrete notions, were introduced in what increasingly became a properly linguistic debate.

The constructs of topic and focus have played a key role in the development of our knowledge and understanding of information structure in and through the Italian language. We shall, therefore, introduce them here, thus preparing the discussion of their morphosyntactic and prosodic encoding. Topic has been associated with theme, which is the starting point of the sentence and the part that is already known or given in a particular context. In contrast, focus has been associated with rheme, that is, the part of the sentence that conveys new information about the theme. However, the relationship between topic and givenness, and that between focus and newness, has been a controversial and highly debated question. Indeed, even though *givenness* and *newness* are often understood in relation to the referents denoted in a sentence by the theme/topic and the rheme/focus, respectively, the two sets of notions must be kept separate (Sgall, Hajičová, and Benešová 1973:17). The new-given opposition can be interpreted in terms of the activation of information in the short-term memory, where given corresponds to *active*, while new indicates *inactive* information that has not yet been introduced, and thus is not in the addressee's mental state (Chafe 1976; 1987; 1994). A related notion is that of *accessibility*, i.e., the property of a discourse referent to be individuated in the relevant context (Chafe 1987), including, in conversation, the speech event (Sornicola 1981:76f.). Newness has also been characterized in relation to the illocutionary force of the sentence, so that focus indicates the part that is asserted, as opposed to presupposed (Lambrecht 1994), or the part that carries the illocutionary force, in contrast with topic, which only provides ancillary information that helps to locate the focus cognitively (Cresti 2000; Lombardi Vallauri 2001; 2022).

The need has also been emphasized to distinguish two dimensions of newness and givenness, when considered in combination with the notions of topic and focus (Gundel 1988; Lambrecht 1994; Gundel and Fretheim 2004; Cruschina 2012a:10–13). What is new or given in a sentence can be the referents denoted by the linguistic expressions in the sentence, depending on whether they have already been introduced into the context or are mentioned for the first time. This is the referential dimension, which pertains to the interlocutors,

their mental states, and their knowledge. At the same time, newness and givenness can define the relation between the referents of the constituents of a sentence, so that topic identifies what the sentence is about, while focus is what is predicated or asserted of the topic (Reinhart 1981; Lambrecht 1994). This is the relational dimension, which concerns the distinction between aboutness and predication, or the logical subject and the comment. This partition is key for evaluating the truth value of a proposition, assuming this is assessed as a predicate on a logical subject. It is thus necessary to distinguish two principal senses of topic: on the one hand, the topic is a referent which is contextually accessible or has been established previously in discourse and thus has a status in the minds of the discourse participants. On the other, the topic is what the sentence is about, regardless of its status in the minds of the discourse participants. An utterance, whether spoken or signed, can introduce an aboutness topic anew (§23.4.1). In fact, it can be argued that there cannot be a topicless utterance and that seemingly topicless structures incorporate an implicit topic (§23.3.2). It is also possible for a topic that was established previously in discourse to be the aboutness topic of a sentence.

The notion of focus can also be defined in relational and referential terms. *Broad focus* is mostly defined along the referential dimension, in that it serves the function of introducing new information or new referents into the discourse. If uttered out of the blue, the whole sentence is in referential focus, regardless of the topic-comment opposition, with which it is compatible (§23.3.2). In contrast, *narrow focus* can only be properly understood and defined at the propositional level, in a relational sense, where focus picks out an alternative from an evoked or established set of variables (Rooth 1985; 1992; Gundel and Fretheim 2004). Narrow focus thus generates a focus-background partition, which usually coincides with a new-given articulation of the sentence, where the focus is new information, and the background is given or presupposed. The overlapping between focus-background and new-given is however not always necessary, as will be pointed out in the discussion of mirative focus (§23.4.2). The fact that foci are classified as narrow or broad, unlike topics, reveals a property which characterizes them uniquely: they take the communication forward (see Cresti 2000:117; Lombardi Vallauri 2022:42, and, for a parallel with the notion of

rheme, Sornicola 1986), varying in scope depending on established or accessible information at the relevant point in the illocution or text.

Over the years, Italian scholarship has benefited from and at the same time contributed to the investigation of the above constructs and dichotomies from both synchronic and a diachronic perspective. See, by way of example, the collections edited by Stammerjohann (1986) and Matras and Sasse (1995); the monographic work of Wandruszka (1982); Frascarelli (2000); Venier (2002); Brunetti (2004); Lombardi Vallauri (2009); Cruschina (2012a); Bocci (2013); and Samek Lodovici (2015), among others. A wealth of syntactic literature, couched primarily, though not exclusively, in the cartographic framework (e.g., Benincà et al. 2001; Rizzi 1997), has contributed vastly to the study of the distribution of focus within the sentence, especially within the left periphery, and to the understanding of the pragmatic properties that are associated with the different positions. Recently, Italian scholarship has also explored the relation between the structuring of information in linguistic expression and natural language processing (cf. Lombardi Vallauri and Masia 2015; Lombardi Vallauri 2021; Piciucco et al. 2022).

23.3 Word orders and marked constructions

In Italian, focal or new information gravitates towards the final part of the sentence and, in this position, need not be limited to a single syntactic constituent or be associated with a particular type of intonation (Gruppo di Padova 1974; Benincà et al. 2001:133).[1]

1 a Paolo ha superato a pieni voti l' esame di fisica.[2]
Paolo have.3SG pass.PTCP at full marks the exam of physics
'Paolo passed the physics exam with full marks.'

b La bomba è esplosa alle 4:58 del 5 dicembre.
the bomb be.3SG explode.PTCP at.the 4:58 of.the 5 December
'The bomb exploded at 4:58 am on 5 December.'

[2]

The examples in (1) could occur out of the blue or in contexts whereby the subject referent (cf. 1a), or both subject and verb (cf. 1b), are salient. They may be present in the discourse context, or, alternatively, they have been introduced in discourse previously, for example with a question ('What about Paolo?', 'When did the bomb explode?').[3]

Although corpus-assisted work converges on the finding that SV(X) order is predominant, as suggested by frequency, not only in transitive but also in intransitive structures (e.g., Bernini 1995; Cennamo 1995; Sornicola 1994; 1995 and, for differences between noun phrase and pronominal subjects, Voghera et al. 2004), Italian also allows other word orders. The latter can be said to be pragmatically marked, insofar as they deviate from the default association of the subject with salient or topical information (Berretta 1994b:80) and may prove felicitous only in specific informational contexts (Benincà et al. 2001:130). Whereas VSO and VOS are highly constrained, VS order is not to the same extent, and can either encode broad focus or narrow focus on the subject.[4] Thus, the whole VS string *È crollata la torre* 'the tower collapsed' is in focus if appearing out of the blue. However, in the context of the question 'What has collapsed?', only the post-verbal subject is in focus. The progression towards focal information and the association of focus with the final portion of the utterance may result in sentence fragmentation in spoken registers (Sornicola 1981:127–141) and marked word orders, whereby one or more constituents may be detached from the verb and resumed by a clitic pronoun. The constituents may be dislocated either to the left or to the right of the sentential core, in constructions known as clitic left dislocation and clitic right dislocation, respectively. Dislocation must be distinguished from focus fronting, which, by contrast, is characterized by pre-verbal focus and limited to specific interpretations of the focus. In the next sections we describe these marked word orders and the principal properties of the constructions which exhibit them.

23.3.1 Focus fronting and dislocation

In Italian sentences old information is typically placed before new information, creating connections between information which has already been introduced into the discourse or familiar to the interlocutors and information which is novel or unfamiliar. Focus fronting is an exception to this tendency and instantiates a marked word order whereby the focus of the sentence is placed in a pre-verbal position, usually at the beginning of the sentence, as shown in (2):[5]

2 **Giuseppe** dovremmo invitare.
Giuseppe should.1PL invite.INF
'We should invite Giuseppe.'

The fronted focus can denote new information, but need not do so. What is crucial is that it stands in a focus-background relationship with the rest of the sentence, which is usually given and presupposed (§23.2). From an interpretive viewpoint, focus fronting is limited to a special interpretation of the focus, generally described in terms of contrast (Benincà et al. 2001:163f.). We shall return to focus fronting in sections §23.4.2 and §23.4.4–5.

A second marked order that involves the placement of a constituent at the beginning of the sentence is left dislocation. In this construction, the initial constituent is a topic:

3 a Al cugino di Luca, nessuno (gli) presterebbe dei soldi.
to.the cousin of Luca nobody him.DAT= lend.COND.3SG some money
'Nobody would lend any money to Luca's cousin.'

b Il cugino di Luca, nessuno gli presterebbe dei soldi.
the cousin of Luca nobody him.DAT= lend.COND.3SG some money

c Il cugino di Luca, nessuno presterebbe dei soldi a lui.
the cousin of Luca nobody lend.COND.3SG some money to him
'Luca's cousin, nobody would lend him any money.'

d Il cugino di Luca, nessuno presterebbe dei soldi a quell' imbroglione.
the cousin of Luca nobody lend.COND.3SG some money to that swindler
'Luca's cousin, nobody would lend any money to that swindler.'

The examples in (3a–d) illustrate two distinct types of left dislocation. In (3a) the dislocated, sentence-initial constituent *Al cugino di Luca* 'To Luca's cousin' is picked up by a resumptive clitic pronoun *gli* 'to him' inside the clause; this is an example of clitic left dislocation. Note that clitic resumption is optional with a left-dislocated dative constituent. In (3b) and (3c), by contrast, we have

instances of hanging topic, which is characterized by the absence of prepositional marking and by obligatory resumption through a clitic (3b), a strong pronoun (3c) or an epithet (3d) (although it has been argued that this kind of resumption is not necessary in principle and may not be found in the spoken registers, see Sornicola 1981:59–61).

Starting with Cinque ([1983] 1997; 1990), the contrast between hanging topics and clitic left dislocation has been described in detail (see also Benincà 2001b; Benincà et al. 2001; Rizzi 1990; 1997; 2004b; Benincà and Poletto 2004). The distinctive properties of the two constructions include the lexical category of the dislocated constituent (only pronouns/NPs can be hanging topics, while any constituent can undergo clitic left dislocation), the number of dislocated elements (limited to one in the case of hanging topics), and the type of resumptive element (which is a clitic pronoun in clitic left dislocation but can be a strong pronoun or an epithet with hanging topics). See Cinque ([1983] 1997:96f.) for more details.

A topic constituent may also be dislocated to the right of the core sentence. In this case, it can only be picked up by a clitic pronoun attached to the verb (cf. 4). This construction is known as clitic right dislocation. The latter displays most of the properties described for clitic left dislocation, but it is more restricted with respect to the specific interpretation of the dislocated topic (cf. §23.4.1) and can also feature afterthoughts.

4 a La porto io domani, la torta.
it= bring.1SG I tomorrow the cake
'I'll bring the cake tomorrow.'

b Le ho regalato un orologio, a Laura, per il suo compleanno.
her.DAT= have.1SG give.PTCP a watch to Laura for the her birthday
'I gave Laura a watch for her birthday.'

The dislocated constituent need not be an argument but can also be a predicate. A relevant case is the inverse locative construction in (5A), where *ci* resumes a topical locative predicate and the post-copular noun phrase is its focal argument.

5 Q: Che cosa c' è nel cassetto?
what there= be.3SG in.the drawer
'What's in the drawer?'

A: [Ci_i sono [$_{Focus}$ le chiavi]] ([$_{Background}$ nel $cassetto_i$])
there= are.3PL the keys in.the drawer
'The keys are (in the drawer).'

For in-depth treatment of inverse locatives, see Cruschina (2012b), and, for a micro- and macrovariational comparison see Bentley, Ciconte, and Cruschina (2015) on such structures in the Romance languages of Italy and Creissels's (2019) typological treatment.

Another type of dislocation relevant for discussion of information structure is *ne*-cliticization. Following Cardinaletti and Giusti (1991), this splits a quantifier phrase into a dislocated complement, which is resumed by *ne* 'of it/them', and its post-verbal quantifier head.

6 [$_{Complement}$ (Di) $studenti_i$], ne_i sono arrivati [$_{QP}$ molti ($\_\__i$)].
of students them.PART=are.3PL arrive.PTCP many
'(Students,) many arrived.'

Ne-cliticization has received a great deal of attention in the syntactic literature because its scarce compatibility with the subject of a subclass of intransitives (**?*Di studenti, ne hanno studiato molti* lit. 'Of students, many have studied') lends support to Perlmutter's (1978) Unaccusative Hypothesis. Following Lonzi's observation (Lonzi 1986) that *ne*-cliticization can, however, prove acceptable with the subject of verbs that select the perfect auxiliary HAVE, thus failing a key unaccusativity test, attention has been drawn to the information structural underpinnings of *ne*-cliticization (Bentley 2004; Creissels 2010). The syntactic partition shown in (6) is motivated by an information structural split between the quantifier, which is in focus, and the dislocated phrase, which is not (cf. 7).

7 [$_{Background/Topic}$ (Di) $studenti_i$], ne_i sono arrivati [$_{Comment/Focus}$ **molti**] ($\_\__i$).
of students them.PART=are.3PL arrive.PTCP many
'(Students,) many arrived.'

Bentley (2004) has argued that Italian only licenses this split when the quantifier phrase stands in a semantic (thematic) relation with the predicate which, for the sake of simplicity, can be defined as that of *undergoer* (a construct that picks out the subject of unaccusatives and the object of transitives). Lonzi's apparently deviant examples (Lonzi 1986) are licensed if they are construed as existentials, where

the *ne*-cliticized argument satisfies this thematic constraint: see, by way of example, the English paraphrase of (8).

8 Ne cammina tanta, di gente, su quei marciapiedi.
them.PART=walk.3SG many of people on those pavements
'There are many people who walk on those pavements.'

This construal normally obtains in broad focus, suggesting that a topic-comment partition is compatible with the extension of focus to the whole utterance, a point to which we return in §23.3.2.

Ne-cliticization is of considerable theoretical interest because it sheds light on the interplay of information and semantic (thematic) structure, which in turn has major repercussions on the syntactic organization of the clause. Focus, in this construction, aligns with the head of the undergoer, hence the significant, if imperfect, matching with BE-selecting verbs.

23.3.2 VS order

As noted above, VS order can encode broad focus or narrow focus on the post-verbal subject. In both cases, this word order is pragmatically marked, not only because the post-verbal subject does not align with topical information, but also because a specific informational context is required for this word order to be felicitous. Narrow focus VS order picks out an alternative from an evoked or established set of variables (§23.2).

9 Q: Chi ha sbagliato?
who have.3SG err.PTCP
'Who made a mistake?'

A: (Ha sbagliato) **Marco.**
have.3SG err.PTCP Marco
'Marco did.'

10 A: Secondo me, Gianni ha sbagliato.
according me Gianni have.3SG err.PTCP
'I believe Gianni made a mistake.'

B: No, ha sbagliato MARCO.
no have.3SG err.PTCP Marco
'No, Marco did.'

In both (9A) and (10B), the predication is known from the preceding context and VS order is associated with a focus-background partition. In addition, in (10B) the narrow focus construction serves the purpose of correcting a previously selected value for the argument variable.

By contrast, broad focus VS order introduces the proposition anew, thus requiring that the predicative relation should not already be known from the context.

11 a In quell'anno sono nati molti bambini.
in that=year are.3PL born many children
'Many children were born in that year.'

b È successa una cosa strana.
be.3SG happen.PTCT a thing strange
'Something strange happened.'

When encoding narrow focus, VS order is not subject to any lexico-aspectual restrictions on the predicate, nor does it require that the post-verbal noun phrase be referentially new. In contrast, when broad focus is encoded, there are predicate restrictions on VS order, which interact with the occurrence of an adverbial in sentence-initial or sentence-final position and with the referential newness of S. Indeed, in a corpus-assisted study inspired by Wandruszka (1982), Bernini (1995:55) listed verbs of existence, of appearance on and exit from the scene, and of continuation and change as those that are more frequently found in VS order. In turn, Sornicola (1995:74) noted that VS order typically features verbs 'that, either at the level

of basic representation or at some derived level, have a one-argument predicate frame'.

12 a [...] è arrivata la traccia ligure.
be.3SG arrive.PTCP the connexion Ligurian
'[...] the Ligurian connexion has arrived.'

b Si apre un nuovo troncone [...]
REFL= open.3SG a new section
'A new section is being opened [...]' (Sornicola 1995:75)

A clue to understand the predicate restrictions on broad focus is provided by Benincà's observation (Benincà et al. 2001:138) that the directionality of VS sequences with verbs of inherently directed motion can differ from that of their SV counterparts. Thus, whereas the deixis of (13a) is speaker-oriented, that of (13b) is not. The former utterance announces that Maria has arrived at a location related to the speaker, whereas the latter is felicitous if Maria was expected to be arriving somewhere (be that the location of the speaker or some other location) and the utterance states that this has happened.

13 a È arrivata Maria.
be.3SG arrive.PTCT Maria

b Maria è **arrivata.**
Maria be.3SG arrive.PTCT
'Maria has arrived.' (Benincà et al. 2001:138)

The contrast in the interpretation of (13a) and (13b) is explained by the hypothesis that while (13b) is a predication about the overt subject *Maria*, (13a) is a predication about an implicit locative logical subject, which originates in the thematic grid of *arrivare* and provides the spatial coordinates of the utterance. This logical subject is a topic in relational terms, and, therefore, a corollary of this analysis is that bare broad focus VS order is organized as a comment on a topic.

When there is no location in the thematic grid of the verb, the spatio-temporal coordinates of the utterance may either be provided explicitly (see *in quell'anno* 'in that year' in 11a) or originate from the discourse context itself, assuming relevant lexico-aspectual constraints are satisfied (cf. 11b) (for details, see Bentley and Cruschina 2018; Bentley 2020, building on work by Bianchi 1993; Erteschik-Shir 1997; Klein 2008). If such restrictions are not

fulfilled, bare VS order normally receives a narrow focus interpretation.

14 Ha sbagliato MARCO.
have.3SG err.PTCP Marco
'It was Marco who made a mistake.'

For VS order to convey broad focus it is also necessary that the post-verbal noun phrase should be construed as part of the predicate itself. This is Fuchs's (1980:449) notion of *argument integration*, discussed in Sasse (2006:258) (see also Bianchi and Chesi 2014). This construal is more easily obtained with non-specific noun phrases, which encode inactive or inaccessible discourse referents, particularly in the presence of an overt sentence-final locative adverbial.

15 a ??È arrivato Piero a Roma.
be.3SG arrive.PTCP Piero at Rome
'Piero has arrived in Rome.'

b È arrivato un marziano a Roma.
be.3SG arrive.PTCP a Martian at Rome
'A Martian has arrived in Rome.' (Benincà et al. 2001:138)

In sum, the analysis of broad focus VS order in Italian is of utmost theoretical significance because it challenges the conception, introduced in philosophical debate by Brentano and Marty, and pursued in Lambrecht's (1994) influential work (see the notion of *sentence focus*), that theticity is to be defined in terms of the absence of a logical subject or topic. A topic-comment relation can instead be encoded in broad focus VS order in two ways: there can be an overt pre-verbal relational topic, which does not correspond to the post-verbal controller of person and number verb agreement (cf. 11a). Alternatively, an implicit logical subject or topic is drawn from the thematic grid of the verb or from the discourse context itself (cf. 11b). In both cases, the controller of verb agreement is understood as part of the new predication. In fact, although Italian normally requires control of verb agreement by the post-verbal noun phrase, person agreement can be lacking, depending in part on diastratic and diatopic variation, as can be seen in this example from Tuscan Italian (see Salvi 2001c:231f. and Nocentini 1999 for further detail).

16 Mi manca cinque bollini per arrivare a venti.
me= miss.3SG five coupon.PL to arrive.INF to twenty
'I need five coupons to get to twenty.' (Nocentini 1999:319)

Examples like (16) indicate that the role of information structure goes well beyond the linear order of the constituents, affecting the morphological marking of subjecthood by agreement.

23.3.3 Presentative *c'è*

Broad focus is not only encoded by (X)VS order in Italian, but also by a construction known as *c'è presentativo* 'presentative *c'è*' (cf. Berruto 1986a; Berretta 1994b; 1995; Serianni 2000; Venier 2002; Roggia 2009; Cruschina 2012b; Belligh and Crocco 2022) or *c'è focalizzante* 'focalizing *c'è*' (De Cesare 2007), which is primarily found in the informal registers of the spoken language.

17 C' è tuo padre che ti aspetta.
there= be.3SG your father COMP you= wait.3SG
'Your father is waiting for you.'

Despite resembling a cleft construction because of its biclausality and the formal similarity of the *che* clause to a relative clause, in terms of information structure the construction under discussion differs from specificational clefts (De Cesare 2017) in several respects. First, the information provided in the *che* clause is not in the background but is introduced in discourse with the construction itself. Related to this information structural property are key semantic and syntactic properties. Presentative *c'è* is not specificational, in that it does not specify a value for a given variable. In addition, it cannot be negated (cf. 18a) or abridged (cf. 18b) and, bar diatopic variation, displays a fixed word order (cf. 18c); lastly, its *che* clause need not be immediately adjacent to the head noun (cf. 18d), a property of pseudo-relatives (De Cesare 2007 and, for pseudo-relatives, Cinque 2001:515).

18 a #Non c' è tuo padre che ti aspetta.
NEG= there= be.3SG your father COMP you= wait.3SG

b C' è tuo padre ≠ c' è tuo padre che ti aspetta.
there= be.3SG your father there= be.3SG your father COMP you=wait.3SG
'There's your father ≠ Your father is waiting for you.'

c Tuo padre (**c' è) (che) ti aspetta (**c' è).
Your father there= be.3SG COMP you=wait.3SG there= be.3SG

d C' è tuo padre all' entrata che ti aspetta.
there= be.3SG your father at.the entrance COMP you= wait.3SG
'Your father is waiting for you at the entrance.'

Given that presentative *c'è* does not cleave the proposition into a newly asserted and a presupposed part, the question arises as to why the construction under discussion should be syntactically biclausal and what role *c'è* plays in this pattern. Two important hypotheses have been advanced. On the one hand, following Berruto (1986a), it has been argued that *c'è* introduces a new referent, which then becomes the new topic in text or discourse (De Cesare 2007:141). On the other hand, bearing in mind that the noun phrase immediately following *c'è* is in focus, the construction could be a strategy to avoid pre-verbal focus. The latter hypothesis has been pursued in the treatment of comparable French patterns (Lambrecht 2001; Lahousse and Lamiroy 2012). However, it is also relevant to Italian to the extent that pre-verbal focus is normally constrained in this language and bare broad focus VS order, unlike presentative *c'è* (Venier 2002:90), is constrained in lexico-aspectual terms, as pointed out above.

Without detracting from these analyses, it can be enlightening to reflect on the formal similarity between presentatives and existentials, and specifically the presence of *ci* plus a copula in both constructions.[6] Bearing in mind that existentials express a proposition about existence or presence in a context (Bentley, Ciconte, and Cruschina 2015:1f.), the common denominator of presentative and existential *c'è* constructions is that they are context-dependent. Specifically, in presentative *c'è* 'the proform-plus-copula nexus marks the information being provided as new and relevant in the context of the previous or following statement' (Bentley, Ciconte, and Cruschina 2015:213).

A variant of presentative *c'è* exhibits *ci* 'there' and *avere* 'have'. Rather than anchoring the predication in the discourse context, this pattern relates it explicitly to an argument, usually a first-person speech act participant (Berretta 1995:216). Venier (2002:90) notes that this variant is preferred when the head noun is in an inalienable relation to the subject of *avere*, as can be seen here.

19 a C' ho la testa che mi fa male.
there= have.1SG the head COMP me= do.3SG hurt
'My head is hurting.'

b C' ho il bambino che ha 40 di febbre.
there= have.1SG the child COMP have.3SG 40 of temperature
'My child has a temperature of 40 degrees.'

External possession, where the possessor is not coded within the same phrase as the possessed, but rather as a separate (pro)noun in the clause, also occurs in broad focus, relating the new information to an argument, which is usually a speech participant.

20 Mi fa male la testa.
me= do.3SG hurt the head
'My head is hurting.'

Lastly, when *ecco* 'here/there is' occurs instead of *ci* and a copula, the event being announced may be one that was expected, and broad focus has a deictic or evidential flavour: *ecco* anchors the information in a spatio-temporal dimension witnessed by the speaker or the interlocutors and can be translated with locative (stressed) *there* in English.[7]

21 a Ecco le vele che spuntano all' orizzonte.
ecco the sails COMP appear.3PL at.the horizon

b Ecco le vele spuntare all' orizzonte.
ecco the sails appear.INF at.the horizon
'*There* are the sailboats, appearing on the horizon.'

In sum, the analysis of broad focus in Italian reveals that all-new information does not occur in an informational vacuum, but is anchored to the discourse context in accordance with precise semantic and information-structural parameters, which are reflected by the range of broad focus strategies available in the language.

23.3.4 Clefts

Clefts have received a great deal of attention in the Italian literature, both from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective (e.g., Frison 2001; Sornicola 1991; Berretta 1994b; 1995; 2002; D'Achille, Proietti, and Viviani 2005; Roggia 2006; 2009; De Cesare 2014; De Cesare and Garassino 2015). They have also figured in comparative work on Romance languages and other language families (Berretta 1994b; Dufter 2009; De Cesare 2017; Karssenberg et al. 2017). Italian clefts split a single proposition into two clauses, the first containing a copula and the second a finite or infinitival verb. The clefted constituent can be the subject or the direct/indirect object of the clefted clause (22a–d). Significantly, in the former case, the clefted constituent occurs in the nominative case and controls person and number agreement on the verb in the clefted clause (22a). This is also the only pattern that admits the infinitival cleft clause (22b).

22 a Sono io che abito qui.
be.1SG I COMP live.1SG here

b Sono io ad abitare qui.
be.1SG I to live.INF here
'It's me who lives here.'

c È Giovanni che aspetto.
be.3SG Giovanni COMP wait.1SG
'It's Giovanni I am waiting for.'

d È a Giovanni che l' ho dato.
be.3SG to Giovanni COMP it=have.1SG give.PTCP
'It was to Giovanni that I gave it.'

The clefted constituent can also be an adverbial, such as a temporal or locative adjunct (23b–c). Predicates are not normally clefted (Berretta 1994b:94).

23 a È per rispetto che lo dico.
be.3SG for respect COMP it=say.1SG
'It's out of respect that I am saying this.'

b Sono anni che ci conosciamo.
be.3PL years COMP us= know.1PL
'We've known each other for years.'

c È lì che l' ho incontrato.
be.3SG there COMP him= have.1SG meet.PTCP
'I met him there.'

Unlike presentative *c'è* constructions, clefts are comparable to specificational copular constructions, in that they provide a value for a given variable (Bentley 2017:335). Clefting thus readily results in a conversational implicature of exhaustivity (Dufter 2009:95–98), which is, however, cancelled in additive focus frames like *(non solo . . . ma) anche* '(not only . . . but) also'.

A key information structural role of clefts is that of marking narrow focus on the clefted constituent, whether this is information or contrastive focus. The constituent in focus in (24a) could provide the variable left open in a question (Who killed Calvi?), in which case it would represent information focus, but it could also contrast with an alternative, in which case it would be contrastive. The focal constituent in (24b) is explicitly contrasted with an alternative.

24 a Fu la **mafia** [our emphasis] a uccidere Calvi.
be.PST.IPFV.3SG the mafia at kill.INF Calvi

'It was the mafia that killed Calvi.' (*La Stampa* 8.11.93, p. 2, see Berretta 1994b:98)

b (Leonardo) È stato lodato come architetto, ma fu **Bramante** [our emphasis] a fare avanzare l'architettura del Rinascimento. (*La Stampa* 8.11.93, p. 13, see Berretta 1994b:98)

'He (Leonardo) was praised as an architect, but it was Bramante who advanced Renaissance architecture.'

The contents of the cleft constituent are even more distinctly marked as focal in a pseudo- cleft construction where an infinitival clause precedes a constituent clefted with *essere* 'be' (Berretta 1994b:89).

25 A premere il pulsante che scatenò l'inferno sull'autostrada di Capaci fu **il corleonese Giovanni Brusca** [our emphasis] (*la Repubblica*, 12.11.93, p.1; subheading of newspaper article, see Berretta 1994b:89).

'The one who pressed the switch that caused havoc on the Capaci motorway was Giovanni Brusca from Corleone'

However, clefts have a much broader spectrum of information-structural, and, ultimately, textual, functions in Italian. As is the case with other languages (see Dufter 2009), it is possible for both clauses, or the clefted clause alone, to occur in focus. Thus, in (26a), the clefted constituent refers to an established discourse antecedent, which means that it is not new in a referential sense (§23.2). In contrast, in (26b), the cleft structure introduces anew both components. The latter pattern can serve the function of introducing a new topic (Berretta 1994b:101).

26 a È proprio per questo che ti consiglio di…
be.3SG exactly for this COMP you= advise.1SG of
'It is exactly for this reason that I am advising you to…'

b È con grande dolore che annunciamo…
be.3SG with great pain COMP announce.1PL
'It is with great sadness that we announce…'

However, even in these cases clefting foregrounds the clefted constituent. Indeed, a known textual function of clefting is that of bringing an old topic from the background to the foreground (Berretta 1994b:99), thus presenting as focal information that is 'in some way continuous from the preceding context' (Lombardi Vallauri 2022:48). According to the latter analysis, clefts serve a cohesive function within the text, retrieving information that has already been introduced and bringing it back to the centre of attention, thus taking the communication forward. In spoken registers, this cohesive function is often played by negated and all-focus clefts lacking an overt clefted constituent (D'Achille, Proietti, and Viviani 2005:260f.; cf. 27a–b) and supporting turn-taking (cf. 28) or, alternatively, in pseudo-clefts where the cleft clause, headed by a demonstrative pronoun, precedes the focused constituent (cf. 29).

27 a È che mi sono stancato.
be.3SG COMP me= be.1SG tire.PTCP
'It is just that I have got tired.'

b Non è che non ti creda.
NEG be.3SG COMP NEG you= believe.SBJV.1SG
'It's not that I do not believe you.'

28 Eccomi qua che dico le stesse cose.
ecco=me here COMP say.1SG the same things
'And there's me saying the same things.' (Bazzanella 2001a:227)

29 Quello che mi preme sottolineare è questo/che…
that COMP me= matter.3SG underscore.INF be.3SG this COMP
'What matters to me is to underscore this/that…'

Also marked diamesically are clefted wh-questions, which carry a stronger presupposition than their non-clefted counterparts, suggesting that the truth of the contents of the *che* clause cannot be doubted. Thus, when we open a biscuit tin and find that all the

biscuits have gone, the question *Chi è che ha mangiato i biscotti?* 'Who was it that ate the biscuits?' is more perspicuous than its non-clefted counterpart, in that it suggests that we are faced with evidence that the biscuits are missing. The same type of clefted wh-question can also suggest that, rather than being unknown, the answer has slipped the attention or memory of the interlocutors (D'Achille, Proietti, and Viviani 2005:264). This interpretation is aided by the use of the past tense (Who/what was that . . . ?).

Having introduced the word orders that are pragmatically motivated, and the principal pragmatically marked constructions of Italian, we shall now proceed to a discussion of the encoding of information structure in the left periphery of the Italian sentence.

23.4 The left periphery of the sentence

Since the first studies of theme and rheme in Italian, attention has focused on the impact of these notions on the order of constituents within the sentence and, in particular, on syntactic constructions such as left dislocation and right dislocation (see, e.g., Gruppo di Padova 1974 and some of the contributions in Stammerjohann 1986). The results and findings of these studies converged in thorough descriptions and analyses of the different types of topic and focus and their distribution (see, in particular, Benincà 1986; Benincà et al. 2001; Cinque 1983; 1990; Rizzi 1990) and paved the way for the development of the generative conception of the so-called left periphery of the clause (Rizzi 1997), that is, the syntactic area to the left of the canonical pre-verbal subject position (see also §21.2.2).

The impact of this seminal work was twofold. On the one hand, it launched the cartographic enterprise internationally, based on the assumption that all languages exhibit a richly articulated hierarchy of functional projections with specific meanings (see Cinque and Rizzi 2010 and Rizzi and Bocci 2017 for overviews of syntactic cartography). More specifically, the work of Benincà and Rizzi led to the idea of breaking down the complementizer phrase (CP) into a

sequence of functional projections. On the other hand, availing himself of Italian data, Rizzi (1997) presented a syntactically integrated and fine-grained analysis of the two major information-structure notions, topic and focus, which directly encode topic and focus features in the syntactic structure, as illustrated in (30) (where Top* means that recursion of topics is possible).

30 [Force [Top* [Foc [Top* [Fin [IP . . .]]]]]]

Within the studies of information structure, it is especially the detailed analysis of the left periphery of Italian that has served as a benchmark for comparative studies, not only of closely related languages and dialects, but also of typologically distant languages.

Following the cartographic model, the evidence for the distribution of topics and focus in the left periphery of the clause is based on their relative order in relation to other elements occurring in the left periphery. In embedded contexts such as (31), both topic and focus must follow the finite complementizer *che* 'that', which lexicalizes the highest complementizer position, Force, expressing declarative force. In non-finite contexts, by contrast, topic and focus must precede prepositional complementizers such as *di* 'of', which lexicalize the lowest complementizer position Fin, expressing properties related to the (non-)finiteness and the modality of the clause (cf. 32). With respect to their relative order, as we can see in (31), a topic can either precede or follow a focus, thus justifying its sandwiched representation in (30).[8]

31 Credo [che]$_{Force}$ [a Gianni,]$_{Top}$ [QUESTO,]$_{Foc}$ [domani]$_{Top}$ gli
think.1SG COMP to Gianni this tomorrow him.DAT=
dovremmo dire.
should.1PL say.INF
'I think that tomorrow we should say this to Gianni.' (adapted from Rizzi 1997:295)

32 Gianni pensa, [il tuo libro,]$_{Top}$ [di]$_{Fin}$ conoscerlo bene.
Gianni think.3SG the your book of know.INF=it well
'Gianni thinks that he knows your book well.' (adapted from Rizzi 1997:309)

This positional evidence is then supplemented by further syntactic differences of the categories associated with the distinct projections. A direct comparison of the syntactic operations that lead topic and focus to their designated projections within the left periphery of the clause (namely, clitic left/right dislocation and focus fronting) shows significant syntactic differences between these two categories (Rizzi

1997:§4; see also Benincà et al. 2001; Cinque 1990). Focus is unique, in that focalization of two syntactic constituents in the left periphery is ruled out and there can only be one focus per sentence (33), whereas a clause can contain more than one topic (34), insofar as this is compatible with the possible arguments and adjuncts and limitedly to processing constraints—hence the recursive representation of the topic projections in (30) (an assumption shared with work in other theoretical frameworks; see, e.g., Bentley 2023).[9]

33 a **È GIORGIO che CARLO ha visto.
be.3SG Giorgio COMP Carlo have.3SG see.PTCP

b **Che cosa CARLO ha comprato?
what Carlo have.3SG buy.PTCP

c ??IL BURRO ha comprato *anche* *Carlo.*
the butter have.3SG buy.PTCP also Carlo

d ??Il BURRO ha comprato *solo* *Carlo.*
the butter be.3SG buy.PTCP only Carlo (Benincà et al. 2001:150)

'Only Carlo bought the butter.'

34 Di vestiti, a me, Gianni, in quel negozio, non mi ce ne ha
of clothes to me Gianni in that shop NEG me= there= of.them=have.3SG
mai comprati.
ever buy.PTCP

'Gianni has never bought me any clothes in that shop.' (Cinque 1990:58)

A fronted focus is incompatible with a fronted wh-phrase, irrespective of the relative order (see *Che cosa* in 33b and *A Gianni* in35). This has been taken as evidence for the competition between focus fronting and wh-movement for the same target projection, that is, FocP. Topics and wh-elements are instead compatible and can indeed co-occur, in the fixed order Top-Wh (cf. 36).

35 a **A GIANNI che cosa hai detto (, non a Piero)?
to Gianni what have.2SG tell.PTCP NEG to Piero

b ** Che cosa A GIANNI hai detto (, non a Piero)?
what to Gianni have.2SG tell.PTCP NEG to Piero (Rizzi 1997:291)

36 a A Gianni, che cosa gli hai detto?
to Gianni what him.DAT= have.2SG tell.PTCP
'To Gianni, what did you tell him?'

b ** Che cosa, a Gianni, gli hai detto?
what to Gianni him.DAT= have.2SG tell.PTCP (Rizzi 1997:291)

Focus fronting is inconsistent with clitic resumption (37a), while dislocated topics can be picked up by a resumptive clitic on the verb; the resumptive clitic is obligatory in the case of dislocated direct objects (37b):

37 a TUO FRATELLO ho visto / **l' ho visto.
your brother have.1SG see.PTCP him= have.1SG see.PTCP
'I saw your brother.'

b I giornali, Giorgio **(li) compra alla stazione.
the newspapers Giorgio them= buy.3SG at.the station
'The newspapers, Giorgio buys them at the station.'

These syntactic differences between focus fronting and topicalization are taken as evidence in favour of the dichotomy between quantificational and non-quantificational dependencies. A quantificational dependency involves an operator and a variable; the variable is generally in an argument position (the trace) and the operator takes a set of possible values and evaluates the sentence in its scope for those values. Focus fronting is a type of quantificational movement in that the focus phrase acts as an operator that makes use of a range of values which are assigned to the variable. By contrast, topic dislocation is not quantificational because the value assigned to the variable (the trace) in the interpretation is constant and does not vary. This distinction is further supported by two additional differences between topic and focus. First, only focus fronting shows so-called weak crossover effects (38a), which result from the fact that a quantificational configuration cannot contain a pronoun that is interpreted as co-referential with the moved element, whereas topics do not show them (38b). Second, bare quantifiers can be focus-fronted, but they cannot be dislocated as

topics, as illustrated in (39) and (40) (examples from Rizzi 1990:290). Bare quantifiers are quantifiers that need to bind a variable, but since there is no variable in the topic structure, they cannot be dislocated topics.

38 a ??GIANNI$_i$ sua$_i$ madre ha sempre apprezzato ~~GIANNI$_i$~~ (non Piero).
Gianni his mother have.3SG always admire.PTCP NEG Piero
'His mother has always admired Gianni, not Piero.'

b Gianni$_i$, sua$_i$ madre lo$_i$ ha sempre apprezzato.
Gianni his mother him= have.3SG always admire.PTCP
'His mother has always admired Gianni.'

39 a **Nessuno, lo ho visto.
no.one him= have.1SG see.PTCP

b **Tutto, lo ho fatto.
everything it= have.1SG do.PTCP

40 a NESSUNO ho visto.
no.one have.1SG see.PTCP
'I saw no one.'

b TUTTO ho fatto.
everything have.1SG do.PTCP
'I did everything.'

A further tenet of the cartographic approach is that the functional heads and the relevant syntactic features provide specific instructions at the interface, so that the corresponding semantic-pragmatic interpretations are activated, and the appropriate prosodic contours are assigned. In other words, within this approach, the syntactic representations determine the interpretive and prosodic properties of the relevant structure. Rizzi (1997) points out the interpretive differences between topic and focus, which are involved in different sentence partitions, namely topic-comment and focus-presupposition. More fine-grained interpretive differences and prosodic distinctions are however developed in subsequent studies (cf. §23.4.2 and §23.5).

Following the core assumptions of syntactic cartography, expansions and modifications of the map of the left periphery in (30) have been proposed, either by suggesting the addition of further elements and functional projections (Rizzi 2001; 2004b) or by

deepening the analysis of the interface properties of certain categories (Benincà and Poletto 2004; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010; Cruschina 2012a; Bianchi, Bocci, and Cruschina 2015; 2016). Once again, these proposals have largely been motivated by Italian data, which formed the initial basis for much subsequent cross-linguistic work on the left periphery.

In what follows, we will limit the discussion to the development of the left periphery concerning information structure, thus mostly topic and focus.

23.4.1 Types of topic

Italian, as well as other Romance languages, allows multiple types of dislocation into the left periphery. Several studies have associated the different types of topic with distinct hierarchically ordered projections (Benincà and Poletto 2004; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010; Cruschina 2012a). Benincà and Poletto's classification in (41) is mainly based on the syntactic properties that correlate with the different functions of the topic constituent, while Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) types in (42) are defined in information-structural terms and their distinctions are supported by both syntactic and prosodic evidence:

41 Hanging Topics > Scene-Setting > Left Dislocated Topics > Listed Items > Focus…

(Benincà and Poletto 2004)

42 Aboutness-shift Topic > Contrastive Topic > Focus > Familiar/Given Topic…

(Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007)

Studies on topicalization in Italian have contributed to the distinction between two types of topic with distinct grammatical properties: *aboutness topic* (AT) and *given topic* (GT) (see Cruschina 2021a; Cruschina, Giurgea, and Remberger 2022). Aboutness topics correspond to the traditional definition of topic as what the sentence is about (Reinhart 1981) and can be further distinguished into *shifting* or *continuing* topics, depending on whether the sentence topic introduces a change or preserves a previous topic. Aboutness topics need not correspond to old or active information (Reinhart 1981), but since their function is to indicate the topic of an utterance,

they are typically familiar, known, or accessible to both the speaker and addressee (Gundel 1988; Benincà et al. 2001:159). In contrast, given topics convey old and anaphoric information and resume background knowledge, so that we can state that the function of clitic right dislocation is not to mark topicality (or aboutness), but rather givenness.[10]

43 a Giorgio$_{AT}$, i giornali$_{GT}$, li compra alla stazione.
Giorgio the newspapers them= buy.3SG at.the station
'Giorgio buys the newspapers at the station.'

b A Giacomo$_{AT}$, Maddalena (gli) regalerà un orsacchiotto.
to Giacomo Maddalena him.DAT= give.FUT.3SG a teddy.bear
'Maddalena will give Giacomo a teddy bear (as a present).'

c (Di) passeggiate$_{AT}$, Martina ne fa molte.
of strolls Martina of.them= make.3SG many
'Martina often goes for a stroll.'

d Alice$_{AT}$, (ci) andrà l' anno prossimo, in America$_{GT}$.
Alice there= go.FUT.3SG the next year in America
'Alice will go to America next year.' (adapted from Benincà et al. 2001:158f.)

The distinction between aboutness topics and given topics is further supported by syntactic differences. First of all, an (Italian) sentence can only contain one aboutness topic, but there can be more than one given topic.[11] In the case of multiple topics, the aboutness topic typically corresponds to the first dislocated constituent (cf. 43a, d). In addition, when looking at their distribution in subordinate clauses, it emerges that embedded aboutness topics are rather limited and are only possible in root-like embedded clauses, namely clauses which are endowed with illocutionary force, while the distribution of given topics is unrestricted (Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). Indeed, Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010:77) point out that embedded aboutness topics are very scanty in naturalistic corpora; one of the few examples that they found is given in (44). On the contrary, given topics can occur in any type of subordinate clause, including if-clauses (45).

44 Mi dicono [un gran turismo]$_{AT}$ che due mattine fa
me= tell.3PL a tourist bus COMP two mornings ago
han dovuto farlo rientrare dal giro di città.
have.3PL must.PTCP make.INF=it go.back.INF from.the tour of city

'I am told that two days ago, they had a tourist bus go back from the city tour.'
(Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010:77)

45 A: Il riso è già pronto.
the rice be.3SG already ready

'The rice is ready.'

B: Vabbé: se [il riso]$_{GT}$ l' hai già cotto, apparecchia la tavola.
well if the rice it= have.2SG already cook.PTCP set.IMP.2SG the table

'Well, if you've already cooked the rice, lay the table. (Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010:65)

The distinction is further corroborated on a crosslinguistic level. While the dislocation of aboutness topics is available in several languages, given topics can be marked by means other than syntactic. In English, for example, givenness and given topics are only marked prosodically (see Selkirk 1984; Schwarzschild 1999), while in Italian they are marked both prosodically and syntactically through left or right dislocation of given topics. This also explains why in subordinate contexts topicalization is not accepted in English: only given topics can be dislocated in embedded contexts but, unlike Italian, English does not resort to the dislocation of given topics (see also Haegeman 2012).

As for *contrastive topics*, labelled as listed items in Benincà and Poletto (2004), their formal characterization for Italian directly reflects the description of previous work on Germanic languages, where they are also fronted and distinguished by a specific prosodic profile (see Jackendoff 1972; Büring 1999; 2003; Krifka 2007). From an interpretive viewpoint, contrastive topics subdivide the discourse topic (or the question under discussion) into two sub-topics (with *aboutness* properties), creating oppositional pairs (44):

44 [CONTEXT: A farm producing a set of goods that are known to the people involved in the conversation]

La	frutta	la	regaliamo,	la	verdura	la	vendiamo.	
the	fruit	it=	give.1PL	the	vegetables	it	sell.1PL	

'We give away fruit for free, while we sell the vegetables.' (Benincà and Poletto 2004:67)

45 a

Il	vino	lo	porto	io,	la	torta	la	porti	tu.
the	wine	it=	take.1SG	I,	the	cake	it=	take.2SG	you

'You take the wine, I'll take the cake.'

b

** Lo	porto	io	il	vino,	la	porti	tu	la	torta.	
it=	take.1SG	I	the	wine	it=	take.2SG	you	the	cake	(Benincà et al. 2001:176)

As for their distribution, contrastive topics can only be dislocated to the left (45). Moreover, Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010) show that in Italian contrastive topics can occur in subordinate clauses with a propositional denotation.

Scene-setting constituents are sometimes treated as topics (Benincà and Poletto 2004), being labelled as scene-setting topics in Lambrecht (1994), frame-setting topics in Krifka (2007), or limiting topics in Frascarelli (2017). Examples are given in (46):

46 a

[Nella radio]$_{space}$,	chiaramente,	sono	tutti	professionisti.	
in.the radio.station	clearly	be.3PL	all	professionals	

'At the radio station, clearly, they are all professionals.'

b

[Tre	mesi	più	tardi]$_{Time}$,	hanno	deciso	di	sposarsi.
three	months	more	late	have.3PL	decide.PTCP	of	marry.INF=REFL

'Three months later they decided to get married.' (Frascarelli 2017:486, 488)

In fact, these constituents are different from the topic types that we have outlined so far: the sentence is not *about* them (cf. §23.2), they do not convey old information, and are not necessarily related to the question under discussion. Their function is simply to limit or restrict the domain of applicability of the predication (see Chafe 1976; Krifka 2007; Frascarelli 2017).

23.4.2 Types of focus

The seminal work on focus fronting in Italian was based on the distinction between *(new) information focus* and *contrastive focus* (see Rizzi 1997; Benincà and Poletto 2004; Frascarelli 2017). This

distinction is particularly important because only contrastive focus allows focus fronting in Italian. Subsequent studies, however, attempted to set out a better definition of the multifaceted notion of contrast by proposing different types of focus (Bianchi and Bocci 2012; Cruschina 2012a; Bianchi 2013; Bianchi, Bocci, and Cruschina 2015; 2016; Cruschina 2021b; 2022). This focus typology allows not only a more precise understanding of the pragmatic properties associated with focus and focus fronting, but also a better characterization of the pragmatic conditions that licence focus fronting in Italian.[12]

The starting point for this work is the definition of focus at the propositional level as the element that introduces a set of alternatives into the context, which share the same background (Rooth 1992). Different interpretations of focus arise from the way in which the set of alternatives is exploited pragmatically, depending on certain properties of the alternatives and on the association with specific implicatures. We can distinguish the following subtypes (adapted from Cruschina 2021b:5):

47 a *information focus*: the set of alternatives is a contextually open set, which is only pragmatically delimited;
b *corrective focus*: correction of explicitly given alternatives (Bianchi and Bocci 2012);
c *mirative focus*: the proposition asserted is more unlikely or unexpected with respect to the alternative propositions (Cruschina 2012a; Bianchi 2013).

In Italian, information focus is typically realized in a post-verbal position (cf. 48; see also §23.3), whereas focus fronting obtains when it involves either corrective (49) or mirative focus (50):

48 Q: Chi ha aperto la porta?
who have.3SG open.PTCP the door
'Who opened the door?'

A: L' ha aperta **Giorgio.**
it= have.3SG open.PTCP Giorgio
'Giorgio opened it.'

49 A: Gianni ha invitato Lucia.
Gianni have.3SG invite.PTCP Lucia
'Gianni invited Lucia.'

B: MARINA ha invitato.
Marina have.3SG invite.PTCP
'He invited Marina.' (Bianchi and Bocci 2012: 7)

50 [Context: Anna and Beatrice talk about Lea, Gianni, and their recent wedding.]
E io che pensavo che non avessero nemmeno un
and I COMP think.PST.IPFV.1SG COMP NEG have.PST.SBJV.3PL even a
soldo! Indovina un po'?! **Alle Maldive** sono andati in viaggio di nozze!
penny guess a little to.the Maldives be.3PL go.PTCP in journey of wedding
'I thought they were penniless! Guess what! They went to the Maldives on honeymoon!'
(Bianchi, Bocci, and Cruschina 2016:6)

Corrective focus corresponds to a more precise characterization of the examples of contrastive focus discussed in relation to focus fronting in the previous literature—in fact, to a specific use of contrastive focus. According to Bianchi and Bocci (2012), corrective focus performs a correction between the focus value of the asserted proposition (i.e., the corrective claim) and an explicit focal alternative that comes from a previous speech act (i.e., the corrected antecedent). Bianchi, Bocci, and Cruschina (2015; 2016) analyse the mirative import of mirative focus as the result of an association between focus fronting and the conventional implicature that there is at least one focus alternative proposition that is more likely than the asserted proposition. This implicature explains the effect of surprise and unexpectedness that is often associated with focus fronting. An important property of mirative focus, which differentiates it from information and corrective focus, is that the background need not be given in the context, as in (50).

23.4.3 The 'low' left periphery

Left dislocation and focus fronting are syntactic operations that directly involve the left periphery of the clause. From a theoretical viewpoint, direct links to the relevant left-peripheral projections have also been proposed even when the focus is clause-internal and for right dislocation (Rizzi 1997; Cardinaletti 2002; Samek-Lodovici 2006; 2015; Bianchi and Bocci 2012; Bocci 2013; Bianchi 2019). In other analyses, both the differences in linear order and the distinct interpretive properties have led to the postulation of a 'low' left periphery. Thus, Belletti (2001; 2004) proposes that the architecture of the domain below the inflexional locus of the sentential core (IP) and above the verb phrase (v-VP) parallels the structure of the clause-external left periphery, in that it comprises a similar array of functional projections dedicated to discourse notions like focus and topic:

51 [Top [Foc [Top [v-VP . . .]]]]

Even though they are similar in nature, in Italian these projections are specialized for specific types of focus and topic, that is, information focus and right-dislocated given topics. According to this analysis, the post-verbal, sentence final position of information foci in Italian is therefore not *in situ*, but in the low focus position associated with the v-VP periphery, thus explaining (a type of) subject inversion as an instance of focalization. Indeed, Belletti (2001; 2004) observes that the left-peripheral focus position cannot be used in Italian to express information focus (e.g., in a clausal answer to a wh-question; cf. (52)). We will return to this issue in §23.4.4.

52 Q: Chi ha parlato?
who have.3SG speak.PTCP
'Who spoke?'

A1: Ha parlato **Gianni.**
have.3SG speak.PTCP Gianni
'Gianni spoke.'

A2: # **Gianni** ha parlato.
Gianni have.3SG speak.PTCP (Belletti 2004:21)

Similarly, right-dislocated topics, which present several differences with respect to left dislocation, occur in dedicated topic

positions within the left periphery of the lower periphery (see also Cecchetto 1999; 2000):

53 Io l' ho visto, Gianni.
I him= have.1SG see.PTCP Gianni
'I saw him, Gianni.' (Cecchetto 1999:49)

The hypothesis of a low left periphery has also had a wide resonance beyond Italian. In particular, the clause-internal focus position has been viewed as the locus of the syntactic encoding for focus in languages that do not allow focus fronting, as well as for *in situ* wh-phrases (see Bonan 2021 for an overview).

23.4.4 The syntactic distribution of focus

Starting with Benincà et al. (2001), Cinque (1990), and Rizzi (1990; 1997), an important issue in the literature on information structure in Italian has been the distribution of focus within the sentence and, in particular, focus fronting, the syntactic operation that brings the focus constituent to a sentence-initial, pre-verbal position. However, the left peripheral focus position is rather restricted. We have already seen that, in Italian, focus fronting is sensitive to the type of focus and that information focus does not occur in this position. The comparative study in Cruschina and Mayol (2025a) provides strong empirical evidence for this view: in Italian information focus is almost always realized in a post-verbal position. The study was based on a production experiment with thirty-two participants from different regions of Italy (twenty females, twelve males, mean age = 39.7) who had to answer questions like that in (54a), here provided in English only for the sake of space, where some lexical material was inserted after the question that is asked in the first turn of dialogue in a role-playing situation. This elicitation technique aimed at the spontaneous production of full sentences rather than fragments in the answers by the participants. An example of an answer is given in (54b):

54 a You are a high school teacher. As is often the case, you make your pupils check and correct the answers of a fellow student's test. During the discussion of the test, Jordi, one of the pupils, asks you: "**Who checked my answers?** There is a comment here that I don't understand and I would like a clarification." You reply:

b Le ha corrette **Mattia.**
them= have.3SG correct.PTCP Mattia
'Mattia corrected them.'

The results are summarized in Table 23.1 and show that the participants overwhelmingly produced post-verbal foci both with subject and with object foci, along with a smaller number of pre-verbal foci and of clefts:

Table 23.1 Percentage (and tokens) of elicited information foci

	Italian	
	subject	object
post-verbal	84.7 (183)	98.2 (224)
pre-verbal	6.9 (15)	1.8 (4)
cleft	8.3 (18)	0 (0)

Source: Cruschina and Mayol (2025a).

It is widely acknowledged that for focus fronting to be possible, the focus must be associated with either a corrective or a mirative interpretation (see, however, Brunetti 2004 for a different view, and Cruschina 2012a; 2016; 2021b for a discussion of the different behaviour of some Italian dialects). The acceptability of focus fronting with corrective and mirative focus has been confirmed in recent experimental studies on the distribution of focus (see Bianchi and Bocci 2012; Bianchi, Bocci, and Cruschina 2015; Ylinärä, Carella, and Frascarelli 2023). The same studies, however, have also pointed out that this acceptability is significantly reduced when compared with post-verbal focalization, which is in fact always the preferred

option (see Bianchi and Bocci 2012; Bianchi 2019; Cruschina and Mayol 2025a, 2025b for theoretical accounts of the optionality and of the different degrees of acceptability).

23.5 Information structure and prosody

There is general consensus that in the Romance languages dislocated topics form independent intonational phrases. This has also been shown for Italian, both for clitic left-dislocated and clitic right-dislocated topics (see Gili Fivela 1999; 2002; Frascarelli 2000; Bocci 2013; see also Poletto and Bocci 2016 for an overview in comparison to other Romance languages). The specific realization of these intonational phrases is subject to a number of factors, including regional variation (see Gili Fivela et al. 2015), but within a cartographic approach, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) have argued for a direct association between topic types (cf. §23.3.1) and pitch accents: L*+H for aboutness topics, H* for contrastive topics, and L* for given topics (see also Brunetti, D'Imperio, and Cangemi 2010; Torregrossa 2012).

It has also been noted that, unlike clitic left-dislocated topics, clitic right-dislocated topics are characterized by a lack of intonational prominence, being realized with a prosodic contour that can be defined as low and flat. According to Bocci and Avesani (2011) and Bocci (2013), this contour is determined by the fact that clitic right-dislocated topics are typically preceded by the focus of the sentence and hence subject to post-focal pitch compression. In yes/no questions, however, clitic right-dislocated topics generally show a different behaviour and can be associated with main prominence. On the basis of corpus data, Crocco (2013) shows that while in declarative clauses the clitic right-dislocated constituent is characterized by a lack of prominence and by a preceding pitch drop (73.7 per cent of cases), in 84.9 per cent of the yes/no questions analysed the main prominence falls on the dislocated constituent, as if they were neutral questions with an unmarked word order.

According to Crocco, this type of prosodic grammaticalization correlates with the functional observation that in yes/no questions, clitic right-dislocated topics are not necessarily given, but can be used to mark topic continuity or to introduce discourse-new referents (see Berruto 1986b; Benincà et al. 2001), with the result that this construction can even be used—and in the spoken language it is indeed often used—in out-of-the-blue contexts:

55 a Lo vuole un caffè?
it= want.3SG a coffee
'Do you want a coffee?' (Berrutto 1986b:65)

b Il cane ce l' ha il guinzaglio?
the dog there=it= have.3SG the leash
'Is the dog on a leash?' (Crocco 2013:40)

The strong tendency to place the main prominence at the end of yes/no questions when the last constituent is a clitic right-dislocated element is however not exclusively determined by this exceptional function in the interrogative sentence type. Bocci (2013:ch. 6) discusses other factors that affect the prosodic realization of clitic right dislocation in declarative clauses.

As a general crosslinguistic property, narrow foci are associated with main prominence. In the absence of a narrow focus, the main prominence is assigned to the rightmost constituent of the sentence, where the nuclear stress falls (see Cinque 1993; Zubizarreta 1998; 2016). This amounts to saying that there is no strict one-to-one correspondence between information structure and prosodic marking, and a certain degree of ambiguity persists, especially in combination with the unmarked word order SVO and with the default assignment of the main prominence to the rightmost constituent of the sentence. In (56)–(57) we indicate in bold the prosodically prominent constituent:

56 Rosalia ha rotto il **vaso.**
Rosalia have.3SG break.PTCP the vase
'Rosalia broke the vase.'

57 a [Rosalia ha rotto il **vaso**]$_{Foc}$

b Rosalia [ha rotto il **vaso**]$_{Foc}$

c Rosalia ha rotto [il **vaso**]$_{Foc}$

The syntactically and prosodically unmarked sentence in (56) can identify a structure with broad focus on the entire sentence (57a), which would be a felicitous answer to the question *What happened?*, but it could also associate with an information structure in which the verb phrase falls in the focus domain (57b), for example in answering the question *What did Rosalia do?*. Finally, the same sentence is compatible with a narrow focus interpretation of the direct object (57c), as in a reply to the question *What did Rosalia break?*.

Even though the position of the main prominence is the same in all cases, the actual realization of the focal pitch accent may vary according to the focus type or extension. D'Imperio (2002) shows that in the regional Italian of Naples narrow focus aligns with L+H*, while the final constituent in broad-focus sentences aligns with H+L*. Other studies based on different varieties of Italian, however, argue that the alignment with different pitch accents does not depend on the extension of the focus but, rather, on the focus type. For Tuscan Italian, Avesani and Vayra (2003), Bocci and Avesani (2011), and Bocci (2013) show that contrastive and information focus are marked by different nuclear pitch accents (L+H* [or H+H*] for contrastive focus, H+L* for information focus) and that broad focus sentence displays the same pitch accent as information focus (namely, H+L*). See also Frascarelli and Stortini (2019) for similar results.

No ambiguity arises when the focus is fronted to the left periphery. In this case too, distinct pitch accents associate with different types of focus (cf. §23.3.2). Bianchi, Bocci, and Cruschina (2015:11; 2016) show that while corrective focus (cf. Figure 23.2) displays the typical nuclear pitch accent associated with contrastive/corrective focus (L+H*), mirative focus aligned with either H* or H+L* (cf. Fig. 23.1).

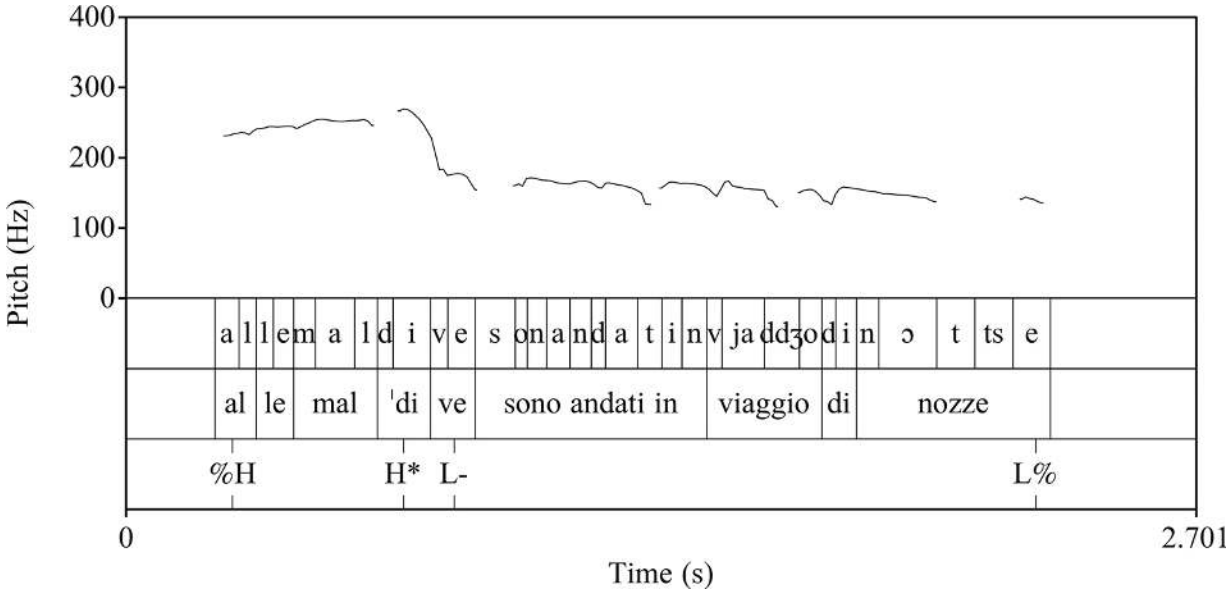


Figure 23.1 Pitch contour of the utterance with Mirative FF (cf. 50): ***Alle Maldive*** *sono andati in viaggio di nozze!* 'They went to the Maldives on honeymoon!'

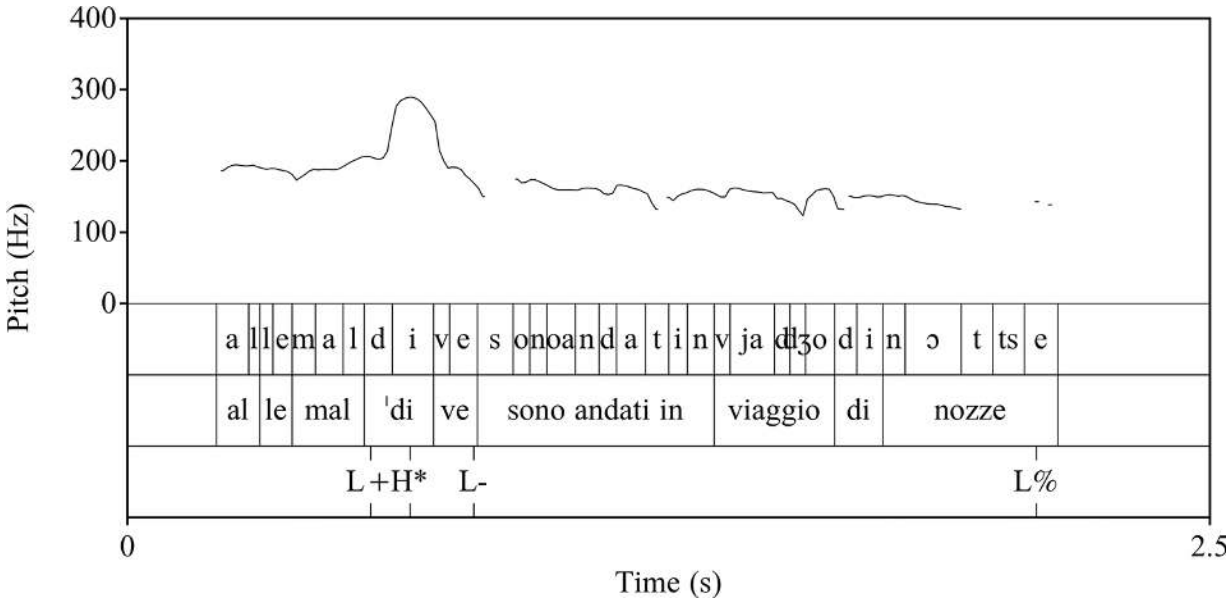


Figure 23.2 Pitch contour of the utterance with Corrective FF: *Alle Maldive sono andati in viaggio di nozze (, non alle Isole Vergini).* 'They went to the Maldives on honeymoon (, not to the Virgin Islands).'

This prosodic evidence confirms that, in Italian, the distinction between these two focus types is not only pragmatic but also grammatical in nature: corrective and mirative foci are

grammaticalized as two distinct types of focus marked by different phonological properties.

We conclude this section with a note on a distinctive prosodic peculiarity of Italian: the disassociation between focus and main prominence in wh-questions. Under the assumption that wh-phrases are focal, we would expect them to be associated with the nuclear pitch accent. Although this holds true for some languages (e.g., Hungarian, Romanian), this does not happen in others (e.g., English, Spanish), where main prominence is by default assigned to the stressed syllable of the last constituent of the sentence—similarly to what happens in unmarked declarative clauses (see Ladd 1996). Italian wh-questions (with a bare wh-phrase) display neither pattern, in that main prominence is assigned neither to the wh-phrase nor to the rightmost constituent. Instead, it is exceptionally assigned to the lexical verb (Calabrese 1982; Ladd 1996; Marotta 2001; Bocci, Bianchi, and Cruschina 2021) even though the verb is not semantically focal and the post-verbal constituent is not dislocated:

(58) a. Chi **canta** questa canzone?
who sing.3SG this song
'Who is singing this song?'

b. Dove hai **comprato** il latte?
where have.2SG buy.PTCP the milk
'Where did you buy the milk?'

The wh-element *perché* 'why' is an exception to this generalization, in that it attracts the main prominence, at least when no other constituent of the sentence is marked as narrow focus (Marotta 2001; Bocci, Cruschina, and Rizzi 2021). Yes/no questions, by contrast, show the same prosodic pattern as declarative clauses: when no narrow focus is present, main prominence is by default assigned to the last constituent of the sentence (see Bocci and Pozzan 2014).

23.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have pursued a twofold objective. On the one hand, we have discussed how information is arranged in Italian so as

to reflect the temporary mind state and the background knowledge of the interlocutors or readers, as well as key dimensions of variation such as register and the written/spoken media. On the other hand, we have reflected on the theoretical contribution of the debate on information structure in Italian. We hope to have convincingly argued that this debate has considerably enhanced the understanding of theticity vis-à-vis the topic-comment dichotomy, the typology of topics and foci, and how these are expressed in morphosyntax and prosody. At the same time, the literature on information structure in Italian has shed light on the syntax of the sentence, engendering theoretical debate couched primarily, though not exclusively, in the cartographic framework.

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[1] In spoken registers, focal or key information may also be signalled by a variety of discourse markers (e.g., *proprio* 'exactly', *appunto* 'precisely', *ecco* 'that is, here/there is', *(ti) dico* 'that is, I'm telling you', *voglio dire* 'I mean'; see Bazzanella 2001a:247).

[2] Given that the domain of focus could extend to the whole sentence, we do not use any typographical strategies to indicate it in (1a–b). See note 5 for the typographical conventions adopted to mark the domain of focus in other cases.

[3] For salience in the spoken language, and its relevance to ellipsis, see Sornicola (1981:76f.).

[4] Italian has been compared with Catalan in exhibiting a degree of word order flexibility, associated with information structural factors, which is higher than that of French and lower than that of Spanish, Romanian, or Sicilian (Bentley 2007; 2008b; Leonetti 2017; Cruschina and Mayol 2025a). For the encoding of focus in VS order see also Belletti and Shlonsky (1995) and Belletti (2004).

[5] We mark information and mirative focus in bold and corrective focus in small capitals. We do not use any typographical convention to mark broad focus (see §23.4.2 for the focus typology).

[6] See Carlier and Lahousse (2023) for a unified analysis of existentials and *c'è/il y* as presentatives in Italian and French.

[7] *Ecco* has a much broader range of textual and anaphoric functions, which we cannot discuss in this context, where we are merely concerned with presentational '*ecco* + NP + clause'. For detailed discussion see Bazzanella (1994:161; 2001a:227) and De Cesare (2010; 2011).

[8] The possibility of having a topic constituent after a fronted focus has been disputed in some subsequent work (see Benincà and Poletto 2004; Bentley 2008b; Samek-Lodovici

2015; see however Bocci 2013 for an analysis of the types of topic that can appear in this position).

[9] In 23.3 we provided an example which suggests that the domain of focus can include more than one syntactic constituent in the latter portion of the sentence: if the subject of (1a), repeated here as (i) for convenience, has already been introduced into discourse, then the domain of focus includes not only the verb and its complement, but also an adjunct, *a pieni voti* 'with full marks'.

(i) Paolo **ha superato a pieni voti l' esame di fisica.**
Paolo have.3SG pass.PTCP at full marks the exam of physics
'Paolo passed the physics exam with full marks.'

Since the adjunct is a modifier of the VP, or part thereof, we would argue that there is only one focal unit in this example, although it is not limited to a single syntactic constituent. The restriction of the domain of focus to a single syntactic constituent is, however, true of the left periphery.

[10] Given topics are also called *referential* or *familiar* topics in the relevant literature (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010; Cruschina 2012a). Following Vallduví (1992) and Vallduví and Engdahl (1996), Brunetti (2009) adopts the terms *link* and *tail* to cover the same distinction between aboutness topics and given topics.

[11] See De Cia, Ciconte, and Bentley (2022) for the relevance of the topic typology for object agreement with the active participle in old Italian.

[12] These studies do not attempt to outline the different functions and interpretations of focus (see Dik 1989 for an overview), but only the interpretations that are associated with distinct grammatical and prosodic properties.

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Chapter 24

Semantics

Chiara Gianollo

24.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses topics for which Italian evidence has been influential in shaping wider theoretical discussion. It focuses on items from the functional lexicon (grammatical words and morphemes), and particularly the nominal and verbal domains. See also §20.4.1 on adverbial modification, §19.3 on modification by means of adjectives and relative clauses, §21.3 (and §24.3.2) on facts related to clause combining. Meaning-related aspects of information structure are treated in Chapter 23. Lexical semantics is the topic of Chapter 25.

24.2 Determiners and quantifiers

24.2.1 Articles

The distribution and function of articles is described in Renzi (2001b). Italian evidence has figured prominently in the theoretical debate surrounding the syntax-semantics mapping within the nominal phrase (Longobardi 1994; Chierchia 1998).

Following a well-known Romance and cross-linguistic tendency, the forms of the Italian definite article originate in a demonstrative (Latin distal ILLE) and those of the (singular) indefinite article in the

numeral ‘one’ (Lat. UNUS). The indefinite article has no plural forms; a so-called ‘partitive article’ is used instead.[1]

In contemporary Italian determinerless (bare) nouns have a very restricted distribution. This has been attributed to an interplay of semantic and syntactic conditions. In Longobardi (1994; 2001b), a parametric choice governs the strength of the D position in languages, and in certain cases leads to the presence of semantically expletive articles (motivated in terms of a syntactic requirement of the D position) and phonetically empty ones (covert determiners).

The definite article prototypically expresses identifiability, based on shared knowledge and uniqueness.[2] In the Fregean analysis, definite descriptions denote unique individuals and presuppose their descriptive content, presented as known to both speaker and hearer. In the plural, definite descriptions refer to maximal plural entities, the presupposition of uniqueness applying to the maximal sum that satisfies the description.

The descriptive content enables referential retrieval in various ways, yielding deictic, anaphoric, situationally or intrinsically unique readings, which vary in their degree of discourse integration (see Andorno 2003b:27–68 for discourse properties of Italian referential expressions).

In the deictic use (1), the definite description picks up a unique referent in the perceivable extralinguistic context:

1 Puoi passarmi **il cacciavite?**
can.2SG pass.INF=me the screwdriver
‘Can you pass me the screwdriver?’

In the anaphoric use (2), a nominal introduced by the definite article refers to an entity previously introduced into the discourse:

2 Anna ha comprato **una bicicletta nuova**, ma dopo poche settimane
Anna has bought a bicycle new but after few weeks
la bicicletta era già rotta.
the bicycle was already broken
‘Anna bought a new bicycle, but after a few weeks the bicycle was already broken.’

Associative anaphora is also possible: in (3) the definite nominal phrase refers to a part of the previously introduced referent, and this stereotypical association allows the use of the definite article even if the part is newly introduced.

3 Anna ha comprato **una bicicletta nuova**, ma dopo poche settimane
Anna has bought a bicycle new but after few weeks
la catena era già rotta.
the chain was already broken

'Anna bought a new bicycle, but after a few weeks the chain was already broken.'

In (4), the referent of the definite description is presented as situationally unique within the frame of events involved, which provides the necessary contextual restriction:

4 Siamo stati in vacanza in montagna. **L'albergo** era molto tranquillo.
we.are been in holiday in mountains the hotel was very quiet

'We were on holiday in the mountains. The hotel was very quiet.'

When the referential content is particularly rich, nominal phrases with the definite article can introduce discourse-new information, based on the presupposition that the hearer will be able to retrieve the referent in the broader context of shared knowledge, or to accommodate it (5):

5 **La strategia economica dell' Unione Europea** dovrà
the strategy economic of.the Union European must.FUT.3SG
cambiare nei prossimi anni
change.INF in.the coming years

'The European Union's economic strategy will have to change in the coming years.'

The definite article also accompanies nominals that intrinsically refer to unique entities (6):

6 **Il capitano della squadra** ha chiesto scusa.
The captain of.the team has asked pardon

'The team captain apologized.'

Proper names do not occur with the article in standard Italian (see Renzi 2001b:404–409 for the precise distribution). Longobardi (1994) assumes that proper names raise to occupy the D position themselves, because they are intrinsically referential (7a). When they do not raise (7b), the definite article is a semantically empty placeholder (an expletive article).

7 a **Roma antica** fu la città più importante del Mediterraneo.
Rome ancient was the city most important of.the Mediterranean

b **L' antica Roma** fu la città più importante del Mediterraneo.
the ancient Rome was the city most important of.the Mediterranean

'Ancient Rome was the most important city in the Mediterranean.' (Longobardi 1994:624)

Some uses of the definite article defy uniqueness, as with co-varying uses (Chierchia 1995) in which the interpretation of the

definite description depends on the interpretation of a quantificational expression (8):

8 Ciascun partecipante dovrà scrivere un resoconto
each participant must.FUT.3SG write.INF a report
del suo esperimento. Nella giornata conclusiva, ciascun
of.the his/her experiment. In.the day final each
partecipante leggerà il **resoconto** davanti al gruppo.
participant read.FUT.3SG the report in.front to.the group
'Each participant will have to write a report of his/her experiment. On the final day, each participant will read the report in front of the group.'

Another case is weak definite uses (in the sense of Carlson et al. 2006): these occur in stereotypical situations where identifiability (thus, discourse accessibility) is based on the familiarity of the situation, more than the uniqueness or familiarity of the referent (Leonetti 1999:793; Donazzan 2013).

9 La mia vicina mi ha visto dalla **finestra.**
the my neighbour me has seen from.the window
'My neighbour saw me from the window.'

Note that weak definites share interpretational properties with bare singulars that occur within a prepositional phrase, see (10a–b):

10 a Ieri ho preso il **treno** per andare al lavoro.
yesterday have.1SG taken the train to go.INF to.the work
'Yesterday I took the train to go to work.'

b Ieri sono andata al lavoro **in treno.**
Yesterday be.1SG gone to.the work in train
'Yesterday I went to work by train.'

One line of analysis relates weak uses in (9–10) to reference to kinds (Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts 2010): within an ontology in which individual entities can be objects or kinds (Carlson 1977; Dayal 2004), in cases such as (9–10) the noun denotes properties of a kind, rather than of an ordinary object. In this taxonomic interpretation, the definite article in (10a) still contributes uniqueness, but applies it to the level of kinds. To allow for these expressions to occur in episodic contexts like (9–10), specific shifting rules applying to verbal predicates must be assumed (Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts 2010:191f.). For alternative proposals maintaining an ordinary-object denotation for the noun, see, e.g., Donazzan (2013), who exploits the notion of weak familiarity, Espinal and Cyrino (2017) who capitalize on similarities between weak definites and cases treated as expletive articles, and Leonetti (2019) who proposes a

context-induced inferential strategy. In Leonetti (2019) the mismatch between the uniqueness presupposition and the situation is resolved by pragmatically resorting to types (or roles/functions in a frame). Leonetti's proposal (Leonetti 2019) has the advantage of suggesting a unification with so-called indefinite interpretations of plural definite nominal phrases like (11), in which *i ladri*, despite the definite article, denotes an undetermined group of unknown individuals (see Zamparelli 2002; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018; Gerards and Stark 2022):

11 Quest' estate mi sono entrati in casa i **ladri.**
this summer me= be.3PL entered in home the burglars
'This summer burglars got into my house.'

In these cases, the establishment of a stereotypical situation, which in Italian seems to be more freely contextually determined and therefore more widespread than in other Romance languages, triggers the pragmatically determined type reading, while maintaining the uniqueness presupposition and, thus, a uniform semantics for the definite article in all contexts (unlike alternative proposals such as Giusti 2015 or Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018, in which the definite article is not necessarily associated with uniqueness).

For Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2010), the use of the definite article in weak singular definites has parallels with the kind-referring use in (12), this time with a kind-selecting predicate:

12 **La rondine** è un uccello migratore.
The swallow is a bird migratory
'The swallow is a migratory bird.'

Plural definites can also refer to kinds (13):

13 **Le rondini** sono uccelli migratori.
the swallows are birds migratory
'Swallows are migratory birds.'

In these cases, kind-reference can be accounted for either by assuming a kind denotation for the noun (similar to Carlson 1977 and Chierchia 1998 for English bare plurals), or by assuming that the noun has ordinary-object denotation and the combination with the definite article yields a maximal plural individual with lifting of contextual domain restriction in connection with a kind-level predicate (Leonetti 1999:872–874 for Spanish). Alternatively, Longobardi (1994; 2001b) argued that in these cases the definite

article has purely expletive function, identifying syntactically the D position as an alternative to movement with kind-denoting nominals.

This discussion is more broadly connected to the interpretation of bare plurals in Italian. These cannot receive a kind interpretation (14a): they are typically interpreted as existentials (indefinites) (14b), and occur in limited syntactic contexts.[3] Distributional limitations have been attributed to the presence of an empty category, that is, a phonetically empty D position (Longobardi 1994; 2001b).

14 a **Elefanti di colore bianco sono estinti. (Longobardi 2001b:343)
elephants of colour white are extinct
'White-coloured elephants are extinct.'

b Elefanti di colore bianco hanno creato in passato
elephants of colour white have created in past
grande curiosità. (Longobardi 2001b:340)
great curiosity
'White-coloured elephants have aroused much curiosity in the past.'

Existential import can also be expressed by the so-called partitive article (15) (cf. §1.4.2.2, §19.2.1, §38.4.2):

15 Degli elefanti di colore bianco hanno creato in passato
PART elephants of colour white have created in past
grande curiosità. (Longobardi 2001b:344)
great curiosity
'White-coloured elephants have aroused much curiosity in the past.'

As mentioned, the partitive article, which originates as the combination of the ablative preposition *de* and the definite article in a partitive structure (Carlier and Lamiroy 2022), is traditionally considered the plural counterpart of the indefinite article (see Renzi 1982). It is also found in the singular with mass nouns (16):

16 A cena abbiamo bevuto del vino.
at dinner have.1PL drunk PART wine
'During dinner we drank wine.'

The partitive article is much discussed (Chierchia 1997; Storto 2003; Stark 2007; Zamparelli 2008a), and has received renewed attention within the broader system of indefinites (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016; 2018; 2020; Baldi and Savoia 2022; Carlier and Lamiroy 2022; Espinal and Cyrino 2022; Pinzin and Poletto 2022; Squartini 2022). One aspect of the debate concerns its determiner status, and connects to the actual role of partitivity in synchronic terms. In analyses such as Chierchia (1997) and Zamparelli (2008a),

partitive articles are truly partitive structures, connected to full partitives (17):

17 a Il cliente ha pagato **tre delle fatture.**
The client has paid three of.the bills
'The client has paid three of the bills.'

b Il cliente ha pagato **delle fatture.**
the client has paid PART bills
'The client has paid some bills.'

Analyses such as Storto (2003) or Cardinaletti and Giusti (2016) treat partitive articles as grammaticalized indefinite determiners. Cardinaletti and Giusti propose that the originally prepositional element occupies a position in the D projection, and the originally definite article has become a gender-number marker.

A further aspect involves the distribution of functions between the partitive articles and other indefinites. This relates to the interplay between the count vs mass distinction and number-marking (Delfitto and Schroten 1991; Stark 2007, 2008; Squartini 2022), and to the differences between the various formal options in their semantically and pragmatically determined meaning contribution, on which the debate is ongoing.

Plural indefinites introduced by the partitive article can receive a specific reading (18a) or a non-specific one (18b). Under a specific reading, the speaker has the referent in mind and the indefinite conveys an existential presupposition (see von Heusinger 2002 for specificity and its various subtypes). Under a non-specific reading, indefinites are non-presuppositional and have narrow scope with respect to co-occurring operators.

18 a Alla riunione ho incontrato **dei colleghi**
at.the meeting have.1SG met PART colleagues
che mi hanno dato un grande aiuto.
who me= have.IND.3PL given a great help
'At the meeting I met some colleagues who gave me a great help.'

b Francesco cerca **dei colleghi** che lo spingano
Francesco looks.for PART colleagues who him push.SBJV.3PL
a migliorarsi costantemente.
to improve.INF=REFL constantly
'Francesco is looking for colleagues who will push him to constantly improve.'

Non-specific readings without existential import pose a problem for theories according to which structures like (18) are inherently partitive, since partitives presuppose the existence of the set of which they denote a subset.

The specific vs non-specific ambiguity is parallel to what is observed with the singular indefinite article *un* (19):

19 a Alla riunione ho incontrato **un collega**
at.the meeting have.1SG met a colleague
che mi ha dato un grande aiuto.
who me= have.IND.3SG given a great help
'At the meeting I met a colleague who greatly helped me.'

b Francesco cerca **un collega** che lo spinga
Francesco looks.for a colleague who him push.SBJ.3SG
a migliorarsi costantemente.
to improve.INF=REFL constantly
'Francesco is looking for a colleague who will push him to constantly improve.'

Nominals introduced by the singular indefinite article can also receive a generic reading: in sentences such as (20) they designate a prototypical individual with the properties predicated by the noun, and the generic reading emerges in the interplay with modal and aspectual features of the sentence.

20 **Uno scienziato** non farebbe mai un' affermazione simile.
a scientist not make.COND.3SG never a statement similar
'A scientist would never make such a statement.'

Bare nouns have very limited distribution. Bare singulars, besides the weak definite cases seen in (10b), can occur with mass nouns (21), with count nouns in the scope of a negative operator (often in conventionalized expressions) (22), and when conjoined (23) (see Heycock and Zamparelli 2003):

21 Abbiamo bevuto **vino** tutta la sera.
have.1PL drunk wine all the evening
'We drank wine all evening.'

22 Questo studente non ha aperto **libro.**
this student not has opened book
'This student didn't open any book / didn't even open a book.'

23 Ho convinto **madre** e **figlio** a prendere il treno successivo.
Have.1SG convinced mother and son to take.INF the train next
'I convinced mother and child to take the next train.'

Bare nouns can also occur in predicative position, where they serve the function of property ascription (24), see Zamparelli (2008b):

24 Giovanni è **insegnante.**
Giovanni is teacher
'Giovanni is a teacher.'

In copular sentences, both definite (25a) and indefinite (25b) articles are possible with nominals in predicative function.

25 a Manzoni è **l' autore dei Promessi sposi.**
Manzoni is the author of.the *Promessi sposi*
'Manzoni is the author of *The Betrothed*.'

b Manzoni è **un autore molto famoso.**
Manzoni is a author very famous
'Manzoni is a very famous author.'

These uses raise important issues about the semantic characterization of articles, for which see Renzi (2001b:416–419), Salvi (2001b:163–167), and Acquaviva (2013:64–81).

24.2.2 Quantifiers

Nominal quantification in Italian has been the object of comprehensive descriptions (Longobardi 2001c; Crisma 2012) and numerous case studies. This section presents an overview of the main quantificational determiners with universal and existential force in their basic characterization, leaving aside more complex issues related to their syntactic and semantic distribution and scope properties.

Universal quantification is expressed by *tutto* 'all' and by distributive *ogni*, *ognuno*, *ciascuno* 'each'. Italian also has *entrambi* 'both', exhaustively quantifying over a binary set.

Tutto can combine with singular and plural nouns preceded by the definite article (26a–b) or by a demonstrative. It can float, that is, it can be found in a non-adjacent position linearly following the rest of the noun phrase (26c).

26 a Paolo ha mangiato **tutta** **la** **pasta.**
Paolo has eaten all the pasta
'Paolo ate all the pasta.'

b Paolo ha mangiato **tutti** **i** **biscotti.**
Paolo has eaten all the biscuits
'Paolo ate all the biscuits.'

c **Gli** **alberi** sono stati controllati **tutti.**
the trees be.3PL been checked all
'The trees were all checked.'

The distributive quantifiers combine with singular nouns; *ogni* has a determiner-like distribution (27a), *ognuno* is pronominal (27b); *ciascuno* can be pronominal or determiner-like. With *ogni* no quantifier floating is possible; *ognuno* and *ciascuno* can occur non-adjacently to the nominal to which they pertain, but in both cases it is clearly the pronominal variant that occurs in the floating position, since the nominal has its own determiner and independent number marking (27c).

27 a **Ogni** **candidato** ha ricevuto una penna.
each candidate has received a pen
'Each candidate received a pen.'

b **Ognuno** ha ricevuto una penna.
each has received a pen
'Each one received a pen.'

c **I** **candidati** hanno ricevuto una penna **ciascuno.**
the candidates have received a pen each
'The candidates received a pen each.'

Existential quantification is expressed through a complex inventory of elements with pronominal and determiner-like distribution, which, in addition to the system of indefinite articles seen in §24.2.1, convey special flavours of indefiniteness (e.g., epistemic, free-choice, polarity-sensitive). There is a lively debate as

to whether these elements lexically convey an existential quantifier or should be understood as introducing variables that interact with existential quantification at sentence level (Heim 2011). I follow the taxonomy adopted by Haspelmath (1997) in his semantic map for indefinites to present the most studied items.

Specific indefiniteness (cf. §24.2.1) can be expressed by plural *alcuni* (28).

28 Alla riunione ho incontrato **alcuni colleghi**
at.the meeting have.1SG met some colleagues
che mi hanno dato un grande aiuto.
who me= have.3PL given a great help
'At the meeting I met some colleagues who greatly helped me.'

Specific indefinites are characterized by wide scope with respect to other operators: (29) can only mean that there are some specific colleagues, who could be named if needed, whom I did not meet (and not that I did not meet any colleagues); in fact, *alcuni* is typically used to introduce new discourse referents.

29 Non ho incontrato **alcuni colleghi**
NEG have.1SG met some colleagues
'There are some colleagues whom I didn't meet.'

Other means to express specific readings are *un certo* (singular) 'a certain' / *certi* (plural) 'certain'.

Pronominal *qualcuno* and determiner-like *qualche* 'some or other' are best characterized as epistemic indefinites (roughly corresponding to the 'specific unknown' function in Haspelmath 1997). Epistemic, unlike specific, indefinites do not imply identifiability on the part of the speaker, who conveys ignorance of the identity of the individual satisfying the existential claim. Moreover, they do not necessarily require wide scope with respect to co-occurring operators, and their existential import is dependent on these interactions. They have been treated as requiring a widened domain of quantification, which must enable more than one alternative identification (see contributions in Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito 2015). The interpretation of *qualche* is discussed by Zamparelli (2007). *Qualche* presents an interesting meaning-form mismatch: it is morphologically invariant and combines exclusively with singular nouns, but it can receive a plural interpretation: (30) would be infelicitous if I only bought one peach.

30 Ho comprato **qualche pesca.** #Più precisamente, una.
Have.1SG bought some peach more precisely one

'I bought some peaches. # More precisely, one.'

However, the plural interpretation is not necessarily present: it seems to be inhibited in certain contexts where the indefinite interacts with other operators, as in conditionals or questions, with epistemic modality (31).

31 a Se incontri **qualche avvocato** alla festa, fatti aiutare.
if meet.2SG some lawyer at.the party make.IMP=you help.INF

'If you meet a / some lawyer at the party, ask for help.' (Longobardi 2001c:662)

b A: 'Hai **qualche giorno libero?**' B: 'Sì, il 23 ottobre'
you.have some day free yes the 23 October

A: 'Do you have a / any free day?' B: 'Yes, October 23.'

c **Qualche idiota** ha parcheggiato sulle strisce.
some idiot has parked on.the stripes

'Some idiot parked on the zebra crossing.'

The distribution is further complicated by the possibility of combining *qualche* with the indefinite article (32), which forces a singular interpretation but still conveys the referential indeterminacy of *qualche*:

32 Vorrei **una qualche spiegazione** per il tuo rifiuto.
want.COND.1SG a some explanation for the your refusal

'I would like some explanation of your refusal.'

Indeterminacy is maximal with free-choice indefinites *qualsiasi*, *qualsivoglia*, *qualunque*, *chiunque*, which mean 'any', 'whichever' and signal that it is not possible or communicatively necessary to identify an individual within the quantificational domain (33a) (Chierchia 2006; 2013; Kellert 2022). The universal quantifier *tutti* can also receive a free-choice interpretation (33b) (see Giannakidou 2001 for the relation between free-choice and universal quantification).

33 a **Qualunque studente di linguistica** conosce la definizione di fonema.
any student of linguistics knows the definition of phoneme

'Any student of linguistics knows the definition of a phoneme.'

b Dobbiamo partecipare a **tutti i costi.**
must.1PL participate.INF at all the costs

'We must participate at any cost.'

Often the pragmatic function of free-choice indefinites is to indicate that the domain has to be maximally widened to include marginal cases and exclude exceptions (Kadmon and Landman 1993; Chierchia 2006; 2013). In Italian, these indefinites combine with singular nouns, but their free-choice nature naturally allows plural interpretations.

Negative polarity items (NPIs)—to which we return in §24.4.2—are dependent for their felicity on negation and other entailment-reversing operators. The appropriate contexts have been characterized in terms of either non-veridicality or downward-entailingness (see Giannakidou 2011). Singular *alcuno* has an NPI distribution: it occurs as a narrow-scope indefinite in contexts of sentential negation (34a) and in the complement of *senza* 'without' (34b); it is not negative in isolation (34c):

34 a Gianni **non** ha superato **alcun** esame.
Gianni not has passed any exam
'Gianni did not pass any exam.'

b Gianni ha ottenuto il lavoro **senza** **alcuna** **qualificazione.**
Gianni has obtained the job without any qualification
'Gianni got the job without any qualification.'

c A: Hai ancora esami? B: ***Alcun** esame.
Have.2SG still exams any exam
A: 'Do you have any more exams?' B: 'No exam.'

The development of *alcuno*, which led to the split between the specific plural (28–29) and the NPI singular, and to remarkable cross-linguistic variation across Romance, is discussed in Gianollo (2018:88–136; 2020).

24.3 Tense and aspect

24.3.1 Introduction

Foundational work for the semantic analysis of the Italian tense-aspect system is Bertinetto (1986; 1997; 2001), Berretta (1992),

Giorgi and Pianesi (1997), and Squartini (1998; 2015). Comparative research has shown that, although grammatical descriptions of the Italian verbal system have traditionally been organized around tense distinctions, aspectual distinctions play an equally important role, and drive the more recent diachronic phenomena reshaping the system (Squartini 1998).

Sections §24.3.2 and §24.3.3 focus on the macro-domains of deictic and anaphoric tense distinctions and the expression of perfective and imperfective aspect. It will become clear that tense and aspect are actually tightly intertwined in the meaning of the various forms.

24.3.2 Deictic and anaphoric tense

Italian tenses can be grouped into simple (morphologically synthetic) and compound (morphologically analytic) forms (Table 24.1). Compound forms combine an auxiliary (*have* or *be*) with a participial form.[4] In finite forms, simple tenses are deictic (that is, absolute), compound tenses are anaphoric (that is, relative).[5]

Table 24.1 Simple and compound forms in the verb (indicative)

simple	compound
presente (present): mangia 's/he eats'	*passato prossimo* (present perfect): ha mangiato 's/he has eaten'
imperfetto (imperfect): mangiava 's/he was eating'	*trapassato prossimo* (pluperfect): aveva mangiato 's/he had eaten'
passato remoto (simple past): mangiò 's/he ate'	*trapassato remoto* (past anterior): ebbe mangiato 's/he had eaten'
futuro semplice (future): mangerà 's/he will eat'	*futuro anteriore* (future perfect): avrà mangiato 's/he will have eaten'

Deictic (absolute) tenses find their anchor (origin) indexically in the time of the utterance (speech time, ST): thus the future tense in (35), which is evaluated relative to the time at which the speaker speaks (35). Anaphoric (relative) tenses find their anchor not in the speech time, but relative to another time retrievable from the discourse context: for instance, with the anterior future in (36), the time of the event 'to win' in the main clause is evaluated with respect to the time at which the event 'to take place' in the subordinate clause is situated. In the tradition of Reichenbach (1947), this perspective point is called *reference time* (RT).

35 Maria **vincerà** una gara.
Maria win.FUT.3SG a competition
'Maria will win a competition.'

36 Quando si terranno.FUT.3PL le prossime Olimpiadi,
when REFL= hold the next Olympics
Maria **avrà** già **vinto** molte gare.
Maria have.FUT.3SG already won many competitions
'When the next Olympics take place, Maria will already have won many competitions.'

In a referential analysis of tense,[6] temporal expressions are analysed as referring to temporal entities; specifically, tenses encode temporal relations between temporal entities. Referential analyses of tense work particularly well in accounting for the anaphoric relations that are created in context between times introduced at various points in the discourse and subsequently picked up again, rather as with individual discourse referents. In particular, the notion of reference time provides the antecedent for anaphoric relations (Partee 1984), as well as the anchor for perspective shifting.

Simple tenses can be represented by two points: speech time, which is the utterance time functioning as deictic anchor, and situation time (or event time, ET), which is the time of the situation or event instantiated by the predicate. The tense expresses the relation established between these two points. For instance, the imperfect in (37) expresses the past temporal collocation of the event encoded by the verb 'leave' with respect to the speech time; the adverb 'yesterday' further (deictically) specifies the event time.

37 Ieri Giovanni **partiva** per Berlino.
yesterday Giovanni leave.PST.IPFV.3SG for Berlin
'Yesterday Giovanni was leaving for Berlin.'

Compound tenses require three points: speech time, situation time, and reference time. The last-named is picked up from the surrounding discourse, and functions as anchoring point: since the reference time is independent of the context of enunciation, the mechanism in this case is not deictic, but anaphoric. The reference time can be determined by adverbials (*a 15 anni* in 38a), by tenses in other clauses (*entrò* in 38b, cf. also 36 above), or inferred implicitly from the broader discourse context (the saying event in 38c).

38 a **A 15 anni** Maria aveva già vinto la sua prima medaglia.
at 15 years Maria have.PST.IPFV.3SG already won the her first medal
'At 15 years old Maria had already won her first medal.'

b Maria aveva già vinto la sua prima medaglia
Maria have.PST.IPFV.3SG already won the her first medal
quando **entrò** in squadra.
when enter.PST.PFV.3SG in team
'Maria had already won her first medal when she entered the team.'

c Avevo pensato di partire in macchina,
have.PST.IPFV.1SG thought of leave.INF in car
ma prendiamo il treno come dici tu.
but take.IMP.1SG the train as say.PRS.2SG you
'I had thought of leaving by car, but let's take the train as you suggest.'

The *trapassato prossimo* (anterior past) in the examples in (38) expresses the anteriority of the event encoded by the predicate with respect to the reference time, which in turn precedes the speech time: ET–RT–ST, where '–' represents the relation of anteriority.

The relation ST–RT is the defining characteristic of the anterior future. As for ET, provided it precedes RT, it can have different collocations with respect to ST, depending on the context: it can be in the future, thus following ST, as in (39a), or it can be simultaneous with ST, as in (39b), which depicts a durative situation that in fact extends before, during, and after ST (thus, also in the past):

39 a A 15 anni Maria **avrà** già **vinto** la sua prima medaglia.
at 15 years Maria have.FUT.3SG already won the her first medal
'At 15 years old she will already have won her first medal.'

b Giulio sta ancora dormendo. Tra mezz' ora **avrà**
Giulio stay.3SG still sleep.GER in half hour have.FUT.3SG
dormito per 10 ore senza interruzione.
slept for 10 hours without interruption
'Giulio is still sleeping. In half an hour, he will have slept for ten hours without interruption.'

More generally, compound tenses are anteriors that establish an anaphoric relation between ET and RT, whereby ET precedes RT (ET–RT). The relation between RT and ST, in turn, is different in the various compound tenses: while in the anterior past the RT precedes the ST (thus, RT is in the past), in the anterior future the RT follows the ST (thus, RT is in the future). The fact that RT must have a specific collocation in time shows that also compound tenses share, in fact, a deictic component (the collocation of RT with respect to ST) in addition to the anaphoric one (the anteriority of ET with respect to RT). Crucially, the relation between ET and ST is always mediated by RT.

With compound tenses, adverbials can contribute to locating either RT or ET: for instance, in (38a) and (39a) *a 15 anni* locates RT, but in (40) it locates ET (the time at which the decision takes place), whereas RT is provided by the following sentence:

40 **A 15 anni** Maria aveva deciso di lasciare l' atletica,
at 15 years Maria have.PST.IPFV.3SG decided to leave.INF the athletics
ma un anno dopo ha cambiato idea.
but one year after have.3SG changed idea
'At 15 years old Maria had decided to quit athletics, but a year after she changed her mind.'

The *passato prossimo* form can be analysed along these lines, like the other compound tenses. With *passato prossimo*, ET precedes RT; unlike *trapassato prossimo*, however, RT and ST coincide, resulting in the representation ET–RT, ST (where ',' represents simultaneity). Although RT and ST temporally coincide in the canonical interpretation, they are independent entities, since occasionally they can be disjoint (Squartini 2015:46–48). Consider (41), where *da domani* locates RT in the future, thus following ST:

41 **Da domani** ho finito le ferie. (Squartini 2015:47)
from tomorrow have.1SG finished the holidays
'From tomorrow I have finished my holidays.'

The anchoring in RT as a perspectival point distinguishes the compound form *passato prossimo* from the simple form *passato remoto*, which, as the other simple forms, deictically finds its anchor in the speech time. For both forms, ET is located in the past. The traditional names for these forms suggest a deictically determined difference in temporal distance ('near' vs 'remote') of ET with respect to ST. This is indeed a cross-linguistically observed possibility,[7] and within Romance languages we also see preferences in the use of past tenses connected to a hodiernal vs non-hodiernal distinction.[8] However, in contemporary Italian it does not play a major role. We focus here on the anaphoric vs deictic distinction.

The simple past for *passato remoto*, being intrinsically deictic, is incompatible with adverbials that establish a relation with a RT, e.g., 'since x time' (Squartini 2015:51–53):

42 a **La piscina chiuse da cinque anni.
the swimming.pool close.PST.PFV.3SG since five years
lit. 'The swimming pool closed down since five years.'

b La piscina ha chiuso da cinque anni.
the swimming.pool have.3SG closed since five years
lit. 'The swimming pool has closed down since five years.' = 'The swimming pool closed down five years ago.'

The adverbials *cinque anni fa* 'five years ago' and *da cinque anni* 'since five years' are similar in establishing a relation between ST and ET. However, while *cinque anni fa* indicates a precise point in time for the event and uses ST only to calculate it, *da cinque anni* establishes ST as the orientation point from which the event is observed and evaluated in its present consequences. Therefore, ST also functions as RT. An RT-oriented adverbial measures the distance between ET and RT (Bertinetto 1986:202–205; Squartini 2015:55); therefore it is compatible with the anaphoric nature of *passato prossimo*, which establishes the anaphoric relation between ET and RT and locates ET before ST and RT (the resulting representation is ET–RT, ST). Why is an RT-oriented adverbial incompatible with *passato remoto* instead? A simple answer would be that the latter, being a deictic tense, can be described without reference to RT. However, in Reichenbach's framework RT is present in the semantic representation of all tenses. According to this framework, we can conclude that, since in *passato remoto* (as in all simple tenses) RT and ET coincide, the focus is on the event *per se*

and its deictic location with respect to ST, hence an RT-oriented adverb is excluded.

It is clear that RT is connected to the aspectual meaning of the verb form, as it represents an observation point from which the consequences of the situation expressed by the verb are evaluated, that is, a point from which a certain perspective on the event emerges, besides the event's collocation on the temporal line (see further §24.3.3).

Two types of situations in which tenses are used without their prototypical value must be discussed: cases of neutralization and contexts in which sequence of tense is encountered.

Traditional descriptions of tense tend to distinguish, for each tense form, a primary, fundamental function and various special uses. For instance, a present tense form has the fundamental function of referring to an event that runs simultaneously to ST, but, in the right contexts, it can receive future (43a) or past (43b) meaning.

43 a Fra tre settimane **provo** di nuovo l' esame.
in three weeks try.PRS.IND.1SG of new the exam
'In three weeks I will attempt the exam again.'

b Ieri sera Franco **va** al ristorante e
yesterday evening Franco go.PRS.IND.3SG to.the restaurant and
chi incontra? il suo capo!
Who meet.PRS.IND.3SG the his boss
'Yesterday evening Franco goes to the restaurant and who does he meet? His boss!'

Theoretical analyses try to account for the multifunctionality of tense forms by providing a meaning general enough to account for all the uses (modulating the effect of context at a semantic and/or pragmatic level). For instance, a present tense form can be characterized as neutral, with no necessary simultaneity with ST. The present behaves as a neutral form with respect to aspect as well, since it is compatible with both an imperfective and a perfective viewpoint. Other uses that have been treated as neutralizations involve *passato prossimo* to refer to future events (44, and 41).

44 Tra una settimana, quando **ho** **comprato** il mio,
in one week when have.PRS.1SG bought the my
ti restituisco il manuale.
you= return.PRS.IND.1SG the handbook
'In a week, when I have bought mine, I will return your handbook.'

As discussed in Berretta (1992), neutralizations have often been considered a sign of diachronic simplification of the verbal system; however, they are best interpreted as panchronic tendencies, which emerge more clearly in spoken language and less frequently in historical written records.

Another context in which tenses are not found with their primary value is the so-called sequence of tense (Vanelli 2001a; Giorgi and Pianesi 1997): in this case a dependence of the tense in the embedded clause on the tense in the matrix clause is observed, in ways that are highly variable cross-linguistically. Sequence of tense leads to differences in the interpretation of tenses in embedded clauses with respect to their interpretation in matrix clauses. In (45) the present tense in the embedded clause is not anchored to the ST of the utterance, but to the ET of the event expressed by the future tense in the matrix clause:

45 Gli domanderò se **ha** fretta. (Vanelli 2001a:627)
him= ask.FUT.1SG if have.PRS.IND.3SG hurry
'I will ask him if he is in a hurry.'

Some tenses cannot give up their deictic anchor, and therefore are marginal or unacceptable in certain embedded contexts. This is the case with the simple past in (46), see also Bertinetto (1986:439):

46 *Allora Carlo mi rivelò che Maria **partì**
then Carlo me= reveal.PST.PFV.3SG that Maria leave.PST.PFV.3SG
all' improvviso. (Vanelli 2001a:612)
to.the sudden
'Then Carlo revealed to me that Maria left suddenly.'

The temporal dependence of the tense in the embedded clause on the tense in the matrix clause is connected to the syntactic tightness of the construction: it is maximal in the case of complement clauses (declaratives, indirect interrogatives), whereas tenses maintain their independence in relative clauses, which modify nominals.

A peculiar phenomenon observed in sequence of tense concerns 'double access' readings: when there is a past tense in the matrix clause, the present in the embedded clause is interpreted in such a way that the event is predicated to hold both at the time of the utterance and at the ET of the matrix predicate. In (47) the state of being pregnant must hold at the time of utterance and at the time of the telling event in the matrix clause.

47 Maria mi ha raccontato che Francesca è **incinta.**
Maria me= have.PRS.IND.3SG told that Francesca be.PRS.IND.3SG pregnant
'Maria told me that Francesca is pregnant.'

If only simultaneity with the matrix event holds, the tense in the embedded clause will have to be an imperfect (the hearer may infer that Francesca is still pregnant at the time of the utterance, but this is a cancellable inference, unlike (47)):

48 Maria mi ha raccontato che Francesca **era**
Maria me= have.PRS.IND.3SG told that Francesca be.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG
incinta.
pregnant
'Maria told me that Francesca was pregnant.'

Giorgi and Pianesi (1997:280–291) argue that, after verbs of saying, this effect is not limited to the embedded present tense, but is generalized to all forms of the indicative save the imperfect (which expresses simultaneity with the event in the main clause). In (49) the *passato prossimo* also shows a double access reading, because the event of leaving must be located in the past with respect to both the utterance time of (49) and the saying event encoded by the predicate in the main clause.

49 Ieri Gianni ha detto che Maria è **partita.**
yesterday Gianni have.PRS.IND.3SG said that Maria be.PRS.IND.3SG left
'Yesterday Gianni said that Maria has left.' (Giorgi and Pianesi 1997:283)

A conditional form must be used to allow for the event of leaving to be located in the past with respect to the time of the utterance, but not with respect to the time of the main clause event (but note that in this case also an interpretation in which the leaving takes place after the utterance time is possible):[9]

50 Ieri Gianni ha detto che Maria
yesterday Gianni have. PRS.IND.3SG said that Maria
sarebbe **partita** presto (Giorgi and Pianesi 1997:284)
be.COND.3SG lefet early
'Yesterday Gianni said that Maria would leave early.'

However, when the matrix predicate is in the future, no double access obtains, and the embedded event is only interpreted with respect to the temporal location of the matrix event.

24.3.3 Imperfective and perfective aspect

Discussion of the role of aspect in the Italian verbal system generally assumes a clear-cut distinction between the viewpoint, from which an eventuality is presented, and actionality or *Aktionsart*, the intrinsic event structure, the event type. Actionality is established by a combination of lexical and structural factors and sensitive to parameters such as the eventuality's telicity, dynamicity, or punctuality. It can be described by grouping predicates, based on their prototypical reading, in terms of Vendlerian classes: activities, states, achievements, accomplishments (Vendler 1957; for Italian, Bertinetto 1986; 2001:26–41; Jezek 2003). Aspect and actionality interact in various ways, since some eventuality classes show preferences or incompatibilities with respect to certain aspectual readings (see especially Bertinetto 1986).

Italian verb forms (simple and compound) can be aspectually classified according to whether they express imperfective or perfective viewpoint. Imperfective forms convey a point of view internal to the situation, presented as open, ongoing at the time of evaluation. Perfective forms provide a global perspective on the situation from an external viewpoint, which allows one to indicate the situation's boundaries. A possible formalization, adapted from Smith (2012), is presented in (51–52): in the imperfective, the initial (Init) and final (Fin) points of the event lie outside the interval visualized by the verb form; in the perfective, the verb form visualizes the entire temporal interval of the event ('<' means 'precedes' and '>' means 'follows'):

51 Imperfective viewpoint (Smith 2012:2589)
For an event *e* with an imperfective morpheme IPFV:
IPFV(*e*) holds of interval I, where Init(*e*) holds at t and Fin(*e*) holds at t', and t, t' $\not\subset$ I.

52 Perfective viewpoint (Smith 2012:2588)
For an event *e* with the perfective morpheme PFV:
PFV(*e*) holds of interval I, where t, t' $\subseteq$ I and there is no t'' such that t'' < t or > t'

With the imperfective viewpoint, it is possible to focalize a definite point in time (*in quel momento* in 53); however, this point will not represent a boundary for the event:

53	**In**	**quel**	**momento**	Andrea	**lavava**	**i**	**piatti.**
	in	that	moment	Andrea	wash.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG	the	dishes

'In that moment Andrea was washing the dishes.'

With the perfective viewpoint, it is possible to indicate an extended interval (54):

54 Dopo la festa, Andrea **ha** **lavato** i **piatti** per **un'ora.**
after the party Andrea have.PRS.3SG washed the dishes for one hour
'After the party, Andrea washed dishes for an hour.'

This shows that a treatment of the perfective/imperfective opposition in terms of a durative vs punctual distinction falls short of accounting for the aspectual properties of Italian verb forms.

Aspect allows the creation of a background-foreground organization of events in discourse, establishing relations with other situations in the context. Thus, imperfective forms can express events that are background to foregrounded events conveyed by perfective forms, as in (55):

55 La pioggia **cadeva** fitta quando Giovanni **uscì**
the rain fall.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG thick when Giovanni exit.PST.PFV.3SG
dall' ufficio.
from.the office
'The rain was falling heavily when Giovanni left the office.'

The discourse dimension is an essential ingredient of the meaning contribution of aspect and determines patterns of system-internal competition between aspectually similar forms.

The aspectual dimension is independent of the temporal coordinates of the utterance event (ST in the terminology of §24.3.2). At the same time, the tense forms of §24.3.2 have specific aspectual characteristics, which tie them to the expression of a specific viewpoint (although neutralizations are possible in aspect as well).

The expression of aspect is a fundamental driving factor in the development of the Italian verb system, both in terms of the birth and grammaticalization of new periphrastic forms and in terms of the shifting functional balance with respect to the simple forms since, in general, new periphrases arose with a predominant aspectual value (Bertinetto 1986; Squartini 1998; Amenta 2003).

For imperfective past in contemporary Italian, Squartini (2015) proposes the scheme in Table 24.2: certain periphrases, while not yet being obligatory—hence fully grammaticalized—specialize in the expression of fine-grained aspectual distinctions, with varying degrees of productivity.

Table 24.2 Forms for the imperfective past (adapted from Squartini 2015:73)

HABITUAL	CONTINUOUS	PROGRESSIVE
imperfetto	*imperfetto*	*imperfetto*
essere solito + infinitive	*andare* + gerund	*stare* + gerund

Examples (56–58) show the multifunctionality of the simple *imperfetto* and the specialized periphrasis for habitual, continuous, and progressive imperfective readings.

56 a Andrea **mangiava** la pasta tutti i giorni.
Andrea eat.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG the pasta all the days

b Andrea **era** **solito** **mangiare** la pasta tutti i giorni.
Andrea be.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG wont eat.INF the pasta all the days
'Andrea used to eat pasta every day.'

57 a Andrea **cercava** una bicicletta in affitto.
Andrea look.for.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG a bicycle in rent

b Andrea **andava** **cercando** una bicicletta in affitto.
Andrea go.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG look.for.GER a bicycle in rent
'Andrea was looking for a bicycle to rent.'

58 a Andrea **cuoceva** la pasta quando
Andrea cook.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG the pasta when
ricevette una chiamata dal suo dottore.
receive.PST.PFV.3SG a call from.the his doctor

b Andrea **stava** **cuocendo** la pasta quando
Andrea stay.PST.IPFV.IND.3SG cook.GER the pasta when
ricevette una chiamata dal suo dottore.
receive.PST.PFV.3SG a call from.the his doctor
'Andrea was cooking pasta when he got a call from his doctor.'

Among the periphrastic forms in Table 24.2, the periphrasis *stare* (lit. 'stay' or 'stand') + gerund has a particularly important role (Squartini 1990); also §12.6; §35.5.3.1. It has gradually developed into a specialized expression of progressive imperfectivity, with the advantage of being adaptable to deictic temporal locations in the past (e.g., *stavo mangiando* 'I was eating'), in the present (*sto mangiando* 'I am eating'), and in the future (*starò mangiando* 'I will be eating') in a morphologically transparent way. Currently, it shows

signs of expansion towards habitual imperfectivity, since it can express multiple repeated occurrences of an event in an indefinite time stretch (59) ('imperfective drift', Bertinetto and Squartini 2016):

59	In	questo	periodo	**sta**	**studiando**	spesso	con	Olga.
	in	this	period	stay.PRS.IND.3SG	study.GER	often	with	Olga

'These days s/he is often studying with Olga.' (Squartini 2015:68)

Moving to perfective forms, a crucial topic is the relation between the two perfective past forms *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto*. Italian is similar to other Romance languages in opposing an aoristic past expressed by a synthetic form (*passato remoto*; Simple Past in the terminology of Squartini and Bertinetto 2000) to a present perfect expressed by an analytic form (*passato prossimo*; Compound Past in Squartini and Bertinetto 2000), derived from a grammaticalization process with its roots in Latin (Harris 1982; Vincent 1982; Maiden 1995a:145–156, 210–212; Napoli 2007). In modern standard Italian the originally resultative compound past has become a purely perfective past ('aoristic drift', Squartini and Bertinetto 2000; Bertinetto and Squartini 2016). This meaning shift with *passato prossimo* is a case of the well-known diachronic cline resultative > perfect > perfective (Dahl 1985; 2000; Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994; Drinka 2017; Condoravdi and Deo 2015; see Napoli 2019:75–100 for a synthesis). While the perfective viewpoint provides a global visualization of the event (aoristic perspective), the perfect, in addition, highlights the current consequences of the event with respect to RT. Thus (60) (cf. also 42b):

60	L'	insegnante	**ha**	già	**concluso**	il	lavoro.
	the	teacher	have.PRS.IND.3SG	already	finished	the	job

'The teacher has already finished the job.'

What is relevant in the visualization in (60), where *passato prossimo* has a perfect reading, is the current situation in which the job has been completed, not the completion *per se*. However, *passato prossimo* is also compatible with an adverbial indication of the point in time in which the completion happened (61a), where the visualization shifts towards a global perspective over the event:

61 a L' insegnante **ha** **concluso** il lavoro due mesi fa /
the teacher have.PRS.IND.3SG concluded the job two months ago
il 23 novembre.
the 23 November

b L' insegnante **concluse** il lavoro due mesi fa /
the teacher conclude.PST.PFV.3SG the job two months ago
il 23 novembre.
the 23 November

'The teacher finished the job two months ago / on November 23.'

When *passato prossimo* combines with *due mesi fa* or *il 23 novembre* in (61a), it overlaps with the aoristic function of *passato remoto* in (61b): in this case it has perfective value, and neutralizes the difference between perfect and perfective.

Aoristic drift has developed differently and reached different stages in Romance languages. Within Italo-Romance, remarkable differences are observable across the dialects, with important repercussions for regional varieties of the national language (Bertinetto and Squartini 1996; Squartini and Bertinetto 2000; Bertinetto and Squartini 2016; Drinka 2017:169–219; this volume §26.3, §38.4.1). Numerous factors (diachronic, sociolinguistic, textual) have been argued to be in play. In standard contemporary Italian, *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto* compete, although to different extents in the local varieties. Northern standard Italian varieties are further advanced in aoristic drift than southern ones, but for Squartini and Bertinetto (2000:426) 'this is merely a probabilistic tendency, rather than a sharp contrast of grammaticality'.

The simple past, at least in some more formal registers, is preferred in narrations, where it displays its characteristic driving function in carrying forward the textual timeline. The fact that it tends to be preferred with distant events (in many varieties *passato remoto* is excluded for recent events) can be attributed to the pragmatic competition with *passato prossimo* rather than with a constraint on its deictic properties: *passato remoto* is excluded in contexts of temporal proximity to ST because, in these contexts, a form like *passato prossimo*, which establishes an interpretationally relevant relation to ST (through its coincidence with RT, cf. §24.3.2), is more suitable (Squartini 2015:48–53). Thus the 'remoteness' of

passato remoto is a secondary effect of competition with *passato prossimo*.

At the same time, in standard Italian *passato prossimo* is the only possible or the strongly preferred form in contexts that invite the perfect reading: the expression of persistent result; inclusivity readings, as in durative and habitual situations persisting at ST; the presence of RT-oriented adverbials, such as *since* x *time* seen in (42); contexts of current relevance (a highly debated notion, Klein 1992), such as the so-called hot news and experiential uses. These are key differentiating contexts, attesting, with their appearance in the written record, to changes in the meaning of the compound form, but not necessarily to be analysed as subsequent diachronic stages (see Squartini and Bertinetto 2000). These contexts may share the feature of referring to an 'extended now' period, 'a period that ends at Speech Time and extends into the past, perhaps delimited by temporal information in the sentence or context' (Smith 2012:2594).

24.4 Negation

24.4.1 Introduction

Evidence from Italian (and Italo-Romance dialects) holds a prominent position in the theoretical debate on the interface between morphosyntax and semantics in the expression and interpretation of negation. Italian data play a significant role in, e.g., Rizzi (1982:117–184), Zanuttini (1987; 1997), Haegeman and Zanuttini (1991; 1996), Bernini and Ramat (1996), Acquaviva (1997), Zeijlstra (2004; 2022), Moscati (2006), Poletto (2008), De Swart (2010), and Penka (2011). While the presence of a logical operator reversing the truth value of a proposition is a linguistic universal, its morphosyntactic realization is subject to cross-linguistic variation and displays complex interaction with interpretational factors. This section reviews two topics of particular interest for semantics: the interaction between the negative operator and indefinites within its scope (§24.4.2) and expletive negation (§24.4.3). Comprehensive

descriptions of the Italian negation system are Manzotti and Rigamonti (2001), Bernini (2011b), and Ballarè (2015). Zanuttini (1997) compares standard Italian with northern dialects. Molinelli (1988), Parry (2013), and Gianollo (2018) deal with diachrony. For a comparative Romance perspective see Poletto (2016) and Moscati (2022).

24.4.2 Negative concord and polarity sensitivity

Italian has negative concord: under appropriate conditions, multiple negative elements (elements that can express sentential negation in isolation, 62a) co-occur yielding a single-negation interpretation (62b). This pervasive form-meaning mismatch challenges theories of the morphosyntax-semantics interface, because it requires an account of the seemingly non-compositional interpretation of (62b).

62 a **Nessuno** sapeva della partenza di Giovanna.
nobody knew of.the departure of Giovanna
'Nobody knew about Giovanna's departure.'

b Giovanna **non** aveva detto **niente** a **nessuno.**
Giovanna not had said nothing to nobody
'Giovanna hadn't said anything to anybody.'

Moreover, in certain syntactic contexts the co-occurrence yields a double-negation interpretation. This happens when the negatively marked indefinite and the negative marker co-occur in pre-verbal position (63), showing the characterizing asymmetry of non-strict negative concord systems: the negative marker and the negatively marked indefinite co-occur in a single-negation reading only when the indefinite is post-verbal.

63 **Nessuno non** sapeva della partenza di Giovanna.
nobody not knew of.the departure of Giovanna
'Nobody did not know (= everybody knew) about Giovanna's departure.'

A further complication is the non-negative interpretations that some of the elements routinely undergoing negative concord receive in contexts that are known for licensing negative polarity items (NPIs). As seen in §24.2.2, NPIs are elements that are not negative in

isolation, but are felicitous in downward-entailing contexts and in contexts licensing similar inferences. In Italian, the non-negative use of NCIs is found in direct and indirect polar questions (64), clausal comparatives (65), *before*-clauses (66) (see §24.4.3 for the peculiarities of these contexts).

64 a È passato **nessuno** a cercarmi?
is passed nobody to look.for.INF=me
'Did anyone come by to look for me?'

b Mi chiedo se **nessuno** abbia mai provato in un altro modo.
me=ask.1SG if nobody has ever tried in a other way
'I wonder whether anyone has ever tried in another way.'

65 Il film ha avuto più successo di quanto **nessuno**
the movie has had more success of how.much nobody
potesse pronosticare.
could foresee.INF
'The movie was more successful than anybody could foresee.'

66 Di' loro di fare attenzione, prima che succeda **niente.**
Tell.IMP.2SG them of make.INF attention before that happens nothing
'Tell them to pay attention, before anything happens.'

It is tempting to connect this non-negative NPI use of *nessuno* to what happens in (62b): when the indefinite is post-verbal and obligatorily co-occurs with a negative marker, one could argue that it behaves like a non-negative NPI, and the negative operator is exclusively contributed by the negative marker. However, this would require a principled explanation for cases where *nessuno* negates the sentence by itself, like pre-verbal *nessuno* in (62a) and the short answer in (67), as well as double-negation cases like (63), since in those cases *nessuno* clearly contributes a sentential negative operator.

67 A. Chi ti aiuta con il trasloco? B. **Nessuno.**
who you helps with the move nobody
A. 'Who's helping you with the move?' B. 'Nobody.'

To account for the variable negative force of *nessuno* 'nobody'/'anybody', *niente* 'nothing'/'anything', and the entire series of so-called negative concord items (NCIs), various approaches have been proposed. A widespread intuition is that negative concord is one manifestation of the more general phenomenon of sensitivity to negative polarity, which conditions the interpretation and the

expression of logical operators and variables interacting with negation. The way in which this intuition has been formalized, and negative concord and sensitivity to negative polarity have been demarcated, varies considerably (see Zeijlstra 2004:191–241; Penka 2011:14–88; Giannakidou 2020; van der Auwera and Gianollo 2025 for a critical overview). The discussion has centred on the properties of argumental indefinites interacting with negation, but negative concord also involves adverbial elements (*mai* 'never'), focus particles (*nemmeno*, *neppure*, *neanche* 'neither', 'not even', Franco et al. 2016), correlative negation (*né . . . né* 'neither . . . nor', Gianollo 2022), and *mica* (a marker of presuppositional negation: Cinque 1976a; Penello and Pescarini 2008; Magistro 2022).[10]

In Haegeman and Zanuttini (1996), argumental indefinites are treated as negative quantifiers, which bear at the same time negative and quantificational force. Their inability to express sentential negation when post-verbal (68) is considered independent of the quantifier's semantics, and is attributed to a syntactic condition that requires sentential negation to be overtly marked 'in a position c-commanding Infl' (Haegeman and Zanuttini 1996:120). This syntactic condition applies in languages whose negative marker has a head status (the negative marker is analysed as the head of a NegP projection above Infl).

68 **Giovanna aveva detto **niente.**
Giovanna had said nothing.

The single-negation interpretation in the presence of multiple negative elements (62b) is attributed to the creation of a dependency ('chain') resolved through an operation of 'factorization' at LF. Factorization is understood as a form of absorption similar, but not fully parallel, to *wh-* absorption in multiple *wh-* questions (see also Haegeman 1995b). If a negative marker belongs to the chain, the quantifier only contributes its quantificational force. If multiple negative quantifiers occur ('negative spread': den Besten 1986), 'negation is factored out and the two (or more) universal quantifiers become one binary (or n-ary) quantifier' (Haegeman and Zanuttini 1996:139). In this approach the quantificational force attributed to the negative quantifier is universal, and the universal quantifier takes scope over the negative operator. This has the effect of sharply distinguishing elements such as *niente* and *nessuno* from existential NPIs such as *alcuno* (§24.2.2) and sets this approach apart from

others that converge in analysing Italian NCIs as indefinites, i.e., elements of nominal phrases with existential quantificational import.[11]

Haspelmath (1997) includes NCIs in his semantic map for indefinite pronouns. He classes Romance NCIs into the direct and indirect negation function (further indicating when they can be used in additional polarity-sensitive contexts). In the formal semantic literature, various families of existential analyses can be distinguished, both with respect to the way the existential import is accounted for and with respect to the status attributed to the negative component.

As for existential import, there are non-quantificational and quantificational existential analyses of (Italian) NCIs. In non-quantificational approaches such as Ladusaw (1992), Acquaviva (1997), and Zeijlstra (2004), the quantificational force of NCIs is not intrinsic to their lexical entry: NCIs are analysed as variables that obligatorily enter semantic dependency relations in the clause, from which the existential quantificational force emerges (either through default existential closure or through existential quantification introduced by the negative operator). In quantificational approaches such as Penka (2011), Chierchia (2013), or Zeijlstra (2022), an existential quantifier is lexically encoded by the NCI.

As for the negative component, in some existential analyses NCIs have been considered inherently negative, that is, lexically containing a negative operator (De Swart 2010). Others have proposed that NCIs do not contain a negative operator, but are lexically marked as needing to create a dependency with one in the syntactic structure.

An influential analysis along these lines is Zeijlstra (2004; 2022) in terms of syntactic features (also Penka 2011): NCIs carry an uninterpretable formal [uNeg] feature, which must enter a dependency (syntactic Agree) with an interpretable counterpart [iNeg] for the structure to be well-formed. The [iNeg] feature is provided either by an overt negative marker (as in 62b) or by a covert operator (as in 62a). The presence of a cover operator implements the property of self-licensing that distinguishes NCIs from NPIs (Ladusaw 1992). The interpretational component reads the dependency as the instruction to insert a logical negative operator. In Zeijlstra's approach, thus, negative concord is a matter of syntax, and

the form-meaning mismatch is only apparent, because NCIs are not semantically negative. Under this approach, cases like (63), where a double-negation reading obtains, can be accounted for by the presence of two independent negative operators: one contributed by the negative marker, one brought about by the NCI as a c-commanding licensor of its [uNeg] feature.

Another approach that sees NCIs as non-negative indefinites in need of a special relation with negation is Chierchia (2013), where the relation is created in the semantic component, and obtains not directly with the negation operator, but with an exhaustifier, which operates on the alternatives evoked by the NCI. Crucially, however, the mechanism of exhaustification (that is, the way alternatives are factored in the meaning) requires the presence of a negative operator to yield the correct computation, resulting in negative concord (Chierchia 2013:227–240).

There are also ambiguity-based approaches to NCIs, where NCIs come in homophonous negative and non-negative versions. Proposals in this sense are formulated by Herburger (2001; 2023) mainly based on Spanish, which is however parallel to Italian in the relevant respects. In Herburger (2001), NCIs are ambiguous between non-negative NPIs and inherently negative elements. Cases of visible negative concord like (62b), where a negative marker and one or more NCIs co-occur in a single negation reading, are cases of NPI licensing. Cases of pre-verbal NCIs like (62a) are instead manifestations of the intrinsically negative homophonous counterpart, which Herburger (2001) analyses as a negative quantifier (her analysis is meant to extend to non-quantificational NCIs like focus particles and correlative negation as well). The distribution of the two forms is governed by interface constraints: the intrinsically negative version must be pre-verbal if it is to take sentential scope. An ambiguity-based approach, although in principle disfavoured from a purely theoretical perspective, has the advantage of readily accounting for non-negative uses of NCIs (cf. 64–66).[12]

In general, current approaches to negative concord try to reach a principled unitary analysis of NPIs and NCIs, following a stage in the theoretical debate during which they have been strictly distinguished on the basis of their respective licensing mechanisms (pragmatic in the case of NPIs, syntactic in the case of NCIs). This distinction has

been conducive to improved understanding of the distributional factors, which has led to more precisely identifying clines of licensing contexts (weak vs strong) and syntactic locality conditions on the distribution of NPIs (Guerzoni 2006; Gajewski 2011; Homer 2021), making a unified account more plausible. An analysis of NCIs as existentials has the advantage of relating NCIs to the more general phenomenon of sensitivity to negative polarity (Ladusaw 1992; Chierchia 2013), and of providing a motivation for the recurrent diachronic processes linking NPIs and NCIs (Haspelmath 1997; Herburger 2001, 2023; Jäger 2010; Gianollo 2018; Breitbarth et al. 2020). The sensitivity of existentials to negative polarity is related to their pragmatic usefulness in downward-entailing contexts. As for their negative import, the syntacticization of the NCIs' relation with negation is reminiscent of other grammaticalization phenomena such as the creation of new negative markers from originally non-negative reinforcing elements in Jespersen's Cycle (see Herburger 2001; 2023; Labelle and Espinal 2014; Gianollo 2018 and 2020 for possible implementations).

24.4.3 Expletive negation

Expletive negation is where 'a negative formative that is often (though not always) linguistically indistinguishable from standard sentential negation is used in main and embedded clauses without providing, according to the received wisdom, any truth-conditional contribution to interpretation' (Delfitto 2020:255). Unlike items in negative concord structures, expletive negation does not seem to contribute a negative operator, since it does not reverse the truth value of the sentence. Italian data figure prominently in the theoretical debate, which has recently been rekindled by cross-linguistic investigation (Jin and Koenig 2021).

Classic contexts for Italian expletive negation include subordinating contexts, such as the standard of comparison (69a), *before*-clauses (69b), *until*-clauses (69c), as well as root contexts, such as biased and rhetorical questions (70a) and exclamatives (70b).[13] In some of these contexts expletive negation shows a

different syntactic distribution from standard negation (Delfitto and Fiorin 2014; Greco 2019a; 2019b).

69 a Questo ristorante è più raffinato di quanto **non** pensassi.
this restaurant is more sophisticated of how.much not thought.1SG
'This restaurant is more sophisticated than I thought.'

b Voglio comprare una bicicletta, prima che **non** aumentino i prezzi.
want.1SG buy.INF a bicycle before that not increase.3PL the prices
'I want to buy a bicycle, before the prices rise.'

c Resteremo seduti finché **non** saranno finiti i titoli di coda
stay.FUT.1PL seated until not be.FUT.3PL ended the titles of end
'We will remain seated until the credits have ended.'

70 a Che cosa **non** ha detto il ministro oggi?
what thing not has said the minister today
rhetorical interpretation: 'What didn't the minister say today?' (= he said everything he possibly could)

b Che cosa **non** ha detto il ministro oggi!
what thing not has said the minister today
'The things the minister said today!'

Various contexts in which expletive negation occurs are also contexts for non-negative uses of NCIs (cf. §24.4.2), to which we return below.

In typologically grounded approaches such as Jin and Koenig (2021), root contexts are excluded from the definition of expletive negation, which is restricted to contexts in which expletive negation 'is included in a syntactic dependent of a lexical item' (Jin and Koenig 2021:41). In frameworks that postulate the existence of (potentially covert) logical operators (e.g., question operators), however, the distinction is blurred. Nonetheless, current work on expletive negation acknowledges the substantial heterogeneity of the observed contexts and, consequently, the possibility that they may defy a unitary analysis (Greco 2019b).

Several competing explanations exist, not necessarily addressing all contexts at once (see Delfitto 2020). The phenomenon has been related to negative concord through the proposal that some of the licensers contain a syntactically active negative feature (Espinal 1992; 1997; 2007). However, expletive negation is also attested in languages without negative concord. Moreover, while negative

concord always involves a dependency on a negative operator, expletive negation appears in a broader class of NPI-licensing contexts (analysed in terms of downward-entailingness or non-veridicality), and can even appear in veridical contexts (like certain *until*-clauses).

A different line of analysis builds on the evaluative contribution that emphatic negation brings about and attributes the phenomenon to the level of expressive meaning (Yoon 2011). Here the negative morpheme does not make a truth-conditional contribution, but expresses information related to the conversational agent's epistemic stance: by virtue of the conventional implicature it triggers (which is lexically encoded and, therefore, distinguishes expletive negation from the homophonous standard negation morpheme), it flags the content of the proposition as unlikely or undesirable.

A further perspective is represented by arguments that, in some contexts, expletive negation is not expletive, but contributes a real negative operator (Abels 2002; Krifka 2010). While this perspective has not been systematically applied to all contexts in which expletive negation appears, it is promising in the case of exclamatives and interrogatives (Portner and Zanuttini 2000), as well as temporal clauses.

Consider *before*-clauses.[14] Krifka (2010) argues for German that in this context the negative morpheme traditionally analysed as expletive is actually semantically negative. Thus, given certain semantic and pragmatic conditions, *before*-clauses with and without the negative marker end up having very similar truth conditions. For Italian *before*-clauses, there are two competing analyses. In Del Prete's (Del Prete 2008), the negation in the temporal clause is expletive. Del Prete proposes that *prima* 'before' contains a negative operator in its logical representation, which is responsible for the 'absorption' of expletive negation (by a mechanism similar to negative concord). More specifically, the negation absorbing the expletive one is introduced by the comparative marker *più* that makes up the meaning of *prima* (= *più presto* 'earlier'). Interestingly, since in Del Prete's analysis *prima* has a comparative semantics, a unification is possible with expletive negation in comparatives (Napoli and Nespor 1976). Delfitto (2020:260–263) proposes instead that the negative marker in Italian *before*-clauses is interpreted negatively. However, the negation does not apply at the

propositional level, but at the level of implicature computation. In *before*-clauses, expletive negation is only possible (not obligatory) when the interpretation of the temporal clause is counterfactual. If the temporal proposition expresses that the event actually took place, it is impossible, compare (69b) and (71):

71 Ho comprato una bicicletta prima che (*non) aumentassero
have.1SG bought a bicycle before that not rose
i prezzi. Sono stata fortunata perché dopo i prezzi
the prices am.1SG been lucky because afterwards the prices
sono quasi raddoppiati.
are almost doubled

'I bought a bicycle before prices rose. I was lucky because afterwards prices almost doubled.'

The factual interpretation of the *before*-clause in (71) derives from a conversational implicature: truth-conditionally, (71) says that the event of buying a bicycle happened at a time at which prices had not risen. The interpretation that prices did rise after the bicycle-buying event is derived pragmatically.[15] Accordingly, the factual component is subject to contextual factors and can be cancelled (72):

72 Ho comprato una bicicletta prima che aumentassero i prezzi.
Have.1SG bought a bicycle before that rose the prices.
Ma alla fine non ci sono stati aumenti.
but in.the end not there are been increases

'I bought a bicycle before prices rose. But in the end there were no increases.'

Delfitto (2020) argues that the negation in counterfactual *prima*-clauses may indicate obligatory cancellation of the implicature of factuality: expletive negation would be 'a way of syntactically encoding the process of implicature cancellation' (Delfitto 2020:261). Thus, in (69b), the negation would enforce the counterfactual reading, by applying to the potentially implicated positive proposition ('prices rise after the buying event'). Pragmatically, this results in a form of avertive precautioning use with a meaning similar to 'lest' (AnderBois and Dąbkowski 2023). This approach has the advantage of maintaining for the negative marker the function of expressing a truth-reversing operator as in the default propositional cases (the negative marker has a uniform semantics, but applies at different levels of meaning), while capturing without further stipulations the evaluative component of undesirability. The application of negation to non-propositional meaning conceptually resembles some treatments of denials (Geurts

1998), and readily accounts for the fact that expletive negation does not license NPIs (as it does not apply at the propositional level, where NPI licensing occurs):

73 Voglio legare la bicicletta, prima che **non** la rubi **alcun / qualche ladro.
want.1SG lock.INF the bicycle before that not it steals any some thief
'I want to lock my bicycle, before some thief steals it.'

An aspect that awaits proper investigation is whether an explanation along these lines may also apply to at least some uses of NCIs traditionally analysed as non-negative (§24.4.2). As observed, there is considerable overlap in the contexts in which expletive negation appears and those in which non-negative uses of NCIs are attested: *before*-clauses are one such case (Del Prete 2008:162–166):

74 a Voglio legare la bicicletta, prima che **nessuno** la rubi.
want.1SG lock.INF the bicycle before that nobody it= steals
'I want to lock my bicycle, before someone steals it.'

b Prima che **nessuno** vi veda, tornate di dove siete venuto.
before that nobody you= sees go.back from where be.2PL come
'Before anyone sees you, go back to where you came from.' (Manzoni, *Promessi sposi*, ch. 33)

Non-negative use of NCIs in Italian may also turn out to be only superficially a homogeneous class, reducible, at least sometimes, to the same factors that motivate expletive negation (being instances of real negation in at least a subset of cases).

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[1] Although articles are already at an advanced stage of grammaticalization in the earliest Italian documents, a diachronic expansion of contexts is clear, especially for the indefinite article. See Renzi (1976), Maiden (1995a:117–122), Giusti (2001; 2010), Stark (2002; 2006), and Ledgeway (2012a:81–109).

[2] For the theoretical debate about definiteness and indefiniteness see Lyons (1999) and Heim (2011).

[3] Bare plurals with generic interpretation are possible when genericity is induced by the broader semantic context, e.g., in the case of habitual aspect; they fall within the interpretational possibilities of indefinites (Longobardi 1994; Delfitto 2002).

[4] Passive forms are all periphrastic (but their tense properties are largely parallel to those of active forms). For compound forms (with auxiliaries different from *avere* or *essere*) combining with the gerund see §24.3.3.

[5] In non-finite forms, the temporal interpretation is always anaphoric, relative to the tense of the main clause (Bertinetto 2003).

[6] The referential analysis of tense is predominant in research on the Italian tense-aspect system. See Giorgi and Pianesi (1997:17–30) and Bonomi and Zucchi (2001:53–103) for comparison with a quantificational analysis, where tense morphology is assumed to express sentential operators quantifying over times.

[7] In Dahl and Velupillai (2013), marking for remoteness/recency distinctions ('tense choice is dependent on the temporal distance between the time of speech and the topic time') is found in one fifth of languages.

[8] For the hodiernal/pre-hodiernal distinction in the grammaticalization process from perfect to perfective see Schwenter (1994) and Squartini and Bertinetto (2000).

[9] Note that Italian is peculiar within Romance in using a compound conditional form to express the future-in-the-past, while the simple conditional form expresses modal meanings (Maiden 1995a:216f.); see also §12.4, §21.3.2.

[10] *Mai* and *mica* have a non-negative etymological source (Lat. MAGIS 'more' and MICA 'crumb'). In this they differ from the other NCIs, which all contain traces of the Latin negative particle NEC 'not even', confirming the observation that NCIs can diachronically derive from non-negative items (cf. Fr. *personne*, Sp. *nada*, etc.), and that NCI series can be etymologically heterogeneous (cf. Haspelmath 1997:232f.; Willis et al. 2013:37).

[11] Analyses of NCIs as universals are more widespread in the case of strict negative concord languages, such as Greek, Romanian, and Slavonic languages, where the NCIs always co-occur with a negative marker; see Giannakidou (1998; 2000), Ionescu (2025), Rossyaykin (2025), and Rudnev (2024).

[12] The NPI uses of NCIs in Italian are more restricted than in Spanish, so that some of Herburger's NPI contexts (Herburger 2001:297f.) cannot be reproduced in Italian (cf. also Bosque 1980). However, NPI uses of argumental NCIs were more frequent at earlier stages of Italian (Zanuttini 2010; Parry 2013; Gianollo 2018:202–288). This is puzzling, since items like *nessuno* 'nobody' and *niente* etymologically contain the Latin negative particle NEC 'not even' and therefore the negative meaning was the original one, but it appears to have been a widespread phenomenon in medieval Romance (cf. Martins 2000; Labelle and Espinal 2014).

[13] Other cross-linguistically recurrent contexts for expletive negation, such as complements of verbs of fearing or prohibition, do not host expletive negation in Italian.

[14] Another environment for which expletive negation has been argued to have negative meaning involves certain clauses introduced by *finché* 'until', which are particularly interesting because in certain cases they are a veridical context: see Tovena (1996) and Gradimondo (2023).

[15] See Krifka (2010) for the implicature calculation. It rests on the fact that pragmatically it makes sense to compare the timing of the two events in the main and temporal clause only if the event in the temporal clause actually happens.

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Chapter 25

The lexicon

Onomasiology and semasiology

Luca Lorenzetti

25.1 Introduction

Like many national languages which have been used for centuries for a full-fledged set of communicative functions, Italian also has a complex and stratified lexicon. From a historical perspective, many components have contributed to shaping and enriching it. From a functional point of view, its uses have long ranged from everyday speech to literature, science to information and schooling, and religion to administration and justice. Alongside these characteristics, which are shared with many other languages, Italian linguistic history does, however, present some peculiarities that are of particular interest to the overall formation of the Italian lexicon and which are also explored in many other chapters (see especially §1.4.3.4, §1.5.2.5). As Tullio De Mauro first demonstrated in his *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (1963), Italian was for centuries a language that was almost exclusively used in writing in a territory which was for a long time politically divided and where the vast majority of inhabitants spoke different, albeit genealogically related, varieties, namely dialects. With the birth of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, Tuscan Italian started to emerge as the spoken language of a newly formed nation. This meant that a language which had been primarily used in writing for over five hundred years was to become

the common language of a nation whose people were predominantly illiterate and who spoke numerous different dialects.

Indeed, the first census following unification recorded an illiteracy rate of 78 per cent. Although later studies from the last two decades of the twentieth century have shown that the existence of spoken uses of Italian even before the political unification of 1861 set the conditions for its decisive extension to the entire population, there is no doubt that until the twentieth century Italian was predominantly a written language, especially as Italian was taught and studied. Moreover, the heated debates regarding the number of Italian speakers at the time of Unification (Castellani 1982b; De Mauro 1989a; Trifone 2017) refer to the number of Italians able to speak or understand Italian, not to the actual number of native speakers of Italian who at that time were rather thin on the ground. It was only in the mid-twentieth century that native acquisition of a regional variety of Italian became the most frequent and normal condition for Italians (Lorenzetti 2002).

Under these conditions, as De Mauro himself (1963:30) wrote, in the absence of widespread and spontaneous use of the spoken language, and in a linguistic tradition entrusted to a minority of scholars, who used Italian only in writing, no linguistic norm in the proper sense could be elaborated. As noted elsewhere, this status of Italian as a mere literary grapholect had important consequences on the lexicon: while parts of it developed and preserved a high degree of polymorphy, overabundance, and variation, because of the high frequency of cultivated Latinisms in written texts, the lexical areas nearer to everyday experience, lacking a shared Tuscan-based lexicon, were therefore expressed mainly through dialects (Lorenzetti 2020). Consequently, we may conventionally identify five main stages in the linguistic history of Italian:

1. the medieval formation of the Florentine vernacular;
2. its establishment as a common written language after Bembo's modelling normative interventions in the sixteenth century;
3. political unification and the subsequent process of linguistic convergence;
4. the spread of spoken Italian and the consequent emergence and generalization of diglottic repertoires consisting of dialect (the

native variety and basilect) and Italian (the acrolect);

5. the full nativization of Italian which began in the mid-twentieth century and which is still ongoing.

The considerations to be presented in the following sections should be understood and contextualized within this framework.

25.2 Semasiology and onomasiology in the tradition of Italian studies

The development of the conceptual pair *semasiology/onomasiology* has figured prominently in studies of the history of Romance languages, since the availability of the Latin antecedent often makes it possible to examine lexical and semantic conservations and innovations of great interest in time and space. If we follow the traditional definition, the two terms appear to be quite sharply contrasted: 'Semasiology [. . .] considers the isolated word and the way its meanings are manifested, while onomasiology looks at the designations of a particular concept, that is, at a multiplicity of expressions which form a whole' (Baldinger 1980:278). This juxtaposition has since been reworked on a theoretical level, mainly as a consequence of its framing within diachronic cognitive semantics (cf. Geeraerts 2010). Empirically, new discoveries have emerged from the application of statistical methods to onomasiological fields tested on large textual corpora (see, among others, Glynn 2015). The two concepts are thus nowadays seen as complementary perspectives, different but converging, rather than as two polar opposites: and indeed synonymy and polysemy, connected respectively with the onomasiological and semasiological perspectives, represent two different semantic relations that it would be futile to study in a rigidly separate manner.

However, the two perspectives cannot be considered equally useful for our specific topic. This follows not from theoretical but from empirical considerations which are deeply rooted in the history of linguistic studies. A general, structural description of the lexicon of a

language can only be based on the available lexical repertoires. The lexicographic tradition of Italian, not unlike that of the other Romance languages and other European languages in general, largely consists of repertoires characterized by a semasiological structure as formalized in dictionaries ordered alphabetically by lexeme. There has existed, it is true, a parallel and not inconsiderable tradition of so-called 'reasoned', 'methodical', or 'domestic' dictionaries, grouped and ordered by meaning (or, more often, by etymological family) rather than by form (cf. Carena 1851:iii; Marello 1980; 1996:132–136). But this tradition, which reached its peak in the nineteenth century, has remained decidedly secondary in terms of size and importance, so that recent reviews of Italian lexicography make no more than a cursory mention of it (Schweickard 2016:522f.).

To date, specific preparatory works on the onomasiology of Italian are lacking, even though Italian is included in standard repertories such as the *Dictionnaire onomasiologique des langues romanes* (Vernay 1992–1996) and the *Dictionnaire étymologique et cognitif des langues romanes* (Gévaudan and Koch 2011), the latter specifically dealing with the origin and genesis of the names of the parts of the human body in fourteen Romance languages. When we refer to recent works on Italian, the only available repertory is the *Dizionario ita-liano ragionato* (Gianni and Satta 1988). However, the latter gathers its headwords according to etymological connections, not their meaning. For instance, under the headword CASA one will find *casello* 'motorway toll booth' and *casino* 'house of prostitution', but not the adjective *domestico* 'relating to the house', which is found instead under DUOMO, since both words are indirectly derived from Lat. DOMUS 'house'. This kind of ordering corresponds less well to the organization of meanings in the lexical competence of the speaker than the pure semantic clustering of headwords in nineteenth-century 'methodical' dictionaries.

Other results are consigned to the works on individual lexical sets put together in the golden age of Italian onomasiology, including Clemente Merlo's essays on Romance nouns for the seasons and months (Merlo 1904), Pentecost (Merlo 1926), and Carnival (Merlo 1927a), which, however, cannot provide systematic data on the whole Italian lexicon. For all these reasons, the present discussion will follow a predominantly semasiological perspective, especially where

reference is made to quantitative data. However, onomasiological observations will figure whenever necessary as in the case with the description of regional lexicons where, for example, reference to the problem of geosynonymy requires an onomasiological approach.

In what follows we use the term *word* in a broad sense to refer to the lexical elements mentioned in the text, only distinguishing between such terms as *word*, *wordform*, *lexeme*, and *headword* in cases of ambiguity.

25.3 Continuity and discontinuity between Latin and Italian: words and meanings[1]

The historiography of Italian linguistics has often emphasized the continuity of the Italian lexicon with respect to Latin. First, the peculiar linguistic history of Italy is such that among the Romance languages Italian has been subject to the most intensive and extensive contact over time with cultivated Latin. Although, strictly speaking, loanwords from Latin, the direct linguistic ancestor of Italian, cannot be considered a structural element of diachronic continuity, they have nevertheless introduced into the lexicon a rich and culturally prestigious series of elements that are almost identical to their respective Latin sources. A second factor of continuity with respect to Latin concerns the inventory of lexical categories, which has remained almost unchanged, with the notable exception of the article, which is absent in Latin, but an innovation which Italian shares with the other Romance languages.

As a matter of fact, the Italian lexicon was formed through a centuries-long process of internal developments and the acceptance of loanwords from other languages and cultures, with which the inhabitants of the Italian regions gradually came into contact long before they became ‘Italians’ proper. The very concept of ‘stratification’ is based on a metaphor, that of the ‘strata’, which thanks to the traditional concepts of ‘substratum’, ‘superstratum’,

and ‘adstratum’ is unavoidable when speaking about the history of the lexicon. Here too we shall use it, although it must be borne in mind that it is a metaphor, and not a diagrammatic representation of reality.

From a linguistic point of view, the Italian lexicon can thus be divided into a number of layers or strata (Lorenzetti 2010b; D’Achille 2023):

- words inherited from pre-Latin substrata;
- words inherited from Latin by direct transmission;
- words borrowed from Latin by indirect transmission;
- loanwords from other languages, including the dialects and jargons; the Latinisms borrowed by indirect transmission are usually treated separately, and a practice we also follow here, even though they are strictly speaking borrowings in all respects, albeit from the same language from which inherited words come;
- endogenous neologisms, namely, words formed in Italian at any point in time through the usual morphological rules of word formation.

25.3.1 Substratum words

Paolo D’Achille has recently revived the traditional explanation first proposed by Clemente Merlo (1927b) regarding the scarcity of Italian words of unquestionable substratum origin. In particular, this scarcity is claimed to be a consequence of the peculiarities of the contact situation between Latin and Etruscan inasmuch as ‘Etruscan, highly distinct from Latin for genetic reasons, did not leave substrate traces in the language comparable to those left by Celtic in northern Italian dialects or the Italic languages in central and southern dialects’ (D’Achille 2023:7).[2] As D’Achille rightly points out, Merlo’s explanation possibly rules out the chance of Tuscan-Italian words coming from the Etruscan substratum, since Italian is based on fourteenth-century Florentine. But, of course, it does not exclude the possibility of Italian words of non-Tuscan origin coming from other

substratum languages such as *arnia* 'beehive', whose variants are well attested in Italo-Romance and Ibero-Romance varieties, but which finds no correspondence in Latin. A similar case is *barra* 'bar, wooden or metal rod that can serve as a lever' which also lacks an obvious Latin etymon, although due caution should be exercised when attributing words that lack a precise Latin etymon to pre-Latin substrata (cf. Lorenzetti 2011).

25.3.2 Direct Latin heritage

Inherited lexemes can be traced directly back to spoken Latin. They are words that have changed form or meaning without speakers ever perceiving any break in continuity through time. Words such as Lat. AQUAM 'water', CIMITERIUM 'cemetery', CLAUEM 'key', became *acqua*, *cimitero*, *chiave* in Florentine and subsequently Italian, examples of a lexical continuity enduring for more than two thousand years. Of course, some may well have entered Latin as borrowings from other languages, especially Greek: CIMITĒRIUM is a spoken variant of Lat. COEMETĒRIUM < Christian Gr. *koimētē´rion* 'sepulchre, cemetery', literally 'dormitory' (cf. Gr. *koimáō* 'to sleep'). Words belonging to this stratum are not particularly numerous, amounting to about 5,000 entries (less than 15 per cent) in De Mauro's *GRADIT* (containing about 260,000 headwords). As is to be expected, the percentage of such heritage words calculated in relation to the basic vocabulary is much higher. These are the most frequent and distinctive lexemes of the language, including auxiliaries and other high-frequency verbs (*essere* 'be', *avere* 'have', *dire* 'say', *fare* 'do'), nouns and adjectives (*albero* 'tree', *bello* 'beautiful', *caldo* 'hot', *cane* 'dog', *grosso* 'large', *mano* 'hand', *nero* 'black'), and above all functional words (articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns) belonging to the basic vocabulary.

From a historical perspective, uninterrupted transmission makes inherited Latinisms a category of their own. For lexemes coming from other languages, historical analysis is only possible when their first attestations are available (and this criterion, as we shall see, is not always easy to apply nor always decisive), but in the case of inherited Latinisms it makes no sense to ask *when* they entered

Italian, since they existed before Italian came into being. In this sense, Serianni (2023:74) is right to point out that, rather than claiming that Italian derives from Latin, it is more correct to say that Italian is spoken Latin as it evolved from one generation to another through time (cf. §1.2).

25.3.3 Latinisms

Besides inherited Latinisms, Italian has more than 30,000 loanwords from Latin relating to the most diverse semantic spheres, e.g., *applicare* 'apply', *biblioteca* 'library', *cibo* 'food', *concetto* 'concept', *cultura* 'culture', *equestre* 'equestrian', *grammatica* 'grammar', *inclinare* 'incline', *influenza* 'influence', *manuale* 'manual, handbook', *materno* 'maternal', *mensile* 'monthly', *pensione* 'pension', *secolo* 'century', *termine* 'term', *tradizione* 'tradition'. Towards the first half of the first millennium Latin ceased to be a native language, but it remained the main written language for many centuries in the former territories of the Western Roman Empire. From this written Latin, the only vehicle of supra-local culture, more educated speakers, who at some level were bilingual, transferred lexical elements into their own vernaculars, including old Florentine. Both for chronological and sociolinguistic reasons, Latinisms have not been fully exposed to the developments that affected words of direct heritage, so that they only partially underwent, if at all, the normal adaptations typical of the spoken language. As a consequence, Latinisms are often distinguishable as such by their very form which keeps closer to the Latin model than to lexemes of direct Latin heritage. For example, in inherited words the Latin cluster consonant + /l/ became consonant + /j/, e.g., CLAUEM > *chiave* 'key', FLUMEN > *fiume* 'river', GLACEUM > *ghiaccio* 'ice', PLUS > *più* 'more'. In learnèd Latinisms, by contrast, the same clusters remain intact, e.g., *clavicola* 'clavicle', *fluviale* 'fluvial', *glaciazione* 'glaciation', *plurale* 'plural'. Similarly, the Latin diphthong /aw/ becomes /ɔ/ in inherited terms, e.g., CAUSA > *cosa* 'thing', AURUM > *oro* 'gold', but is retained in Latinisms, e.g., *causa* 'cause', *aureo* 'golden' (cf. §8.5).

Latinisms therefore roughly follow the phonological rules of Latin only undergoing, once imported into Florentine and then Italian, partial adaptation of sounds and sound combinations which are otherwise systematically transformed in words of direct descent. A typical by-product of this double source of formal developments can be observed in the many lexical doublets which come from one and the same etymological base but via two distinct pathways, e.g., Lat. UITIUM > inherited *vezzo* 'habit' vs learnèd *vizio* 'bad habit', DISCUM > inherited *desco* 'eating table' vs learnèd *disco* 'disc'. The same process also enables Italian to form much more complex semantic families than would be permitted with just lexemes of direct Latin descent. For example, for concepts in the semantic area of *occhio* 'eye' (< Lat. OCULUM) Italian presents such Latinisms as *oculare* 'ocular' and *oculista* 'ophthalmologist', and endogenous neoformations such as *occhiale* 'eyeglass', *occhiata* 'glance', *occhiolino* 'wink' (not to mention the learnèd Greek loanwords *oftalmico* 'ophthalmic' and *ottico* 'optician').

Such a significant abundance of expressions may however lead to some difficulties, both from the point of view of the child acquiring the language as their L1 and the adult learning it as a L2. If we take a noun X, it is not possible to predict with certainty what the adjective meaning 'pertaining to X' will be: in the case of *orecchio* 'ear' the corresponding adjective is *auricolare* 'of the ear', not ***orecchiale* or ***orecchino* (the latter does exist but means 'earring'); in the case of *pecora* 'sheep' the adjective is *ovino*, not ***pecorino* (which does exist as a noun meaning 'sheep's cheese'); and in the case of *maiale* 'pig', *pork* meat is called (*carne*) *suina*, and not for example ***maiàlica*, ***maialina*, or ***maialesca*. Thus, inherited and learnèd elements from Latin, together with neoformations, interact very closely in shaping the Italian lexicon.

Focusing on meaning, it is also worth mentioning the frequency of so-called *semantic Latinisms*, namely, Italian lexemes which retain meanings closer to those of Latin alongside their common popular meanings. Examples include *imbecille*, commonly 'moron' but also Latinate 'weak', and *gentile* 'kind' but also used with the meaning 'of noble origin', 'not Christian'.

The combination of all these peculiarities explains why treating Latinisms separately from other linguistic borrowings is fully justified from a historical perspective. Unlike other loanwords,

Latinisms have essentially involved the whole history of Italian, affecting not only the lexicon but also other areas of the grammar such as phonology, word-formation, and syntax, so that their overall contribution is hardly comparable to that of the other languages that have contributed to forming the Italian lexicon. Indeed, the influence of Latinisms on Italian is not limited to the early centuries of the history of the language but continues to the present day: about one-third of the 30,000 Latinisms appeared in Italian during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and more than 11,000 are neologisms from the twentieth century.

Moreover, Latinisms can have different sources. To begin with, there are of course many Latinisms which Latin itself borrowed from other languages: just to take up the examples mentioned earlier, *biblioteca* 'library' and *grammatica* 'grammar' ultimately stem from Greek. Also of particular interest are so-called 'xeno-Latinisms', i.e., indirect Latinisms that entered Italian not from medieval Latin, but as modern borrowings from other European languages which, in turn, had accepted them into their own lexicon as learnèd elements of Latin origin (Ricci 2023:140–143). Some of them share with 'normal' Latinisms the usual phonological and morphological features: *optare* 'to opt' and *opzione* 'option' present the clusters [pt] and [pts] not only because they are learnèd loanwords from Latin, but also because they passed into Italian in the eighteenth century from French and English models (Fr. *opter*, *option*, Eng. *opt, option*), possibly through written interference (to explain *op*[ts]*ione* we need to go back to the usual Italian rendering of the letter <z>). In this class we find some of the most common contemporary English loanwords, e.g., *media*, *computer*, and *sport*.

Another culturally significant kind of Latinism is the pseudo-Latinism. Examples include the adjective *post lauream* 'after graduation, postgraduate', a semantic backformation forged on the Italian *laurea* 'degree' and inflected as if it were a Latin prepositional locution, widely used in written and formal contexts. Similarly, *una tantum* 'one-off, just once', a phrase coined in the twentieth century to indicate a one-off, extraordinary payment or tax, is based on a non-Latin interpretation of the adverb UNA, which actually means 'together with, at the same time' rather than 'once in a while' as in its modern sense (Ricci 2023:149).

25.3.4 Words vs meaning continuity

Despite having highlighted a number of straightforward examples of lexical continuity between Latin and Italian in §25.3, a consideration of method becomes nevertheless necessary in order to assess this continuity correctly. Serianni (2023:65f.), after mentioning De Mauro's estimates of the proportion of lexemes making up the core vocabulary of Italian, about 90 per cent of which was almost entirely constituted by the end of the fourteenth century, emphasizes the remarkable frequency with which a lexeme that has remained the same for centuries and is fully recognizable in its external appearance may have undergone some significant changes in meaning. For example, the Italian words for 'little boy' and 'little girl' are today *bambino* and *bambina*, while in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries they were *fanciullo* and *fanciulla*, which today are possible synonyms only in deliberately literary or joking usage. In the same range of meanings, in the early centuries of the language *ragazzo* meant 'stable boy' and 'apprentice', and it was only in the late sixteenth century that the modern meaning of 'boy' emerged. Interestingly, the meaning of the latter is still evolving today: it is not uncommon in modern usage to hear a fully grown man, say in his thirties or forties, referred to as a *ragazzo*, as further evidenced by the increasing frequency of collocations such as *ragazzo giovane* or *giovane ragazzo* (lit. 'boy young' and 'young boy'), which a couple of decades ago would have sounded redundant and stylistically sloppy.

Indeed, if we estimate the rate of lexical continuity on the basis of the number of lexemes preserved in the transition from Latin to Italian or reintroduced by taking them directly from Latin by way of learnèd borrowing, we limit our observation to the level of form at the expense of meaning. This may well be also an unwanted consequence of the normal structure of modern dictionaries: as a matter of fact, the search functions of even the best electronic repertories allow us to easily extract very rich quantitative data based on semasiological diachrony, taking account of all the criteria used by lexicographers to tag the many sections of the headwords. Unfortunately, the corresponding data about semantic diachrony are much less easy to obtain. Some examples will give a clearer idea of the mismatch. It. *cavallo* 'horse' < Lat. CABALLUS 'nag': as Aprile

(2005:71) rightly observes, if an ancient Roman today heard us saying *cavallo*, they would effortlessly understand the word, but would struggle to understand why we are able to use it to refer to a fiery steed. It. *fuoco* generally means 'fire', but comes from Lat. FOCUS meaning 'fireplace, hearth'. However, semantic continuity subsists even when formal continuity is interrupted: Grm. **hanka* > It. *anca* 'hip' has replaced Lat. COXA which has continued as *coscia* with the meaning 'thigh', thereby leaving intact the original segmentation of the semantic field.

25.3.5 Loanwords

If we consider the number of Italian loans from other languages in a word list of over 260,000 entries (such as that of *GRADIT*) and sort them by number, the most represented foreign language is English, which, with about 7,000 lexemes, outnumbers French by about a thousand entries. This result is due to the great incidence of borrowings from English in the field of technical terminology; in fact, if we restrict ourselves to the approximately 45,000 entries that make up the most common lexical base of Italian, the situation is reversed with the percentages becoming about 5 per cent for French and less than 3 per cent for English. If one then narrows the sample down even further to the 7,500 entries of the most basic vocabulary, the number of Anglicisms reaches about fifty (0.7 per cent), in contrast to more than 4,000 Gallicisms (5.7 per cent). Spanish, German, and other languages have provided loans in much smaller quantities.

The number of loans from ancient Greek is also very significant. This is due firstly to the large number of terms, especially of a scientific nature, of remote Greek origin that passed through Latin before making their way into Italian, e.g., *filosofia* 'philosophy', *problema* 'problem', *tema* 'theme', *tesi* 'thesis'. A second source are neoclassical formations involving affixes such as *bio-* (*biologia* 'biology'), *idro-* (*idrogeno* 'hydrogen'), *micro-* (*microscopio* 'microscope'), *fono-* (*fonogramma* 'phonogram', *telefono* 'telephone') which were either formed in Italian or taken from other European languages, mainly French.[3]

An important distinction is that between non-adapted loanwords (e.g., *hard-disk*, *jihad*, *Weltanschauung*), which maintain a clear extraneousness, even graphically, with respect to the usual form of Italian words, and adapted loanwords (cf. *bistecca* < Eng. *beef-steak*, *catrame* 'tar' < Ar. *qaṭrān*, *guerra* 'war' < WGmc. **werra*), which speakers perceive to be indistinguishable from inherited popular words and therefore treat them as 'normal' Italian lexemes. With respect to this distinction, the degree of assimilation is very different from one source language to another. The difference, of course, does not depend on structural factors but, rather, on the historical period when the various languages exerted their influence on Italian. Early borrowings always appear assimilated, whereas in more recent times, various factors, including an increase in the general level of education and consequent greater familiarity with other languages, and especially their written forms, have led to a preference for retaining the source form rather than assimilating it.[4] With this in mind, it is possible to look at foreign contributions to the Italian lexicon along a historical timeline, relating borrowing trends to the main phases of Italian political, cultural, and literary history.

25.3.5.1 Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages

In this period, the nascent Italo-Romance vernaculars came into contact with the regionally differentiated languages of the Germanic, Arab, and Byzantine invaders. Sicilian place names such as *Caltagirone*, *Calatafimi*, and *Mongibello* document this phase for Arabic, as do nouns such as *cubbaita* 'type of sweet' and *tabbuto* 'coffin' which have made their way into Italian in recent times through modern Sicilian dialects. For the Germanic languages, examples of words of Longobard origin include *anca* 'hip', *balcone* 'balcony', and *grinza* 'wrinkle'; from the Gothic of the Visigoths probably came *albergo* 'hotel', *elmo* 'helmet', *guardia* 'guard', and from the Ostrogoths *fiasco* 'flask', *nastro* 'ribbon', and *stecca* 'splint'. Frankish domination brought many terms related to feudal terminology (e.g., *barone* 'baron', *feudo* 'fiefdom') and clothing (e.g., *guanto* 'glove', *roba* 'stuff' but originally 'garments'), while lexemes such as *brace* 'embers', *martora* 'marten', *sapone* 'soap', and *vanga* 'spade' provide direct evidence of earlier contacts between Germanic

varieties and Latin of the late Roman Empire. Words of Byzantine origin were the direct or remote source for *bottarga* 'roe', *duca* 'duke' (eastern adaptation of Lat. DUX 'leader'), *fanale* 'lamp', *schiavo* 'slave', and *zingaro* 'gypsy'.

25.3.5.2 French and Provençal

In the same period of the late Middle Ages when the Florentine vernacular was beginning to establish itself as the future common language of Italy, the cultural centrality of France and Provence had major linguistic effects on the Italian lexicon. Already present as a settled superstratum, thanks to the French-speaking elements of the Frankish (nineth–tenth centuries), Norman (eleventh–twelth), and Angevin (fourteenth–fifteenth) aristocracies, old French also entered Italy because of the intensive trade relations of Tuscan and Venetian merchants with France and the eastern Mediterranean. But the major role in this process was played by the cultural influence of Provençal and French literature. Loanwords from Provençal in the common lexicon include *bandiera* 'flag', *bugia* 'lie', *coraggio* 'courage', *noia* 'boredom', *speranza* 'hope'; from old French came *bastardo* 'bastard', *burro* 'butter', *cugino* 'cousin', *giallo* 'yellow', *mangiare* 'to eat', *puttana* 'whore', *roccia* 'rock', *romanzo* 'romance', *svegliare* 'to wake', *volentieri* 'gladly'. The main areas of influence were in merchandising (cf. *derrata* 'foodstuff' < OFr. *denrée*), hunting (cf. *artiglio* 'claw' < OPrv. *artelh*, *levriero* 'greyhound' < OFr. *lévrier*), riding (*destriero* 'steed' < OFr. *destrier*), warfare (OFr. *eschiere* > *schiera* 'array', OPrv. *escudier* > *scudiero* 'squire', OFr. *gonfalon* > *gonfalone* 'gonfalon'), pilgrimages (OPrv. *viatge* > *viaggio* 'travel', OFr. *passage* > *passaggio* 'passage', OFr. *oste* > *oste* 'innkeeper').

25.3.5.3 Spanish, Catalan, and Portuguese

Spanish and Catalan domination in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provided about twenty lexemes of common Italian vocabulary, mostly names of exotic realities such as *cacao* 'cocoa', *cannibale* 'cannibal', *cioccolata*, *cioccolato* 'chocolate', *patata* 'potato, *tabacco* 'tobacco', *zebra* 'zebra'. By contrast, Hispanisms are

more or less absent from words associated with intellectual discourse, an indication of the fact that the acceptance of Hispanisms in common Italian was linked not to cultural prestige, but rather to worldly prestige and to stereotypes characteristic of Spaniards: *baciamano* 'hand-kissing', *sfarzo* 'pomp', *sussiego* 'arrogance, self-importance'. For many Hispanisms, their original nature linked to technical terms of seafaring (*flotta* 'fleet', *risacca* 'backwash', *nord/est/sud/ovest* 'north/east/south/west') and the military (*guerriglia* 'guerrilla', *parata* 'parade', *pattuglia* 'patrol') has gradually vanished, as much as the meaning has expanded to cover common referents. One should not underestimate the scientific Arabisms that arrived via Spanish in the late Middle Ages, following a complex path of translation which involved Arabic, Hebrew, Spanish, and Latin: it was through this pathway that words such as *almanacco* 'almanac', *quintale* 'quintal' or *zenit* 'zenith' entered medieval Italian (cf. most recently Mancini 2023).

Finally, a small but not negligible share of Portuguese loanwords testifies to the fact that Portuguese, unlike Italian, has mainly been a conduit of exoticisms, which entered the language following the colonial explorations of the sixteenth century: *ananas* 'pineapple', *bambù* 'bamboo', *banana* 'banana', *mandarino* 'Chinese 'dignitary', *tifone* 'typhoon', *tucano* 'toucan'.

25.3.5.4 French

The influence of French, so-called *galloromania*, began in the eighteenth century and continued through the Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire up until the early twentieth century. Although impossible to summarize here, the overall role and the social and cultural milieus of the approximately 5,000 French loanwords in the Italian lexicon can perhaps be inferred from the following few examples, listed by century of first occurrence:

1. Seventeenth century: *baionetta* 'bayonet', *chimica* 'chemistry', *equipaggio* 'crew', *moda* 'fashion', *parrucchiere* 'hairdresser';
2. Eighteenth century: *burocratico* 'bureaucratic', *certificato* 'certificate', *damigiana* 'demijohn', *giornalista* 'journalist', *polemica* 'controversy', *suicidio* 'suicide', *uniforme* 'uniform';

3. Revolution and Napoleonic era: *cospirazione* ‘conspiracy’, *destra/sinistra* ‘(political) right/left’, *ghigliottina* ‘guillotine’, *terrorista* ‘terrorist’;
4. Nineteenth century: *centimetro* ‘centimetre’, *disinfettare* ‘to disinfect’, *vaccino* ‘vaccine’; *aeroplano* ‘airplane’, *automobile* ‘car’, *elicottero* ‘helicopter’. In this period a series of non-adapted loanwords began to emerge: *omelette*, *hotel*, *menu* for gastronomy, *choc* ‘shock’ in the field of medicine, and *baccarat*, *bon-ton*, *boudoir*, (*cadeau* >) *cadò* ‘present’, *chic*, *élite*, *habitué* ‘regular customer’, *pardon!* ‘excuse me!, sorry!’ from the semantic realm of *bon vivre* ‘fine living’. During the nineteenth century French also acted as a conduit for various exotic loanwords: from Arabic (*lillà* ‘lilac’), Turkish (*colbacco* ‘colbac’, *tulipano* ‘tulip’), American (*caucciù* ‘rubber’, *colibrì* ‘hummingbird’, *giaguaro* ‘jaguar’), and African native languages (*scimpanzè* ‘chimpanzee’);
5. Twentieth century: thrown into crisis at first by the purism of the Fascist regime and later, from the 1960s, by the growing fortune of English as the main foreign language in Italy—a fortune boosted by the rapid ongoing shift from French to English as the preferred foreign language taught in schools—the lexical influence of French is nevertheless still evident in those sectors for which the dependence on France was still strong, such as transport (*camion* ‘truck’, *carburante* ‘fuel’, *garage* ‘garage’, *parabrezza* ‘windscreen’, *semaforo* ‘traffic light’, *taxi* ‘taxi’) and cinema (*cinema*, *riflettore* ‘spotlight’, *trucco* ‘make-up’). A number of complex multi-word idioms were also borrowed from French, e.g., *presa di coscienza* ‘awareness’ or *qualità della vita* ‘quality of life’, which, although constructed from Italian material, have been shaped on the corresponding Fr. *prise de conscience* and *qualité de vie*.

25.3.5.5 Anglo-American cultural and economic domination

Anglo-American cultural and economic domination has led to English playing a leading role among the sources of borrowings in contemporary Italian. The major dictionaries record more than 7,000 Anglicisms in Italian today, coming from technology

(*alluminio* ‘aluminium’, *meccanismo* ‘mechanism’, *microfono* ‘microphone’, *missile* ‘missile’, *telefono* ‘phone’), transport (*bus*, *clacson* ‘horn’, *motel*, *stop*, *tunnel*), and a good number of non-adapted loanwords from information technology and communication sciences (e.g., *browser*, *bug*, *chat*, *computer*, *formattare* ‘to format’, *mail* ‘email’). Given the large number of contributions, the formal diversification of borrowings is also broad and well attested. Gualdo (2023b) jokingly applies a ‘six degrees of separation’ model to categorize Anglicisms in Italian. This model ranges from unadapted and fully recognizable borrowings to semantic calques, where the foreign influence is not immediately recognizable in the seemingly ‘genuine’ Italian words. On the first level of this scale, we find words that are only adapted in terms of their segmental phonology. This adaptation partly depends on the written form: Eng. /kəmˈpjuːtə/ is adapted into Italian as *computer* /komˈpjuter/, reflecting a partial spelling-based pronunciation. However, neither the phonological nor the morphological structure of English is adapted to Italian: It. *sketch* ends with an obstruent, which is an impossible structure for an Italian noun, from both a phonological and a morphological perspective. Nonetheless, it displays the narrowing of the semantic spectrum which is typical of the borrowing process: It. *sketch* mainly means ‘short comic scene’, but not (or very rarely) also a ‘simple quickly-made drawing’, the original meaning of the English source word.

At the opposite pole of the integration scale are semantic calques: *intrigante* has taken on the meaning of ‘compelling, enthralling’ from Eng. *intriguing*; *realizzare* has added the meaning ‘to understand, to realize’ to the traditional one of ‘to implement, to accomplish’ under the influence of Eng. *realize*. Between these two poles, going from the greatest to the lowest awareness of linguistic foreignness on the part of the speaker, lie the other degrees of borrowing: morphological integration in word-formation (cf. agentive suffix *-ista* in *bar* > *barista* ‘barman’) or inflexion (cf. first-conjugation infinitival marker *-are* in *to friendzone* > *friendzonare* ‘to make someone understand that you want to be their friend, but not to have a romantic or sexual relationship with them’); hybrid lexical compounds formed with English and Italian material, e.g., *papa* ‘pope’ + *boy* > *papaboy* ‘boy(s) of the Pope’, the name given to the young fans of Karol Wojtyła during the World Youth Days in the

year 2000; calques following the morphotactics of the source language, e.g., *centravanti* < *centre-forward*, *viadotto* < *viaduct*, or that of the target language, e.g., *assistente di volo* < *flight assistant*.

Over the years professional linguists have often downplayed concerns about the English language taking over Italian. They have pointed out that the actual use of unadapted English words in Italian remains very low, especially in the most commonly used words (less than 2 per cent of the 7,500 most frequently used Italian words). However, the perceived influence of English seems to be much broader. It extends beyond the well-known contexts of technical and scientific languages, deeply influencing the lexicon of the media, the web, and the language used by institutions. A recent bill aimed at 'protecting and promoting the Italian language', brought forward by right-wing parties in 2022, seeks to address what it sees as the 'degradation' of Italian caused by the 'excessive use of dialectal jargon', 'the indiscriminate adoption of bureaucratic and scientific neologisms', and an 'overreliance on English loanwords'. Such proposals uncomfortably echo the worst purism of the Fascist era and appear rather folkloristic to experts, but it is unclear how far, beyond the limited domain of journalists or TV pundits, they might reflect a broader social and cultural context genuinely sensitive to the impact of English on Italian.

25.3.5.6 Exoticisms and orientalisms

Under the generic labels of 'exoticisms' and 'orientalisms' can be grouped a wide range of languages, e.g., Arabic (cf. early loans: *ammiraglio* 'admiral', *magazzino* 'warehouse'; modern loans: *fatwa*, *jihad*, *imam*, *intifada*), Japanese (*banzai*, *geisha*, *tatami*, *karate*, *origami*), Turkish (*bailamme* 'bedlam', *cacciucco* 'fish stew', *sorbetto* 'sorbet', *yog(h)urt*), and languages of India (Sanskrit *avatar*, *karma*, *yoga*, Hindi *basmati*).

Mancini (2023:341f.) has recently proposed some criteria to distinguish recent exoticisms from other non-adapted borrowings. First, a characteristic of recent and modern so-called exoticisms is the written rather than oral medium. These words enter Italian exclusively through written usage, without any linguistic contact between speakers of the languages involved, let alone between the

respective linguistic communities: there are of course no bilingual Italian-Turkish, Italian-Japanese, or Italian-Quechua communities that are so numerous and stable over time to effectively allow spoken language contact between both languages. Second, there is the predictable absence of morphological assimilation. Finally, in terms of semantics, the loans are usually linked to specific spheres: religion, ethnic gastronomy, sport, fashion, and so on, and this is reflected in the circulation of exoticisms, which, therefore, appears restricted to specific areas of society.

The number of oriental exoticisms in the general lexicon is quite limited: there are fewer than 1,500 words from Arabic, Japanese, Turkish, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Persian in the headwords of *GRADIT*, and less than one-third of those are recent, non-adapted borrowings.

25.3.5.7 Pseudo-loanwords

Pseudo-loanwords are formed in a language, in our case Italian, using language material or word-formation rules belonging to another language, in our case mostly English or, less frequently, Latin, e.g., *footing* 'jogging', *autostop* 'hitchhiking', or *Mattarellum* 'electoral system devised by politician Sergio Mattarella' (cf. §25.3.3). Since the trigger for pseudo-loans is that the other language should be seen as prestigious, fashionable, or 'cool' in given semantic areas at a given time, these words are a good mirror of the social attitude of attention, or in some cases even subservience, to the (pseudo-)source languages and of course to the source cultures of reference. The external form of pseudo-loanwords immediately refers back to the source language, in which, however, they do not exist at all, or have very different meanings. According to Furiassi's classification (Furiassi 2010), pseudo-Anglicisms in Italian may be words formed from proper English bases which do not form derivatives or compounds in native varieties of English, e.g., *recordman* 'record holder'; or compounds formed from English words but following the Italian head-initial pattern, with consequent semantic shift, as in It. *baby killer* meaning 'murderous child' and not, as it would in English, 'killer of babies'; or words clipped through an ellipsis process, e.g., It. *basket* 'basketball'; or finally English words that

change their meaning in a way often very far from that of their English source, e.g., It. *mister* ‘sports coach, trainer’. Other very common examples include *no-vax* ‘anti-vaxxer; anti-vax’ or *smart working* ‘working from home, remote working’.

25.3.5.8 Dialectisms and regionalisms

As already noted, the long-standing presence of dialects as the native languages of most Italians has played a significant role in shaping the common Italian vocabulary. Especially since the nineteenth century, the lexicon has been enriched with contributions from the many dialects spoken across the peninsula. These contributions have a common source in local or regional dialects, but they differ in terms of their areal distribution. Consequently, they are usually tagged as ‘regionalisms’ when they tend to remain limited to local or regional varieties (e.g., Sic. *carnezzeria* ‘butcher’s shop’, very common and usual in Sicily but absent from other regions of Italy), but as ‘dialectisms’ if they have become part of common Italian and are understood and used by most speakers, e.g., *ciao* ‘hi; bye’, from Venetian *s-ciao* ‘slave’, used as a form of greeting since the eighteenth century (D’Achille 2010; Foresti 2011; De Blasi 2023; for a slightly different application of the distinction see, for example, De Mauro 2005).

Like other adapted loanwords, dialectisms are mostly indistinguishable in their form from words of Italian heritage. For instance, confining our examples to gastronomic terms, *acciuga* ‘anchovy’ from Genoese, *raviolo* ‘ravioli’ from Venetian, and *vongola* ‘clam’ from Neapolitan are in all respects Italian words in the intuition of speakers, who obviously do not have access to etymology. Among dialectisms it is also possible to find non-adapted loanwords, e.g., Cal. *’ndrangheta* ‘Calabrian organized criminality’ which displays an initial onset cluster [nd], and Srd. *porceddu* ‘typical Sardinian piglet roasted on a spit’, which ends in word-final unstressed -[u], both alien to Italian phonology.

As D’Achille (2010) points out, even if dialectisms can be seen as the next stage of regionalisms in the diachrony of the Italian lexicon, the distinction between dialectisms and regionalisms is not always clear-cut. Many words that originated in the dialects and have now

entered common usage still retain some local features, making them recognizable as such. This is often because they refer to local realities (It. *mafia* evokes Sicily even if one is talking about Russian or Japanese criminal organizations), or to concepts that are perceived throughout Italy as being linked to the region they come from, e.g., Srd. *nuraghe* 'fortress characteristic of pre-Roman Sardinia', Vnt. *campiello* 'small Venetian square', Rom. *borgataro* 'person living in the suburbs of Rome', and by connotation 'person living in a condition of social exclusion'.

Most regionalisms designate realities and concepts that are not specific to one region and which may have counterparts in common Italian or other regional varieties of Italian, and therefore belong to the category of geosynonyms (cf. §1.4.3.4, §1.5.2.5). As noted above, geosynonyms are perhaps the type of regionalism most frequently dealt with in the classic works of Italo-Romance onomasiology, e.g., Sic. *carnezzeria* vs It. *macelleria* 'butcher's shop', Tsc.-It. *padrino* vs Ven. *sàntolo* vs SIt. *compare* 'godfather', Rom./CIt. *abbacchio* vs It. *agnello* 'lamb', Pdm./Lmb *carrobbio* vs It. *incrocio* 'crossroads', Rom. *fraschetta* vs It. *osteria* 'wine tavern (serving food)', Ven. *peoci* vs Lig. *muscoli* vs (S)It. *cozze* 'mussels'. Alongside geosynonyms, Italian onomasiological variation also frequently involves geohomonyms (Regis 2010), words displaying the same form but different meanings in different geographical areas, e.g., *mollica*: Tsc.-It. 'inner, soft part of loaf of bread' vs Sic. 'breadcrumbs', *lea*: Pdm. 'avenue' (< Fr. *allée* 'path') vs Ven. 'mud' (Lat. LAETAMEN 'manure'). The scope of geosynonymy within regional varieties of Italian is inevitably more limited than that of dialect-based Italo-Romance geosynonymy. The two sections of the Italian repertoire, namely the dialectal and standard Italian, while closely related in everyday usage, should be kept distinct in linguistic analysis in order to obtain a correct historical framework of mutual relations. Nonetheless, the variation remains significant and contributes to the establishment of a fluctuating equilibrium in numerous semantic areas of the Italian lexicon.

25.3.5.9 Italian slangs

Slangs (It. *gerghi*) are language varieties used occasionally by specific social groups to avoid transparency in communication with outsiders while emphasizing group membership (on Italian slang, cf. Sanga 1993; Vigolo 2010; Marcato 2013). In Italy, the most widely used—and studied—slangs are those of the underworld and of retail traders. From a linguistic perspective, slang is a parasitic variety that borrows morphosyntax from its base language but creates its own lexemes and overall language-specific lexicon by modifying the form or meaning of the lexicon of the host language through the application of very specific and powerful word-formation rules. Now in the strict sense, Italian-based slang does not exist since speakers of slang typically belong to socially marginalized groups that have not had enough contact with spoken Italian to use Italian vocabulary as the foundation for their variety. Although it is certainly possible that speakers of slang used words of some local variety of Italian as a basis for communication in typical contexts of language contact such as markets, trade fairs, or prisons (cf. Scala 2020b and Sanga 2020 on multilingual slang users), it is doubtful that coherent varieties of Italian could have been the basis of these developments. Furthermore, for sociological reasons it is highly unlikely that this role could have been filled by native varieties of Italian. In other words, the base languages behind Italy's historical slangs were mainly dialects.

Nevertheless, over time varieties of Italian have come into being which are functionally close to slang, in the sense that they share at least in part one or both of its main characteristics: the cryptolalic function and the function of group delimitation and identification. This is the case, for example, with youth language varieties, or military slang, or the slang of drug addicts. The assimilation to historical slang is also justified at a structural level, as these varieties are characterized exclusively by their lexicon and pragmatic uses, while morphosyntax remain those of their base varieties. On the other hand, the social groups that use Italian-based slang are not 'marginal' in the same sense as the historical users of slang are.

Italian-based slang appears much less rich in lexical innovations than traditional dialect-based slangs. The latter used a huge variety of word-formation processes, responsible for a continuous lexical turnover: particularly frequent use of common suffixes (e.g., *-oso* in *fangose* 'shoes', *calcosa* 'street', *fogliose* 'playing cards') or proper

suffixes (*altro* 'other' > *altrera*, *legge* 'law', in the sense of 'law of the underworld' > *leggèra*, then *lingèra* 'underworld'), personal pronouns based on a possessive plus an empty word (*mio* 'mine', *tuo* 'yours' > *miòdine* 'me', *tuòdine* 'you'), negation words alliterating in [n] (*nisba niberta nicolò nicci*), and so on (cf. Sanga 1993). Compared with this luxuriant morphology, modifications of form in Italian-based slangs are much rarer: one example, though, is clipping as in *fascio* 'fascist' (< *fascista*) in the slang of extra-parliamentary left-wing groups. Modifications of meaning prove more frequent, e.g., (slang of drug addicts) *erba* 'grass' → 'marijuana', *spada* 'sword' → 'syringe'; (military slang) *nonno* 'grandfather' → 'conscript soldier close to discharge', *spina* 'thorn' → 'newly enlisted conscript'. A mechanism of sociolinguistic osmosis is also particularly frequent: slang terms that were once specific to limited groups can spread, expand their sphere of usage, and become part of the common vocabulary retaining only a faint hint of their original slang nature. Examples from the underworld include *pizzo* 'protection money (extorted by mafia organizations)' and *soffiata* 'anonymous tip-off'.

Varieties of Italian sometimes likened to slang are the youth varieties (It. *linguaggi giovanili*). Often censured or at most used as lists of oddities from which to select journalistic curiosities for edifying purposes, youth languages are a useful observatory of tendencies that, in standard varieties, require much longer to emerge. Their lifespan—similarly to other 'transitory' slangs—is very brief, coinciding by definition with a single generation: the users of youth languages renew themselves every ten to fifteen years, with the result that lexical turnover is rapid, both in the inventory and, much more frequently, in changes of meaning. In terms of inventory, many lexemes dating back to the 1960s have since completely disappeared in youth language, even though they may have entered common usage: e.g., *gettonare* 'play a popular song on a jukebox by inserting a token (*gettone*)' → 'decreeing someone's or something's success', *matusa* (clipped from *Matusalemme* 'Methuselah') 'old person'. As for meaning innovations, it will suffice here to consider a couple of examples from the youth language of central Italy. *Alzare* 'to raise, lift', an early jargon verb which at the beginning of the nineteenth century meant 'to get by by stealing', came to mean in the youth lexicon of the 1960s–1980s 'to earn' before evolving at the beginning of the third millennium into the meaning 'to lend'. The derogatory

adjective *scrauso* ‘ugly, horrible, of poor quality’, a word of unknown origin whose earliest dialectal records from central Italy date back to the sixteenth century, passed at the turn of the millennium from obligatory reference to animates to preferential reference to inanimates (Lorenzetti 2001).

25.4 Italian neoformations

Alongside borrowing from other internal or external varieties, the primary means of renewing and enriching the lexicon remains morphology, through word-formation rules. In investigating the relationship between semasiological and onomasiological dynamics, this process is interesting from various points of view. In this section we will comment on some of these.

Let us begin with some quantitative considerations. The basic vocabulary (cf. De Mauro 1980; 2016), comprising some 7,500 lexemes of very high frequency, is made up of 53 per cent of lexemes inherited from Latin, 12 per cent from other languages, and 35 per cent are language-internal formations forged from other lexemes already present in the language, either inherited (*coppia* ‘couple, pair’ → *accoppiare* ‘to pair’) or borrowed (*judo* → *judoistico* ‘pertaining to judo’). As is to be expected, the percentage of complex words (namely, lexemes including a morphological structure different in this respect from ‘primitive’ words that consist only of a lexical base and inflexional marker, e.g., *dis*-oss-*are* ‘to debone’ vs oss-*o* ‘bone’) rises when we consider the whole lexicon. Indeed, when an extended headword list is considered, e.g., that of *GRADIT*, made up of more than 260,000 entries, the lexemes including derivational morphological structure account for more than half (50.6 per cent), almost three quarters of which are derivatives (more than 97,000 = 73 per cent) and just over a quarter are compounds (about 35,000 = 27 per cent; data from De Mauro 2007c).

Turning now to the typology of complex words, the overall processes of derivation and compounding can be further subdivided as follows (cf. also Chapter 17).

There are just over 17,000 derivatives formed with prefixes (*uscire* 'to exit' plus *ri-* > *riuscire* 'to succeed'; *tagliare* 'to cut' plus *in-* > *intagliare* 'to carve') besides about 60,000 formed by suffixation (*lampada* 'lamp' plus *-ario* > *lampadario* 'chandelier'), and about 20,000 are converted derivatives of the type of *arrivare* 'to arrive' → *arrivo* 'arrival'. The main derivative processes are also not perfectly symmetrical when the lexical category of the neologisms is considered. Suffixation can modify the lexical category of the base, turning nouns into verbs or vice versa, e.g., *gamba* 'leg' → *gambizzare* 'to shoot someone in the legs', *mangiare* 'to eat' → *mangiata* 'good feed, hearty meal'. Conversion (*arrivare* → *arrivo*), in fact, serves precisely to modify the category of the base in order to expand the expressive potential of the lexicon. On the other hand, prefixation can only form lexemes of the same category as their base, e.g., *fare* 'to do' → *rifare* 'to redo', *continuo* 'continuous' → *discontinuo* 'discontinuous', *informazione* 'information' → *disinformazione* 'disinformation'.

Within the broad category of compounds, many words can be considered elements of substantial continuity, both from the point of view of the history of their respective lexical bases and their head-modifier order: words such as *pettirosso* 'robin redbreast' ← *petto* 'breast' + *rosso* 'red', or *pescespada* 'swordfish' ← *pesce* 'fish' + *spada* 'sword', exhibit this sort of continuity. However, the most frequent Italian compounds are also the most innovative in many respects. So-called 'neoclassical' compounds are lexemes such as *fotografia* 'photography' or *osteoporosi* 'osteoporosis', composed of two or more bound elements, mainly of Ancient Greek origin but adopted by European languages through modern French (as was indeed the case with It. *cinematografo* 'cinema' < Fr. *cinématographe*, from Gr. *kínēma* 'movimento' and *-graphos* '-graph'), which cannot function as standalone words in the language (***mi sono rotto un osteo-* 'I broke a bone'). Starting in the seventeenth century, these compounds have contributed significantly to the Europeanization of the Italian intellectual lexicon. However, although most of them belong to the technical and scientific spheres of the lexicon, neoclassical compounds have also made their way into the basic vocabulary, as exemplified by everyday words such as *citofono* 'intercom', *pediatra* 'paediatrician', *semaforo* 'traffic light'.

The almost unlimited availability of neoclassical forms has also significantly affected the general trends of Italian word formation. Among the various types that have become available by far the most productive model has proven to be that of compounds involving bounded + free element, e.g., *criptocomunista* 'cryptocommunist', *pornofilm* 'porn movie'. In these left-handed formations, the neoclassical element functions much like a prefix, which makes these compounds much more elastic than native compounds, allowing for a vast range of neologisms.

Numbers also serve to highlight an interesting historical issue, in that the structure of the lexicon mirrors a notable sociolinguistic turn that took place from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. Italian, up to that time the literary language of a minority, began to become the *de facto* national language and then in time the L1 of almost all Italians (remarkably it was not until 1999, with the passing of the national law on the recognition and protection of linguistic minorities, that Italian officially became the language of the Republic). Most complex lexemes present in modern Italian were formed precisely in those two centuries: almost 70 per cent of derivatives and as much as 96 per cent of compounds. Moreover, from the fourteenth century onwards, the percentage of complex lexemes that enter the basic lexicon is higher than that of simple lexemes. Indeed, the two percentages progressively distance themselves over time until in the twentieth century when we reach 88 per cent of complex neologisms (from *scongelare* 'to defrost' to *tergicristallo* 'windscreen wiper') against 12 per cent of simple neologisms (*collant* 'tights', *meta* 'rugby try', *pigiama* 'pyjama'). Today, morphologically simple neologisms cannot but be borrowed from foreign languages.

On the other hand, there are plenty of Italian complex words with a clear morphological structure, for which it is not strictly possible to establish whether they came directly from Latin derivatives or were formed in Italian from a lexical base combined with affixes. This is the case of It. *pavimentare* 'to pave', which may go back to Lat. PAUIMENTARE, a derivative of PAUIMENTUM, or may be analysed as a derivative by conversion from the Italian noun *pavimento* 'floor'. Another example is *infelice* 'unfortunate; unhappy', which can be either attributed to the Lat. INFELIX or seen as a derivative of It. *felice* 'happy' with the negative prefix *in-* 'in-, un-'. Of course, the problem

is not one of mere formal attribution: the classificatory uncertainty reflects the strong probability that in speakers' intuition transparent words such as *infelice* or *pavimentare*, whatever their etymology, are analysed as common neoformations.

Finally, lexical complexity must also be considered from the point of view of meaning. An eloquent example in this respect comes from technical-scientific words where so-called 'semantic neology' works alongside neoclassical compounding and left-handed derivatives. In physics, mathematics, and other hard sciences, neologisms are formed by adding a scientific meaning to the common value of specific lexemes (e.g., *corda* 'rope' and *raggio* 'ray' become 'chord' and 'radius' in geometry), thus transforming them into unambiguous scientific terms. Semantic neologisms do not change the inventory of lexemes, and therefore remain opaque to automated searches on electronic search engines, but of course they do increase the semantic complexity of the lexicon in a way which still heavily depends on inherited semantic values of scientific terminologies.

All these considerations converge towards the same conclusion. The Italian lexicon has progressively increased its internal regularity, particularly in the last century, thanks to a substantial increase in the productivity of word formation, which in turn has strengthened the formal and semantic relationships between existing and new-formed words. Since the linguistic material of the neologisms mainly comes, albeit along different paths, from the classical Greek-Latin repertoire, it is not surprising that the lexicon has not just remained close, but come even closer through neologisms to its classical roots. Paradoxically, the Italian lexicon is more 'classical' today than it was from its origins until the sixteenth century.

25.5 Statistical analysis of the make-up of the lexicon: words

Empirical investigations into word frequency in Italian began in the early 1970s and continued over the following decades as larger and richer text corpora and more powerful computer search functions

became available. However, the only section of the lexicon for which these investigations have been mirrored in the drafting of dictionaries is that of the aforementioned basic lexicon, corresponding to the set of the approximately 7,500 most frequently occurring lexemes. Moreover, this set was principally based on a corpus of written, not spoken, Italian (cf. Bortolini, Tagliavini, and Zampolli 1972), with all the limitations that brings with it. For the other areas of the lexicon, frequency considerations have remained qualitative and impressionistic. In other words, Italian does not yet have an extended dictionary compiled from a statistically based corpus analysis: the wordlists in the best dictionaries are still compiled in a rather traditional way from pre-existing lexicographical sources, namely, from other dictionaries.

That being said, a quantitative census of Italian lexemes, somehow ranked by frequency of use, remains a potentially information-rich operation. According to an image proposed by De Mauro (1980) and often taken up again subsequently, the lexicon of Italian can be represented as a kind of target in concentric bands. The closer one gets to the centre of the target, the more frequently one finds words with a high probability of being used by most speakers of Italian in most of their linguistic usages. At the periphery, on the other hand, one will find less frequent words, those used only by some speakers and only in some communicative situations. The centre of the target is occupied by the *basic lexicon* (It. *vocabolario di base*) made up of the lexemes that everyone uses to a large extent to construct any kind of text. These number about 7,500 lexemes and are further divided into a *fundamental lexicon*, consisting of just over 2,000 units, to which belong those lexemes that make up about 90 per cent of any Italian text. These are mostly grammatical lexemes, i.e., they do not serve to signify concepts but, rather, to construct sentence structure: prepositions, articles, conjunctions, functional adverbs, auxiliary verbs, modals, and support verbs (*essere* 'be', *avere* 'have', *fare* 'do', *venire* 'come'). Verbs, nouns, and adjectives such as *abitare* 'inhabit', *anno* 'year', and *azzurro* '(light) blue' are also included in this core. The lexicon of *high usage* is made up of those 2,500–3,000 lexemes of immediately lower frequency, including *abbassare* 'to lower', *alimento* 'food', *africano* 'African', *veneziano* 'Venetian', *zampa* 'paw', and *zappare* 'to hoe'.

The 2,300 lexemes of *high availability* correspond to 'words that we might happen not to say and even more so never write or almost never, but which are linked to objects, facts, experiences well known to all adults in their everyday life' (De Mauro 1980:148). *Forchetta* 'fork', for example, is a lexeme of high availability: we think of the FORK when we have it in front of us, at the dinner table or in the kitchen, that is, precisely in those contexts when we are more likely to reference it with gestures than to call it by its name. In a sense, 'high availability' lexemes point more to passive than active competence and usage, which makes it problematic to measure their frequency in ordinary corpus analysis.

In addition to the basic lexicon, we find the common lexicon better defined in negative than in positive terms: 40,000 lexemes used to produce texts that do not refer to particular technical fields and which are not characteristic of a particular region or geographical area, e.g., *arpione* 'harpoon', *aromatico* 'aromatic', *vecchiaia* 'old age', *zittire* 'to hush'. Basic and common lexicon together form the *current lexicon*, the set of lexemes without regional, stylistic, or sectorial overtones, which is largely shared by all speakers.

To these broadly shared lexicon layers we can add literary and technical-scientific lexemes. The former are not used in common speech and are understood only by those familiar with the Italian of literature. This also dramatically restricts the possibility of these lexemes being used in speech rather than writing. As for specialized lexicon, it mirrors technical and scientific progress and, therefore, changes more readily than other lexical subareas. For this reason, estimating its size is not easy: allowing for considerable leeway, its order of magnitude may be around 100,000 lexemes.

25.6 Statistical analysis of the make-up of the lexicon: meanings

An obvious but no less critical limitation of lexical statistics based on word counts is that the semantic depth of the lexicon inevitably gets lost by counting each word as one. Considering the *GRADIT* wordlist

again, most lexemes have a complex meaning structure: indicatively, of the 260,000 Italian lexemes, more than 50,000 have more than one meaning, more than 27,000 have more than two meanings, more than 9,000 have more than five, 100 have more than twenty, and a dozen have more than thirty (Lorenzetti 2010b). The relationship between the frequency of Italian words and the structure of their meaning is therefore a fascinating but still little explored issue. It corresponds to one of several principles outlined by George Zipf in the early twentieth century to describe the connections between usage frequency and other characteristics of words. Of particular interest to us is the hypothesis that more frequently used words tend to have multiple meanings, and words with more general meanings are used more often. Both conditions have been repeatedly stated, inferring them on a theoretical basis, notably by Tullio De Mauro and his pupils, but empirical research into them was not initiated until relatively recently (Carloni 2000; 2005; Casadei 2014; 2016; 2023). In particular, Casadei has tested Zipf's hypotheses by also cross-checking the basic Italian lexicon wordlist (It. *Vocabolario di base*, henceforth VdB) against written Italian corpora. Her analysis confirms a strong correlation between frequency and polysemy: the number of polysemous lexemes in the VdB is 89 per cent, as against an estimated 19 per cent for the Italian lexicon as a whole, and it even reaches 96 per cent in the fundamental lexicon, decreasing progressively with the decrease of usage frequency. Also interesting are the average number of meanings found in the VdB, about 7.3 for verbs and 6.6 for nouns, and the fact that in nouns, 34 per cent of meanings (vs 8 per cent in verbs) belong to technical-scientific lexicon, and 67 per cent of nouns have at least one technical-scientific meaning. Some overlap between specialized and common lexicon in nouns is not entirely unexpected, but perhaps its extent exceeds this expectation: two-thirds of the more frequently used Italian nouns are also, in one or more of their meanings, technical terms.

Finally, the basic vocabulary contains a small but noticeable number of words that have only one meaning (less than 6 per cent of the total vocabulary). Most of these words are either technical terms with very specific meanings such as *elettrone* 'electron', *stendibiancheria* 'clothes horse', the names of the months and the seasons (*gennaio* 'January', *febbraio* 'February', *estate* 'summer',

inverno ‘winter’), nouns for common clothes and textile items (*asciugamano* ‘towel’, *mutanda* ‘underpants’), diseases and physiological conditions (*forfora* ‘dandruff’, *raffreddore* ‘cold’), abstract words (*funzionamento* ‘operation, functioning’), non-referential words such as grammatical terms (*sebbene* ‘although’) or interjections (*boh* ‘dunno’).

With all the difficulties, both theoretical and practical, of dealing statistically with a subject as typically nuanced as the structure of lexical meaning, which not by chance is an issue about which different dictionaries record the most significant variation, the subject is of great interest and promises considerable developments in the analysis of the Italian lexicon.

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[1] For the topics discussed in this section, the most up-to-date references are D’Achille (2023) and the essays collected in Antonelli (2023) dedicated to ‘external’ contributions to the Italian lexicon. See also the general sketch offered in Lorenzetti (2010b).

[2] On the possible ideological biases of Merlo’s position within the framework of Ascoli’s substratum theory, see Lorenzetti (2019:90n4).

[3] For a synoptic table of the sources and quantities of lexical loanwords in Italian, see *GRADIT*, vol. VI, p. 1170.

[4] From a historical perspective, it is important to remember that words that entered the lexicon long before Italian emerged from Florentine, including Germanic, Byzantine Greek, and Arabic words dating back to the first millennium CE, are also conventionally included among the loanwords found in Italian.

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Part IV

SOCIOLINGUISTICS

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Chapter 26

Standardization

Massimo Cerruti

26.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the standardization of Italian from a sociolinguistic perspective. The term *standardization* is used here to refer to the development of a standard variety—namely, a language variety characterized by the following three features: (a) it is a benchmark for "speakers of more than one vernacular variety (which does not necessarily imply that it is mastered by everybody), (b) it is looked upon as an H-variety[1] and used for writing, and (c) it is subject to at least some codification and elaboration" (Auer 2005:2; the notion of standard is extensively discussed in Berruto 2007). *Standard variety* is not therefore to be equated with *standard language*, as the latter includes multiple varieties (i.e., distinct clusters of linguistic features associated with particular geographic areas, social groups, and/or communicative situations). The standard variety is, in fact, one of the several varieties of a standard language.

First, the main social forces that play a role in standardization will be discussed, as well as the main criteria for deciding which linguistic features can be deemed standard in a language (§26.2.1). Subsequently, after a brief diachronic account of the development of the standard norm in Italian (§26.2.2), the focus will turn to the most recent phase of this process, which extends from Unification (1861) to the present day. Special attention will be paid to the emergence of a new standard variety of Italian, which is characterized by a core set of features originating from informal spoken, socially low, and regional varieties (§26.3). The relationship between this newly

emerged standard and the traditional standard variety will then be considered, taking particular account of recent corpus-based studies (§26.4). Finally, major changes with respect to the past will be pointed out (§26.5).

26.2 Language standardization

26.2.1 Social forces

A model that has proven useful in determining which linguistic features can be deemed standard in a language is that proposed by Ammon (2003; 2015). This model identifies four social forces as playing a direct role in the development of a standard norm: (a) language codifiers, (b) model speakers and model writers, (c) language-norm authorities, and (d) language experts. They all participate in language standardization by exercising their own professional activities. Language codifiers compile linguistic codices, namely dictionaries and grammars, which serve as benchmarks for correct language usage. Model speakers and model writers such as classical authors, journalists, TV and radio announcers, actors, and renowned politicians, produce model texts, namely texts which represent 'normal' language usage in public speaking and public writing. Language-norm authorities such as school teachers, editors, and copy-readers are required to correct linguistic behaviours. Language experts are consulted on the standardness of linguistic features and/or the validity of linguistic codices.

A fifth social force can also be identified, namely ordinary people. However, in most standardization processes the role played by ordinary people is indirect. In fact, it generally depends on the attitude of the aforementioned four agents, who can shape their own activities to a greater or lesser degree in accordance with the actual language use of the population.

The four social forces playing a direct role in standardization interact with each other. Language codifiers can derive the standard norm from model texts and can take into account expert judgements;

language-norm authorities can use linguistic codices and model texts as points of reference for corrections; model speakers and model writers, who are trained by language-norm authorities, can both comply with the codified norm and be carriers of new norms; language experts can give an opinion on codified and newly emerging norms; and so on.

These four agents do not always agree on which linguistic features are to be considered as standard. In particular, certain linguistic features may be regularly used by model speakers and model writers, but disregarded by language codifiers. Features like these, which occur regularly in model texts but lack codification, can still be deemed standard. They can be referred to as 'standard by mere usage' (Ammon 2003:2). More broadly, the standard variety of a language has a core set of 'generally agreed-upon' (Ammon 2015:58) features and a number of less agreed-upon features, the latter blurring the distinction between standard and non-standard.[2]

Finally, the social forces at hand can be involved in different ways and to different degrees at various stages in the standardization process (see the 'classic' works of Haugen 1966 and Milroy and Milroy 1985; cf. Ayres-Bennett 2021).

26.2.2 Historical phases

At least three phases can be identified in the historical development of the Italian standard norm (cf. Maraschio and Matarrese 2021; see also Chapters 2 and 3). The first, preceded by the fifteenth-century development of regional and supra-regional *koinai* sharing both Latinizing and Florentine forms (despite local features; see, for instance, Brown 2020), encompasses the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This phase was characterized by the production of normative grammars based on fourteenth-century literary texts written in Florentine, and in particular on Dante's *Commedia*, Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*. One of these grammars, Pietro Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), subsequently became prominent in the codification of standard Italian. Moreover, an extensive reference dictionary was published in the early seventeenth century, the renowned *Vocabolario degli*

Accademici della Crusca (1612), which, however, included both the language of fourteenth-century Florentine authors and that of contemporary Florentine (see also §§1.3–4, and Chapters 2 and 6). The main social forces (cf. §26.2.1) at play in this phase of standardization were, therefore, language codifiers and model writers (see also Berruto 2017a:36). Men of letters and philologists indeed codified a standard norm essentially based on model texts of classical authors.

The second phase extends approximately from the eighteenth century to Unification. During this period, Italian made significant steps forward in its (slow and non-linear) transition from a prominently literary language to a multifunctional one (cf. Maraschio and Matarrese 2021:327–335). In fact, it became increasingly widespread in various non-literary public domains of use such as science and technology, legal practice, news journalism, religious preaching, and language education, all of which brought about the need for a less classicizing prose. As a result, language use progressively opened up to lexical and syntactic innovation. At the same time, the gradually accepted idea of language as a founding element of a nation reinforced the need for a common language, and this need grew along with the conviction that a common language could not ignore current usage. In this respect, particularly influential were the linguistic choices made by Alessandro Manzoni in the final edition of his novel *I promessi sposi* (1840–1842), which, since they were based on contemporary nineteenth-century Florentine, were aimed at reducing the distance between spoken and written language. In this phase, therefore, model speakers and model writers (cf. §26.2.1) were the main forces of standardization. Model texts opened up to change and showed an unprecedented attention to current language use.

The third phase roughly goes from Unification to the present day (see also Chapter 5). At the time of political unification, Italian was commonly used only by a social and cultural élite and almost exclusively in writing and formal speech, while the vast majority of the population were almost exclusively monolingual dialect speakers. The large-scale spread of Italian followed Unification as a result of major socioeconomic changes occurring in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries such as the establishment and progressive extension of compulsory education, as well as the growing number of

people entering post-compulsory education, the transition from an agricultural to an industrial and post-industrial society, the development of the mass media, and the increase in mobility both within and outside Italy. In particular, it was between the 1950s and the 1970s that the first generations of native speakers of Italian were born, delivering a 'shift from a mainly dialect-speaking to a mainly Italian-speaking community' (Berruto 2018:500). In the subsequent decades (cf. De Mauro 2014a:111–113; Berruto 2018:498–500), Italian came to be used both in writing and formal speech, as well as in everyday conversation. Italian thus ended up being used as a multifunctional language, able to act as both a 'language of distance' and a 'language of immediacy' (see the notions of *Sprache der Distanz* and *Sprache der Nähe* in Koch and Oesterreicher 1985).

At the same time, the standard norm itself ceased to be under the exclusive control of an intellectual élite, which prompted this very norm to conform even more to the spoken language. In fact, a bottom-up process took place which led to numerous informal spoken features, as well as low-status and regional features (not only Florentine or Tuscan ones), being regularly used even in formal and educated speech, and to a certain extent in formal and educated writing. The social forces of standardization, and especially model speakers and model writers (cf. §26.2.1), were (and still are) increasingly inclined to accept as standard a large number of features coming from everyday speech. As a result, several previously sub-standard features have entered (and continue to enter) the standard norm. This can be thought of as a process of demoticization (see Coupland and Kristiansen 2011; cf. *Demotisierung* in Mattheier 1997), namely 'popularization' of the standard norm.[3]

In particular, demoticization has led to the emergence of a new standard variety of Italian, so-called *italiano neo-standard* 'neo-standard Italian' (Berruto 2012c),[4] which is characterized by a (constantly increasing) set of informal spoken, socially low, and regional features that have come to be used and accepted even in formal and educated productions. Significantly, this newly emerged standard is largely an uncodified variety, as many of its features are 'standard by mere usage' (cf. §26.2.1). However, neo-standard Italian has not replaced the traditional, codified literary standard variety. Each standard is actually used, and serves as a reference model, more in some public domains than in others. For example, the new

standard appears to supersede the old standard in spoken and, to a certain extent, written media, but not in school education. In this domain, in fact, the traditional literary standard maintains official prestige and represents 'the basic norm' (Berruto 2017a:34; see also Antonelli 2011).[5]

In the third phase of standardization, therefore, the dissemination and maintenance of the traditional literary standard have been ensured first and foremost by language-norm authorities (cf. §26.2.1), and in particular by school teachers (see also D'Achille 2012a:120f.). On the other hand, the role played by the everyday linguistic behaviour of ordinary people in renewing the standard norm has been much more substantial than it was in the past, albeit still indirect. The most important direct role in developing the neo-standard has been played by model speakers and model writers, and especially by prominent people in the media, who have increasingly included previously sub-standard features in the 'normal' language usage of public speaking and public writing.

26.3 Neo-standard Italian

Most linguistic features have thus entered neo-standard Italian 'from below', namely from language varieties lower than standard in the 'architecture' of Italian (see Berruto 2012c:24; cf. related notions of 'changes from below', Labov 1994:78, and 'standardization from below', Elspaß 2021).[6] In this respect, neo-standard Italian consists of both a nationwide shared core of features and some regionally marked features. Neo-standard Italian is indeed slightly regionally varied, as it shows different regional standard features in different geographic areas (cf. Berruto 2012c:26f.; see examples 11, 12, 13).

Its nationwide shared features are particularly noticeable in syntax, morphology, and lexis (see Berruto 2012c:75–122; Renzi 2012; 2019; Cerruti, Crocco, and Marzo 2017; D'Achille 2019; Moretti et al. 2019: Ballarè 2020).[7] These include pragmatically marked word orders, such as left dislocations, right dislocations, and cleft sentences, as well as routinized formulae with textual functions (e.g., *ti mostro quelli che sono i nostri libri* 'I'll show you our books',

lit. 'I'll show you those that are our books').[8] Other examples concern relativization strategies; in some domains (cf. §26.2.2), the literary standard use of a relative pronoun, as in (1), is indeed increasingly superseded by the neo-standard use of a gap strategy, as in (2), or pronoun retention (see 23; cf. Cerruti 2017).[9] The gap strategy is also a specific case of the neo-standard overextension of the complementizer *che* 'that', which is commonly referred to as *che polivalente* 'multifunctional *che*', e.g., *chiamami che controllo* 'call me so I can check', lit. 'call me that I check'.

1 quel misterioso signore, il nome **del** **quale** nessuno
that mystery man the name of.the.MSG REL.SG no one
osava pronunziare
dare.PST.IPFV.3SG pronounce.INF

'that mystery man, whose name no one dared to mention' (CORIS Corpus, Fiction, *https://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_ita.html*)

2 l' uomo di Porto Empedocle, **che** il nome hanno cercato invano
the man of Porto Empedocle COMP the name have.3PL search.PTCP in.vain

'the man from Porto Empedocle, whose name they have searched in vain' (Radio Capital, Tg Zero, 31.03.2023)

Moreover, neo-standard phenomena are pervasive in the domain of personal pronouns. Examples are the use of the third-person masculine dative clitic *gli* as a dative clitic pronoun for both genders and both numbers, e.g., *gli ho parlato* 'I spoke to him/her/them' vs literary standard *gli* 'to him', *le* 'to her', *loro* 'to them'; the use of the third-person oblique pronouns *lui* (MSG), *lei* (FSG), and *loro* (PL) as third-person subject pronouns (vs literary standard *egli*, MSG, *ella* FSG, and *essi*/*esse*, MPL/FPL), as witnessed by the contrast in (3) and (4); and the use of the originally non-reflexive pronouns *lui* 'him', *lei* 'her', and *loro* 'them' vs literary standard reflexive *sé* '-self' to express coreference with the third-person subject of the clause (cf. 5–6).

3 **loro** non possono rispondere alle provocazioni
they NEG can.3PL respond.INF to.the provocations

'they can't respond to provocations' (CORIS Corpus, Press, https://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_ita.html)

4 quella che **essi** fecero per noi
that.FSG COMP they.M make.PST.PFV.3PL for us
'the one they made for us' (KIP Corpus, university lecture, https://kiparla.it)

5 ecco cosa portava con **lei**
here what take.PST.IPFV.3SG with herself
'here is what she carried around with herself' (*la Repubblica* Corpus, https://corpora.dipintra.it)

6 i beni che la sposa porta con **sé**
the goods COMP the bride take.3SG with herself
'the goods that the bride brings with herself' (KIP Corpus, university lecture, https://kiparla.it)

With locative pronouns, the traditional alternation between *ci* and *vi* 'there' as the pre-copular proform of existential constructions (e.g., *ci/vi sono due libri* 'there are two books') has ultimately given way to the stabilization of *ci* as the unmarked form. Neo-standard features are also found with demonstratives, involving, for instance, the non-reinforced forms of proximal demonstratives (e.g., *'sto libro* 'this book' vs literary standard *questo libro* 'this book'), the co-occurrence of a pre-nominal demonstrative with a post-nominal locative adverb (e.g., *questo libro qui* 'this book', lit. 'this book here'), and the use of *quello*(/*questo*) as a distance-neutral demonstrative (e.g., *quello che hanno scritto* 'what they wrote', vs literary standard *ciò che hanno scritto* 'what they wrote').

The verb system is also strongly affected by neo-standard phenomena. For example, in public speaking and public writing the present tense is now commonly compatible with future reference (e.g., *torno domani* lit. 'I return tomorrow' with the meaning 'I'll be back tomorrow'), the imperfect indicative is increasingly used with various modal meanings (for example to denote politeness or mitigation such as in *volevo comprare una torta* 'I'd like to buy a cake'), the compound past is extending its reach to specifically aoristic functions in accordance with the process of aoristic drift (cf. Bertinetto and Squartini 2016:944f.; e.g., *il campanile è crollato nel 1642*, 'the bell tower collapsed in 1642'), the indicative (cf. 7) is selected in lieu of the subjunctive (cf. 8) in a growing number of non-factual contexts (cf. Prandi 2012; Digesto 2021), and the progressive periphrasis *stare* 'stay, be' + gerund covers an increasing range of

imperfective values (both focalized and durative progressive, as well as habitual, with specific restrictions; e.g. *quando sei entrato, stavo dormendo* 'when you walked in, I was sleeping', *il manoscritto a cui il professor Eco sta lavorando da due anni* 'the manuscript which Professor Eco has been working on for two years', Squartini 1990:193, *sto andando tutti i giorni a parlare alla signora* 'every day I go to talk to the lady', Bertinetto 1997:237; cf. Squartini 2015:60–76).

7	se	**era**	stanco	non	avrebbe	accettato
	if	be.PST.IPFV.3SG	tired	NEG	have.COND.3SG	accept.PTCP

'if he had been tired, he would not have accepted' (RAI Radio 3, Radio 3 Mondo, 2 January 2023)

8	se	**fosse**	**stato**	vivo,	avrebbe	fatto	meglio
	if	be.PST.SBJV.3SG	be.PTCP	alive	have.COND.3SG	do.PTCP	better

'if he had been alive, he would have done it better' (CORIS Corpus, Academic prose, https://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_ita.html)

Further neo-standard features regarding the verb involve the interface between morphosyntax and lexis. This is the case with idiomatic verb-clitic constructions including either the locative clitic pronoun *ci* (e.g., *averci* lit. 'to have=LOC (= have, to possess)', *entrarci* lit. 'to enter=LOC (= be relevant, be involved)', lit. 'to want=LOC (= *volerci* 'to be necessary)', or the clitic pronoun *ne* 'of/from it/this, thereof/-from' (e.g., *parlarne* lit. 'to talk=thereof (= talk about it)', even in combination with additional clitics such as *si* (*se*) '-REFL' (e.g., *andarsene* lit. 'to go=REFL=therefrom (= leave)'). Other examples involve phrasal verbs which in some domains of use (cf. §26.2.2) tend to be preferred to corresponding synthetic forms (cf. 9 vs 10).[10] The former are also generally more prone to be used with figurative/idiomatic meanings (e.g., *tirare su un figlio* 'to bring up a child', *tirare su un amico* 'to cheer up a friend', *tirare su una casa* lit. 'to pull up a house (= build a house)' (cf. Bernini 2011a:33–40).

9 **ho** **tirato** **su** la saracinesca
have.1SG pull.PTCP up the shutter
'I opened the shutter' (CORIS Corpus, Press, https://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_ita.html)

10 **ha** **alzato** il bicchiere in segno di condivisione
have.3SG lift.PTCP the glass in sign of sharing
'he raised his glass as a sign of agreement' (CORIS Corpus, Fiction, https://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_ita.html)

These and several other neo-standard features (see further Berruto 2012c; Ballarè 2020) appear to be shared at a national level.[11] However, as noted in §26.2.2, neo-standard Italian shows a certain degree of variation across regions. In different areas, indeed, region-specific features have also entered the standard usage. These are particularly evident in phonetics and phonology, at both segmental and prosodic levels (cf. Calamai 2017; Crocco 2017; Gili Fivela et al. 2015; Vietti 2019b). In fact, neither the traditional normative model(s) of pronunciation nor the so-called 'modern neutral' model (Canepari 1999) is actually used by any socially or geographically defined group of speakers (cf. Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005). In addition, several regional features are insensitive to social and stylistic variation and, therefore, regularly occur even among educated speakers in careful speech styles. By way of illustration, (11) exemplifies six different realizations of the same sentence as read aloud by university students from different areas. Each realization presents regionally marked features (cf. Chapter 38) such as the reduction of consonant length (degemination) in Venice (*que*[l]*o*), the intervocalic voiceless velar fricative realization of the voiceless velar, so-called *gorgia*, in Florence ([x]*e*), the lengthening of intervocalic [dʒ] in Rome, Naples, and Palermo (*Lui*[d:ʒ]*i*), and *rafforzamento fonosintattico* in central and southern Italy ([t:]*utto*).[12]

11 Milan *Lui*[**dʒ**]*i fa* [t]*utto que*[**l:**]*o* [**k**]*e gli si chiede.*
Venice *Lui*[**dʒ**]*i fa* [t]*utto que*[**l**]*o* [**k**]*e gli si chiede.*
Florence *Lui*[**ʒ**]*i fa* [**t:**]*utto que*[**l:**]*o* [**x**]*e gli si chiede.*
Rome *Lui*[**d:ʒ**]*i fa* [t:]*utto que*[**l:**]*o* [**ʟ̆**]*e gli si chiede.*
Naples *Lui*[**d:ʒ**]*i fa* [t:]*utto que*[**l:**]*o* [**k**]*e gli si chiede.*
Palermo *Lui*[**d:ʒ**]*i fa* [t:]*utto que*[**l:**]*o* [**k**]*e gli si chiede.*
'Luigi does everything he is asked to.' (CLIPS Corpus, www.clips.unina.it)

At the same time, some regional pronunciations—especially from northern Italy—have been gaining prestige and function as indicators of standardness (cf. Galli de' Paratesi 1984; De Pascale et al. 2017). This has led to the spread of such features across the country, particularly within standard usage. A well-known example is the north-to-south spread of the intervocalic voiced alveolar sibilant, which is weakening the (traditionally standard) phonemic contrast between /z/ and /s/ in intervocalic position (e.g., [ˈfuzo] 'liquefied, melted' and 'spindle' vs traditional standard [ˈfuzo] 'liquefied, melted' but [ˈfuso] 'spindle'; cf. Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005; Vietti 2019b). Similar considerations apply to lexis. On the one hand, in fact, some expressions have entered standard usage only in certain geographical areas (such is the case, for instance, with a number of region-specific phrasal verbs;[13] cf. Cini 2008; Iacobini and Masini 2009). On the other hand, some lexical features originally limited to specific areas have been spreading across Italy (cf. Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013), especially within the standard usage.

Regional standard features are also found in morphosyntax (cf. Amenta and Castiglione 2003; Cardinaletti and Munaro 2009; Cerruti 2009; Cerruti and Regis 2014; Regis 2017). In fact, some region-specific morphosyntactic features regularly occur in 'model texts' (cf. §26.2.1). Examples are given in (12) and (13), both from newspaper articles and involving authors of Piedmontese origin. The former contains the progressive periphrasis *essere lì che* + verb (equivalent to the progressive periphrasis *stare* 'be, stay' + gerund; Cerruti 2014), the latter includes the focus particle *solo più* (largely corresponding to the adverbial locutions *ancora solo* lit. 'still only', and *ormai solo* lit. 'already only'; Regis 2017:158–161). Such phenomena derive from the retention of dialectal substratum features and are found to occur in standard Piedmontese Italian. Similar observations can be made for other regional varieties of Italian (cf. Berruto 2017b).

12 lei ha incrociato il mio sguardo imbarazzato
she have.3SG cross.PTCP the my look embarrassed
(ero lì che contavo a mente [...])
be.PST.IPFV.1SG there COMP count.PST.IPFV.1SG to mind
'she caught my embarrassed look (I was counting in my head)' (M. Candito, *La Stampa*, 16 February 1998; Cerruti 2014: 301)

13 la primavera [...] vi cadrà **solo più** una volta
the spring there= fall.FUT.3SG only more one time

'spring will only occur once more' (L. Mercalli, *La Repubblica*, 21 March 2005; Regis 2017: 159)

Nevertheless, neo-standard Italian is also apt to include linguistic features 'from above', namely from bureaucratic, technical-scientific, refined formal, and educated varieties, which are situated 'higher' than the standard ('supra-standard' in Cerruti 2017; cf. note 6 above) in the 'architecture' of Italian (cf. the related notion of 'changes from above', Labov 1994:78). Most of these features display overt prestige, while not being prescribed. Examples are the use of the relative pronoun *il quale* (14) to relativize both subjects and direct objects (cf. Cerruti 2017:79–83); the overextension of clitic *ne* (15) to the pronominalization of [–animate] 'dativ al accusatives'[14] (cf. Miola 2023); the selection of the subjunctive (16) in factual relative clauses (Gualdo 2014:235f.);[15] and the spread of Anglicisms originating from such fields as business, economics, and information technology (e.g., *account*, *brand*, *file*, *grant*, *leasing*, *management*, *marketing*, *password*, *smartphone*, *staff*, *wireless*),[16] which may even result in new patterns of word-formation (cf. Bombi 2017) and new uses of abbreviations and acronyms (De Cesare 2016a).

14 la figlia di Dasha, **la quale** nascondevano
the daughter of Dasha the.FSG REL.SG hide.PST.IPFV.3PL
nella cantina di una casa bombardata
in.the cellar of a house bombed

'the daughter of Dasha, whom they hid in the cellar of a bombed house' (RAI Radio 2, 15.10.2022)

15 quell' esperienza gli apparteneva. **Ne** accennò
that experience to.him= belong.PST.IPFV.3SG there= mention.PST.PFV.3SG
una volta con me
one time with me

'that experience belonged to him. He mentioned it once to me' (*la Repubblica Corpus*, https://corpora.dipintra.it; Miola 2023:105)

16 la lentezza con la quale si **stia**
the slowness with the.FSG REL.SG REFL= be.SBJV.3SG
procedendo
progressing

'the slow progress being made' (NUNC Corpus, www.corpora.unito.it; Santulli 2009:174)

It goes without saying that features 'from below' and features 'from above' can, to some extent, be in conflict with each other (see, for instance, the use of the indicative in lieu of the subjunctive in non-factual contexts vs the use of the subjunctive in lieu of the indicative in factual contexts). This comes as no surprise, as the former are of a different nature than the latter. Features 'from below' 'appear first in the vernacular' (Labov 1994:78) and, therefore, generally require low processing costs (viz., low cognitive outlays of producing and understanding linguistic communication; cf. Chambers 2004; see also §26.4). It is no coincidence that most neo-standard features traditionally occurring in sub-standard varieties of Italian are cross-linguistically associated with informal dialogic speech, which is characterized by low 'local complexity' (in the terms of Miestamo 2017; cf. Berruto 1990). Moreover, several speech features are often disregarded (i.e., neither prescribed nor proscribed) by normative grammars (this is particularly the case for dialogic speech; cf. Voghera 2017:15–20) and/or school education (as is the case with the teaching of standard pronunciation; cf. Crocco 2017:105f.), which leaves speakers mostly unaware of the sociolinguistic status of these features. On the other hand, most features 'from above', despite not being prescribed, are imbued with overt linguistic prestige; hence, speakers are probably aware that the use of such features can convey the prestige associated with them. Furthermore, features 'from above' 'do not immediately affect the vernacular' (Labov 1994:78) and even rarely occur in dialogic speech (also because they generally exact higher processing costs than their counterparts 'from below').

At the same time, the progressive inclusion of linguistic features in the standard norm may be ideologically motivated. This is, for instance, the case with gender-inclusive strategies, which are generally inspired by the ethical need to express gender equality. An example is the use of feminine job titles when referring to female referents, in lieu of the traditional use of masculine forms regardless of gender (see §30.3). In fact, both gendered nouns with feminine suffixes, as in (17), (18), and (19) (compare the masculine *consigliere*, *avvocato*, *senatore*), and epicene nouns with feminine articles such as *giudice* as in (20) are increasingly used to denote positions held by women. Significantly, this applies in particular to prestigious job titles traditionally attributed to men. Such behaviour appears to be especially widespread in spoken and written media (cf.

Castenetto and Ondelli 2020; Perra 2023) and is also generally favoured by school and university policies (see, for instance, Thornton 2020), as well as by language experts (cf. Accademia della Crusca 2023).

17 la consigliera Rita Borioni [...] e Riccardo Laganà
the.F.SG councillor.FSG Rita Borioni and Riccardo Laganà
hanno difeso il diritto di inchiesta
have.3PL defend.PTCP the right of inquiry

'Councillor Rita Borioni [...] and Riccardo Laganà have defended the right of inquiry' (CORIS Corpus, Press, https://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_ita.html)

18 le richieste fatte dalla famiglia Regeni, attraverso l'
the requests made by.the family Regeni, through the.FSG
avvocata Alessandra Ballerini
lawyer.FSG Alessandra Ballerini

'the requests made by the Regeni family, through the lawyer Alessandra Ballerini' (CORIS Corpus, Press, https://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_ita.html)

19 dice la senatrice Mariangela Bastico
say.3SG the.FSG Senator.FSG Mariangela Bastico

'so says Senator Mariangela Bastico' (CORIS Corpus, Press, https:/ /corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_ita.html)

20 la giudice Monica Sarti ha ritenuto la
the.FSG judge Monica Sarti have.3SG consider.PTCP the
testimonianza della vittima sufficiente
testimony of.the victim sufficient

'Judge Monica Sarti considered the victim's testimony to be sufficient' (CORIS Corpus, Press, https://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_ita.html)

Finally, the use of most linguistic features that we now call 'neo-standard' has actually been documented since the earliest Italian texts (see also Chapter 3). Some of these features have long been proscribed by normative grammars, others have been subject to different judgements, or even disregarded, by grammarians. However, such features have been a constant presence in the history of Italian. In particular, they have been found regularly across time in written texts that are close to the spoken language (cf. D'Achille 1990). Below are examples of Tuscan texts prior to 1525 (cf. §26.2.2); they include features characteristic of spoken language such as right dislocation (21), cleft sentences (22), the use of the third-person oblique pronoun *lei* 'her' as a subject pronoun (22), and the

relativization of an indirect object by means of pronoun retention (23). What seems to be innovative today is that features like these now consistently form part of current usage in public speaking and public writing.

21 no ci puoi stare a Lucha
NEG LOC= can.2SG stay.INF at Lucca
'you cannot stay in Lucca' (*Ingiurie lucchesi*, p. 51, 1330–1384; D'Achille 1990:142)

22 fu lei che fece quello busso
be.PST.PFV.3SG her COMP do.PST.PFV.3SG that noise
'it was she who made that noise' (*Prediche volgari di San Bernardino da Siena*, p. 77, 1427; D'Achille 1990:330)

23 quello Amàn, che Mardocceo non gli facea reverenza
that Amàn COMP Mardocceo NEG him.DAT= do.PST.IPFV.3SG curtsey
'that Amàn, to whom Mardocceo did not curtsey' (*Quaresimale fiorentino*, p. 166, 1305–1306; D'Achille 1990:229)

Quite different is the case of morphosyntactic patterns borrowed from English (as well as a number of lexical Anglicisms, see above).[17] Examples are the use of superlative with ordinal numbers (24), multiple *wh*-questions, sometimes transposed into noun phrases (25), thetic clauses increasingly having SV(O) order with unaccusative verbs (instead of being verb-initial; e.g., *improvvisamente un applauso è scoppiato* 'suddenly applause broke out' vs *improvvisamente è scoppiato un applauso*; cf. Cardinaletti 2005; see also De Cesare 2009b), and the ellipsis of an identical prepositional object in the first conjunct of coordinated adjectival phrases (e.g., *capace di, e pronto a, tutto* 'capable of, and ready for, anything'), as well as in other syntactic structures (e.g., *puoi trasferire file da e verso il tuo telefono* 'you can transfer files from and to your phone'). Features like these, which can be included in the neo-standard norm (see, for instance, Berruto 2017a:47–51), are real innovations. In fact, they were first documented in Italian in the twentieth century (Grasso 2007).

24	Diego	Maradona	è	risultato	**il**	**terzo**	uomo	**più**	importante
	Diego	Maradona	be.3SG	turn.out.PTCP	the	third	man	most	important
	dell'	Argentina							
	of.the	Argentina							

'Diego Maradona turned out to be the third most important man in Argentina' (*la Repubblica* Corpus, https://corpora.dipintra.it)

25	nella	pratica,	il	**chi**	**decide**	**chi**	è	ancora
	in.the	practice	the.MSG	who	decide.3SG	who	be.3SG	still
	difficile							
	difficult							

'in practice, "who decides who(m)" is still difficult' (*la Repubblica* Corpus, https://corpora.dipintra.it)

26.4 A 'double standard' situation

As observed in §26.2, neo-standard Italian has come to co-exist with literary standard Italian. Each standard variety is reported to occur, and serve as a reference model, more in some public domains of use than in others. It is no coincidence that in §26.3 the examples of neo-standard features and those of literary standard features are not from the same model texts; the former essentially come from newspaper articles and radio broadcasts, while most of the latter are taken from, university lectures and academic prose.

The co-existence of neo-standard Italian and literary standard Italian as separate language varieties can be empirically verified in the usage of speakers. A corpus-based study (Cerruti and Vietti 2022) considered the speech of university students as a case in point. The study, which is based on a subset of data coming from the KIP Corpus (www.kiparla.it), compares three types of interaction recorded at the University of Bologna: (a) spontaneous conversations among students recorded by in-group members; (b) semi-structured interviews collected by students within the peer group; and (c) student-professor interactions during oral examinations. The analysis takes into account thirty-six morphological, syntactical, and lexical features, twenty-three of which are associated in the research

literature with either neo-standard Italian or literary standard Italian (see Table 26.1;[18] linguistic features are labelled as in Fig. 26.1).

Table 26.1 Neo-standard features and literary standard features

	label	feature	standardness
1.	Cleft	cleft sentence	neo-standard
2.	R disloc	right dislocation	neo-standard
3.	L_disloc	left dislocation	neo-standard
4.	Pass	passive construction	literary standard
5.	RET/GAP	pronoun retention/gap strategy (IO, OBL, GEN)	neo-standard
6.	REL	relative pronoun (IO, OBL, GEN)	literary standard
7.	MFNC.*che*	multifunctional *che*	neo-standard
8.	Dem Loc	demonstrative + locative adverb	neo-standard
9.	Dem *st**	non-reinforced forms of proximal demonstratives	neo-standard
10.	Dem *qu**	*questo*-type proximal demonstratives, *quello*-type distal demonstratives	literary standard
11.	n_Dem *qu**	distance-neutral demonstrative *quello*(/*questo*)	neo-standard
12.	n_Dem *ciò*	distance-neutral demonstrative *ciò*	literary standard
13.	Cl *gli*	third-person singular indirect object clitic *gli* used for female referents	neo-standard

	label	feature	standardness
14.	Cl *le*	third-person singular indirect object clitic *le* used for female referents	literary standard
15.	Refl 3	third-person singular and third-person plural pronouns (*lui*/*lei* and *loro*) used as reflexive pronouns	neo-standard
16.	Refl *sé*	third-person singular and third-person plural reflexive pronoun *sé*	literary standard
17.	Loc *ci*	existential construction with *ci* as pre-copular proform	neo-standard
18.	Loc *vi*	existential construction with *vi* as pre-copular proform	literary standard
19.	*quell* che*	routinized formula *quello/i/a/e che*	neo-standard
20.	*tipo*	non-nominal uses of *tipo*	neo-standard
21.	Phrasal.V	phrasal verbs	neo-standard
22.	V*ci*	idiomatic verb-*ci* constructions	neo-standard
23.	V*ne*	idiomatic verb-*ne* constructions	neo-standard

Considering these twenty-three elements, the analysis allows for the detection of two distinct clusters of co-occurring features (see Fig. 26.1):[19] one consisting of neo-standard features (with the exception of feature 16 above) and the other consisting of literary standard features (with the exception of *quell* che*). Neo-standard features tend to cluster during spontaneous conversations and semi-structured interviews, namely in interactions characterized by symmetrical personal relationships, while literary standard features do so during oral examinations, namely in interactions characterized by asymmetrical personal relationships. Two distinct varieties can thus be identified in speakers' usage according to the symmetrical vs

asymmetrical relationship between the participants and, therefore, in accordance with the opposition between informality and formality (cf. §11.1.2). In particular, the co-occurrence of literary standard features during oral examinations reflects the role that the old standard continues to play in school education (cf. §26.2.2). The presence of neo-standard features in other formal contexts is, however, beyond dispute, as is widely documented by an extensive body of research (cf. §26.3).

At the same time, the co-occurrence of neo-standard features both in spontaneous conversations, namely during exchanges characterized by a high degree of interactivity (in which speakers are concerned with expressing feelings, opinions, and attitudes, as well as with indexing social identities), and in semi-structured interviews, namely during exchanges focused on conveying information, can reflect the multifunctional character of the newly emerged standard. In fact, the latter appears to be more suitable for meeting interactional as well as informational communicative purposes than the literary standard (which seems to be more closely aligned with informational purposes).

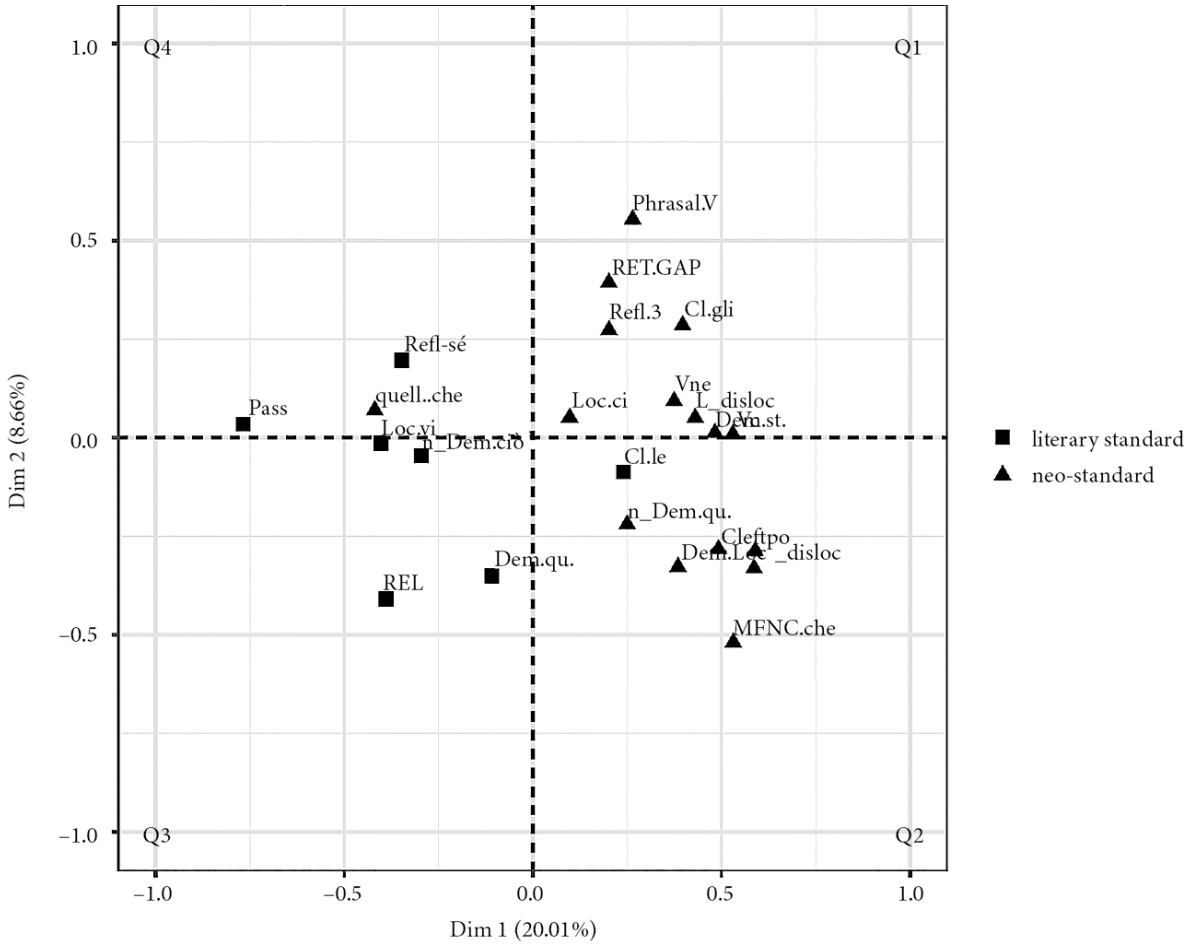


Figure 26.1 Clusters of neo-standard features and literary standard features in students' speech. Source: Based on Cerruti and Vietti (2022:273)

Moreover, it is worth noting that both sets of standard features are related not only to extra-linguistic motivations, such as the degree of formality of the situation or communicative purposes, but also to linguistic factors. Two of these are the overt coding of semantic distinctions and the analytic vs synthetic marking of categories. In fact, neo-standard appears to be less prone to overt coding and more inclined to analytic marking than the literary standard. To give just a few examples, the gap strategy makes no overt case-marked reference to the head noun (cf. 2), and pronoun retention combines a subordinating conjunction with a case-marked resumptive element (cf. 23), while the relative pronoun strategy uses a single element to mark subordination and overtly signal the case of the head noun (cf. 1). Neo-standard resorts to third-person singular and plural

pronouns also to convey a reflexive meaning (cf. 5), while the literary standard makes a distinction between personal and reflexive pronouns (cf. 6). Neo-standard does not show an overt gender contrast in third-person plural pronouns (cf. 3), while literary standard does (cf. 4). Phrasal verbs encode some semantic components of motion event description in the verb root and others in a satellite (cf. 9), while non-phrasal verbs express multiple semantic components in a single lexical item (cf. 10). The processing advantages of avoiding overt coding and/or opting for analytic marking are consistent with the nature of neo-standard features, which come from spoken, informal, and uneducated varieties. On the other hand, overt coding and synthetic marking are in accordance with the nature of literary standard features, which originate mainly from written, formal, and educated varieties. In fact, as noted in §26.3, 'low' varieties generally require lower processing costs than 'high' varieties.[20]

Similarities and differences between neo-standard Italian and literary standard Italian can also be identified in terms of lexical choices. In this regard, a recent study (De Pascale and Marzo 2023) compared four different corpora, each of which was considered as representative of ('but certainly not equivalent to', De Pascale and Marzo 2023:153) the written or the spoken mode of either standard variety. In particular, (a) a sample from the Press sub-corpus of the most recent (i.e., 2017–2020) section of CORIS, (b) the semi-structured interviews constituting the ParlaTO Corpus (www.kiparla.it), (c) a sample from the Academic sub-corpus of the most recent section of CORIS, and (d) the lessons, exams, and office hours interaction types of the KIP Corpus have been regarded as representative of written neo-standard, spoken neo-standard, written literary standard, and spoken literary standard, respectively. This study has taken into account forty concepts, each considered as lexicalized by two or three variants (e.g., *diventare*/*divenire* 'to become', *questo*/*tale* 'this/such', *modo*/*maniera* 'way/manner', *dappertutto*/*ovunque*/*dovunque* 'everywhere'), and has investigated lexical variation between and within each corpus with methods from lexical lectometry. Results are shown in Figure 26.2. Here, both the diameter of the bases and the height of each truncated cone are directly proportional to lexical variation.[21] As is apparent, both standards show less lexical variation in the spoken mode than in the

written mode. However, there is a slightly larger difference in lexical choices between written and spoken neo-standard than between written and spoken literary standard. The neo-standard is, therefore, more sensitive to the distinction between written and spoken mode than the literary standard. On the other hand, the discrepancy in lexical choices between spoken neo-standard and spoken literary standard is slightly higher than that between written neo-standard and written literary standard. This means that, as far as lexical choices are concerned, neo-standard and literary standard are much more distinct from each other in speech than in writing.

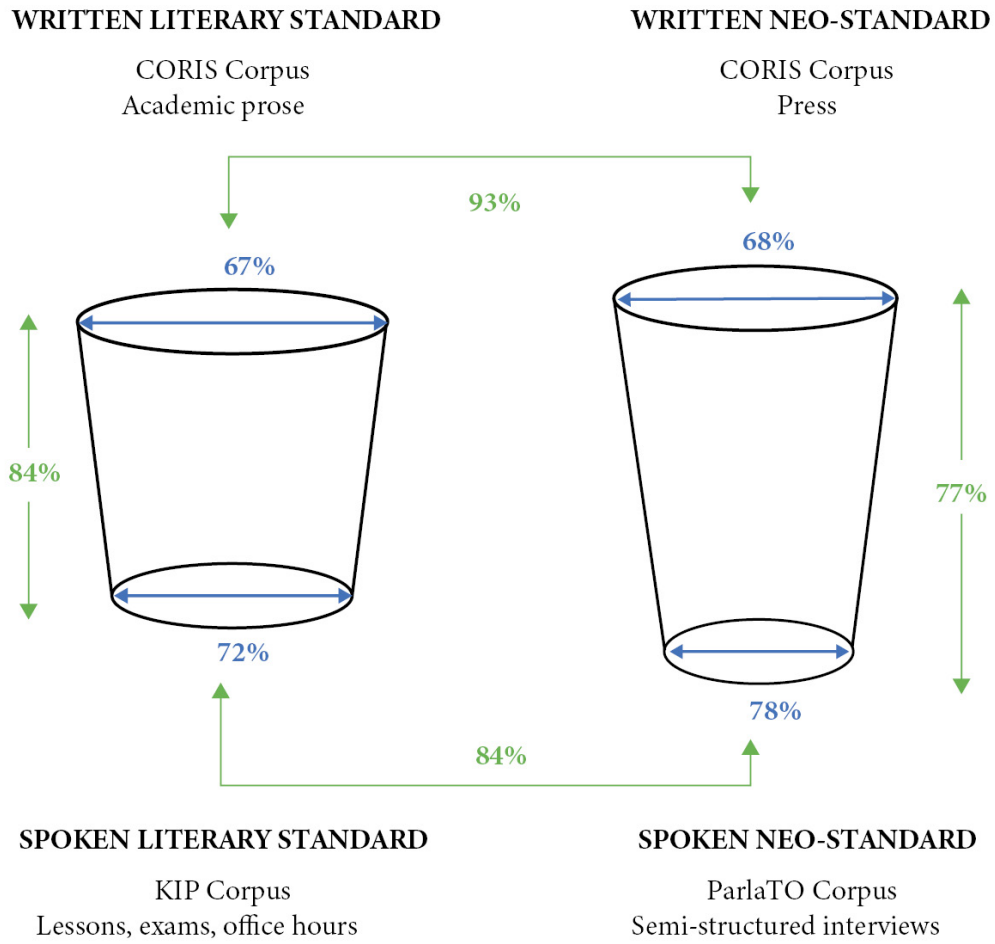


Figure 26.2 Lexical variation between and within neo-standard Italian and literary standard Italian. Source: Based on De Pascale and Marzo (2023:160)

Finally, neo-standard features and literary standard features may reflect differences in attitude towards standard usage. According to

Auer (2017; 2018), four attitudinal components form the basis of the perception of neo-standard: orality, informality, subjectivity, and modernity. These can be contrasted with the corresponding attitudinal components of literary standard: 'literality',[22] formality, objectivity, and tradition. All these components derive from linguistic features such as those mentioned in §§26.3–4. For example, the use of Anglicisms can contribute to the perception of the neo-standard as 'modern' (Auer 2018:50), and left dislocation, together with other pragmatically marked word orders, can be associated with orality, informality, and subjectivity, while the passive construction is responsible for attitudinal components of the opposite value (i.e., literality, formality, objectivity). As for subjectivity vs objectivity, it is indeed apparent that in many cases left dislocation occurs when the agent, or the presence of an agent, is salient (26), while the passive construction is used when the agent is unknown or not visible (27).

26	la	**taverna**	**la**	usavamo	soprattutto	d'	inverno
	the.FSG	basement.FSG	it.ACC.FSG=	use.PST.IPFV.1PL	especially	of	winter

'we used the basement especially in winter' (KIP Corpus, semi-structured interview, https://kiparla.it)

27	la	concezione	evoluzionista	è	**stata**	completamente	**abbandonata**
	the	conception	evolutionist	be.3SG	be.PTCP	completely	abandoned

'the evolutionist conception was completely abandoned' (KIP Corpus, university lecture, https://kiparla.it)

In some public domains, such as school education—in which literary standard Italian still serves as the benchmark for correct usage—linguistic prestige is generally conveyed by language practices based on literality, formality, objectivity, and tradition. In others, such as spoken and, to a certain extent, written media—in which the reference model is now represented by neo-standard Italian—it is language practices based on orality, informality, subjectivity, and modernity that tend to be imbued with linguistic prestige. The development of a new standard norm of Italian can therefore be considered as reflecting 'an attitudinal change in what is considered a prestigious way of speaking' (Auer 2018:52). This change has, however, occurred only in certain domains of use.

26.5 Conclusions

In the history of Italian, the most recent phase of standardization is characterized by a substantial change in the standard norm. Until at least Unification, the standard norm of Italian was essentially codified in dictionaries and grammars, and mainly based on literary texts written in Florentine, whether composed by classical authors or modelled on the contemporary usage of the time. Subsequently, the standard norm has gradually come to include uncodified features originating in everyday speech, some of them shared at a national level and others confined to distinct areas. In particular, the standard norm has come to consist of two separate language varieties: the traditional, codified, literary standard variety of Italian, and a new standard variety mostly composed of features coming 'from below'.

Even though both standard varieties enjoy prestige, each of them is employed more in some public domains of use than in others. For example, the literary standard still serves as a reference model in school education but has been overtaken by the neo-standard in spoken and written media. Indeed, the linguistic prestige accorded to either standard variety differs from one domain to another. However, unlike the literary standard, neo-standard Italian is drawn on in verbal interactions of various types, ranging from spontaneous in-group conversations to public speaking and public writing, and appears to meet both interactional and informational communicative purposes. Standardization has therefore led to the coexistence of a standard variety with a more specific use, namely literary standard Italian, and a standard variety with a more general use, namely neo-standard Italian. The latter appears, in fact, to be less marked than the former in stylistic and functional terms.

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[1] That is to say, a language variety used for 'high' purposes (such as official functions in the public sphere).

[2] After all, no language variety is neatly definable. All varieties of any language generally display smooth, gradual transitions from one to the other (see Berruto 2004a; 2010b; 2012c:17–61; Guy and Hinskens 2016; Vietti 2019a).

[3] This process has affected many European languages in similar ways (cf. Auer 2005; Auer, Hinskens, and Kerswill 2005; Kristiansen and Coupland 2011). In the case of Italian, the resulting development of a new standard norm is termed *restandardization* by Berruto (2012c; 2017). The same phenomenon is referred to as *destandardization* by other scholars (see, for instance, Auer 2017; cf. Kristiansen 2021).

[4] Substantially equivalent expressions are *italiano dell'uso medio* (lit. 'Italian of average use', Sabatini 1985), *italiano tendenziale* (lit. 'tendential Italian', Mioni 1983), and *italiano comune* (lit. 'ordinary Italian', Serianni 1988). What Lepschy (2002:66) terms *ordinary Italian* also has very much in common with the concept of *italiano neo-standard*.

[5] Significantly, in Antonelli (2011:51) the new standard is termed *italiano neo-standard giornalistico* 'journalistic standard Italian', while the old standard is referred to as *italiano standard scolastico* 'scholastic standard Italian'.

[6] The reader is referred here to the Coserian notion of *Architektur der Sprache* ('architecture of the language', cf. Berruto 2010b), which makes it possible to understand the whole spectrum of relationships between the varieties of a language. According to Berruto's (2012c:24) multidimensional model of Italian's 'architecture', standard Italian has lower varieties below and higher varieties above. The language space below the standard is known as *sub-standard*, while it was recently proposed that the language space above the standard should be termed *supra-standard* (Cerruti 2017).

[7] Punctuation is also affected by neo-standard phenomena; in particular, some punctuation marks (e.g., colon and semicolon) tend to be losing ground, while others (such as full stops, commas, and exclamation marks) are undergoing a change in function (cf. D'Achille 2016; Ferrari and Pecorari 2019).

[8] This formula with *quello/-a/-i/-e che* ('that.MSG/FSG/MPL/FPL') essentially has the function of splitting the clause into smaller information units.

[9] In the case of relative pronoun strategies, 'the position relativized is indicated inside the relative clause by means of a clause-initial pronominal element, and this pronominal element is case-marked [. . .] to indicate the role of the head noun within the relative clause', while in the case of the pronoun-retention strategy 'the position relativized is explicitly indicated by means of a resumptive personal pronoun' (Comrie and Kuteva 2013). Conversely, the gap strategy 'involves cases where there is no overt case-marked reference to the head noun within the relative clause' (Comrie and Kuteva 2013).

[10] The regular presence of phrasal verbs in public speaking and public writing is now seen as a national phenomenon (cf. Berruto 2012c:112), since it is documented both in the north and south of Italy (see, for instance, Iacobini and Masini 2009; Amenta 2017). However, phrasal verbs represent the predominant pattern of expression for motion events in northern Italy (both in regional varieties of Italian and dialectal substrata, see, for example, Benincà and Poletto 2006) and are in fact highly preferred and more productively used among northern speakers (cf. Cini 2008).

[11] Including those pertaining to 'linguistic custom' (in the sense of Berruto 2017a) such as non-nominal uses of *tipo* 'type' (e.g., *arrivano tipo alle cinque* 'they arrive like at 5 pm', cf. Voghera 2013a) and the use of *piuttosto che* (lit. 'rather than') to connect equivalent,

typically non-exhaustive, alternatives (e.g., *posso viaggiare in treno piuttosto che in aereo* 'I can travel by train or by plane'; cf. Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2015).

[12] Yet not all the regional features occurring in a given area emerge in careful speech styles. The selection is guided by the interplay of manifold factors, including the influence exerted by Italian orthography (cf. Crocco 2017:106–109).

[13] In fact, Italian displays a nationwide shared core of phrasal verbs and some regionally marked ones (cf. Cini 2008).

[14] Miola (2023:98) terms *datival accusative* 'the second valency of intransitive bivalent verbs introduced by the preposition *a* ['to']' (e.g., *accennare* 'to mention', *alludere* 'to allude', *attingere* 'to draw', *contribuire* 'to contribute', *giungere* 'to arrive', *pervenire* 'to come (to)', *ricorrere* 'to resort'; Miola 2023:102).

[15] In the codified standard norm, *il quale* can only relativize subjects of non-restrictive relative clauses and positions lower than the direct object, *ne* can only stand for prepositional phrases consisting of *di* 'of'/*da* 'from, by' + NP, and the referring head of a factual relative clause triggers the indicative.

[16] English is also a major source of calques; see, for example, the case of *ovviamente* 'obviously' investigated in De Cesare (2019a:214–217).

[17] The influence of English models can also be seen in punctuation; see, e.g., the increasing use of the dash (cf. Ferrari and Pecorari 2019: 307–309).

[18] All the features listed in Table 26.1 are exemplified in §§26.3–4.

[19] Figure 26.1 reports the results of a Principal Component Analysis. Each point on the plane represents a linguistic feature and the distance between the points represents the degree of correlation; that is, the nearer two points are on this plane, the stronger the co-occurrence between the two corresponding features in speakers' usage. Moreover, it can be argued that the horizontal axis is associated with the opposition between formality (negative scores) and informality (positive scores) and the vertical axis with the opposition between informational (negative scores) and interactional (positive scores) communication (the reader is, however, referred to Cerruti and Vietti 2022).

[20] In many cases, neo-standard and literary standard features also show different degrees of typological markedness (cf. Grandi 2019a; 2019b).

[21] On the contrary, both the diameter of the bases and the height of each truncated cone are inversely proportional to the so-called 'uniformity indexes', which are expressed as percentages. The 'internal uniformity index' (whose values are indicated in normal typeface in Fig. 26.2) signals the number of lexical variants within a single corpus, and reaches a maximum of 100 per cent in the case of one-to-one correspondences between meaning and form, while the 'external uniformity index' (whose values are indicated in shaded typeface in Fig. 26.2) quantifies the difference between corpora regarding the distribution of lexical variants, and reaches 100 per cent in the case of totally overlapping lexical distributions.

[22] This is the term used by Auer (2018) to indicate that the literary standard displays typical features of a written variety.

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Chapter 27

Multilingualism

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27.1 Introduction

Italy is characterized by a high degree of multilingualism:[1] its official language, Italian, has been widely used as a common spoken language only since the 1960s, and it is surrounded by a plurality of local varieties known as 'dialects' (*dialetti*),[2] which are actually a linguistic continuum of diverse autonomous developments of spoken Latin across the area of modern-day Italy (for discussion, see also Chapter 1). These 'dialects' are generally not mutually intelligible, either with one another or with Italian. On the geographical periphery of the country and/or in isolated enclaves, and spoken by a much smaller percentage of the population, are to be found Romance, Germanic, Slavonic, Albanian, and Greek varieties, which are commonly and legally regarded as minority languages. The sociolinguistic boundaries between these two groups (dialects and minority languages) are quite fuzzy and overlap with so-called 'regional languages', sets of local varieties whose speakers refer to an ideal spoken or even written *koiné* but which almost lack a corresponding ethnic self-definition, such as Piedmontese, Venetan, or Sicilian. Traditionally scattered across the territory of the country, there are also several smaller communities of Romas and Sintis who, in part, refer to Romanī as their ethnic language (cf. Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2011b). Lastly, more than five million foreign citizens or their descendants, mainly concentrated in (sub)urban areas, where

they migrated during the final decades of the twentieth century, enrich the sociolinguistic scenario with a vast array of languages and dialects historically unrelated to Italy.

This complex landscape has prompted researchers and interest groups to differentiate between national minorities, linguistic minorities, and dialects within the Italian territory (cf. Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2011b).[3] National and linguistic minorities refer to populations directly or indirectly linked to closely neighbouring states: Austria and Germany for the German speakers of South Tyrol, Yugoslavia (later Slovenia) for the Slovenian speakers living in the provinces of Gorizia and Trieste, and France for the residents of the Aosta Valley. All other internal cases of heteroglossia are usually considered as fundamentally Italian communities in terms of culture and identity which incidentally use non-Italian language varieties; if these varieties are Romance, these communities are recognized as language minorities only if located in the country's periphery; otherwise, they are broadly seen as dialect-speaking Italians.

With the slow rise and emergence of the fourteenth-century Florentine vernacular (*volgare*) as a prestigious literary language and especially with its more recent extension across all of the peninsula, these varieties, even if to different degrees, underwent a process of 'dialectalization' and cultural subordination (cf. Dal Negro and Vietti 2011 and §27.3.1). From a sociolinguistic perspective, the dialects of Italy are not perceived as languages since they lack autonomy (cf. Ammon 1987), and their use is limited to specific geographical areas, whereas Italian is in use across the entire nation and has the role of a marker of national identity.

This classificatory vision is informed by scholarly discussions dating back to the end of the nineteenth century with the birth of the so-called *questione ladina* 'Ladin language question' and the identification of Francoprovençal by Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (cf. Bauer 2010). This has led to the widespread (and academically accepted) opinion that Romance varieties traditionally spoken in Italy are not Italo-Romance dialects if they have at least one of the following (morpho)phonetic features: preservation of Latin final inflexional -[s], preservation or non-palatalization of Latin clusters C+[l], and palatalization of Latin <c> [k] before [a]. This approach has allowed linguists to recognize as minority languages rather than as Italo-Romance dialects of Italy the following Romance varieties spoken

within Italy: Friulian (preservation of -[s] and C+[l], palatalization of [k] before [a]), Ladin (predominant preservation of -[s] and C+[l], palatalization of [k] before [a]), Francoprovençal and Alpine Provençal (partial preservation of -[s] and C+[l], palatalization of [k] before [a]), and Sardinian (preservation of -[s], [l] mainly not palatalized). In fact, this intralinguistic categorization encompasses sociolinguistic and political factors. From a legal perspective, the rights of these minorities (but not those of speakers of Italo-Romance dialects) were guaranteed in the Italian Constitution of 1948 (Article 6: 'The Republic protects minority languages'), although a law to this effect has only been consistently applied since 2000 when the constitutional article took effect after the adoption of the 1999 Law 482 regarding minority languages (Dal Negro 2000; Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2004; Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2020; Fiorentini 2022).

Given the complexity of the situation sketched above, we will provide here a presentation of the Italian multilingual context based, not on geographical criteria, but, rather, on the patterns arising from the relationships between the varieties in use within the repertoire of relevantly different subcontexts. In this way, we will explore some specific features of multilingualism in Italy from the perspective of a typology of repertoire structures based on general properties and models; these models can be (and have been) applied at a more general level. According to this perspective, we will not follow an *a priori* distinction between minority languages and dialects, but will, rather, focus on sociolinguistic factors, starting from a fundamentally 'etic approach' (cf. Pike 1967:37) and bringing in 'emic' factors (i.e., the speaker's perception) when required for the description of the sociolinguistic situation. For our overview of the Italian diasystem, we first introduce our theoretical framework which is based not only on the relevant scholarly literature but also on in-depth methodological research. This framework will serve as an interpretive grid for analysing multilingualism in Italy.

27.2 Typologies of repertoire

27.2.1 From a naïve definition of bilingualism to diglossia

The theoretical framework adopted here originates with Ferguson's (1959) discussion of sociolinguistic reality through the lens of *diglossia*, subsequently refined in particular by the Turin Sociolinguistics School (cf. Berruto 1987a; 1995; Berruto and Cerruti 2015; Cerruti and Regis 2020). Alongside the Fergusonian term diglossia (to some extent restricted here in the scope of its definition) we must first add the concept of *dilalia*, which is fundamental for a precise description of the Italian late post-war situation (Berruto 1987a,b), and then more recent terminological concepts such as *diacrolectia*, arising from both the quantitative analysis of sociolinguistic data and the need for new frames of interpretation.[4]

A key point of our classification involves a prior and fundamental distinction between three different planes, or dimensions, neither co-extensive nor necessarily in an implicational relation with one another, which intersect the categories of our theoretical framework and on which relationships between codes can be established: the social, personal, and institutional dimensions. The social dimension takes into consideration the set of speakers in a given territory (and possibly single compact communities coexisting in the same region), in which the (potentially idiosyncratic) linguistic behaviour of each speaker is absorbed into the observation of the sociolinguistic behaviour of the speech community (see §27.4, but also Gumperz 1962; Labov 1968; Berruto 1995), or the community 'norm' of reference. The personal dimension focuses on the individual (albeit part of a community) in relation to other individuals and on their communicative choices related to sociolinguistic roles and relationships between codes, observed independently of the 'norm' of the community of reference. The last dimension along which relations between different codes can be established (even exclusively) is the institutional or political-administrative one, which concerns the relationship between codes within the official legislative system of a given territory or administrative entity.

This distinction allows us to avoid certain misunderstandings regarding the categorization of repertoires, not least the use of the

term *bilingualism*, which is commonly applied to two distinct types of phenomena: individual bilingualism and institutional bilingualism. At the individual level, we can easily identify bilingual subjects for whom two varieties are equivalent in terms not only of competence but also of communicative functions and distribution in the various domains of use—although there may be, even in these cases, a different distribution in terms of frequency or in relation to specific interlocutors. At the institutional level, the status of two languages may be totally equivalent in a given territory, with full co-officiality of the codes (or, more appropriately, of their standard varieties) established by law. It should be noted, however, that one does not necessarily imply the other and that they are thus clearly separate phenomena—as is also emphasized by the presence of distinct terms in English: *plurilingualism* and *multilingualism*, respectively.[5] In some sense, the concept of *diglossia* is opposed to a strict definition of multilingualism, whereby two (or more) fully equipollent languages are used interchangeably in a given speech community. Against this idea of full functional equivalence, Ferguson's diglossia highlights a fundamental aspect that shapes the very concept of linguistic repertoire, i.e., *functional distribution*. What we maintain here, discussing it with actual situations of multilingual repertoire structures across the Italian territory, is that bilingualism *stricto sensu*, i.e., with full functional equivalence between codes, cannot be considered a stable situation at a societal level: in the speech community, when the repertoire includes multiple codes that are clearly distinct for speakers (and not necessarily distant for the linguist), they tend in any case towards some form of functional distribution at the diaphasic and/or diamesic level. In other words, in our view, any form of social bilingualism with full overlap of the domains of use of the codes either describes the coexistence of two communities or tends to be highly unstable and doomed to functional restructuring of the repertoire. To discuss this claim, we will use the concept of functional distribution to define the relationship between codes within the repertoire. This will form the basis for the description of the multiple sub-systems within the Italian diasystem.

In 'canonical' diglossia, the diasystem is organized through a clear (and more or less rigid) functional distribution between two (or potentially more) codes: a 'high' code, which fulfils communicative

needs in formal domains and in writing, and a 'low' code, which instead serves the functions of informal communication, particularly in the more internal domains of the community. As to the metaphorical use of the terms 'high' and 'low' to indicate the hierarchy of varieties along the diaphasic axis, a few remarks are in order here. It is normally assumed in sociolinguistics (or at least in correlational sociolinguistics) that the notion is fully 'external', always directly related to an evident social stratification, of which the co-presence of codes would be the semiotic outcome. While this assertion may be fundamentally valid in relation to its emergence, it does not necessarily hold true in any type of repertoire, nor does it exclude the use of the variation itself as an index of the social values attributed to the codes by the community. In other words, the concepts 'high' or 'low' may also be the result of a speaker's communicative choice, which transfers the social values of the codes (assigned by virtue of their position and functions within the speech community) to the type of communicative situations in which they are used (cf. Joseph 1987). As studies in the social psychology of language show (cf. Giles and St Clair 1979), speakers can mark single interactions or even passages within the interaction through code choice, code switching, and accommodation strategies, thus 'constructing' the social context of the communicative event through acts of speech. In this perspective (closer to interpretive sociolinguistics, cf. Auer and Di Luzio 1984), it is actually the codes themselves that are classified as 'high' or 'low', while communicative events receive a connotation of 'high' or 'low' depending on the code that is predominantly used in that type of interaction. This different perspective, in fact justified by the empirical evidence that has emerged in numerous surveys and censuses (Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2019), allows us to speak of domains as 'typical of high codes' or 'typical of low codes'. In Ferguson's diglossia, there is precisely a 'high domains' code (acrolect, or *H code*) and a 'low domains' code (basilect, or *L code*). The one excludes the other from its domain,[6] while a possible area of transition in the intermediate domains is not *a priori* excluded; this area of transition is particularly interesting for the conceptualization of repertoire structures since it serves, in our view, as a ground for conflict and renegotiation of the functional boundaries between codes. This is in fact what happens in many diasystems, and significantly also in the

Italian one, as opposed to examples that still represent archetypes of Fergusonian diglossia (Ferguson 1959), such as German-speaking Switzerland and, until the end of the twentieth century, Italian-speaking Switzerland (cf. §27.3.1, §31.2).

27.2.2 The functional distribution of codes in the repertoire

The issue of functional distribution thus represents an essential parameter for macro-sociolinguistic observation and, even more interestingly, a scalable parameter. Precisely by virtue of the area of transition in this functional distribution and in a totally independent way from 'internal' linguistic conditions (e.g., the genealogical relationship between the codes or the structural distance), many different forms of 'diglossia' can manifest themselves that gradually deviate from the Fergusonian definition, so that they can no longer be included in the same category.[7]

One of the first needs for a new category to be added to that of diglossia arises from Berruto's observation (Berruto 1987a,b) of the contemporary sociolinguistic situation of Italy. In particular, he shows how, among the new fully literate generations, for whom dialects have undergone a sharp contraction in diffusion and communicative functions, the 'high' code (i.e., the standard variety, albeit diatopically marked) has gradually shifted towards the more 'internal', informal domains, effectively becoming a direct competitor for local Italo-Romance varieties (cf. Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2011a). Here, then, the functional distribution is no longer complementary, but shows not only a vertical asymmetry ('high' vs 'low' domains) but also an imbalance of forces on the 'horizontal' plane, with one of the two codes being able to access all domains and the other being limited to informal and familiar contexts, where it competes with the dominant code. For this new configuration of the diasystem, Berruto coined the term *dilalia*—a term that is still uncommon in the English-language scholarly literature but which well describes a pattern of linguistic repertoire that is anything but rare or without interest, and not only in Italy.

Dilalia may be understood as a sort of evolution of a rigid diglossic relationship (à la Ferguson), with a strictly complementary functional distribution, into a system in which the high code is allowed complete mobility along the diaphasic axis while the other remains relegated to its original positions. Diglossia can also resolve itself through a functional extension, not of the H code, but of the L code, which, through a process of *Ausbau* (cf. Kloss 1987), extends its use to formal and written domains; this type of functional distribution of codes is called *diacrolectia* (cf. Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2004; Berruto and Cerruti 2015). If in dilalia the 'high' code, which might represent the 'majority' or dominant language (at a socioeconomic or symbolic level if not demographically), infiltrates the 'inner' or 'low' domains, in diacrolectia it is the 'low' code that conquers the 'high' domains, formerly restricted to the majority language.[8] The diachronic development of repertoires can also take the opposite direction, increasing sociolinguistic constraints or preferences in the use of codes. The restructuring of the repertoire does not necessarily extend the domains of one code or another, but can normalize an exclusive use of codes according to relevant sociolinguistic parameters. The renegotiation of the functions of the codes can thus, for instance, move from a dilalic to a diglossic situation, developing a more consistent and efficient functional distribution.

Similarly to what we observed in relation to the concept of bilingualism, also for its opposite, monolingualism, we must distinguish between a *naïve* definition and a more properly informed one that takes account of the sociolinguistic dynamics that may intervene within the repertoire of a speech community. In fact, even monolingualism is perhaps too broad a term to describe two quite different realities: one relatively rare, typical of situations of recent linguistic change, and the other one widespread, both possibly quite stable. The first case is that of social monolingualism *tout court*, in which the majority of the community uses exclusively one code in all domains, consciously named as such, and with intralinguistic rules of reference not only shared socially but also institutionalized and re-enforced by the school—a situation in which, for the majority of the speakers, every deviation from the 'correct' norm is frowned upon.[9] The other case is merely apparent monolingualism, or rather a system of linguistic variations used consistently in relation to specific

domains and communicative situations but only partially recognized by the speakers: this is the situation that Berruto (1995) calls *dialettia*, which corresponds to *bidialectalism* in the English-speaking literature (cf. Chambers and Trudgill 1998). From the speaker's viewpoint, the intralinguistic rules concerning phonetics, morphology, and syntax form a single system that admits variation within it, while the lexicon can move from the top down or from the bottom up to cover any semantic needs. Basically, the norms regarding morphology and syntax may in some cases have alternative solutions, though these alternatives are not free variants or related to diatopy but are conditioned by social communicative norms of the community itself. The diasystem admits the use even at a high level of what in an earlier publication (cf. Iannàccaro 2009) we called 'grandmother's language', i.e., all traditional heritage vocabulary, also from rural life, nature observation, or traditional professions, which are usually considered low domains. Features marked in that fashion can 'move up' the domains of usage, all the way to the top, without being negatively marked as such, at least when possible alternatives are not discerned (often with activation of a metalinguistic function), making such lexical components available to the wider community.

In diglossia, however, this is not possible: 'grandmother's language' is a reserve that can be used only for the low code and can enter the domains of the high code only in cases where there is no consciousness of its possible sociolinguistic markedness (i.e., diastratic variants that cannot be controlled diaphasically by the speaker); even in these cases, the speaker has a rich lexicon at their disposal, which they use according to the social norms for the codes. In dilalia, the lexicon of 'grandmother's language' cannot penetrate the high domains but rather risks disappearing under the pressure of the lexicon of the dominant language, and the semantic gaps caused by this conflict between codes are not filled. As observed by Dal Negro and Vietti (2011), this can lead to possible lexical loss, parallel to the breakdown of a cultural system, as well as accentuate possible endogenous contact dynamics, from the occasional transfer of single phonologically unintegrated words to the embedding of lexical morphemes of the high code into the morphosyntactic patterns of the low code, which further narrow the distance, even (or especially) in the speaker's perception, between the two codes.[10]

Lastly, in particular situations of extensive migration, at least since the media have become pervasive in daily life, we can find another peculiar repertoire structure: populations of immigrant origin may, alongside a full acquisition of the host language, retain the language of origin for both low and high domains, but generally not at the intermediate level involving interactions in the wider community outside the inner circle of family and friends. This means that the native (or heritage) language maintains its *in-group* function in the innermost domains, as well as a position of *H-code* when accessing the media or interacting with institutions of the country of origin; on the other side of the repertoire, the host language extends to all domains, in particular occupying the intermediate level, for which the use of the L1 is (mostly) precluded. We will call this particular pattern in the repertoire as *deuterolectia*, a term based on the concept of L2, in particular as conceived in Scandinavian sociolinguistics: here L2 refers also to a language (Swedish, Norwegian, or Danish) spoken and written by Scandinavian citizens of foreign origin, which is normally the most frequently used on a daily basis (Hyltenstam et al. 2012).

All these different configurations in the repertoire can be converted into operational definitions of the functional distribution of codes in a given community, thus deriving the typology of repertoire directly from sociolinguistic data. As already shown in previous studies (cf. Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2006; Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2011a; Dell'Aquila 2011), quantitative data concerning the (perceived or reported) use of the languages can be summarized through a matrix that represents the different codes in columns and the domains of use (or their groupings in macro-levels, sorted from 'high' to 'low') in rows. The structure of the community repertoire is thus mapped through this matrix: each slot marks the regular use of a single code (and its acceptance as 'unmarked choice') in a specified (macro-level) domain, or its absence, by means of a categorical recoding of the collected answers.

For the purpose of our theoretical discussion and exemplification of the Italian multilingual landscape, we will adopt a largely abstract scheme with two columns (but incorporating possible combinations of multiple codes) and three rows (high, intermediate, and low domains, labelled H, M, and L). These represent the minimum number of macro-levels required for the clear distinction and

definition of the different typologies to be portrayed: indeed, it is not possible to give an effective representation, however abstract and formal, of the different relationships between codes in a diasystem and, consequently, observe possible dynamics at work, without considering at least one intermediate macro-level between the high and low poles that can serve precisely as an area of conflict, transition, and renegotiation of the roles and functions of the codes. Obviously, the domain continuum can be divided into far more than three levels, showing a more varied situation and a more detailed map of functions, and, by the same token, the codes can also be more than two. At a purely combinatorial level, the possible combinations of dichotomous values of presence/absence of two codes on three macro-levels (regardless of the order of the two codes) is 36.[11] However, here we will exclude a set of combinations by virtue of two postulates (which, as such, are refutable): (1) a speech community without at least one code in the low domains is sociolinguistically impossible; (2) a speech community without at least one code in the intermediate domains, i.e., that of the wider community outside of the family and close friends, is implausible or highly marginal in the contemporary world, since it would imply an isolated community without any form of exchange or contact with the outside world. On the other hand, we assume the possibility of the existence of communities in which the high (written, institutional, or liturgical) code is the exclusive prerogative of a demographically small, privileged socioeconomic class (and is thus absent from the repertoire of lower classes): this is the situation with all societies in which generalized illiteracy is the norm. However, for the purposes of our abstract model, we assume that the patterns of functional distribution between codes on two levels (i.e., only the low and intermediate domains) are fully subsumed by corresponding patterns on three levels, i.e., codes also in the high domains.

By constraining the matrix according to these assumptions, we obtain 14 potential combinations. As the following scheme in Table 27.1 shows, 10 of these combinations represent one of the different repertoire structures defined above: from the polar situations of *monolingualism* and *bilingualism* to *diglossia* and the other salient patterns of functional distribution, namely, *dilalia*, *diacrolectia*, and *deuterolectia*.[12] The other four combinations can be seen as possible

transitions between different types of repertoire and will not be discussed further here.[13]

Table 27.1 Abstract repertoire structures

	L_x	L_y	L_x	L_y	L_x	L_y
H	+	–	–	+	+	+
M	+	–	+/–	–/+	+	+
L	+	–	+	–	+	+
	monolingualism		*diglossia (3)*		*bilingualism*	
	L_x	L_y	L_x	L_y	L_x	L_y
H	–	+	+	+	+	+
M	–/+	+	+	–/+	–	+
L	+	+	+	–	+	+
	dilalia (2)		*diacrolectia (2)*		*deuterolectia*	

This abstract modelling allows us to identify a system of oppositions based on the different positioning of the languages in the repertoire as either exclusive or competing codes for specific functions. While exclusiveness of a code in a set of domains fulfils the communicative need for diaphasic markedness, functional competition weakens it. From this perspective, diglossia shows a higher potential for diaphasic markedness thanks to the mutual exclusiveness of the codes in the high and low domains. Dilalia and diacrolectia, on the other hand, are characterized by *functional competition* on one pole of the diasystem (low domains and high domains, respectively) combined with the exclusive unmarked use of one of the codes on the opposite pole. This unbalanced competition between codes can

produce a certain instability in the repertoire structure compared to the mutual exclusiveness of diglossia: either the dominant language might progressively erode the functional space of the other code, or the competing codes might shift towards a form of functional distribution closer to diglossia. Also, deuterolectia appears quite unstable due to the presence of competing codes on both the high and low macro-levels: in this type of situation, the community's L1 might progressively lose its function either as a 'high' code or as a 'low' code, depending on its (international) prestige and/or its symbolic role for the migrant community.

Following this line of reasoning, social bilingualism, with no exclusive codes on either level but rather full functional competition across the entire diaphasic axis, appears to be the most unstable and inefficient distribution of the codes in a multilingual repertoire.

Bidialectalism has been left out of the scheme above because it portrays a peculiar situation that cannot be efficiently described in terms of dichotomous combinations of distinct codes. Our matrix representation implies that the varieties in different rows of the same column are considered part of the same code and that the codes in different columns can always be distinguished on any macro-level. These two assumptions fall short precisely when we observe situations of bidialectalism, where speakers do not perceive two clearly distinct codes used in specific domains but, rather, a continuum of varieties with some features marked along the diaphasic dimension. We have tried to represent this situation through the following scheme (Table 27.2), in which the plus within parentheses highlights a higher markedness and ambiguity in the use of a variety at a certain macro-level of domains.

Table 27.2 The abstract model for bidialectalism

	L_X	L_Y
H	(+)	+
M	(+)	(+)
L	+	(+)

	bidialectalism

As already noted, the codes involved in the repertoire might often be more than two. The possible combinations of competing and exclusive codes will nonetheless show a relevant correspondence to the types described here. Therefore we will not use other terms (e.g., *triglossia* or *polyglossia*) to describe such complex repertoires but instead refer to them as, for instance, *diglossia*, *dilalia*, or *diacrolectia* with three (or four) codes. Moreover, we assume that several speech communities can coexist in the same territory, thus showing different repertoire structures in contact. In this regard, *diacrolectia* and *deuterolectia* seem to emerge only within speech communities in contact with other communities, thus sharing the same 'territory', not necessarily at a local level, but at a regional or national level.

27.3 The Italian 'landscape'

27.3.1 Diglossia with restricted H code: Italy from Unification to the twentieth century

Before discussing the compounded landscape of contemporary Italian multilingualism, it is worth highlighting some key aspects of the recent sociolinguistic history of Italy—history, in fact, not so different in many aspects from that of other European countries. This history has obviously had a relevant impact on today's situation, particularly in terms of the dynamics triggered within the repertoire.

The rise of the nation-states determined, or at least accelerated, a process of ideological convergence towards national languages that replaced Latin in all domains (except its liturgical use in the Catholic Church until the 1970s). At the time of the birth of the Italian Kingdom (1861), only a small portion of the population (2.5 per cent

according to De Mauro 1970a:43, corresponding to the literate élite and the bidialectal areas of Tuscany and Rome; cf. §27.3.7) could use (standard) Italian, and almost exclusively in written form or as a *lingua franca* in exceptional situations of interregional contact.[14] Italian was first of all a written language used for institutional needs and correspondence, while the various local dialects used in different Italian regions were almost never used in written form, at least for administrative purposes (with the relative exception of Venetian), and the national language was never actually spoken in the innermost domains. At an individual level, then, we might find in this time frame a form of monolingualism *stricto sensu*, with potentially no code in the formal domains and/or the written medium; at a societal level, in Italy (as was the case in other states in modern Europe until at least the nineteenth century) there was a general situation of diglossia with a restricted H code. With Italian as the official language of the Kingdom and its diffusion through schooling, all local spoken languages and varieties acquired the status of *dialetti* at a societal level, in the sense that they began to be considered by the population as lower, popular, and 'vernacular' versions or even distortions of the national language (dialectalization on the literary level and for the élite already took place centuries before, but with almost no effect for the society). Other authors tend to consider this pervasive use of a multitude of local Romance and even non-Romance varieties, with absence of active use of Italian by the larger majority of the population, as a form of monolingualism *tout court* (cf. Dal Negro and Vietti 2011), restricting multilingualism to other-language speakers, speakers of regional *koinai* as mesolects, and cultural-economic élites. We believe instead that society as a whole, excluding the bidialectal area of Tuscany, was diglossic in the sense that Italian was present as the only conceivable unmarked written code, even for the lower classes that had no direct access to it, neither in the written form nor as a spoken language. After Unification, Italian continued to gain areas of use throughout society, with a significant peak between the 1970s and 1980s. From this point onwards, Italianization was massive in the urban areas of northern Italy, while *dialetti* continued, albeit in different ways, to maintain a considerable presence in the more internal domains and in rural areas, especially in north-eastern and southern Italy.

These changes in the balance of power between national standard and local Romance varieties, and above all the marginalization and stigmatization of the latter, have led in many areas to the interruption of direct intergenerational transmission of *dialetti* as L1 (cf. Dal Negro and Vietti 2011): young children are typically addressed in a variety of Italian intended to be close to the standard (but frequently featuring transfers from dialects and/or hypercorrections), while dialect remains the code of communication only between adults, with rather rigid strategies of code selection according to the addressee. Italian is ultimately considered the most suitable code for first acquisition, leading to the contemporary dominant situation of dilalia (cf. §27.3.2). This does not mean, however, that new generations have no access to *dialetti* at all; on the contrary, these are often restored, or rather reclaimed, in adolescence or adulthood, primarily thanks to interactions with peers and neighbours as well as intergenerational interactions between grandparents and grandchildren (but not between parents and children), which become the main factor supporting language maintenance.

27.3.2 Dilalia as the 'common' Italian repertoire

In this changed landscape, then, Italian is considered suitable for all contexts and domains, while the use of 'dialect' becomes extremely sensitive to a wide range of diastratic and diaphasic factors: from the age and educational level of the speaker to the relationship between the interlocutors and even to conditions specific to the speech event, such as topic, solidarity among the speakers, group identity, and accommodation strategies (cf. Giles and Smith 1979). In this highly unbalanced interplay of forces, code switching and code mixing phenomena reinforce both the diffusion of standard variants to the disadvantage of vernacular ones and the socio-pragmatic markedness of lexical items and idioms from local dialects (cf. Berruto 1990a; Cerruti and Regis 2020).

Typical dilalic settings are urban and suburban areas in northern and southern Italy (central regions and Tuscany in particular

present, by contrast, a different scenario, cf. §27.3.7). In these areas, active spoken and written competence in Italian is highly diffused over a large portion of the population (although the actual skills in formal written language might vary, as suggested by Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2016), while competence in the local dialects is often only passive (cf. Moretti 1999). Particularly interesting, albeit limited, are cases of dialect maintenance or recovery for identity reasons in tourist areas (a phenomenon comparable to that studied by Labov 1963), in which young people learn and use dialect within the peer group (rather than with the family) to distinguish themselves from Italian-speaking tourists, especially those coming from the urban areas of northern Italy.

As noted above, dilalia is clearly very different from bilingualism: speakers do not have complete competence in the two codes, and the standard is often the one in which they feel more at ease in many communicative situations. In some cases, Italian is indeed the only fully acquired language.

27.3.3 Diglossia: rural areas in the Veneto, Sicily, Calabria, Salento, and South Tyrol

Despite the pervasive presence of Italian throughout the territory, and despite widespread literacy, there are still areas within the country characterized by Italian/dialect diglossia: these are above all the rural areas in the Veneto, Sicily, Calabria, and Salento. Here, the use of dialect is still unmarked in informal speech, while Italian is the language of formality and the only written code. Moreover, in Sicily and in the Veneto, alongside Italian and the local dialects, there is a tension towards an ideal regional *koiné* that has the function of preserving a balanced diglossia, albeit perhaps with three codes. Sicilian, Venetan, and Piedmontese *koinai* not only improve the community's perception of substandard varieties,[15] but also enhance an in-group regional identity without questioning the broader identification with the Italian linguistic community in both a political and ethnic sense (cf. Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2004).

South Tyrol, if we exclude the main urban centres, also shows a fundamentally diglossic repertoire, even if it does not strictly belong

to the diasystem of Italian: here a wide range of Austro-Bavarian dialects, from *Basisdialekte* (lit. 'base dialects') to a regional *Umgangsprache* 'colloquial language' (cf. Lanthaler 1997), covers the low and intermediate domains, while standard German occurs mainly in formal written use or in interactions with German-speaking foreigners. Italian is also on the H pole of the diasystem, but it hardly enters into a functional competition with German, since it can be replaced by it (or even by Austro-Bavarian dialects) in any formal situation. On the other hand, Italian fills a specific functional slot as the unmarked code choice for inter-group communication, namely, with Italian speakers from within or outside South Tyrol (cf. Ciccolone 2016).

27.3.4 Diglossic and dilalic repertoires with minority languages protected by Law 482/1999

The introduction of specific language policies, such as Law 482/1999, has a clear impact on diglossic or dilalic repertoires involving one of the targeted languages, as is the case for Friulian, Sardinian, Ladin, and the many linguistic enclaves scattered across the country. In particular, Friulian and especially Sardinian cover quite compact and well-delimited territories, which nevertheless show a notable amount of diatopic variability within them. This complex internal diasystem seems to replicate on a smaller scale the sociolinguistic settings of other European nations. In this scenario, the linguistic repertoire of the innermost circles of the speech community can be rather uniform: local varieties of Friulian or Sardinian are surrounded by other (possibly slightly different) varieties of the same language, while Italian maintains its role as the H code. This situation is in general quite similar to the common Italian scenarios described above (§§27.3.2–3), with a form of diglossia in the inner areas (central Sardinia and rural areas of Friuli) or dilalia in urban and border areas (apart from a wide variety of exceptions or special cases): here too Italian shares the functional space with a locally developed Romance variety, which assumes the

role of a 'dialect', even if, in theory, it belongs to the Friulian or Sardinian system. On a macro-sociolinguistic level, though, the relationship between the H and the L codes (with or without functional competition in the low domains) does not seem radically different from that between standard Italian and, for instance, the dialect of Parma or Matera. And yet differences clearly exist: the speakers perceive that their spontaneous varieties are part of a wider linguistic reality to which they give the name of Friulian or Sardinian. In this regard we need to distinguish between two levels of perception (Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2011b). The first is a more conscious level, i.e., the explicit awareness of belonging to a minority language community. This level is responsible for overt socio-political behaviour and actions of identification or divergence from groups perceived as different; the deeper level, on the other hand, refers to phenomena that are more difficult to rationalize, although they determine sociolinguistic behaviour and speakers' perception of the relationship between codes. This distinction is important because it allows us to explain why speakers overtly assert their own linguistic and cultural distance from the majority, while their perception of the functional role of their varieties places them on a lower level as local or limited versions of the 'language'. The situation in Friuli and Sardinia is quite exemplary in this respect: Friulian and Sardinian are attributed the status of languages with a (partial) ethnic affiliation and are therefore the target of institutional language policies, but at the same time they assume, in fact, the role of 'dialects', in the sense that they are unconsciously considered as local and limited, regardless of their official status (Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2015). However, these varieties are different from the aforementioned regional *koinai* (e.g., Venetan, Sicilian, and partially Piedmontese), since they do not serve as mesolects to maintain diglossia. Instead, as targets of language policies, they are intended to trigger a shift towards diacrolectia, with the regional language occupying all macro-levels (with exclusive use in the innermost domains) and Italian competing at the H pole. Nonetheless, in Sardinia in particular, where the contrast between competing varieties (i.e., Logudorese and Campidanese) has complicated the standardization process, the pressure of Italian has pushed the regional languages aside, even their newly formed or revitalized standards, which cannot yet represent true competitors of the

national H code. On a smaller scale, we can find a similar situation in the Ladin-speaking region, where five standardized written forms of Ladin also serve as an ethnic language which, in the Ladin valleys of South Tyrol, competes with Italian and standard German at the high end of the pole (cf. Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2004; 2006).

The regional *koinai* also involve areas with minority languages, such as the Occitan area of Piedmont and the lowlands of Friuli ('Bassa Friulana'). These settings show a situation of dilalia with three codes in which Italian is *de facto* the exclusive code in high domains, despite the fact that the minority language is recognized as having co-official status by law. At the low end of the pole, the minority language competes with Italian and local dialects, while the intermediate domains are covered by a regional *koiné* (Piedmontese or Venetan, respectively) alongside Italian (cf. Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2011b). Since these *koinai* are not typical of a specific centre, they play a particular role compared to the dynamics between the local dialects and Italian: in fact, they represent a mesolect for inter-group interactions and help preserve a form of diglossia which is useful in consolidating identification with the in-group.

27.3.5 'Scattered minorities'

As in the case of Occitan and Francoprovençal in Piedmont (Rivoira 2020), Germanic linguistic enclaves in the Alps (Dal Negro 2004) together with the Arbëresh (Bolognari et al. 1986), Griko/Greko (Romano 2021a), and Slavo-Molisan (Marra 2007) enclaves in southern Italy show a three-code dilalia, despite the fact that the languages of these communities are recognized as autonomous minority languages by Law 482/1999.[16] However, in these contexts, Italian is the only H code in the repertoire, while it competes with local Italo-Romance dialects and the non-Romance varieties for the intermediate and low domains; the latter both still show a certain primacy in the innermost domains (while losing terrain on the M macro-level), thanks to their strong *in-group* value (for general remarks on these 'scattered minorities', see Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2011b). The repertoire of these isolated language minorities can assume quite different and complex structures: we

have situations such as the Tabarchino community of the islands of San Pietro and Sant'Antioco in Sardinia (cf. Toso 2014), which displays a diglossic functional distribution between Italian and Genoese; the village of Issime in the Valle d'Aosta is at the opposite extreme in terms of complexity, involving five codes in a situation of diacrolectia combined with dilalia:[17] Italian (from standard to regional) covers all domains, while French is actually present only as a written formal code; Francoprovençal and Piedmontese are mesolects competing in the intermediate, inter-group domains, while Walser-German represents the in-group L code (cf. Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2003; Dal Negro 2004).

Roma and Sinti communities can be associated with linguistic enclaves and represent another form of 'scattered minorities', with the peculiarity that they are never a demographic majority in any municipality. These populations settled within the current borders of the Italian Republic in late medieval and modern times and are therefore autochthonous and mainly composed of Italian citizens (cf. Scala 2020a).[18] These communities exhibit diglossia with Italian as the exclusive H code and a local Italo-Romance variety (namely an Italian dialect with possible archaic features) as the L code, which in some cases also includes Romanī in family and in-group domains. The intermediate macro-level is normally occupied by Italian alone. In some communities, Italian has also spread into the lower domains, thus shifting the repertoire structure towards dilalia. Another peculiarity is that often the Italo-Romance dialect (in some communities characterized by extensive contact phenomena with the Romanī substratum, cf. Scala 2020a; Forlano 2021) plays the role of a *we-code* (cf. Scala 2015; for the concept of *we-code*, see Gumperz 1977).

To sum up, minority languages of isolated or diffused communities are strongly intertwined with the local Italo-Romance varieties with which they share the same functional space, in contrast to what happens for Friulian and Sardinian where the repertoire structure is polarized by the functional opposition between a (mostly) 'high' code (Italian) and a (mostly) 'low' or in-group code, viz. the local varieties of Friulian or Sardinian.

27.3.6 Diacrolectia with diglossia/dilalia

Language minorities in border areas tend to have quite complex repertoire structures that require the combination of different patterns in order to be described. In particular, where minorities protected by law are involved, the adopted language policies can embed a functional competition on the H macro-level (typical of diacrolectia) in a previous situation of diglossia or dilalia.

Rural and mountain areas of the Aosta valley show this kind of scenario, with the pervasive presence of Italian in all domains, French as a H code mostly limited to public administration and formal education, and Francoprovençal in the intermediate and low domains (cf. Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2003): dilalia between Italian and Francoprovençal is thus combined with diacrolectia between Italian and French, with this last code eligible to work as a sort of *Dachsprache* 'roof language' (cf. Kloss 1987) with a higher (perceived) affinity with the minority language. The presence of French, also an 'easier' target for language policies, might trigger a resolution of this complexity in favour of the standard languages, as already seems true for Aosta (cf. §27.3.9). Traditionally diacrolectic with dilalia is the Valdese community of Piedmont: Italian is present at all macro-levels, French is the language of the reformed cult, and the local Occitan dialect covers the lowest macro-levels (Pons and Rivoira 2018).

The situation of Slovene in Friuli-Venezia Giulia appears even more complex. The provinces of Gorizia and Trieste show a combination of diacrolectia with diglossia involving four different codes: standard Italian and Slovene share the role of the H code, thanks to the presence of Slovene public schools; both codes, or only Italian in areas where the Slovene community is outnumbered, serve also as mesolects, together with Venetan, while only Slovene dialects are commonly used in low domains and can represent the unmarked choice for in-group interaction.

Conversely, in the province of Udine, where the Slovene-language school system is absent, Italian dominates the H macro-level (even if a certain competence in standard Slovene, at least passive, is widespread among Slovene speakers). Italian, local Slovene, and

possibly a Friulian and/or Venetan variety serve as mesolects and partly also as basilects.

27.3.7 Bidialectalism: Tuscany, Rome, and other bidialectal settings

Bidialectalism is prototypically associated with Tuscany, notably because of the genealogy of the Italian standard itself and its relationship with the local varieties of Tuscan. Tuscany represented a traditionally bidialectal area long before the birth of the Italian Kingdom, thanks to the presence of a smooth continuum between slightly different local dialects and sociolects towards the low end of the pole and a variety of Italian nearly identical to the standard; but what further defines Tuscan bidialectalism is the possible joint penetration of lexical, phonetic, and syntactic features from low varieties within interactions in the H code and vice versa. A comparable situation can be found in the urban area of Rome, where the low code is, however, not a primary dialect of Latin but a local variety deriving from Tuscan that first replaced the original Roman dialect during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (cf. Trifone 1992:28–45): here too we can find a continuum of varieties from which speakers can select and combine according to the situation. Moreover, it is possible that Italo-Romance varieties in Umbria and the central areas of the Marche and Lazio (defined as *italiano centrale* 'central Italian' by Pellegrini 1977), which are traditionally already quite close to Tuscan dialects, have merged during the last century due to the ever-increasing pressure of Italian as the institutional and educational language. This has given rise to a new bidialectal area, where low varieties have presumably become fully mutually intelligible and constitute a new basilect and a lexical source for the acrolect. Here we can see how this type of repertoire is quite different from monolingualism, since in bidialectalism the norms for communicative appropriateness concern both poles of the diasystem: the H pole associated with the standard variety and the L pole associated with the traditional, in-group variety, including what we called 'grandmother's language'.

27.3.8 Areas shifting from dilalia to monolingualism

In the urban and industrialized areas of north-western Italy, in particular around Milan, Varese, Como, Pavia, Turin, Genoa, the urbanized line along the Via Emilia from Parma to the Adriatic coast via Bologna, Italian monolingualism is now the norm. Local dialects are seen as reminiscent of the past, a vestige of traditional and rural culture, known by a minority of the population and spoken by few. The strong immigration, mainly from southern Italy in the second half of the twentieth century and later from northern Africa, the Balkans, and the Far East since the end of the twentieth century, also brought a number of non-native varieties used as basilects in individual diglossic or dilalic repertoires.

In these areas, Italian is thus the only unmarked code in both written and oral form in all situations and for all social classes. The use of dialect, where it still exists, is socially stigmatized and marked as the code of the elderly rather than the uncultured. The only norm of reference for language use is the standard variety, although it embeds local features. For instance, in the Milan area the monolingual Italian speaker considers their phonetic, morphosyntactic, and lexical variants to be the correct, right, and beautiful Italian standard.[19] This form of monolingualism is thus the outcome of the recent loss of dilalia, which is likely to cause a sort of creolization, namely, a tendency towards regularization of morphosyntactic structures, and of pidginization (Berruto 1991; Holm 2004) with a lexical impoverishment in the language of the less educated, who can no longer access the lexicon and structures of local dialects (Kerswill and Trudgill 2005:200; Iannàccaro 2023).

27.3.9 Diacrolectia: minority languages and complex repertoires in Aosta, South Tyrol, and Venezia Giulia

Single diacrolectic communities can be found in border areas of the Italian territory. One of these is the German-speaking community of South Tyrol, which represents a quite complex case: alongside the diglossic repertoire in the rural areas and small towns described in §27.3.3, German L1 speakers in the main urban centres (such as Bolzano, Bressanone, Merano, and Brunico) show a form of diacrolectia due to the competition between German and Italian on the H pole in written and institutional uses, as well as the parallel use, adjusted according to the addressee, of Italian and a German mesolect (or *Umgangssprache* 'colloquial language') that represents the centrepiece of the dialect-standard continuum (cf. Lanthaler 1997). Yet the Italian-speaking group in the same area might represent an even clearer case of diacrolectia: apart from Bassa Atesina, which represents an even more peculiar subset of the complex situation in South Tyrol (cf. Dal Negro and Tartarotti 2019), Italian L1 speakers are substantially monolingual, having only residual traces of dialect or no dialect at all. Consequently, standard Italian covers all domains, representing the exclusive code at the low and intermediate macro-levels but competing with standard German, learned mostly as a foreign language in school and (almost) never used in everyday communication, at the H macro-level.

Diacrolectic communities can also be found in the city of Aosta and in the provinces of Gorizia and Trieste: in Aosta, diacrolectia involves the use of Italian by small élites as the exclusive L code and the functional competition of Italian and French as H codes (cf. Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2003); Slovene L1 speaking groups in Gorizia and Trieste, on the other hand, have both Italian and Slovene at the H macro-level and local varieties of Slovene in a dilalic relation with the respective standard as well as the Venetan *koiné* as M and L codes.

Returning to South Tyrol, Val Badia and Val Gardena surely represent a relevant case of diacrolectia diffused across a larger area: here three different languages have to share the functional space of the H pole of the diasystem, Italian, German, and Ladin, while the low macro-level is the exclusive domain of the local Ladin varieties (acknowledged as varieties of the written standard used in the high domains); an Austro-Bavarian dialect further extends this already composite repertoire, serving as a mesolect for informal and/or spoken interactions outside the valley.

27.3.10 Deuterolectia and repertoire structures for migrant communities

The recent migratory flows towards Italy from other parts of the world have spread a series of particular configurations, albeit quite unstable, in the individual and collective repertoires of migrant populations. The possible configurations can vary deeply according to the starting repertoire, the individual conditions of literacy, as well as the prestige of the language(s) of origin (cf. Iannàccaro, Gobbo, and Dell'Aquila 2018). In some cases, the repertoires of migrant communities show some similarity with those of minority languages, with a tendentially diglossic distribution of the L1 as the L code and Italian as the H code. However, the distinctive feature of these speakers is often the abrupt adoption of Italian as the exclusive mesolect for interaction with the host community. For migrant groups with an *Ausbausprache* among their home languages, another concurring condition is broad access to media and formal texts in that language (or in the heritage language for the second generation); this aspect together with the maintenance of the same language in in-group interactions represents the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for the emergence of deuterolectia.

Deuterolectia may involve groups of migrants from the same monolingual or bidialectal region living in urban areas with diffused social monolingualism. For these, Italian and the standard language of origin share the high and low domains, while Italian is exclusive in the intermediate macro-level (that of the broad community and daily/informal interaction outside of the inner circle of family and friends). In some cases, the low pole is occupied only by the language of origin, thus showing a peculiar and quite unstable functional distribution with Italian. This last configuration is what we call 'false' deuterolectia. For those migrants who live in diglossic areas, such as the rural Veneto, local dialects are added as a third code for the intermediate domains, without however affecting the deuterolectic structure that sees Italian and L1 in functional competition as both H and L codes (for in-depth discussion of this subject, cf. Chini 2004; Arcodia 2014; D'Agostino 2021).

Originally diglossic populations, such as Arabic speakers, tend to develop a (rather unstable) three-code diacrolectic situation in which Italian and classical Arabic share the high pole, Italian is the exclusive code for the intermediate macro-level, and the Arabic dialect is the low code. The situation is more complex when the low macro-level is also occupied by Italian. These configurations in the repertoire can characterize communities of Arabic migrants even in diglossic areas in Italy: probably due to issues of intercommunity relations mainly influenced by religions and prejudices, the Arabic-speaking migrants do not generally learn the local Italian dialect.

Finally, the mainstream idea, spread by the press and political debate, of a new multilingualism produced by migration in a previously monolingual Italy cannot be further from truth, as we have tried to show through our discussion of the different types of multilingual repertoires in the country. As a matter of fact, probably after a peak of monolingualism between the 1970s and 1990s, present-day Italy is returning to multilingualism, although in different forms and facets. This new multilingualism appears different from the previous iteration (and is therefore unconsciously perceived as new) because deuterolectia is added to the classic diglossic/dilalic repertoire; and, as discussed above, deuterolectia includes in its configuration codes that are not (yet) indigenous to the Italian territory and that, unlike dialects, are considered, at least in their standard varieties, as fully autonomous 'languages'.

27.3.11 Italian-speaking areas outside Italy

Italian is also the official and school language of San Marino, Switzerland, and the Italian minorities in Slovenia and Croatia. San Marino is dilalic, as are the surrounding provinces of Romagna, with which it shares the local Italo-Romance dialect. The Swiss cantons of Ticino and Grisons have long been considered purely diglossic (Bianconi 1980), but the evolution of the last decades has led to a generalized situation of dilalia, restricting the exclusive use of the Italo-Romance dialect at the L pole to the most rural Alpine villages (Petralli 1990). A unique exception is the Val Bregaglia in the Canton of Grigioni/Grischun/Graubünden/Grisons, where a situation of

diacrolectia prevails, with five codes sharing the communicative space: Italian is the official language of the several villages of the municipality and one of the three official languages of the canton; it also plays a historically important role in the Protestant Church, to which the majority of the population belongs; Swiss German dialects are fundamental for communication with neighbouring Swiss villages and for higher education, and Italian is used for relations with the Italian population across the international border; a sort of well-defined Lombard *koiné* shares the M pole with these two codes. The local Romance variety, which can be classified as a transitional dialect between Lombard and Raeto-Romance, is the (almost) exclusive L code. Standard German is required for higher education and for written communication with the rest of the canton and the German-speaking parts of Switzerland. Romansh, on the other hand, is not normally actively used (Bianconi 1998).

The Italian minority in Slovenia and Croatia is characterized by diacrolectia with diglossia, where three or four codes are used: Italian and Slovene or, respectively, Croatian share the H macro level; in fact, Italian is co-official with Slovene in some Slovenian municipalities, as it is with Croatian in Istria, and is widely used in two autonomous Italian language school systems. Slovene or Croatian and their local varieties function as mesolects, while the local Venetan dialect is the in-group code (Filipi 1989).

27.4 Concluding remarks

Taking apart the individual peculiar situations of some linguistic minorities, which in fact represent only a small part of the population, the complex situation of contemporary Italian multilingualism is often subject to a double simplification. Adopting an 'emic' approach (cf. Pike 1967), people who share the more diffused repertoire structures in the Italian diasystem (cf. §§27.3.2–3) consider themselves monolingual and part of a uniform Italian speech community: since dialect is not considered a language, it becomes perforce a local (and diaphasically lower) variety of the language itself; the use of different varieties according to different

contexts does not affect this identification as monolingual. From an 'etic' point of view, external observers too (even linguists, when they fail to pay due attention to dialectological aspects) sometimes barely acknowledge the forms of multilingualism *lato sensu* described above, when there is only one H code labelled as 'language' and local varieties limited to lower domains, and to which this status as 'languages' is precluded (often for political or ideological reasons). Nor would it be correct to claim that in Italy there are as many speech communities as dialects: in many of the Italian contexts, speakers deem themselves to speak 'Italian' in one of its forms, including dialects, even though the linguistic distance between *dialetti* and standard can often be wider than that between Italian and other Romance languages. That is to say that 'etic' (objective) reality does not predict the perception of belonging to a particular speech community, nor can it successfully define it.

This apparent contradiction between what speakers recognize as their mother tongue and the code they actually speak with their mother, namely the code of primary socialization, is a rationale for the definition of 'language', or, in more appropriate terms, of speech community (Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2000). Unlike other terms used in sociolinguistics, the concept of mother tongue represents in fact a notion that every speaker—at least in Europe—instinctively understands; the meaning and motivation of what speakers might consider their mother tongue, what determines such an identification among the different varieties on the territory, and ultimately the kind of descriptive adequacy or potential adherence to the external observation of the 'objective reality' through an 'etic' approach, are in fact particularly interesting and, in our view, enlightening aspects for the study of multilingualism concerning a 'language' (in our case, Italian) and other linguistic entities referred to as 'dialects' (Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2000). There is thus a difference between the idea of 'mother tongue' and language actually spoken (with the mother); hence, it does not seem appropriate either to simply merge these two conceptual objects or to match the speech community with the set of speakers of a given language: such an operation might represent, in the best scenario, an advanced interpretation of the data that cannot be undertaken without a prior discussion of the methodological or empirical motivations behind it. The need to keep this distinction between the two concepts, however,

does not deny or question their close relationship. On the contrary, it is our intention to underline here precisely the pattern of relations between the (emic) mother tongue and the (etic) codes of (primary) socialization (Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila 2000). Our discussion then aligns with Labov's (1968) considerations on the concept of speech community: 'the speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms; these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behaviour, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant in respect to particular levels of usage' (Labov 1968:250f.). As a result of this analysis of the complex sociolinguistic situation of Italy, we can conclude that the whole complex diasystem, apart from clearly distinct and self-aware language minorities and migrant communities, involves a single speech community, even if it is composite, multi-faceted, and characterized by fuzzy borders. Italian is therefore, as already observed by Berruto (1995), a *lingua cum dialectis*, with its intrinsic multilingualism.

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[1] This chapter was conceived and designed by Gabriele Iannàccaro and Vittorio Dell'Aquila. Simone Ciccolone contributed to the writing and editing of the final version together with Vittorio Dell'Aquila. The chapter is the result of long-term discussions and joint work between the authors, although at different times; however, for academic purposes, Ciccolone is responsible for §§27.2.1, 27.3.2–4, and 27.3.9, and Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila are responsible for all other sections. We wish to thank Johannes Mücke for proofreading and especially for his comments and valuable suggestions on a previous version of the text.

[2] On the term *dialetto*, cf. Alinei (1981). It is interesting to note the recurrence of the meaning '[language of the] people', in Italy and in the German-speaking area, in the etymology of glossonyms, e.g., It. *volgare* 'vernacular' (< Lat. UULGUS '(common) people') or Ger. *Deutsch* (< proto-Germanic *þeudō 'people'). The common use of *dialect* in reference to a lower variety of the national language develops together with (or through) the emergence of nation-states.

[3] On the concept of 'complexity' in sociolinguistics, cf. Kraus et al. (2021).

[4] This need emerged more evidently in relation to specific situations such as the recognition of 'regional' languages in Spain and the independence of the former Soviet republics (Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2004).

[5] This terminological distinction is in fact absent or unclear in the scholarly literature in some other languages, including Italian.

[6] Here the corresponding Italian term *dominio*, which can also be translated as 'dominion', is all the more appropriate.

[7] For further developments of this concept, see also Ferguson (1991).

[8] Diacrolectia should not be confused with biliteracy, on which cf. Trond Eiksund (2018).

[9] This is the situation in parts of France or certain segments of the population in the United States but also today common in urban Italy. Cf. §27.3.8.

[10] We will not deal here with contact phenomena (for which see Cerruti and Regis 2020), nor will we further explore the discussion of an incipient crisis of the grammatical system of the dialects (for which we refer again to Dal Negro and Vietti 2011).

[11] The number is the result of the combinations of 2^3 patterns with 2 repetitions (cf. Grimaldi 2004:27).

[12] The matrix for diglossia covers three possible combinations (with either L_X, L_Y, or both on the M macro-level), while dilalia and diacrolectia cover two each.

[13] In two of these combinations, one of the codes is present only at the intermediate macro-level, a situation that we deem particularly unstable. The last two appear as deuterolectia repertoires shifting towards a sort of diglossia. Our intent here, however, is not to add new categories based on these abstract configurations, but, rather, to further discuss the well-known categories for repertoire structures through abstract generalizations of their founding principles, i.e., functional distribution and competition.

[14] By *lingua franca* we do not mean here the Romance variety used by merchants in the late Middle Ages and early modern age for commercial use in the Mediterranean area, but, rather, a code that is not used as the first language of the different speakers but represents a sort of compromise in communications between distinct communities.

[15] On the lack of acknowledgement of Piedmontese in Law 482/1999, cf. Dal Negro (2000); Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro (2004); Iannàccaro (2010).

[16] The use of 'autonomous' here, as in some other passages in this section, recalls the concept of 'autonomy' (of the standard variety, or *Dachsprache* 'roof language') vs 'heteronomy' (of substandard varieties under a *Dachsprache*) as detailed in Ammon (1987).

[17] Cf. §27.3.6 for further cases of diacrolectia combined with diglossia or dilalia.

[18] For what concerns the lack of institutional recognition of Romanī, cf. Dal Negro (2000) and, more recently, Di Paolo (2016).

[19] Cf. Preston (1989) for aesthetic values applied to languages.

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Chapter 28

Diamesic variation and registers

Anna-Maria De Cesare

28.1 Introduction

Like other languages—such as English, French, Spanish, and German—Italian is not a monolithic entity.[1] It should be understood as the sum of different language varieties, each one characterized by a set of typifying features, determined by language-external parameters. Besides standard Italian (It. *italiano standard*), corresponding to the language variety codified in descriptive grammars (see, e.g., Serianni 1988; 2000) and language textbooks, mention should be made of the three varieties included in the linguistic repertoire of every native speaker of Italian (Berruto 2012c:24, 26): neo-standard Italian (It. *italiano neo-standard*), spoken colloquial Italian (It. *italiano parlato colloquiale*), and 'e-taliano'.[2]

As far as language-external parameters are concerned, what counts most in the Italian sociolinguistic landscape is the geographic origin of the speaker. The place where the speaker was born, grew up, lives, etc. determines how they (involuntarily) choose the linguistic features employed, especially in spoken face-to-face communication (for details on the *diatopic* dimension of language variation, see Chapters 38–41). A second important group of parameters determining language variation is related to the social status, gender, and age of the discourse participants (this dimension of language variation, referred to as *diastratic*, is described in Chapter 29).[3]

The focus of the present chapter lies on the diamesic variation of Italian, which is traditionally viewed as depending on the *medium* of communication (as suggested by the etymology of the term: Gr. *diá* 'through' and *mesos* 'medium'), i.e., the means through which the

message is produced and transmitted. Reflecting on how the medium used in communicating determines the presence of specific linguistic features is not a trivial task and is somewhat artificial. Besides the *medium*, other important parameters simultaneously play a role in shaping the linguistic, textual, and pragmatic form of messages, most of which are related to the communicative situation itself. In this chapter, we therefore also consider another dimension with which the diamesic one intersects, viz. the dimension of language variation called diaphasia (*diá* 'through' and *phēmí* 'to say').

The chapter is organized as follows: §28.2 offers some insights into diaphasic variation in present-day Italian as well as in relation to situationally determined language varieties, viz. Italian registers; §28.3 presents a general account of the diamesic variation of Italian, while §28.4 provides a detailed description of four diamesic varieties (or realizations) of Italian. In the conclusions, we reflect on new sociolinguistic issues deriving on the one hand from the availability of complex multimodal communication formats and on the other from recent technological developments in the field of natural language processing and artificial intelligence, namely, the possibility of generating texts through large language models.

28.2 Diaphasic variation and registers

28.2.1 General definition and theoretical issues

Registers are situationally defined language varieties, depending on the communicative setting in which speaker/writer and hearer/reader interact.[4] They belong to the diaphasic dimension of language variation, which is one of the fundamental dimensions identified in the continental European linguistics tradition. The proposal to identify a diaphasic dimension goes back to the 1960s

and can be attributed, among others, to Eugenio Coseriu (see Coseriu 1973). According to Berruto:

> *Diaphasic variation* manifests itself through different communicative situations and consists of the different ways in which linguistic messages are realized in relation to the properties of the specific context present in the situation; it is therefore also called *situational variation*. (Berruto 2010a:1537)

One of the parameters considered most often is the degree of formality of the situation. Basically, two language varieties are identified, which correspond to the extreme poles of a continuum: formal and informal Italian. However, more specific registers have been proposed as well. Dardano (2005:193), for instance, distinguishes eight registers (or *stili del discorso* 'discursive styles'), arranged along a plane going from extremely formal to extremely informal and called, respectively, *aulico* 'refined' (or *ricercato* 'studied, deliberate'); *colto* 'cultivated'; *formale* 'formal' (or *ufficiale* 'official'); *medio* 'medium'; *colloquiale* 'colloquial'; *informale* 'informal'; *popolare*, to be understood as 'typical of the lowest social demographic group', and *familiare* 'familiar'.

28.2.2 Linguistic features

In Italian, diaphasic variation can be detected at all linguistic levels: from pronunciation and word choice to syntax and pragmatics. In spoken communication, for instance, an important difference between formal and informal Italian is captured by the musically inspired terms *lento speech* and *allegro speech* (Ger. *Lento-* and *Allegrosprechweise*; see Dressler 1972). In *lento speech*, associated with formal modes of communication, the message is articulated clearly, and often also slowly. By contrast, *allegro speech*, more typical of informal communicative exchanges, is characterized by the shortening of words. More specifically, *allegro forms* arise through sound fusion and elision of phones and syllables, as shown by the phonetic transcription in (1):

(1) dalle pellicole [dalepe'likɔ] (Voghera 2010:810)
from.the films
'from the films'

Abundance of allegro forms is characteristic of the register called *italiano informale trascurato* 'casual informal Italian', illustrated in the following excerpt, where we find two occurrences of the truncated form *han* 'they have' in *han voluto* 'they have wanted' instead of *hanno voluto*:

(2) cioè han voluto cambiare tutta la società . . . han voluto . . . vivere in un modo semplice (Berruto 2012c:231)

'that is, they wanted to change all of society [. . .] they wanted to [. . .] live in a simple way'

Register variation is also common at the lexical level. In Italian, there are many synonyms varying exclusively from a diaphasic point of view, as documented in Moss and Motta (2000). In this specialized lexicographic resource, each lexical item is associated with one of four register levels (sometimes involving a combination of them): formal, neutral, informal/colloquial, and vulgar. Table 28.1 provides selected examples showing diaphasic variation in different word classes: the verb (*morire* 'to die'), the noun (*sfortuna* 'bad luck'), and the adjective-adverb (*molto* 'a lot').

Table 28.1 Diaphasically marked synonyms

formal	neutral	informal/colloquial	very informal
decedere 'die, decease' *perire* 'die, perish' *spegnersi* 'pass away, die'	*morire* 'to die'	*crepare* 'die, peg out, kick the bucket' *tirare le cuoia* 'kick the bucket, snuff it'	
sventura 'misfortune'	*sfortuna* '(piece of) bad luck, misfortune'	*scalogna* 'bad luck, misfortune'	*sfiga* 'bad luck'
grandemente 'greatly, very much'	*molto* 'a lot (of), much, many, a large amount/number (of)'	*un sacco di* 'a load of, loads of, piles of, heaps of'	*un casino di* 'a bloody lot/load of, a hell of a lot of'

Source: Moss and Motta 2000

Register variation can also concern other lexical aspects, as illustrated by the following invented sentences representing formal and informal Italian, respectively (the example is taken from Dardano 2005:193):

(3) Eseguo questo lavoro durante tutti i giorni della settimana.
'I perform this work every day of the week.'

(4) Faccio 'sto lavoro tutti i santi giorni della settimana.
'I do this work every blessed day of the week.'

Examples (3) and (4) highlight that Italian registers can differ in the nature of the semantic content codified by the words used: the verb *eseguo* 'I perform' is lexically more specific, and therefore also semantically richer, than the generic verb *faccio* 'I do'. Furthermore, formal and informal Italian show a different degree of lexical explicitness—the preposition *durante* 'during' is only present in (3)—and expressiveness: the purely descriptive NP *tutti i giorni* 'every day' (lit. 'all the days') in (3) contrasts with the expressive form *tutti i santi giorni* 'every damned day' (lit. 'all the holy days') in (4), where the meaning of the noun *giorni* 'days' is intensified by the adjective *santi* literally 'blessed' but probably best rendered by English 'blessed'. Finally, a difference in lexical explicitness, related to word phonematic realization, can also be observed in the demonstratives: the lento form *questo* 'this' (3) contrasts with the allegro form *'sto* 'this' (4).

Besides varying in prosody and word choice, Italian also shows diaphasic variation at the syntactic, textual, and pragmatic levels. Important differences between formal and informal Italian can be illustrated in examples (5) and (6), in which an employee communicates being ill via e-mail, respectively, to their boss and to a close colleague (example from Lubello and Nobili 2018:70). In (5) the message is conceived as diaphasically formal, but as informal in (6).

(5) Preg.mo Direttore,
con la presente la informo che a causa malattia domani non potrò recarmi in ufficio e dovrò restare a casa per tre giorni, come prescrittomi dal medico. Pertanto chiederò la cortesia al collega * di poter completare la pratica che ho lasciato ieri in sospeso sulla mia scrivania.
Le porgo i miei saluti più cordiali,
xx

'Most esteemed Director,
I hereby inform you that due to illness tomorrow I will not be able to make my way to the office and will have to stay at home for three days, as prescribed to me by my doctor. I will therefore ask my colleague * to be so kind as to complete the paperwork that I left pending on my desk yesterday.
I offer my kindest regards.
xx'

(6) Caro Mario, sono ammalato e ho un certificato medico per restarmene a casa fino a dopodomani. Puoi vedere tu di chiudere la pratica che ieri non sono riuscito a finire? La trovi sul mio tavolo. Avverto subito il capo. Grazie mille, Ciao
xx

'Dear Mario, I am sick and have a sick note to stay home until the day after tomorrow. Can you take care of the file that I didn't manage to finish yesterday? You can find it on my desk. I'll let the boss know right away. Thanks a lot, Bye
xx'

From a syntactic point of view, formal and informal Italian differ in terms of the number and complexity of the sentences used. The body of the formal e-mail only includes two sentences, while the informal one is written with four sentences. On the other hand, the sentences of the formal e-mail include several subordinate clauses (showing more than one degree of subordination: *Pertanto chiederò la cortesia al collega * di poter completare la pratica che ho lasciato ieri in sospeso sulla mia scrivania* 'I will therefore ask my colleague * to be so kind as to complete the paperwork that I left pending on my desk yesterday'), while the informal version of the e-mail presents short, juxtaposed sentences (*La trovi sul mio tavolo. Avverto subito il capo* 'You can find it on my desk. I'll let the boss know right away') as well as a sentence constructed with two coordinated clauses (*sono ammalato e ho un certificato medico* 'I am sick and have a sick note').

In terms of pragmatic features, examples (5) and (6) highlight important differences especially in relation to the greeting

conventions associated with formal and informal written Italian. The formal e-mail is opened by the courteous *Preg.mo* (the abbreviation of *pregiatissimo*), literally 'most prized', while the informal e-mail starts with the more widespread address form *Caro* 'Dear'. As for the closing greeting forms, the formal e-mail ends with the somewhat bureaucratic *Le porgo i miei saluti più cordiali* 'I offer my kindest regards', while the informal one with the very common *Ciao* (for details of Italian *salutemi* 'salutation formulae' and the complex system regulating their use, see Canobbio 2010; De Blasi 2018; see also §11.8).

Mastering the linguistic features appropriate in formal communicative settings (informal ones are better known) is a sign of language proficiency, not only for learners of Italian as L2. The following e-mail genuinely sent by a student to a female university professor illustrates that even Italian native speakers can struggle in finding the most appropriate expressions to use in a formal message:

(7) Salve prof! Perdono perdono perdono per la relazione in ritardo [...]. Distinti saluti
(Canobbio 2010:1269)

'Hi prof! So, so, so, sorry for the late assignment [...]. Best regards'

Besides the diaphasically appropriate formal greeting closing the message (*Distinti saluti* 'Best regards'), the e-mail includes several informal features, starting with the opening salutation (*Salve* 'Hello/Hi'), followed by the abbreviated address form *prof* (standing for the title *professoressa*, which it is standard to abbreviate as *Prof.ssa*). The message also contains a very expressive form of apology, phrased by means of a repetition (*perdono perdono perdono* lit. 'forgiveness forgiveness forgiveness'). All in all, the presence of informal features in a formal communicative setting, even in the case of an e-mail, results in a diaphasically infelicitous message. Phenomena such as those illustrated in (7) are referred to as a 'fall of style' (It. *caduta di stile*) or 'stylistic deviation' (It. *scarto stilistico*).

28.3 Diamesic variation

28.3.1 General definition and theoretical issues

28.3.1.1 Basic understanding of medial language variation

As already mentioned, the form of the messages exchanged in verbal interactions is sensitive to different extralinguistic factors, including the medium (It. *mezzo*) used to communicate. Recognition of this led to a new proposal in the field of Italian linguistics: Mioni (1983) suggested anchoring medium-related language variation to an independent dimension, which he called *diamesia*.[5] Within the diamesic dimension of language variation, a basic distinction is made between two communication media, where *medium* is defined as the physical means through which the message is produced and possibly also transmitted. The distinction concerns, on the one hand, the phonic (or acoustic) and, on the other hand, the graphic (or visual) means of communication. At the linguistic level, these two communication media correlate with the two core diamesic realizations: spoken and written Italian, as shown in Table 28.2.

Table 28.2 Basic medial forms of communication and core linguistic realization

medium	diamesic realization
phonic-acoustic	oral language
graphic-visual	written language

This proposal was adopted by Berruto (1987a) to describe the architecture of Italian and served, more specifically, to highlight the characteristics of the language variety that he labelled *italiano neo-standard* 'neo-standard Italian' (Berruto 1987a; see §28.4.3).

28.3.1.2 Spoken and written Italian: historical development of the core diamesic realizations

Spoken and written Italian can be understood as the core diamesic language realizations, presenting profound semiotic and linguistic differences (described, inter alia, in De Mauro 1971; Koch 1988; Voghera 2010; see §28.4). In what follows, we sketch the historical development of these two diamesic realizations, comparing Italian to other European languages.

Historically, the Italian peninsula arrived earlier than other European areas at a (more or less) unified written language. This is testified by the national circulation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and Petrarch's *Canzoniere* as early as the fourteenth century (Rossi 2010b:1540), as well as by the subsequent codification of a standard literary language in the first vernacular grammars published in the sixteenth century. In this regard, Book III of Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* (Bembo 1525) played an important role in promoting Tuscan as the standard, literary written Italian. After the codification of the grammatical norm of standard written Italian came the codification of its lexicon in the *Vocabolario della Crusca* (1612). This innovative lexicographic project became a model for the lexical codification of other European languages, in particular French (the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* dates from 1694) and Spanish (the first edition of the dictionary compiled by the *Real Academia Española*, entitled *Diccionario de Autoridades*, came out between 1726 and 1739).

In the case of spoken Italian, the situation is the diametrical opposite. In comparison with other European countries, it was Italy that arrived rather late at a unified national spoken language. For centuries, Italian had been spoken by a small portion of the population (elites in the courts of Europe, the clergy, etc.). At the time of Italy's political unification (1861), most speakers communicated in dialect. According to different sources, only 2.5 per cent (De Mauro 1963) or 10 per cent (Castellani 1982b) of Italians were able to master standard Italian. In De Mauro's view (1993:353), a unified *italiano parlato* 'spoken Italian' did not really exist before the 1950s. Up to that time, Italian had been a second language for most of the Italian population, a language that was frequently only

understood but not used actively in everyday life. An important role in the national spread of standard Italian was played by the mass media: radio, cinema, but mostly television. From the 1950s onwards, Italian began to be used more frequently in informal situations and, in particular, in the family and among friends. Table 28.3 documents the linguistic shift that took place in the period between 1955 and 1995.

Table 28.3 Active competence of spoken Italian (De Mauro 1963 [1999]; from Lorenzetti 2002:22)

	1955	1988	1995
dialect	66%	14%	6,9%
Italian and dialect	24%	48%	48.7%
Italian	10%	38%	44.4%

According to the last *Istituto Nazionale di Statistica* (National Institute of Statistics) poll documenting language use in the home, in 2015 an estimated 45.9 per cent of the population (aged six and older) spoke predominantly in Italian, 32.2 per cent in both Italian and dialect, and only 14 per cent predominantly in dialect (ISTAT 2017).

Similar observations can be made in respect of the national use of a unified form of written Italian. It was not until the 1970s that a new form of standard written language—called inter alia *italiano neo-standard* 'neo-standard Italian' (Berruto 1987a), *italiano comune* 'common Italian' (Serianni 1988), or *italiano dell'uso medio* 'Italian of average usage' (Sabatini 1985)—started to be employed nationwide and on a daily basis. Knowledge of this variety, however, was mostly passive until the end of the second millennium. As reported by Antonelli (2011:40), a survey conducted in November 2000 showed that post-school-aged Italians used written Italian on a daily basis only in two contexts: to compile a shopping list and to write appointments in their diary. Importantly, though, among 18–

29-year-olds, 8 per cent declared that they wrote personal letters every day or almost every day, 9 per cent e-mails, 38 per cent messages with their mobile phones. The shift from writing traditional letters (or *epistola* 'epistle') to what was renamed *e-pistola* 'e-pistol' (viz., digital forms of epistolary exchanges; see Schwarze 2003) happened in the third millennium and followed from the spread of mobile phones.

It is thus only in the third millennium (roughly starting in the 2010s) that Italian truly started to be actively used on a daily basis by a large part of the population in a written form as well. The variety used is an informal realization of Italian called *e-taliano* (see §28.4.4). In fact, according to Antonelli (2011), when it comes to considering the active use of written Italian on a national scale, we can speak of a 'second revolution':

> After conquering spoken use (at the expense of the dialect), the national language finally conquered mass written use as well (at the expense of non-use). In the first case, the credit is largely due to television; in the second, it is entirely due to telecommunications. [. . .] thanks to the so-called 'new media', a great many people who until twenty years ago would not have written a line today produce and consume an impressive amount [. . .] of typed texts every day. (translated from Antonelli 2011:41)

28.3.2 Beyond the written-spoken dichotomy

28.3.2.1 Hybrid modes of medial communication and new theoretical proposals

Scholars working on Italian recognized as early as the 1970s the need to overcome the idea that there are only two diamesic varieties, defined on the basis of the medium of communication (graphic-visual vs phonic-acoustic). Nencioni pointed to the 'reductive opposition' between spoken and written Italian (Nencioni 1976:126) and more importantly highlighted the existence of 'intermediate forms' between what he called the 'polar forms' (1976:127). Thereafter, written and spoken Italian came to be conceived as the two prototypical medial language realizations, occupying the far ends of a *continuum* where other diamesic language realizations can be

identified. These other language realizations are hybrid modes of medial communication.[6]

According to Nencioni, beside prototypical spoken Italian, which he labelled *parlato-parlato* 'spoken-spoken', two other diamesic realizations should be considered, which he called *parlato-scritto* 'spoken-written' and *parlato-recitato* 'spoken-recited', respectively. The latter is a subtype of the former and is represented, for example, by dialogues found in plays or in films (§28.4.2). Following Nencioni's proposal, prototypical written Italian later came to be called *scritto-scritto* 'written-written' (Lavinio 1986).

A few years later, considering the specific characteristics of mass media communication, Sabatini proposed the category *italiano trasmesso* 'transmitted Italian', which he considered to be 'a kind of cross between the channel [in our terms: medium] of spoken speech and the channel of writing' (Sabatini 1982:74). All the language realizations conveyed by traditional mass media fall into the category *trasmesso*: radio, cinema, and television (see Rossi 2023:16f.). Today, as a consequence of the existence of new forms of mass media, the category *italiano trasmesso* has been extended to include new hybrid modes of communication. These new medial forms are labelled in different ways in the literature (note that these labels do not necessarily cover the same forms of verbal exchanges), among others *computer-mediated-communication* (Berruto 2012c:55f.), *e-taliano* (Antonelli 2014), and *technically mediated communication* (Prada 2015). These labels highlight the instrument used in producing and transmitting the message: the computer or, more generally, the use of electronic devices (phone, tablet, etc.).

Given the existence of hybrid modes of medial communication, new theoretical proposals have been made to overcome characterizations of diamesia in binary (written-spoken) or ternary (written-spoken-transmitted) terms. One of the most successful proposals, adopted in Koch (1988) and later in Berruto (2012c:56), is presented in Koch and Oesterreicher (1985) (also Koch and Oesterreicher 2007). In this proposal (inspired by Söll 1980), two distinct sets of diamesic parameters are distinguished and combined. Besides the 'medium' proper (phonic vs graphic, to be understood as discrete, binary categories), they identify a complex, multi-layered parameter called 'conception' (Ger. *Konzeption*). The conception of a message results from the interplay between various extra-linguistic

conditions, including the nature of the interaction (public vs private), the social relationship between the participants involved in the communicative situation, their spatio-temporal co-presence, and the dialogic/monologic character of the exchange. These conditions lead to a 'continuum of conceptual possibilities with numerous gradations' (Koch and Oesterreicher 1985:17), where the two extreme poles are occupied by what they call 'oral' (also referred to as 'communicative immediacy') and 'written' (i.e., 'communicative distance'). In this model, the role played by the medium of communication in determining language variation is thus greatly rescaled, as other linguistic and extralinguistic features contribute to defining the gradual notions of 'spoken' (= informal) and 'written' (= formal).

One of the advantages of Koch and Oesterreicher's model is that it allows us to identify more clearly the medial space occupied by the main diamesic realizations of Italian, including the hybrid medial forms of communication, as shown in Figure 28.1 (adapted from Koch and Oesterreicher 1985:18;[7] see further §28.4).

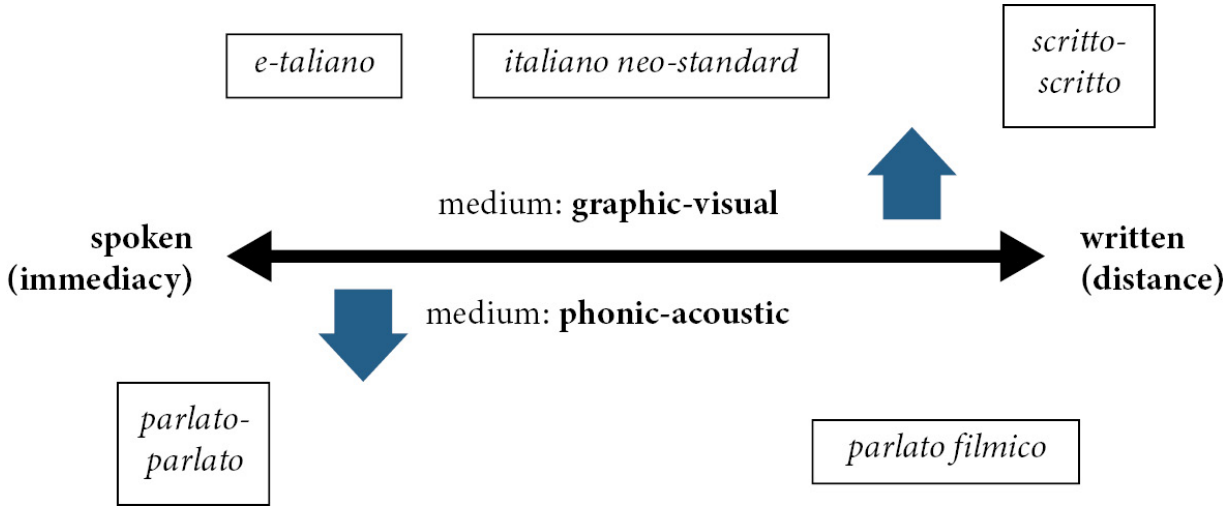


Figure 28.1 Medial language variation and examples of Italian varieties/realizations.

In its prototypical realization, the language variety referred to as *scritto-scritto* corresponds to traditional written communication, i.e., to standard Italian. In respect to this variety, placed in the top part of Figure 28.1 (as it is realized in a graphic-visual medium) and at the right pole of the continuum (as it is conceptually 'written-

formal'), neo-standard Italian occupies an intermediate position on the continuum 'spoken-written' because it is receptive of features that are conceptually 'spoken', while the *e-taliano* (i.e., computer-mediated-communication) occurs at the left pole of the continuum. This medial variety is thus conceptually closer to the *parlato-parlato*, corresponding to spontaneous face-to-face conversation, than to the *scritto-scritto*. Figure 28.1 also shows the medial space occupied by dialogue films: up to roughly the year 2000, hence for the most part of its existence, the *parlato filmico* 'spoken Italian used in cinema' has been conceptually closer to prototypical written Italian than to prototypical spoken Italian, as it includes many features associated with the 'written' mode of communication.

Koch and Oesterreicher's model also has the advantage over other proposals of separating out different diamesic language realizations falling into the category labelled *italiano trasmesso* (Sabatini 1982). As just mentioned, the medial space occupied by the *italiano filmico* and the *e-taliano* is different. The former occurs in the 'phonic-written' medial-conceptional space, while the latter is found in the 'graphic-spoken' medial-conceptional one. Last but not least, Koch and Oesterreicher's model allows us to describe the diachronic medial-conceptional shift of a language variety (or realization): today's *italiano filmico* has moved away from the 'written' pole to come closer to (if not overlap with) the *italiano parlato-parlato* (Rossi 2023:115–120; Nuzzo, Santoro, and Vedder 2022).

28.3.2.2 Mixed modes of medial communication

Besides hybrid modes of medial communication (described in §28.3.2.1), there are texts showing mixed forms of medial communication. Focusing on texts realized graphically, two main types can be identified: (i) written texts with conceptually spoken inserts in (direct) reported speech and (ii) written texts with conceptually spoken structures outside of (direct) reported speech.

Representative examples of the first type appear in newspaper articles. Consider the text block reproduced in (8), taken from a piece published in the online edition of the daily newspaper 'repubblica.it':

(8) 'Correte, correte, c'è una bambina che non respira. I finestrini sono chiusi, se la sono dimenticata'. È rimasta quasi 7 ore dentro la macchina. Abbandonata sotto il sole della Cecchignola, periferia a sud di Roma. [. . .].

Stella, la bambina di 14 mesi, era pronta a entrare entrare [sic] all'asilo nido in via dei Fucilieri ma è stata dimenticata a pochi metri dall'ingresso dal padre, un carabiniere in servizio presso la direzione generale del personale militare del ministero della Difesa. (https://roma.repubblica.it, 7 June 2023, Marco Carta)

'"Quick, quick, there is a small child who's stopped breathing. The windows are shut, they've left her in the car." She has been inside the car for almost seven hours. Left alone in the sun in Cecchignola, a suburb south of Rome. [. . .]

Stella, the 14-month-old child, was supposed to go to the nursery on Via dei Fucilieri but her father, a carabiniere serving in the Defence Ministry's General Directorate of Military Personnel, forgot and left her in the car just a few metres away from the entrance.'

While it is conveyed through a graphic-visual medium, the text reproduced in (8) includes textual segments occupying two distinct spaces on the continuum 'conceptually spoken' vs 'conceptually written'. The text written by the journalist (see the second and third sentences—*È rimasta quasi 7 ore* . . . 'She has been inside the car for almost 7 hours . . .'—as well as the second paragraph) represents the *neo-standard* variety of Italian and is thus located in an intermediate position between the poles 'spoken' and 'written' (see Fig. 28.2, in line with Fig. 28.1). This text differs conceptually from the speech reported at the beginning of the article, which reproduces the words of a typical person in the street: the reported speech is conceptually 'spoken' (informal, colloquial Italian), as shown by several linguistic features. Besides the initial repetition of the verb 'to run' in the imperative form (*correte, correte* 'quick, quick (lit. run, run)'), directed at the people present in the communicative situation (but left implicit in the article), there is a marked syntactic construction typical of spoken language, namely, the biclausal presentational cleft *c'è una bambina che non respira* 'there is a small child who's stopped breathing' (on this marked syntactic structure, based on the format *c'è x che p*, see De Cesare 2007).

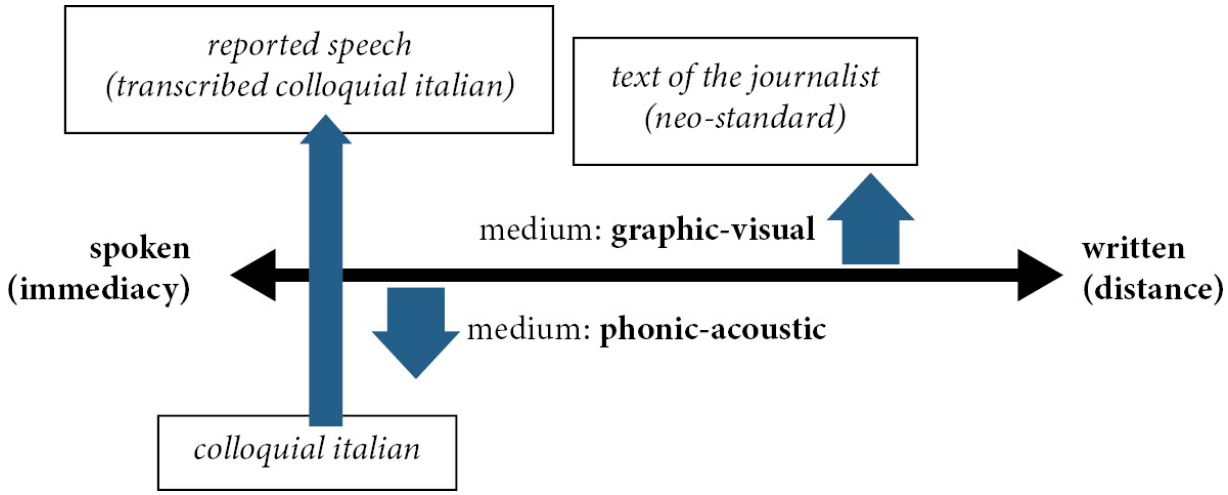


Figure 28.2 Mixed modes of medial communication (reported speech in newspaper articles).

The second type of mixed mode of medial communication is less apparent, as it involves the insertion of individual linguistic features (lexical, morphological, syntactic) belonging to *italiano parlato-parlato* directly into the 'fabric' of graphically realized texts. A detailed account of what has been called *il parlato nello scritto* 'spoken [language] in written [texts]' (see Ferrari and De Cesare 2010) shows that these features not only change form when migrating from one medial mode to another (phonic => graphic), but generally also take up new functions. They no longer serve to regulate speaker-hearer verbal interaction, rather, they are used to create text cohesion, to link portions of text at both the micro- and macro-level, etc. Consider, for instance, the case of the adverb *ecco* lit. '(t)here is' in examples (9) and (10), representing, respectively, the *italiano parlato-parlato* and *neo-standard Italian*:

(9) MAX: allora / te sei + aspetta eh // # ecco // come ti chiami te / scusa? (C-ORAL-ROM, ifamcv27)

'MAX: so / you're + wait eh // # here // what's your name again / sorry?'

(10) Ecco i laghi dove l'acqua è più blu (larepubblica.it, 8 June 2023)

'Here are the lakes where the water is bluest'

In terms of form, when used in *italiano parlato-parlato*, *ecco* generally constitutes an autonomous utterance (as shown in 9, where the double slash indicates utterance boundaries).[8] By contrast, when

it appears in texts representing written neo-standard Italian, *ecco* is generally followed by an NP (in 10: *i laghi dove l'acqua è più blu* 'the lakes where the water is bluest'). Both examples also illustrate that in 'phonic-spoken' medial configurations, *ecco* is characteristically used as a filler or has a deictic-presentational function. In writing, on the other hand, the segment '*ecco* + complement' primarily performs a cataphoric function, which is exploited at various levels of textual organization. In the thematic dimension of textual organization, this segment allows us to introduce a cognitively new and salient discourse referent (the lakes where the water is bluest), which is then specified in the subsequent text. This function is often exploited in newspaper titles, as in (10), where the names of the lakes in question are provided in the body of the article (see De Cesare 2010a).

28.4 Linguistic features of selected diamesic realizations of Italian

28.4.1 *Italiano parlato-parlato*

The core properties of *italiano parlato-parlato*, most typically represented by spoken face-to-face conversation, can be observed at different levels (Voghera 2010:810–813): phonic, lexical, syntactic, and textual (see also Sornicola 1981; Berretta 1994; Cresti 2000).

As for lexical and syntactic properties, we must mention a marked preference for semantically generic and polysemic items, mostly belonging to the word classes of verbs and nouns (e.g., *la cosa* 'the thing' in example 11), but also observable in the category of function words, such as connectives: *ma* 'but', appearing in example (12), is used more often than other adversative connectives, such as *però* 'but', *invece* 'instead', *eppure* 'and yet', and *tuttavia* 'however' (for details, also of their discourse functions, see Cimmino 2021):[9]

(11) ILA: infatti a Rino / gl' ha puzzato subito / la cosa //
ILA: indeed to Rino DAT.3= have.3SG stink.PTCP at.once the thing
'Indeed, Rino smelled a rat immediately.'

(12) VAL: sì // sì ma / ci provo / tanto // a me mi basta passare //
'VAL: yes yes but LOC= try.1SG so.much to me me= suffice.3SG pass.INF
'Yes, yes, but I try so hard: all I need is to pass.'

Italiano parlato-parlato is further characterized by low lexical density, viz., a higher frequency of function words (adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections) over content words (verbs, nouns, adjectives). The high frequency, for example, of pronouns (Voghera 2004a) can be explained by the use of deictic pronouns referring to people, objects, etc. present in the communicative situation (cf. De Cesare 2010a). In the short verbal exchange reproduced in (13), we find the personal pronoun *gli* 'to him', two occurrences of the demonstrative pronoun *questo* 'this', and one instance of the locative pronoun *qua* 'here' (which is traditionally conceived as an adverb: De Cesare 2019b:58f.). Pronouns also occur in marked syntactic constructions such as dislocations: see the clitic pronoun *gli* 'to him' in example (11), which resumes the PP *a Rino* 'to Rino', and *mi* 'me' in (12), which resumes the PP *a me* 'to me', itself headed by the pronoun *me*.

(13) A: dichiaro e gli faccio compilare questo
B: poi deve intanto si faccia firmare questo che è qua (Voghera 2010:811)
'A: I will make the declaration and have him fill this out.
B: then he must in the meantime get this signed which is here'

Another syntactic feature of *italiano parlato-parlato* is the high frequency of nominal sentences, i.e., of sentences at the core of which there is no (temporalized) verb (see Scarano 2004). In (14), for instance, the first two utterances (marked in bold) do not include any verb and thus differ from the following utterance, where we find the temporalized verb forms *De Niro sa fare solo / sa imporre solo se stesso* 'De Niro can only do / can only play himself':

(14) MIC: **ora / mhm / De Niro // De Niro / niente** // De Niro / sa fare solo [//] sa imporre solo / se stesso / come un certo tipo di personaggio // [...] (Cresti 2000/II: *Cinema*)
'MIC: now / mhm / De Niro // De Niro / oh well / De Niro / he can only do [//] he can only play / himself / as a certain kind of character'

From a textual point of view, *italiano parlato-parlato* is characterized by the presence of fragmentations, repetitions, and various unplanned phenomena. Fragmentations and repetitions are present, for example, in (14): the three utterances composing the turn are constructed with small textual fragments (the boundaries of which are marked by a single slash), including the short-distance repetition of the proper name *De Niro*.

Besides the features mentioned above, *italiano parlato-parlato* presents a series of other unplanned phenomena, including interruptions by another speaker (see 15, where the interruption is transcribed by the sign '+/.') and false starts (16), i.e., cases in which the speaker starts anew after realizing that they had said something wrong or because they were not satisfied with the phrasing chosen.

(15) NIN: <diciamo che deve avvicinarsi> il più possibile / <a essere quel personaggio> //
MIC: <no / deve essere // **perché**> +/.
NIN: ma essere quel personaggio / <è impossibile> //

'NIN: <let's say he has to get as close> as possible / <to being that character> //.
MIC: <no / it must be // because> +/.
NIN: but being that character / <is impossible> //'

(16) mio **cug** [/] mio fratello non sa nuotare//

'my cous [/] my brother can't swim//'

Another characteristic textual and pragmatic feature of *italiano parlato-parlato* is the use of discourse markers (Bazzanella 2010; Sansò 2020). Discourse markers perform a wide array of interactional functions: they serve to regulate the turns among speakers (17), they work as turn-fillers (18), they are used by the speaker to ask for agreement or confirmation (19) and/or to express his/her own agreement on what has been said (20):

(17) sai (—) non ne posso più di queste riunioni! (Bazzanella 2010:1304)

'you know (—) I can't take any more of these meetings!'

(18) Più tardi, però, cioè, non so, il terzo giorno penso che qualche mulo, mah anche lì, il mulo può andare bene non so per un'ora o due al giorno, è impossibile poter andare, non so cinque o sei ore al giorno (Bazzanella 2010:1303)

'Later, though, I mean, I don't know, the third day I think some mule, but even there, the mule may be okay I don't know for an hour or two a day, it's impossible for it to be able to go, I dunno, five or six hours a day'

(19) non lasciatemi solo sulle nevi (—) eh? (Bazzanella 2010:1304)
'don't leave me alone in the snow (—) huh?'

(20) A: se tu ascolti noi sai già cosa succede stanotte!
B: esatto! (Bazzanella 2010:1304)
'A: if you listen to us you will already know what is going to happen tonight!
B: that's right!'

28.4.2 *Italiano parlato filmico*

Italiano parlato filmico (described in Rossi 1999; 2010a; 2023), namely, the 'oral [i.e., phonic-acoustic] component of a cinematographic text' (Rossi 2023:16), is not properly speaking a variety of Italian, but should be understood as a peculiar form of medial language realization. What is most characteristic about it is that it is a pseudo-simulation of *italiano parlato-parlato*. A 'pseudo-simulation' for two reasons. First, because roughly up to the second millennium, most Italian films did not feature the use of dialects and seldom included snippets of regional Italian. The lack of diatopically marked linguistic features in Italian film dialogues can be explained by the fact that (big) film productions are intended to be consumed by a wide and heterogeneous audience. Second, *italiano parlato-parlato* is only 'pseudo-simulated' in the oral component of cinematographic texts because many film dialogues are based on a written script.

The hybrid medial nature of the *parlato filmico*, resulting from the two above-mentioned extralinguistic factors (the use of standard Italian to guarantee wide national understanding and the use of a prewritten script), can be illustrated by the following line uttered by Salvatore, a poor and uneducated young Roman from Trastevere, in the film *Poveri, ma belli* (1957) directed by Dino Risi:

(21) «Non le bastavo io, a mamma, che le volevo tanto bene? Dagli a fa' figli. Guarda che disgraziati, che sono venuti fuori!» (Rossi 2010a:207)
'"Wasn't I enough, for mum, I that loved her so much? Then they go and have children. Look at the wretches that were born!"'

As pointed out in Rossi (2010a), this line includes elements that are both, conceptually, spoken and written. On the one hand, as expected from its function of mimicking spoken Italian, it presents features of colloquial and regional Italian: after a right dislocation (*Non le bastavo io, a mamma* 'Wasn't I enough, for mum'), we find an instance of so-called *che polivalente*, i.e., the subordinating conjunction *che* 'that' used with an underdetermined semantic value (*che le volevo tanto bene* 'that I loved her so much'), and a shortened infinitival verb form typical of Romanesco (*fa'* instead of *fare* 'to do'). At the same time, the line uttered by Salvatore includes the pronoun *le* 'to her' (instead of Romanesco *je*) and the verb form *sono* 'I am' (instead of the truncated form *so'*): two linguistic features belonging to standard (and formal) Italian, which are consequently implausible in the mouth of the uneducated character that he represents.

What is also unrealistic in *italiano parlato filmico* is the absence of core features of spoken face-to-face conversation (for a more detailed discussion, based on a wider array of properties, see Rossi 2023:16–19), such as false starts, turn interruptions, and vocalized pauses. In film dialogues only paralinguistic features (e.g., the use of intonation) and extralinguistic features (body language, including gestures and gaze, albeit probably also stylized) are present.

28.4.3 *Neo-standard Italian*

Neo-standard Italian (Berruto 1987a), also referred to as *italiano dell'uso medio* (Sabatini 1985; 1990), has been a core language variety in the repertoire of Italian speakers at least since the 1970s. As Sabatini saw it in 1985, it is a nationally spoken and written variety with a medium degree of formality, 'which differs from the official "standard" [. . .], mainly because it is decidedly receptive to the general features of spoken language' (Sabatini 2011 [1985]:4).[10] The adjective *medio* 'medium' is to be understood primarily in relation to the diaphasic dimension of language variation, in particular to registers (§28.2). According to Antonelli (2011:52), written neo-standard Italian is the type of language typically found in a well-written newspaper article.

The label 'neo-standard Italian' explicitly refers to the fact that this language variety represents the new form of standard, replacing in many communicative situations the use of formal, literary standard Italian. This new standard is characterized by the presence of a group of linguistic features which were, until recently, excluded from the standard 'ancien régime'. In traditional grammars and textbooks, they are therefore either not mentioned at all or presented with critical comments (Berruto 2012c:73). In neo-standard Italian, these features have lost much of the sociolinguistic markedness that relegated them to the margins of the language (for details, see §26.3).

The typifying features of neo-standard Italian can be observed at the lexical, phonological, and morphosyntactic levels. A selection of the grammatical features is presented in Table 28.4.[11]

Table 28.4 Linguistic features of *italiano dell'uso medio* (Sabatini 1990)

features	standard	neo-standard
pronouns in subject position	*egli/ella; essa/essi/esse* e.g., *Ella è contenta*. 'She is happy.'	*lui, lei, loro* e.g., *Lei è contenta*. 'She is happy.'
third-person dative pronoun	*loro* (*a loro* 'to them') e.g., *Do loro il benvenuto*. lit. 'I give them the welcome (= I welcome them).'	*gli* e.g., *Gli do il benvenuto*. lit. 'I give them the welcome (= 'I welcome them).'
function of subordinator *che* 'that'	introduces subject and object relatives e.g., *La ragazza che canta*. 'The girl who sings.' e.g., *La ragazza che ho visto*. 'The girl whom I saw.'	'polyvalent' *che*, in particular with temporal and causal or consecutive value. e.g., *Dal giorno che ti ho visto*. lit. 'From the day that I saw you.' e.g., *Vieni che ti pettino*. lit. 'Come that I comb you (= Come, ('cause) I am going to comb your hair).'

features	standard	neo-standard
Morphosyntactic realization of interrogative pronouns	*Che cosa vuoi?* lit. 'What thing you want? (= What do you want?)'	*Cosa vuoi?* lit. 'Thing you want?'
mood in subordinate clauses and hypothetical constructions	imperfect subjunctive e.g., *Se avessi saputo, non sarei venuta*. 'If I had known, I would not have come.'	imperfect indicative e.g., *Se lo sapevo, non venivo*. lit. 'If I knew, I was not coming.'
agreement between subject and verb	agreement with grammatical subject e.g., *È venuta a trovarmi una decina di amici*. lit. 'is come$_{FSG}$ to visit me a dozen$_{FSG}$ friends$_{MPL}$. (= A dozen friends came to visit me).'	'ad sensum' agreement e.g., *Sono venuti a trovarmi una decina di amici*. lit. 'are come$_{MPL}$ to visit me a dozen$_{FSG}$ friends$_{MPL}$'
word order: cleft sentences	canonical syntax (SVO) e.g., *Stella detesta il formaggio*. 'Stella hates cheese.'	cleft sentence[a] e.g., *È Stella che detesta il formaggio*. 'It is Stella who hates cheese.'
word order: syntactic dislocations	canonical syntax (SVO) e.g., *Stella detesta il formaggio*. 'Stella hates cheese.'	left/right dislocation of a sentence constituent with clitic pronoun resumption/anticipation e.g., *Il formaggio Stella lo detesta*. lit. 'Cheese, Stella hates it'; *Stella lo detesta, il formaggio*. 'Stella hates it, cheese.'

[a] For a detailed discussion of the forms and functions of cleft constructions in neo-standard Italian, see De Cesare et al. (2016:472–480). A form of cleft sentence typically used in *italiano parlato-parlato* found in newspapers (representing neo-standard Italian) is the so-called spurious cleft (Benincà 1978). In this construction, the clefted constituent is an NP with temporal value. What is special, in particular, is that it lacks the preposition that accompanies the NP in canonical syntax: *Ti cerco da tre giorni* 'I have been looking for you for three days' becomes *Sono tre giorni che ti cerco* lit. 'they are three days that I am looking for you' (as opposed to the standard cleft *È da tre giorni che ti cerco* lit. 'It's for three days that I am looking for you').

28.4.4 *E-taliano*

The language variety called *e-italiano* by Antonelli (2014:539), and more commonly referred to as *computer-mediated-communication*, emerged in the 1990s and became widely used in the third millennium, following a second revolution in the Italian linguistic landscape (for details, see §28.3.2). The label *e-taliano* (where *e-* stands for 'electronic') refers to all verbal communicative exchanges that are mediated technically (Prada 2015), be it via smartphone, computer, tablet, or other electronic devices. The term also refers to the special 'genres' and communicative formats associated with the use of those technical devices (Tavosanis 2011):[12] e-mails, text messages (SMS), chats, forums, communication via social networks (such as *Facebook*, *Twitter/X*, *TikTok*), and instant messaging apps (e.g., *WhatsApp*, *Telegram*, *Snapchat*).

E-taliano is generally understood to refer to a diaphasically informal written variety of Italian (Antonelli 2014:539). However, texts written in *e-taliano* can in fact be arranged along a continuum between two poles: they range from (very) informal (WhatsApp messages, texts exchanged on TikTok) to (very) formal (e.g., e-mails, which have for the most part replaced the traditional letter; see example 5), while others generally show a medium degree of formality (SMS messages). In Koch and Oesterreicher's (1985) model, different electronic text genres thus occupy different spaces in the conceptional continuum 'spoken-written', as shown in Figure 28.3. WhatsApp messages tend towards the spoken pole and e-mails towards the written pole, while SMS messages fall somewhere in between.

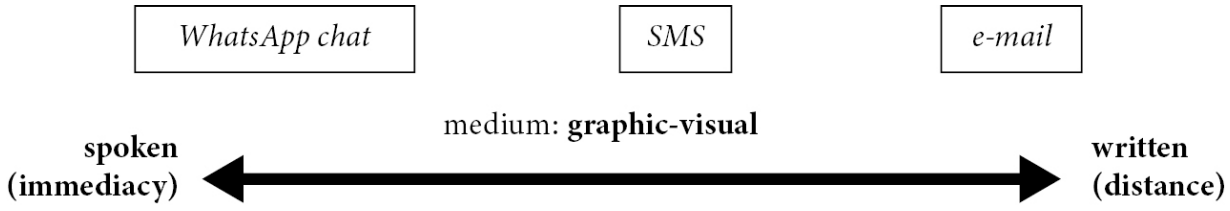


Figure 28.3 Degree of conceptualization of three electronic text genres.

As far as their pragmatic and semiotic properties are concerned, texts written in *e-taliano* can be distinguished by three core parameters (for a more complete list of features, see Pistolesi 2011:86 and 2016:452): (i) their degree of dialogicity (ranging from dialogic to monologic); (ii) the degree of synchronicity of the exchange (with three possibilities: synchronous, quasi-synchronous, asynchronous); and (iii) the frequency of the exchange (ranging from very frequent to rare). These parameters allow us to distinguish, for instance, e-mails from WhatsApp messages: they are both dialogic in nature, but the former are exchanged asynchronously (and, as such, are closer to conventional paper letter correspondence), while the latter are exchanged quasi-synchronously, meaning that there is a small time-shift between the production of the message and its transmission-reception (and, as such, is closer to face-to-face communication). In fact, in WhatsApp messages, the receiver is alerted that the addressee is producing the text by the appearance on screen of the phrase *x* [e.g., *Mamma* 'Mummy'] *sta scrivendo* 'x is writing'.

To round up the description of *e-taliano*, let us consider some of the characteristic linguistic features associated with it, focusing on written WhatsApp messages. A first aspect to highlight again is that written WhatsApp messages have a hybrid medial nature (Pistolesi 2004 coined the wordplay *parlar spedito* meaning both 'sent speech' and 'fast speech'): they are medially 'graphic', but conceptually 'spoken'. Moreover, as mentioned above, they are exchanged in a quasi-synchronous tempo, which makes them closer to the phonic-acoustic mode of communication. Contrary to what could be concluded from these traits, though, WhatsApp messages (and, more generally, any realization of *e-taliano* occupying the 'spoken' conceptional space) include many typical features of writing, as they exploit the possibilities offered by the graphic-visual medium of communication (see Antonelli 2014:541).

Mention can first be made to the heterogeneous group of abbreviations (Thornton 2004c), reminiscent of stenographic shorthands devised to gain time and space (see *w.e* for 'weekend' in 22; the tachygraphic *t* (pronounced [ti]) for the object clitic pronoun *ti* 'you.SG', and the abbreviation *Tvb* for *Ti voglio bene* 'I love you' in 23),[13] as well as the presence of emoji (in 22, the smiley face created with three graphemes: a colon, a dash, and a closing parenthesis),

emoticons, and ludic graphic signs, such as the use of the German 'ß' in (24). Finally, mention should be made of the expressive use of punctuation, for example, in the form of a succession of four dots in (25).

(22) passato un bel w.e :-) io parto merc
'had a good w.e :-) I leave Wed'

(23) appenaposso t chiamo Tvb
as.soon.as.can.1SG you= call.1SG Ily
'As soon as I can, I'll ring you. Ily.'

(24) cosi poßo tel appena so
so can.1SG phone as.soon.as know.1SG
'So I'll be able to phone as soon as I know'

WhatsApp messages of course also include features that are, conceptually, spoken. Suffice it to think of the use of informal lexical expressions (*voleva uccidermi* 'he/she wanted to kill me' in 25), interjections (mimicking laughter: *ahahaha* in 25), allegro forms (*son* instead of *sono* 'am'; *na* for *una* 'a' in 26), dialectalisms and regionalisms as in (27).

(25) un certo punto voleva uccidermi.... ahahaha
a one point want.PST.IPFV.3SG kill.INF=me hahaha
'at one point s/he wanted to kill me.... hahaha'

(26) Son na merda, lo so
be.1SG a shit it= know.1SG
'I am a piece of shit, I know.'

(27) ier a mescdì u bevüt na pivo
'yesterday at midday you drink.PTCP a beer
'yesterday at lunchtime you drank a beer'

28.5 Conclusion

Spoken and written Italian are only two—prototypical and somewhat generic—diamesic varieties of Italian. Since the end of the 1970s,

scholars have advocated the need to identify other language varieties and important theoretical proposals have been put forward to describe, explain, and predict more complex language realizations dependent upon diamesic parameters (Koch and Oesterreicher 1985; 2007). We thus moved away fifty years ago from the idea that the main parameter of variation is related to the medium (phonic-graphic) of communication alone, and this has allowed us to better understand hybrid and mixed modes of medial communication (Pistolesi 2022).

We are now entering a new phase in which we need to find suitable models to capture the complexity of multimodal forms of communication, such as those that have emerged on social platforms (see TikTok videos and Instagram reels, as well as the popular use of memes). Moreover, we need to understand the implications of recent technical advancements, in particular the possibility of generating texts with large language models such as OpenAI's ChatGPT. Some questions that ought to be answered in future research include: are texts generated by ChatGPT a new diamesic variety of Italian or do they correspond for the most part to neo-standard Italian? Can we prompt ChatGPT to produce different diamesic varieties or realizations of Italian? Diamesically speaking, what is the difference between a chat with a human-being on WhatsApp and with a machine on OpenAI's Interface?

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[1] I would like to thank Massimo Cerruti for his comments on an initial draft of this chapter.

[2] Instead of *e-taliano*, Berruto (2012c) mentions *italiano popolare*, roughly translatable as 'Italian of the ordinary people', but this variety can no longer be considered to be available in the repertoire of all Italians (see further Chapter 37).

[3] The labels referring to the dimensions of language variation (*diatopic*, *diastratic*, *diamesic*, *diaphasic*) are constructed with the prefixoid *dia-* 'through' followed by the term referring to the main parameter of variation. This terminological proposal goes back to Coseriu (1958).

[4] According to Berruto (2018b), 'while registers primarily depend on the relationship between the interlocutors communicating in a given situation and the degree of formality of that situation, subcodes [It. *sottocodici*] correlate with the spheres of topics and activities in which the language is used and are characterized by a specialized vocabulary' (all translations provided in this chapter are post-edited texts based on outputs from DeepL).

[5] The autonomy of the diamesic dimension from the diaphasic one is in fact still debated. For some scholars, the communicative situation determines the medium of communication (see Berruto 1993 and, prior to him, De Mauro 1980:118–120): formal communicative settings correlate with written (i.e., graphically realized) language, while informal communicative settings correlate with spoken (i.e., phonically realized) language. Some scholars go even further claiming that diamesia cannot be considered a proper dimension of language variation and that it plays a marginal role at best (Pistolesi 2015; 2016). We return to these issues in §28.3.

[6] For details, see Pistolesi (2016), who also offers a critical review on the theoretical discussion and an overview of new proposals made in Italy to overcome the rigid 'spoken-written' dichotomy.

[7] Berruto (2012c:56) provides a different figure based on Koch and Oesterreicher's parameters, showing four possible general types of language realizations. In his representation, each realization corresponds to a discrete category defined based on the two medial parameters (medium + conception). This representation, however, does not allow us to capture the medial 'distance' between language varieties occupying the same space (e.g., transcribed oral texts and computer-mediated-communication, both falling in the 'graphic-spoken' category).

[8] In (9) and elsewhere, the double slash (or, alternatively, the question mark, etc.) indicates utterance boundaries and the single slash information boundaries within the utterance (for details on the transcription conventions, see Cresti and Moneglia 2005).

[9] The examples provided in this section are drawn from corpora of spoken Italian, in particular De Mauro et al. (1993) and Cresti and Moneglia (2005). Note that several of them appear in Ferrari (2005), to which we refer for an overview of the features distinguishing *italiano parlato-parlato* from *italiano scritto-scritto*.

[10] Francesco Sabatini's studies (cf. Sabatini 1985; 1990) sometimes associate *italiano dell'uso medio* more closely with spoken Italian. Sabatini (2011 [1990]:90), for instance, claims that this variety coincides with 'today's [i.e., the 1990's] spoken Italian on a national level'.

[11] Sabatini (1985) proposed a list of thirty-five features (seven phonological and twenty-eight morphosyntactic), while Sabatini (1990) reduced the list to fourteen features. A list of features is also presented in detail in Berruto (2012c:75–106), to which we refer for a more thorough and complete picture.

[12] New genres of medial communication, such as memes and reels, are characterized by multimodality. The verbal components of these new genres, delivered in the phonic and/or graphic modes, combine with non-verbal components in the form of images and/or videos. What is characteristic of these new genres, in fact, is their 'high degree of multimodality' (Palermo 2022:561).

[13] The examples provided in this last section are drawn from the Corpus *What's up, Switzerland?* (Stark, Ueberwasser, and Göhring 2014–2020).

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Chapter 29

Diastratic variation

Mari D'Agostino

29.1 The changing shape of Italian linguistic space: emergence and disappearance of areas of variability

In modern Italy there are prominent linguistic and sociolinguistic phenomena which are mainly the result of the national language having spread across all levels of the population and its wholesale, albeit not absolute, adoption as a colloquial spoken language. With this broad sociolinguistic movement, the traditional communicative domain of dialects partially loses ground, in interactions within the family, but also gains new ground, for example, in advertising and digital communication. Furthermore, and for the first time, a significant number of people with or without Italian citizenship, born in Italy or elsewhere, live in family and social contexts in which multiple languages are spoken, languages which do not traditionally belong to the Italian linguistic world. These people, at different stages in their lives, come to learn Italian as a language of communication, study, and as a language with which to build relationships of complex social and identity relationships. All this means that Italian has 'emerged from the state of affairs that we might call a "protected system", largely absent from everyday speech, and has had to cope with the functional pressures of being used for common purposes, both in speech and writing' (Moretti 2024:176).

Since the 1970s, Italian linguistic research has continually tracked these processes both quantitatively (also using data from national statistical surveys, cf. D'Agostino and Paternostro 2024) and through

a large body of specific studies aimed particularly at identifying linguistic forms and uses that have entered various different domains of the linguistic repertoire through the process of restandardization. This specifically involves the relationship between sub-standard, neo-standard (cf. §26.3), and standard varieties (cf. Berruto 2017c; Cerruti, Crocco, and Marzo 2017; Renzi 2019).

The situation that we have here briefly sketched calls for close monitoring of what is happening in those areas where the spoken, and to some extent the written, everyday life of specific subjects and social groups impinges pervasively in public and private communicative spaces. It is of considerable interest to observe socio-culturally distant groups from the everyday practice of writing that are today exposed to, and not infrequently also producers of, digital written texts. So-called 'digital Italian' is, in fact, a particularly interesting area on which to focus and it is one very sensitive to the emergence of significant linguistic and sociolinguistic phenomena.

These processes, although not always easy to interpret, are currently underway on a massive scale and will be the focus of attention in what follows. We will refer above all to studies and analyses from the last quarter-century that use variationist models and which increasingly make use of corpora (§29.2). The starting point of this discussion is in fact that, unlike other places in Europe—where the situation of diglossia has developed into a continuum of varieties intermediate between local and standard languages, labelled 'diaglossia' (cf. Bellmann 1998)—in Italy two diasystems still exist: the continuum of varieties of Italian and the continuum of dialect.

Before we explore areas where different forms of variation occur or recur with considerable frequency, it is useful to point out how processes of elimination of variability, very present until the outbreak of the First World War (Migliorini 1960), have had radical effects on part of the Italian orthographic system, which today is certainly the most stable area of the language (Serianni 2014:237f.). De Pascale (2017:27) examines, within a corpus of Italian newspapers, three sociolinguistic graphic variables (with a total of six variants; two for each variable) between 1861 and 2000. In all three cases, the graphic alternation present in the press during the years of unification (presumably reflecting local variations in pronunciation) was resolved, at the beginning of this century, in favour of one of two

variants: (a) the first variable involving free alternation between grapheme <c> and <z>, in words such as *annun**c**iare/annun**z**iare* 'announce' or *pronun**c**ia/pronun**z**ia* 'pronunciation', was settled with the predominance of *annunciare*, *pronuncia*; (b) the second variable involving the alternation between the grapheme <o> and the diphthong <uo>, in words such as *fagiuolo/fagiolo* 'bean' or *giuoco/gioco* 'game', resulting in the widespread use of *fagiolo, gioco*; (c) the third variable which consists in the alternation between the double <bb> and single <b>, in words such as *obbiettivo/obiettivo* 'objective, goal' or *ubbriaco/ubriaco* 'drunk, inebriated', saw the dominance of *ubriaco* but an ongoing alternation today between *obbiettivo* and *obiettivo*.

The evident generalized reduction of orthographic variation over the past 150 years, as shown by De Pascale's data—which focuses solely on quantitative grapheme data without considering phonetic convergence—does not exclude the possibility of ongoing or new forms of variability in other areas of the orthographic system. These areas remain subject to significant normative influence from educational institutions. For instance, Regis (2019:360), taking into consideration the use of the written accent on monosyllables in the phrase *se stesso* 'oneself' (compare *sé* 'oneself', the normal spelling of the pronoun) and in the verbal form *do* 'I give' (often spelled *dò* by analogy with the third-person singular *dà*), and the use or deletion of <*i*> in the plural of nouns and adjectives ending in unstressed <*cia*> and <*gia*> (e.g., *arancia* 'orange' vs *arancie* or *arance* 'oranges'; cf. §13.2.2.5), shows how we are witnessing a 'statistical trend towards an increase in non-standard orthographic forms in the last thirty to thirty-five years'. The quantitative data examined by Regis refer to the DiaCORIS Corpus which includes written narrative texts, essays, periodicals, newspapers, legal prose, etc., and to the archive of the *la Repubblica* daily newspaper. It is therefore formal written Italian and the data only account for one of the points via which the use of new or old variants spread or retreat within subareas of the system.

29.2 The variationist perspective: models, methods, corpora

In what follows we will specifically examine research, analyses, and models that explicitly or implicitly look at linguistic phenomena from the perspective of variation. By this we mean 'the property of a language entity, at all levels of analysis, of assuming different forms, of presenting itself under different manifestations, while remaining the same unit, as far as its functional value is concerned, in the system, the same entity. Variation in language typically manifests itself in the form of sociolinguistic variation, given that it is an essential characteristic of variation that it correlates significantly with social factors, to have a different social distribution that gives it social meaning' (Berruto 2009b:12).

Over the years this perspective has been enriched by a finer-grained vision of the relationship between linguistic and extralinguistic variables. These variables should not be seen as a list of categories that predetermine which variants the speaker will use. Linguistic traits are not a mere reflexion of a static identity, defined by the position of the individual in relation to a pre-existing social order (for example in the opposition young vs old or educated vs uneducated) but rather are resources that the speaker draws on to shape and reshape social structures and to place herself with respect to them and to other individuals.

In these more recent lines of investigation, the social practices to which the speaker is subject come to the fore, being themselves constantly interpreted and reinterpreted by linguistic actions and practices (Eckert 2012). In this chapter the term 'diastratic' will be used as a simple synonym of 'social' or better still of 'speaker variables', in reference to the different possible categories relating to the speaker that can be used in the study of linguistic variation. Among these variables we mention social class, defined by research in the 'Anglo-Saxon' tradition by the three parameters of income, occupation, and level of education, while, in general, in surveys conducted in Italy, only the parameter of education is used as an indicator of the speaker's position on the social scale. Another analytical construct that has proven particularly important for the purposes of social variation of language is that of 'social network'. Even in small groups with very similar characteristics (e.g., students in a school) linguistic differences are recorded that can be linked to the types of social ties established by some individuals and not by others (networks of friends, work relationships, neighbourhood,

sports, etc.). Other social categories often used in Italian research are place of birth/origin, age, gender (cf. D'Agostino and Paternostro 2018).

Here we will briefly analyse the two models of variation analysis that we will refer to in the following pages and that will sometimes be presented together and sometimes not. The first has as its central element (and often as its beginning and end point) a single linguistic feature (we will call this the 'model based on variables'). The second has at its centre a 'variety' (or a set of varieties) of the language (the 'model based on varieties'). In both cases, the aim is to correlate an element or a set of elements (or a diasystem of elements) with extralinguistic factors.

The first model is based on the (socio)linguistic variable. It can be defined as the range of different ways of realizing a certain unity of the linguistic system; each of these ways is a 'variant' and the variable is therefore the set of variants. Berruto (2004b) appropriately stresses that 'if the variables themselves form obviously one class, then the variants, each different manifestation of the variables, are also classes and are not to be confused with single, individual, concrete realizations'. Each sociolinguistic variable is such in that it correlates with an element external to the language system (with a characteristic of the context or a characteristic of the speaker). William Labov, to whom we owe the theorization of this model, considers the sociolinguistic variable as 'the first and also the last step in the analysis of variation' (Labov 2004:7). His definition of the sociolinguistic variable as 'alternative ways of saying "the same" thing' (Labov 1972:188) clearly indicates that there must be a relationship of 'semantic equivalence' between the variants. Another key point of this model is 'the principle of accountability' (Labov 1982:30). By this principle, it is essential for the variationist analysis to focus attention on the choice made by a speaker among the different possibilities represented by the individual variants. For this perspective, the absolute frequency of a given variant is not important, but its frequency in relation to other variants is. For this model, it is therefore essential to take into consideration all the variants of the variable under examination, calculating their occurrences in the total number of contexts in which each could have been found in the text (cf. Biber 2012 for the comparison between the variationist and text-linguistic perspectives). It is not always

entirely clear in corpus-based analyses how the frequency of grammatical elements has been calculated.

The second model we will examine is based on 'varieties'. Within Italian linguistics the term 'variety' is constantly used, frequently within the same text, both as a simple synonym of 'language', 'linguistic code', and as a technical term that refers to a series of specific lines of research. Here we will use 'variety' as a specialist term concerned with the investigation of the link between a set of linguistic characteristics (which make up a 'variety' of that particular language) and one or more extralinguistic factors, in particular with regard to a group of speakers sharing common characteristics.

In Italy the starting point for this model of analysis has often been the observation that a set of texts produced by what is assumed to be a social group have shared linguistic characteristics from which it is possible to identify a distinct 'variety' of Italian. In particular, in the 1970s, on the basis of the linguistic analysis of letters from soldiers during the First World War and from emigrants at various points in history, the label *italiano popolare* was proposed to define the variety of language specific to particular socio-cultural groups at the bottom of what is often referred to as the 'social pyramid'.[1] The characteristic of close association with a specific 'speaker variable' is fully evident in the definition of *italiano popolare* given by De Mauro (1970:49) namely, 'mode of expression of an uneducated person who, under pressure to communicate and without any training, manipulates what is optimistically called the "national" language, Italian'. In Italian linguistics, the label of *italiano popolare* has become established (only partially overlapping with that of *semicolto* Italian),[2] a label concerned above all with phenomena of deviation in writing (Bruni 1978; Fresu 2014; 2016) used to indicate a variety of language which is low along the diastratic axis and characterized by high deviation from the norm. For this see the definition given by Cortelazzo (1972:11): 'type of Italian imperfectly acquired by those whose mother tongue is dialect'.

Since the 1980s, *italiano popolare* and the other varieties that have been given multiple different labels (regional Italian, formal/informal Italian, neo-standard Italian, average-use, etc.) have been integrated by Gaetano Berruto into a unitary model (cf. Berruto 2012c). This model, terminologically continuing the work of Flydal (1952) and Coseriu (1973), aims to connect the different varieties of

Italian into a single variational diasystem (also called the 'variational architecture' of Italian). It is often represented graphically through a system of Cartesian axes. For a proposal for a unitary modelling see also Antonelli (2014).

From a methodological point of view, one of the most important issues within the varieties model is the identification of the criterion, or criteria, on the basis of which the researcher can connect a series of different elements (which almost always belong to multiple linguistic levels: phonetics/phonology, morphosyntax, lexicon), and postulate the existence of a single 'variety'. A criterion that is often indicated as fundamental is that of covariance: '[m]ethodologically, the covariance criterion implies empirical study of the systematic co-occurrence of groups of linguistic features in the context of external variables [. . .] such as speech setting, regional background of both speaker and hearer, and the type of interpersonal relation between interlocutors' (Ghyselen and De Vogelaer 2018:385). Berruto (1995:64) also points out the criterion of congruence: 'the typical linguistic features of a variety must also be congruent, that is, endowed with a certain degree of structural homogeneity, which means that they obey specific rules of co-occurrence'. For a certain statement to be coherent from a sociolinguistic point of view, it must be made up of items that can be traced back to the same variety. In an examination of the different criteria used and that can be used, Ghyselen and De Vogelaer point out the importance of the 'emic' criterion: '[a] variety needs to have emic category status, meaning that the social group realizing a certain type of language use should also perceive that type of language use as a separate category'. From an emic perspective, there is also a conception of variety as a 'Gestalt', which as such 'is always recognized holistically' (Krefeld 2016:268), and not on the basis of the individual characteristics that go to make up the variety.

The two models often coexist, sometimes casually rubbing shoulders, sometimes distinguished in an absolutely deliberate and methodologically meticulous manner, in empirical research. For important reflexions on the need to set out not from varieties but from variables, studying them qualitatively and quantitatively in a way likely to lead to statistically definable 'varieties', Trumper and Maddalon (1990) remains useful today. From a theoretical and methodological point of view, one should not forget the observations

of Krefeld (2020) aimed at modelling Koch's and Oesterreicher's (1990) diasystem of varieties and in general at modelling variation by setting out from (abstract) varieties and not from the much more concrete variants. Krefeld (2016:268) warns that it is not only insufficient but methodologically wrong to extract markedness values directly from utterances (i.e., production data), for the simple reason that the markedness or membership of a variant in a given dimension is not meta-information inherent to the linguistic form (such as its grammatical function). The 'market' of variants is based on the opposition between unmarked and neutral forms on the one hand, and variants that can be called marked on the other, because they are associated in the linguistic knowledge of speakers with the dimensions of. It is, says Krefeld, precisely these mental representations that make the marked variants stand out from the inconspicuous ones, precisely because they are unmarked. Variational markedness is actually an object, substantially, of perceptual linguistics.

In Italy as well, research on various aspects of variation has been driven by the use of multivariate analysis techniques (cf. Vietti 2019a) and, above all, by massive use of existing databases and corpora and by the construction of a new series of spoken Italian. Corpora allow for consultation of a very high number of documents and therefore also of single occurrences of the elements under investigation. In recent decades, the traditional activity of collecting corpora of written Italian and using them for lexicographical studies (one must mention the centuries-old work of the Accademia della Crusca and the *Opera del Vocabolario Italiano*, with the digital publication of the *Tesoro della lingua italiana delle origini*) has also been accompanied by a new activity in building written, spoken, and broadcast corpora used for studies on phonological, prosodic, morphosyntactic, and textual details (for an overview, see Cresti and Moneglia 2022). An overview specifically dedicated to spoken corpora and the implementation and dissemination of shared practices, with contributions from specialists, is Goria and Ciccolone (2020), and there is also an appendix in Ballarè, Fiorentini, and Miola (2024). It is impossible to give any account here of the complexity of the problems posed by the use of this type of data for research on linguistic variation if it lacks, or at least is vague about, 'speaker variables' (cf. Szmrecsanyi 2017). It is important to note,

however, that both ‘corpus’ and ‘variation’ (and ‘diastratic variation’ in particular) are often used in a non-specialist sense that is foreign to both ‘corpus linguistics’ and ‘variation linguistics’.

29.3 The subjunctive as a social stereotype or a sociolinguistic variable?

The subjunctive is that feature of the Italian language that would seem to be the diastratic marker *par excellence*. It is presented as such in numerous linguistic descriptions and, even more clearly, in characterizations of speakers’ (or at least some speakers’) ‘linguistic awareness’, and above all in characterizations made by the media. To give just one example, Angelo Panebianco, a distinguished political scientist and Professor Emeritus of the University of Bologna, in a commentary entitled ‘A country divided by the verb’ argued (in ‘Sette —Corriere della Sera’, 23 December 2017) that while class differences ‘are much less visible than in the past [. . .] it may perhaps be that linguistic habits themselves is what signals social differences’. Among these sociolinguistic traits, the use or non-use of the subjunctive stands out, according to Panebianco, for its ability to divide society into classes or, as another respected journalist had written a few years earlier, ‘we can define it as a banner of class identity. The defence of the subjunctive is one of the last battles being fought to avoid sinking into total equality, into a society without differences of social level, without classes’ (Piero Ottone, ‘Il club esclusivo di chi usa il congiuntivo’, Venerdì di Repubblica’, 17 October 2008).

Here we have a real ‘ideology of the subjunctive’ that cascades down from the media to handbooks on correct use of the language and to classrooms through textbooks and grammars of both L1 and L2, eventually leading teachers to wield their red pens against alleged ‘serious errors’. In these types of text, especially where the media get involved, one frequently finds statements such as ‘the

subjunctive is in decline' (or 'it is in serious crisis', or even 'it is a crucial element of the disaster befalling the Italian language'). The two causes most often cited for this supposed link between a feature of the language and the 'speaker variables' are: (a) a decline in cognitive capacities of the average Italian speaker (the ability to express doubt—commonly assumed to be a characteristic of the subjunctive—is apparently declining); (b) the crisis of class distinctions and the start of a process of simplification of the language and society. How does the knowledge of linguists fit into this very pervasive 'imaginary linguistic world'? A detailed overview of the state of the art can be found in Sgroi (2013), which surveys very different proposed scientific descriptions, highlighting their evident internal contradictions and speaking of fantasy-grammar and the 'phantasmatic' subjunctive not only with regard to the contributions of journalists and political scientists as mentioned above but also to many authoritative descriptions by linguists and to school grammars of Italian L1 and L2.

Before focusing on recent variationist analyses we could make a radical distinction between the subjunctive in independent clauses (e.g., *Che muoia* 'Let him die', *Che muoia?* 'Should he die?', *Voglia andare!* 'Let him go!', etc.) and dependent clauses. In independent clauses, the grammatical form (mood) of the subjunctive might be seen as expressing the semantic value (modality) of non-reality/uncertainty; in this case a use of the indicative mood in the above (*Muore* 'He dies', *Muore?* 'Is he dying?', etc.) would have had a different meaning. A quite different matter is the use of the subjunctive in dependent clauses where its occurrence is, in very many cases, linked to a cluster of lexical, morphosyntactic, and extra-linguistic factors.

If we look just at subordinate clauses, subjunctive and indicative very frequently function as mere combinatory variables (i.e., they are selected by the linguistic context); in other cases, they are in completely free variation and therefore can be associated with extralinguistic variables. In contemporary Italian, multiple trends are observed. We have uses of the indicative in linguistic contexts where the subjunctive was traditionally selected (*Vuole che lo faccio* 'He wants me to do it.') (cf., among others, De Mauro 1963; Simone 1993) and uses of the subjunctive instead of the indicative (Gualdo 2014; Renzi 2019; Ballarè and Cerruti 2023) in contexts where the

indicative was traditionally selected (*anche se l'accordo abbia attualmente pochissimo valore* 'even if the agreement currently has very little value'). Furthermore, there are also pressures to redesign the relationship between linguistic and extralinguistic variability where the subjunctive and indicative are in free variation. These tendencies are connected because the presence of a greater number of contexts in which both the indicative and the subjunctive can be found makes more variational resources available that can be used in multiple different directions.

The retreat of the subjunctive in a variety of languages is today the subject of numerous, mainly variationist, studies (Poplack et al. 2018). Of particular relevance to Italian is the work of Digesto (2019; 2021). These studies are based on the basic principles of variationist linguistics outlined above, including 'the principle of accountability', and make use of two corpora of spontaneous speech: the *Lessico di frequenza dell'italiano parlato* (De Mauro et al. 1993) and C-ORAL-ROM *Integrated Reference Corpora for Spoken Romance Languages* (Cresti and Moneglia 2005), while pointing out some limitations with respect to the extent of geographical coverage and the limited presence of speakers from middle and lower social classes. The context examined is that of complement clauses requiring the subjunctive in the standard language of the type: *Credo che tutti lo sappiate* 'I believe that you all know$_{SBJV}$'.

After testing a series of hypotheses which turn out to be incompatible with the data, Digesto (2021:24–27) concludes that the result does not lend support to one of the major assumptions prevailing in the literature and in normative accounts of the subjunctive, i.e., that there is a semantic/pragmatic motivation behind the choice of the subjunctive mood in embedded complement clauses, but, rather, that the variable use of the subjunctive in complement clauses in Italian indicates a routinized use of the subjunctive in discourse. Digesto examines the relationship between subjunctive vs indicative selection and external variables such as 'casual speech'- vs 'careful speech'-context and behaviour with regard to the variables 'educated speaker' vs 'low speaker'. In general, in a formal context and among educated speakers, the subjunctive appears more frequently. An analysis of the individual main clauses shows an element of great interest. If we examine only the central elements among main clauses, that is, those present in

greater number ('believe', 'think', 'it is not', 'seem') we observe that all of them show the same behaviour in both informal and formal styles, while what varies between the two contexts is that in the formal context the number of main clauses increases and in particular there are many cases of infrequent main clauses or ones that have only one occurrence within the corpus. Among the latter we have for example: *essere consapevole* 'be aware', *l'improbabile è* 'the unlikely (thing) is', *sorprendere* 'to surprise', *piacere* 'to please', *cercare* 'to seek', *è inevitabile* 'it is inevitable', *l'augurio è* 'the wish is', *il problema è* 'the problem is', *è giusto e corretto* 'it is right and proper', *è raro* 'it is rare', *l'auspicio è* 'the hope' is, *è strano* 'it is strange', *avere fiducia* 'have confidence', *dedurre* 'deduce', *assicurarsi* 'ensure', *reputare* 'be of the opinion', *sospettare* 'suspect', *è una vergogna* 'it is shameful', *è ragionevole* 'it is reasonable', *non essere felice* 'not to be happy', *non è da dire* 'it is not to be said', *non è umano* 'it is not human', etc. After these distinctive main clauses, there is 100 per cent use of the subjunctive. From this it can be deduced that the increase in the subjunctive in deliberate, linguistically self-aware, style is due to the increase in the use of these main clauses with low or very low rates of occurrence in the corpus. Analysing the data from the upper social class, it can also be seen that these speakers, as would have been expected, contribute to the group of main clauses with an extremely broad range of lexical types, many of which have low and very low frequency in the corpus. The middle and lower classes present a smaller range of lexical types in the main clause; however, these data require further research since these social classes are strongly underrepresented in both corpora. From this set of data Digesto (2019:163) deduces that: '[t]his result is consistent with the observation that the subjunctive is a sociolinguistic stereotype in contemporary Italian society. We would expect that if there is one segment of the population that would be extremely sensitive to this highly normative and salient feature, it would be the one with a higher level of education'. The conclusion is therefore that: '[o]n a more socio-linguistic aspect, this study confirms the linguistic prestige that the subjunctive has acquired in contemporary speech, being selected with a wider range of infrequent and singleton governors by highly educated speakers. Also, the highly lexicalized pattern on variability was found to be largely shared among the four main urban centres of Florence,

Milan, Rome, and Naples, thus countering the assumption of divergent linguistic behaviour between northern and southern varieties of Italian' (Digesto 2019:iii).

The use of corpora also characterizes a series of other recent investigations on the subjunctive/indicative alternation using generally variationist models. Among these is Ballarè and Cerruti (2023) which is based on the recent KiParla corpus (for which see the appendix to Ballarè et al. 2024) to analyse factive and semi-factive dependent clauses. The examples include, among other things, sentences in which we find in the main clause elements such as *contento* 'happy' and *normale* 'normal', *giusto* 'right', *tanto* 'a lot', *strano* 'strange', *bello* 'beautiful', *importante* 'important', *bene* 'well', *inutile* 'useless', *meglio* 'better', *sapere* 'know', *ricordarsi* 'remember', *capire* 'understand', *rendersi conto* 'realize', *scoprire* 'realize', *accorgersi* 'realize', *dovere* 'must', etc. The conclusion (Ballarè and Cerruti 2023:92) is that the distribution of the subordinate clauses analysed is not connected to any of the sociolinguistic variables examined: 'neither formality nor education, nor even the geographic origin of the speaker'.

29.4 Pronunciation as polycentric standard or social variable

The identification of the standard pronunciation model of contemporary Italian has been a matter of wide debate among linguists who have often stressed how it can be concretely identified neither in a social group nor in speakers who come from a specific area but must rather be considered as an abstract model. Bertinetto and Loporcaro (2005:132) describe this pronunciation as largely the preserve of a minority, not entirely homogeneous, and partly linked to specific learning by professional groups: '[standard Italian is] part of the active verbal repertoire of just a minority of educated people from central Italy (especially Tuscany), besides being used by professional speakers or trained stage actors (the single idiolects spoken by these groups of people may, however, include sporadic

features typical of Roman Italian)'. Berruto (2012c:70) also notes how standard pronunciation is usually 'the artificial result of specific training'.

If the existence of an effective standard in pronunciation learned by simple immersion still appears debatable today (cf. Crocco 2017), there is broad consensus among linguists regarding the notable consistency, both in informal and more formal uses, even by speakers characterized as high on the social scale, of phonetic traits 'of varieties of the Italian language diversified in relation to the origin and geographical distribution of the speakers' (Sobrero 1988:732). These varieties, labelled as 'regional Italian', are characterized by being 'the true spoken reality of Italian' (Mengaldo 1994:96). Canepari (1986) is responsible for one of the most widely used descriptions of the main varieties of regional Italian in relation to pronunciation. They largely coincide with the areal partitions of dialectological studies (Pellegrini 1977). The main groupings are identified with northern regional Italian (within which the Milan variety is placed), central regional Italian (divided between the Tuscan variety and other median varieties), southern regional Italian (upper-southern and extreme-southern), and Sardinian regional Italian, as an intermediate variety between the central and southern ones.

Since the 1960s, there has been a debate about the attitudes attributing prestige and stigma towards these different varieties. De Mauro (1963), on the basis of a series of observations, had proposed a hierarchy of prestige of the different regional varieties of Italian that saw Romanesco (the variety of Rome) at the highest level, driven by television and cinema, with the northern and Florentine varieties occupying an intermediate level, while the lowest level was occupied by the southern varieties. About twenty years later, on the basis of new approaches to the study of linguistic attitudes, as well as empirical research, Galli de' Paratesi (1984) reached different results indicating that the Milanese variety was the variety of highest prestige. Only in recent years has this line of research been resumed with a much revised methodological and statistical apparatus and arriving at results that are not entirely consistent with each other (Calamai and Ricci 2005; De Pascale, Marzo, and Speelman 2017). Furthermore, for the prestige values, among Italian migrants, of Italian varieties abroad see Natale (2021). This debate must also be

kept in mind in the investigations that we will examine below and which point to a reconfiguration of individual variables in relation to the varieties of Italian. In particular, the relationship between standard varieties and regional varieties is often represented (cf. Cerruti 2011; Vietti 2019a) as a combination of dynamic sociolinguistic processes that operate vertically and horizontally. All this, especially in pronunciation, leads to a reconfiguration of characteristics traditionally linked to the origin of the speakers so that they become markers of social identity.

> On the horizontal dimension, recent years have seen an increase in the supra-regional use of originally region-specific features. In fact, many regional varieties of Italian increasingly consist of both autochthonous and allochthonous linguistic features, the latter originating from different geographic areas. This phenomenon is mostly the result of internal migration and is especially noticeable in Northern Italy (as south-to-north migration flows have always been the most significant) and among the younger generations, regardless of whether they were born to immigrant parents. Moreover, it is especially widespread among less educated speakers and in casual speech, and it is often accompanied by changes in the indexicalities of these features; that is to say, linguistic features that spread beyond their borders frequently shift from being markers of geographic provenance to being markers of social identity.' (Ballarè and Cerruti 2023)

We will now examine some of these phenomena at the segmental level, completely leaving aside research on intonational contours (cf. Gili Fivela, Avesani, et al. 2015). The first of these phenomena concerns an area of the system of considerable phonological and phonetic complexity: the phonological opposition between the voiceless fricative /s/ and voiced /z/ in intervocalic position. How many consonants Italian has is a question which has often been debated because, as in this case, some phonological contrasts have a low functional load, being strictly associated with only one geographical area (Tuscany) and occurring in a very limited distribution. In the rest of Italy the contrast /s/ vs /z/ is neutralized in intervocalic position while the pronunciation [z] is generalized in northern regional varieties of Italian as [s] tends to be in the central and southern varieties (see also §15.2.1.2.2).

A widely attested phenomenon (cf. Galli de' Paratesi 1984; Giordano and Savy 2012) is the spread of the northern variant [z] towards the central and southern varieties, generally interpreted as the emergence of a new standard that has the northern varieties as its basis. Sociophonetic research conducted by Nocchi and Filipponio (2012) in Livorno (western Tuscany) confirms these studies by

attesting the pronunciation [z] even in contexts and words where both Rohlfs and Migliorini reported the variant [s] (for example in *casa* 'house', *cosa* 'thing', *riso* 'rice'). Furthermore, the sample used, being stratified by gender (eighteen speakers: nine males and nine females), also reveals an interesting configuration of the data in relation to the social marker assumed by the phenomenon. Together with the presence of three different variants—in addition to [s] and [z], the lenis allophone [z̥]—women show a clear preference for the variant [z̥] in reading style. In this and other surveys, women appear to be 'more sensitive to the prestige factor, since they tend to produce variants which are closer to the standard and characterised by the features [+prestige, +/–overt, –stigmatised], confirming that they are generally more status conscious than men' (Nocchi and Filipponio 2012:56).

A second widely studied phenomenon is so-called Tuscan *gorgia* (cf. §1.4.3.1). This is a process that involves the simple plosives /k, p, t/ losing the occlusion phase in post-vocalic contexts both in the body of the word (*amaca* 'hammock' > [aˈmaha]) and at the word boundary (*la casa* 'the house' > [laˈhasa]) and another weakening process affects to a lesser extent the corresponding voiced /g/, /d/, and /b/, as well as the post-alveolar affricates /d͡ʒ/ and /t͡ʃ/. *Gorgia* (cf. also §8.1) is a phenomenon of gradual weakening, the final stage of which can be deletion in the case of the velar, via fricative and approximant pronunciations. *Gorgia* emanates from the provinces of Florence, Pistoia, and Siena. In the territories on the margins of this area, *gorgia* has an unstable distribution, but is progressively expanding, 'becoming more and more present in varieties of peripheral Tuscany which were not affected by it in the past' (Biliotti and Calamai 2012:1). The prolonged existence and local diffusion of this change is connected with the cultural prestige of the Florentine variety in the history of the Italian language (see Chapter 2). Speaking like a Florentine is considered by Tuscans at the beginning of the twenty-first century as an indicator of a higher socioeconomic status and as a prestigious variant, and is recognized as such even outside the region.

29.5 *Italiano popolare* today

29.5.1 Changes in perspective

We have already seen previously how research on *italiano popolare*, the variety of language that has been characterized from the beginning as being linked to social groups with limited access to writing, began with the analysis of written texts with the use of the standard taught in schools as a term of comparison. Varvaro (1978a) brought to light the distortion involved in this perspective early on, a distortion which led to attributing to this variety traits which are in fact typical of informal, unplanned speech by speakers of different social backgrounds. The start of major work on spoken language in Italy (cf. Sornicola 1981; Voghera 1992; 2017), and above all, the emergence of research using corpora, has introduced important innovations at a theoretical and descriptive level. Of particular relevance for this change of outlook has been the work of Alfonzetti (2002) on the so-called non-standard relative, i.e., on the analytical relative construction formed by the generic complementizer *che* 'that' + resumption by means of a clitic personal pronoun or possessive adjective (cf. §37.2.3), e.g., *Ecco la chiave che l'ho persa* lit. 'Here is the key that I lost it', as well as without a resumptive pronoun, e.g., *una busta che non so il contenuto* lit. 'an envelope that I don't know the contents'. Through the analysis of a corpus of speech collected *ad hoc* and differentiated diaphasically and diastratically, Alfonzetti comes to the conclusion that: (a) 'the fundamental difference between educated speech and popular speech is a negative difference: in the latter, in fact, the paradigm of "il quale" [lit. 'the which': a form of relativizer marking both number and gender] is totally absent, while present in the more controlled and planned speech of educated speakers, although in a very low proportion'; (b) 'there is also a quantitative difference in the frequency of use of the type "cui" [lit. 'to whom; whose; (Preposition +) whom/which'], almost but not entirely absent from popular speech'; (c) 'otherwise, all types of relative structure that characterize popular speech are also present in cultured speech'. Alfonzetti's

study raises the same questions as Lepschy (1989b:45) regarding other structures such as the structure where the stressed pronoun is redundantly doubled by a clitic pronoun in *a me mi* lit. 'to me me' e.g., *A me mi piace il mare*, 'I like the sea' (roughly, 'To me the sea is pleasing to me'), for standard *A me piace il mare*; or hypothetical structures with a conditional or an imperfect subjunctive in both clauses: e.g., double conditional in *Se io andrei alla festa mi annoierei*, lit. 'If I would go to the party, I would be bored'; double imperfect subjunctive in *Se io fossi uomo ci andassi ogni sera*, lit. 'If I were a man, I went there every evening' for standard *Se io andassi alla festa mi annoierei* and *Se io fossi uomo ci andrei ogni sera*. Such structures are identified from time to time as characteristic of popular Italian (for some lists of features, see Berruto 1983; D'Achille 1994; 2010; Vanelli 2016). Faced with these data, many have wondered whether these processes should not actually be classified as forces of linguistic simplification that operate both in popular Italian and in informal spoken Italian (Berruto 2012c; Guerini 2024).

A second area of notable change in perspective in the description of *italiano popolare* is the increasing prominence of regional and local traits that are clearly at odds with the original characterization of this variety as being shaped by unitary tendencies throughout the peninsula (cf. the label 'unitary' applied to *italiano popolare* by De Mauro 1970). Increasingly in empirical research, the local and regional traits of *italiano popolare* come to the fore, actually in line with what is generally indicated as its main characteristic, i.e., interference from the local substratum (Amenta 2018). Indeed, the use of speech corpora instead of letters, diaries, and war postcards has eliminated one unitary characteristic of *italiano popolare*, namely, that which arises from the ubiquitous deviations from the orthographic norm such as failure to mark, or incorrect perception of, word boundaries, absent or erratic punctuation, e.g., *Miacara, moglie. vidolemie. buonenotizie* for *mia cara moglie vi do le mie buone notizie* 'my dear wife I give you my good news'; uncertainty in rendering long consonants, often written as single letters, e.g., *mato* for *matto* 'mad', *ti poso asicurare* for *ti posso assicurare* 'I can assure you'; simplification of consonant clusters, and spelling errors.

29.5.2 Restandardization or obsolescence

We have highlighted throughout how the trends at work in contemporary Italian are today largely described as processes of restandardization (cf. also Chapter 26). This term refers to the fact that traits perceived in a certain historical period as being linked to social groups considered low on the social scale, and therefore generally avoided by educated speakers especially in formal situations, lose their markedness, thus become neutral, and can therefore spread even in contexts hitherto generally closed to them. A broad overview of the areas where processes of restandardization are underway is in Berruto (2012c); see also Ballarè and Micheli (2018) and the acute observations of Binazzi (2019). The sociolinguistic markedness values of some of these traits are investigated in a large-scale research on university students from Bologna in the UniverS-ITA project for which see Grandi (2018). Together with the redefinition of the relationship between individual elements and the different varieties, the issue of the possible progressive disappearance of *italiano popolare* or, as has been said, of its obsolescence has come up on several occasions. In fact, it is widely stressed that there is a radical decrease in the number of those who speak only dialect (according to the data of the ISTAT—national statistical institute—surveys, down to just 4 per cent in 2014) and in the number of illiterates and semi-literates (according to data from the 2021 ISTAT census, 3.7 per cent of the population) and that both these characteristics mostly coexist in elderly speakers. Berruto (2014) in an essay asking whether *italiano popolare* still exists, argues against the idea that it has disappeared. The elements in support of his thesis are on the one hand texts (both written and oral) strongly marked diastratically such as the notes of one of the leaders of the Sicilian mafia, Bernardo Provenzano, and the fact that among the traits listed almost twenty years earlier (cf. Berruto 1987a:119–121) as typical of *italiano popolare* (either strong features presumed to be absent in other varieties, or weaker ones to some extent present in other low diastratic varieties) about half are still unchallenged. These are: construction of the hypothetical sentence with a double conditional or a double subjunctive as described above, differences in selection of the auxiliaries *avere* ‘have’ and *essere* ‘be’

(*ha stato* 'he has been' (with 'have'), *sono mangiato* 'I have eaten' (with 'be') for standard Italian *è stato* and *ho mangiato* with auxiliaries 'be' and 'have', respectively), and the tendency to regularize nominal paradigms, mostly with the adoption of singular *-o* and plural *-i* as masculine endings (*l'agento* 'the agent' for *l'agente*; *feroviero* 'railwayman' for *ferroviere*; masculine *grando* 'big' for standard singular *grande*), and feminines in singular *-a* and plural *-e* instead of *-e* and *-i* (*la moglia* 'the wife' for standard *la moglie*; feminine *inglesa* 'English woman' for standard singular *inglese*), and of the forms of the article (e.g., *il zio* 'the uncle' for standard *lo zio*, *un sbaglio* 'a mistake' for standard *uno sbaglio*). On the other hand, we should remember that in the old and new spoken corpora there are a small number of speakers with medium and low education who nevertheless represent 48 per cent of the Italian population who have a maximum of eight years of schooling (15 per cent have only five). This means that we cannot make completely unimpressionistic judgements about the presence of these traits in adults and young people living in Italy, just as it seems risky to speak of a progressive reduction of linguistic differences between speakers with different social positions. We have already mentioned cases of features which once had other characteristics acquiring new diastratic markedness characteristics. We shall mention others in what follows.

29.5.3 New diastratic variations based on 'ethnic background'?

Hitherto no mention has been made of forms of intralinguistic variability linked to the new migratory situations, which are now consistent and partly stabilized in different areas of the country. Considering the whole population with a migratory background (foreigners and naturalized Italians), the population of foreign origin has continued to grow in Italy, reaching a total of almost 6,800,000 residents on 1 January 2021, of which approximately 1,600,000 are the people who have acquired Italian citizenship (therefore they have become 'Italians' during their lives).

At the beginning of 2022, in Italy there were foreigners from 194 different countries, fifty countries being represented by communities

of at least 10,000 residents. The ranking of the first five nationalities has remained stable over time and the Romanian, Moroccan, Albanian, Chinese, and Ukrainian communities make up approximately 49 per cent of foreign residents. Although studies on these new realities are now very consistent (from the acquisition of Italian to analyses of the linguistic landscape, to teaching, cf. for an overview Giacalone Ramat, Chini, and Andorno 2013), few systematic studies have been conducted on the outcomes of stabilized contact between endogenous and exogenous multilingual repertoires and even fewer on phenomena of intralingual variation linked to speaker variables. Two very different situations have been the object of particular attention. The first is Mazara del Vallo, a small town located in south-western Sicily, a bridgehead for communication with North Africa, the scene of an immigration phenomenon that is prominent for its antiquity, consistency, and homogeneity of the place of origin. Almost all the immigrants of Mazara come from Tunisia and today make up about 5 per cent of the population. The long field research conducted in the early 2000s by Amoruso (2007) allows us to reconstruct a reality in which standard Arabic, Tunisian dialect, varieties of Italian, Sicilian dialect, and French are compared and encounter different outcomes, both in the uses and in the attitudes, both in the first and in the second and third generations.

The second situation is Turin, which has been the object of attention in the past for the extraordinary migration from the south that in a few years transformed its linguistic structure. It has been calculated that in this city of approximately 1,200,000 inhabitants in 1971 only 150,000 were children of Turinese parents, approximately 380,000 were born in the city to immigrant families and approximately 670,000, corresponding to 55.8 per cent of the population, had immigrated during their lives (cf. Sobrero 1973). The city is today also the destination of significant international migration from both EU and non-EU countries. Among the latter, the presence of people from Morocco and in general from the Maghreb is significant. Perhaps it is no coincidence, therefore, that according to studies conducted by Boario (2008), young adolescents, even those of Maghreb origin, seem to share a linguistic characteristic such as *rafforzamento fonosintattico* (whereby in certain conditions the initial consonant of a word doubles: see

§15.2.1.2.4), a phenomenon widely present in southern Italy, presumably propagated following the large internal migrations mentioned above. Its presence has been detected among young people both for native speakers of the regional variety and for non-native speakers of Italian. Among young people, *rafforzamento fonosintattico* carries a new social meaning different from the simple regional marker, in particular foreign adolescents use it much more with peers than with adults, with a clear social meaning of belonging to the peer group.

In the same city, Alessandro Vietti, on the basis of an extensive field study of Peruvian immigrant women and using the construct of social network as an extralinguistic variable with which to correlate the variety of Italian, to a greater or lesser extent influenced by Spanish, comes to the conclusion that:

> The Italian spoken by Peruvians with Italians—in the context of the interview—can be represented as a continuum of varieties characterized by the variable presence of loanwords from Spanish. This variation is closely connected to the way in which the speakers organize their personal social network, tending, on the one hand, towards an expansion and diversification of fields, roles and situations and, on the other, towards the maintenance of a single encapsulating and impermeable field. Functional words [. . .] therefore acquire the status of real sociolinguistic or, more precisely, ethnolinguistic variables that appear in the Italian repertoire alongside the sub-standard varieties. (Vietti 2005:177f.)

The study of situations where immigrant communities have become stabilized for some time, and in particular of the linguistic dynamics of the second- and third-generation members, will one day be able to tell us more about the emergence of microvarieties which, even if only at a local level, in some way correlate with the speaker's migratory background.

A very last area of research, which we can do no more than mention here, is linked to the emergence within the international, as well as Italian, context of an area of studies which analyses at the sociolinguistic, acquisitional, and language-teaching level the specific profile of a young and illiterate migrant, a type becoming prominent as a result of recent migration across the central Mediterranean (cf. D'Agostino 2021). Together with interesting phenomena such as the use of digital media as a context for learning reading and writing (D'Agostino and Mocciaro 2021), Mocciaro (2020) explores

phenomena that could lead to the emergence of stable interlanguages among ‘illiterates’. In particular she refers to:

> persistence of local phenomena of grammaticalisation (the autonomous creation of grammatical formatives through the reuse of forms frequent in the input) appears to mark the limited literacy of the learners. In other words, this persistence represents a diastratically-marked trait, not because it derives from contact with diastratically-marked varieties of Italian, but because it reflects the sociolinguistic profile of language users (their degree of literacy). On the other hand, such persistence results directly from the migrants’ condition of life, which prevents or makes it difficult for individuals to access more effective acquisition conditions.
>
> If future research shows that phenomena of this type actually tend to stabilise, then it could be speculated that they configure specific sub-types of interlanguage, not only in diachrony (as phases of development), but also in synchrony (as varieties). As in the case of other varieties described within the Italian sociolinguistic tradition, this synchrony might be an interrupted diachrony. But this is merely a suggestion that can only be verified by future investigation. (Mocciaro 2020:175)

In the linguistic history of Italian and its varieties there could therefore reappear, in a way unforeseeable only a few years ago, the speaker variable: ‘degree of literacy’.

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[1] ‘Popular Italian’. We keep the Italian designation: cf. Chapter 37.

[2] For the term *semicolto* see §37.1. Broadly, it means ‘semi-educated’.

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Chapter 30

Gender and language

Francesca M. Dovetto

30.1 Gender and the Italian language

Adopting a linguistic perspective, the study of the feminine, as opposed to the masculine, presents some intrinsic weaknesses.[1] While this topic can be (and has been) explored from various angles—historical, sociological, anthropological, and others—it remains weakly defined in linguistic terms, making it difficult to draw plausible generalizations from the numerous studies on individual aspects of women's (or men's) communication. These studies range from specific linguistic phenomena such as vowel production or the use of discourse markers to more general aspects of communication such as the pragmatics of public conversational exchange.

Structural differences, which are part of the natural basis of semiosis, are not strictly relevant in marking a sexual difference attributable to usage, as they constitute a kind of linguistic universal. Differences in vowel pronunciation between men and women are attributed to anatomical differences between sexes and include the size of the larynx, which is approximately 50 per cent larger in men than in women; the vocal folds, which are longer and thicker in men, shorter and thinner in women; and the vocal tract, which is longer in men than in women. They result in voices that are physically and perceptually diverse,[2] typically deeper in men than in women.[3]

According to some studies (starting with Ohala 1984), the acoustic structure of the sounds produced—higher-pitched for women and lower-pitched for men—conveys, in the former case, submission and insecurity, and in the latter, dominance and self-confidence. A similar correlation of an innate nature is also reflected in the

difference, observable in most languages worldwide, between the interrogative sentence, which conveys the informational dependency of the speaker, and the declarative sentence, which is self-sufficient from an informational standpoint. These and other biological Codes have therefore undergone a sort of grammaticalization,[4] which has also been observed in Italian,[5] as evidenced by studies on the acoustic and prosodic traits of charismatic voice (Signorello et al. 2012; Signorello and Demolin 2013; Signorello 2014; Gurrado and Sorianello 2017; Sorianello and Gurrado 2017).[6]

On a completely different front, which is not biological but pragmatic and related to linguistic usage, another stereotype assigns greater linguistic conservatism to women. According to this model, developed by Labov (1966) and later revised in Labov (2001), women lead linguistic changes due to their central position in the socioeconomic hierarchy, having close contacts both within their social groups and beyond with neighbouring circles.[7] They tend to prefer to adopt prestigious varieties—i.e., forms that are correct and closer to the standard—unlike men, who are inclined to use socially disfavoured forms.[8] Even in this case, this attitude can easily be attributed to any linguistic community, and it is easy to find examples and counterexamples in Italian. Following this perspective, Binazzi's lexical study of the vocabulary used among young Florentines (Binazzi 1995) is emblematic. It reveals that the female subgroup tends to use certain 'traditional' (more conservative) forms, such as *scodella* 'dish, bowl', *gruccia* 'clothes hanger', and *odori* (herbs used for making a meat mixture), and, more generally among the male subgroup, a predominance of vocabulary that is immediately recognizable as traditional (popular).[9] The vitality of the traditional forms attributed to the female group can easily be interpreted as the greater competence of this group of speakers with respect to these specific *designata*. From a more sociological rather than linguistic perspective, this simply reveals an evident difference in the contexts of use of the relevant terms by the two subgroups of informants, male and female, which ultimately determines the selection of specific linguistic forms.[10]

Although gender stereotypes have allowed for the identification of linguistic forms that may prejudice women and thereby have contributed to reducing the discriminatory power of these forms over time, interpreting sex-related differences in language as one of the

major variables of linguistic usage (a sort of new 'dia-variable') leads one to overlook the undoubtedly greater complexity of the variationist paradigm. This paradigm cannot ignore the multiple and complex conditions that shape the experiences of individuals, alongside group dynamics determined by diastratic variation and gender variables (Sornicola 2009).

The phenomenon known as 'egocentric reference'—observed predominantly, though not exclusively, among elderly women with low education living in small towns—also highlights the complexity of local phenomena alongside global ones (Sornicola 1979; 2009). It involves a phenomenon whereby pronominal elements contradict the principle of anaphoric or cataphoric recoverability, because they are not in an anaphoric or cataphoric relationship with an identifiable nominal phrase in the text.[11]

Sornicola (2009) interprets these records, observed among elderly Sicilian women, as a type of inner monologue in which communication is not referentially oriented, and thus appears to violate Grice's maxims of relation ('be relevant') and manner ('be clear'). However, in a society such as Italy's, where women have traditionally participated less in work activities outside the domestic sphere of home and caregiving, the same trait is easily generalized as typical of the entire female category. At the same time, it is difficult to deny that this is a characteristic that can also be easily attributed to other types of speakers under similar sociolinguistic conditions of social isolation, whether voluntary or induced.[12]

Whether the issue of the sex-language correlation is the effect of a mere sociolinguistic variation, and thus should be considered a contingent and mutable variation, or whether it is a structural and necessary variation due to a dual linguistic and gendered subjectivity — female and male—remains moot. In Italy, the numerous papers presented in Marcato (1995a) were among the first to tackle this topic at all levels of linguistic analysis and significantly contributed to the discussion (Marcato 1995b).[13] As a result, it will not be possible to speak of a differentiated language in terms of exclusive, rigidly fixed variants. However, it is still possible, even for the Italian language, to identify several *preferred* variants, styles, or registers that co-occur with different linguistic features, belonging to various structural levels of language (phonetics, prosody, lexicon, discourse pragmatics, etc.).

30.2 Variations dependent on the sex of the individuals in the phonetic process of communication

In the field of phonetics, it is important to note how studies on women's voices have appeared only relatively recently, largely due to instrumental and theoretical and technical factors (Albano Leoni 2017).[14] However, these challenges have been overcome by new generations of corpora that are balanced in terms of speakers' sex. The outdated assertion, repeated by Rohlfs (2021a:28), that women and children have a 'più sguaiata' ('more uncouth') pronunciation compared to men would nowadays be recognized as attributable to a more marked ethological and sociopsychological approach, one which is groundless from a sociolinguistic perspective (Ferrero, Magno Caldognetto, and Cosi 1995).

In the more recent work by Gurrado and Sorianello (2017), the gender question shifts towards the perceptual evaluation of a low-pitched voice as a vehicle of dominance traits, in contrast to the high-pitched voice, seen as non-dominant. The study, replicated with a different-sized sample of female speakers and consisting of perceptual evaluations of their speech in two different tasks (reading a journalistic text and describing a recipe), is based on the hypothesis that there is a correlation between pitch and its meaning in terms of 'dominance/submission'. The hypothesis found weak confirmation in the results. The association of a low pitch with a dominant personality, and conversely, a high pitch with a non-dominant personality is only tendential. This supports the idea that the affective and social meanings derived from listening to a simple voice are largely guided by cultural and social stereotypes rather than stable and predetermined acoustic correlates.[15] From the perspective of kinesics and proxemics, it is undeniable that the linguistic communication of Italian men and women exhibits both stereotypes and actual variability in use according to different sociolinguistic parameters.[16] Among these, gender variability has undoubtedly been one of the least explored. While it is relatively easy to identify symbolic gestures representative of the female or male world (such

as the female symbol made with the thumbs and index fingers extended and joined to form a triangle, an iconic gesture of feminist movements, or the phallic gesture with the palm up and all fingers bent except the middle one), identifying their variability in use—i.e., the mode of employment, whether predominantly female or male, of the gesture concerning the semantic content of the discourse—is quite another matter. Similarly, little is known about the gendered use of deictic gestures (indexical gestures) or gestures with pragmatic functions aimed at marking the social aspect of interaction, which are indicative of the linguistic act itself and the goal the speaker aims to achieve (Campisi 2018; Colasanti 2023). For this latter type, which is more conventional, Italian seems to offer a privileged field of study for their pragmatically codified use, especially in the south (e.g., the pragmatic presenting gesture of the *palm-up* hand). The main variable to which gestures are linked is, in fact, more diatopic than gender-based.

With exclusive reference to the gender variable, the few studies produced show that women know fewer gestures and use them less, especially in public.[17] The use of gestures, whether co-verbal or as a substitute for linguistic expression, involving a somewhat deliberate and conscious choice determined by assessments of appropriateness and social opportunity, cannot be separated from the evaluation of the specific context, both contextual and co-textual, in which it is produced.

30.3 Representations of masculinity and femininity conveyed by the lexicon of Italian

The lexicon is the level at which a sexually oriented worldview most prominently emerges, revealing the patriarchal structure underpinning our modern society. It exposes the limited, negative semantic space allocated to women, who have long been cast as objects defined by their biology—specifically, sexuality and

reproductive function (Violi 1986). The representation of reality conveyed by the lexicon is still today skewed towards only one of the two genders, the male. The works of Guiraud (1978) and Yaguello (1978) for French, and Maraschio (2011) for Italian, show the boundaries and limitations determined by the domestic sphere, caregiving, and reproduction.

The images of women constructed by Italian over time reflect this model, which, rather than representing all the faces of women and their multiple identities and affiliations (political, ethnic, cultural, class, religious, professional, etc.), reductively focuses on few macro-roles. *Italiano popolare* is rich in references to these images, revealed through folk etymologies, idioms, and semantic specifications. An example is the phrase *donna Bissodia/Bisodia*, which designates a woman as excessively pious and foolish, where *bissodia* represents a reinterpretation of the words from the Lord's Prayer in Latin 'panem nostrum quotidianum *da nobis hodie*' ('*give us this day* our daily bread'). In popular language, the term specifically refers to a type of woman, the *bissodia*, stigmatized as 'excessively pious' or in the lower Veneto variant, as a woman who is 'foolish, uncouth' (Beccaria 1999). The term *bigotta* in the western Ticinese Alpine variant presents an interesting semantic variation: it denotes the last cow of the herd, probably alluding to the habits of the *pinzochera*, a coarse and pettily devout woman who followed all the religious processions (Dovetto 2003; 2011). But it is especially by examining dictionaries and lexicons, prime sites of linguistic codification, that we see the difficulties faced by female identity in emerging beyond the roles assigned by tradition, which are reflected not only in the definitions but also in the examples provided in citations. These examples add depth to the cultural sedimentations of the terminological and lexicographical perspective (Fusco 2009).

In the most important dictionary of the late nineteenth century (Tommaseo-Bellini 1865–1879), Niccolò Tommaseo adorns certain entries with misogynistic notes, thus inevitably contributing to the construction of further consensus. To explain the concept of 'faithful wife', Tommaseo writes: 'C'è delle buone mogli che a certe ore del giorno quasi si meriterebbero il titolo di cattive' (s.v. *moglie*) 'There are good wives (wife) who at certain times of day almost deserve the title of bad'.

The analysis of dictionaries allows us to examine the prevalence of stereotypes. Even today, there are numerous instances of subordinate meanings assigned to feminine forms compared to masculine ones. For example, a man can be described as *allegro* 'cheerful', *libero* 'free', *serio* 'serious' without these attributes implying anything about his private life or sexual conduct. In contrast, a woman who is *allegra* or *libera* is often perceived as having loose morals. Similarly, a man can be *compiacente* 'accommodating' on a moral level, while a woman, if *compiacente*, is perceived as such on a sexual level.

In a survey of the *GRADIT* dictionary (De Mauro 2007c), Fusco (2009) identifies forty-seven idioms with the headword *donna* 'woman', of which about half denote a woman of loose morals or with a pejorative connotation. Conversely, none of the eighty-two idioms with the headword *uomo* 'man' identifies a man as 'loose', even for those forms that have a derogatory equivalent in the feminine, such as *uomo di mondo* vs *donna di mondo* 'worldly man' vs 'worldly woman', *uomo di strada* vs *donna di strada* 'homeless man' vs 'street woman', *uomo pubblico* vs *donna pubblica* 'public man' vs 'public woman'. In all these cases, the feminine form denotes a 'bad woman, prostitute', while the masculine form conveys neutral or even positive meanings (e.g., *uomo pubblico* is 'a man, especially a politician, whose actions or opinions have public resonance'). Very few masculine idioms have negative connotations, such as *uomo di paglia* lit. 'man of straw' for a weak, vain, and superficial man, and *uomo delle caverne* 'caveman' for 'very crude man'.

The *Dizionario letterario del lessico amoroso* (Boggione and Casalegno 2000) and the *Lessico della maldicenza italiana* (Casalegno and Goffi 2005) provide further insight into the analysis of terms attributed to both sexes. Their examination reveals a high number of syntagms with WOMAN as the base, which create synonymous idioms in Italian for the same type of woman: those of loose morals, high sexual availability, or outright prostitutes. These expressions can have an ironic value (e.g., *buonadonna* 'good woman'), refer to the location of prostitution (e.g., *donna di strada*, *da marciapiede* 'street woman', 'pavement woman', 'working girl'), or relate to the concepts of commerce or profit (e.g., *donna a pagamento* 'woman for payment'). They can also express notions of sin, evil, or immorality (e.g., *donna disonesta*, *di malaffare*

'dishonest woman') or availability (e.g., *donna allegra*, *di facile costume* 'cheerful woman', 'woman of loose morals'), imply pleasure and entertainment (e.g., *donna da/di piacere* 'woman of pleasure'), or indicate common property (e.g., *donna pubblica* 'public woman') (Casalegno and Goffi 2005, s.v. *donna*). In contrast to this extensive list,[18] there is a scarcity of similar constructions for the opposite sex, based on *uomo* 'man'.

Numerous other areas of the lexicon, typically related to the feminine sphere, show the mark of the male perspective on female sexuality and the female body. Guiraud (1978) lists as many as six hundred synonyms for the female genitals in French and about four hundred for prostitute.[19] They represent many semantically undifferentiated terms, which reveal how the female body and sexuality enrich what is termed the language of insults and offences (hate speech). Analysing the Italian lexicon and dictionaries leads to similar conclusions, highlighting the large number of synonyms related to the female sex, and thus to the body and reproduction (Maddalon and Trumper 1995). The list includes terms of considerable metaphorical richness, drawing from various, often diverse, areas of experience. For the French language, Yaguello (1978) identifies, among the semantic fields most frequently used to structure sexual metaphors for women, those of zoomorphic metaphors, and those of food and household objects—terms that can be broadly categorized within the macro-field of *merchandise*. In Italian, the semantic area from which terms for the female genitals are drawn is wide and complex, including generic terms (e.g., *cosa* 'thing', *essa* 'she, it'); domestic objects (e.g., *brocca* 'jug', *calamaio* 'inkwell', *cesta* 'basket', Tsc. *potta* 'pot', *salvadanaio* 'piggybank'); names of machines and tools (e.g., for hunting and fishing, such as *ragna* 'fine-meshed net to catch birds', *rete* 'net', *tagliola* 'bear trap', *trappola* 'trap'); musical instruments (e.g., *chitarrina* 'little guitar', *fischiarola* 'whistle', *piva* 'bagpipe', *zampogna* 'reed pipe, bagpipe'); religious metaphors (e.g., *altare* 'altar'); names of animals, especially small ones (e.g., *calandra* 'calandra lark', *gatta* '(pussy) cat', *passera* 'sparrow', *sorca* 'rat'); terms from food (e.g., *castagna* 'chestnut', *fica* 'fig', *insalata* 'salad', *prugna* 'plum') and flora (e.g., *fiore* 'flower', *rosa* 'flower'); place names with clear reference to their exotic allure or that are easily used metaphorically (e.g., *Babilonia* 'Babylon', *Paesi Bassi* 'Low Countries', *Valleoscura* 'Dark Valley'); and personal

names (e.g., *Bernarda*, *Filippa*, *Venere* 'Venus') (Boggione and Casalegno 1996; 2000; Beccaria 2006).

In contrast to this extensive repertoire which, as observed in French, outlines a sort of conceptual map of widespread stereotypes and symbolizations, and which firmly maintains a view of women as primarily confined to the realm of sexuality—as mothers and reproducers, as well as 'objects of male desire that establish their value and desirability' (Violi 1986)—there is a unique synonymy for the male reproductive organ associated with the rational sphere of the individual, as evidenced by the use of *senno* 'sense' as a synonym for the male sexual organ.[20]

Regarding the profession commonly referred to as the oldest in the world (*meretrice* 'prostitute'), even in Italian, the number of synonyms is significant: Casalegno and Goffi (2005) record as many as 116. The following terms are noteworthy for their metaphorical richness: *baldracca*, derived from the name of the city of Baghdad, rendered in Florence as *Baldacca*, *Baldacco*, and *Baldracca*, and confused with Babylon, a place of debauchery and perversion;[21] *ciccantona*, derived from the proper name Cecco Antonio, used derogatorily for 'buffoon, scoundrel';[22] *zambracca*, derived from *zambra* meaning 'room, latrine', with pejorative suffix, meaning 'properly a maid, especially one who is filthy and sloppy' (Boggione and Casalegno: 2000, s.v. *zambracca*).

In the lexicon of Italian, masculine and feminine terms related to the semantic field of the house are distributed relatively evenly. In this case, the role that tradition assigns to women in caring for the home is evident only from exemplifications. While the Tommaseo-Bellini dictionary includes entries like *casiere* (male) and *casiera* (female) meaning 'guardian of the house', or *casalingo* (adjective) used for 'a man or woman who is homebound, who stays at home, who takes care of the house', the *GRADIT* (De Mauro 2007c), although it also records *casiere/a*, recognizes *casalingo* only in its humorous usage, meaning 'a man who, in certain circumstances, takes on domestic work'.[23] The association with the female sphere is clear and explicit in the case of the verb *accasare*, recorded in Tommaseo and Bellini (1865–1879) as '[t]o place a woman in marriage in the man's home. Hence, to marry (off)'. As tradition dictates, and as the lexicon records, it is the woman who marries into the man's home, and it is the man who receives the woman into his

home. The direction is always unilaterally from the woman to what is identified as her endpoint in ancient law and in the collective imagination recorded by the dictionary, i.e., the social and reproductive purpose, namely the man. Tommaseo and Bellini also record *accasatore* as a noun, used only in the masculine form, meaning 'properly, the one who gives a wife', a term that is now absent in *GRADIT* (De Mauro 2007c), where *accasare* is instead recorded with the new meaning of 'to marry off: the daughter, the son', thus referring to both sexes.

The lexicon also changes, as is evident in the semantic field that identifies old and new professions in their feminine forms, where contemporary Italian registers greater openness, as demonstrated by the widespread acceptance of forms such as *ministra* 'female minister', *sindaca* 'female mayor', and even *medica* 'female doctor' (cf. male *ministro*, *sindaco*, *medico*). Yet, traces of the stereotypical image of women resist change, both in society and in the language that describes it. The persistence of the same clichés reappears even in the oft-cited case of the terms *segretario* 'male secretary' and *segretaria* 'female secretary', where the former is defined as an employee who performs various trusted tasks, and the latter as an employee who performs secretarial functions (De Mauro 2007c). This perpetuates the subordinate view of women's roles and professions, which has long hindered the creation and use of professional titles in the feminine form in Italian (Spina 1995; Maraschio 2011).

Regarding ancient professions, special mention should be made of the *levatrice* 'midwife'. Andrologists and medical sexologists teach that this is the only truly primordial profession, in the feminine form, as it was indispensable during childbirth once the species *homo* reached an upright stance during evolution, to ensure the safety of both the newborn and the mother. The seventeen occurrences of the term in the five editions of the *Crusca* dictionary compared to the 94 and 134, respectively, of the terms *meretrice* 'prostitute' and *puttana* 'whore' demonstrate its lesser significance for those male eyes that have named and described the world (Maraschio 2011). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the noun *ostetrica* 'midwife' entered Italian with the same meaning; however, the male counterpart entered the Italian lexicon later, in the nineteenth century, but with an interesting semantic shift,

because the masculine noun refers to a non-subordinate profession: 'a surgeon specialized in obstetrics' (Cortelazzo and Zolli 1999, s.v.).

From the traces left in popular traditions, it is still possible to recover some additional information about the profession of care and assistance during childbirth in its feminine form, as well as the stereotype that the profession, and the term that describes it, conveys. The profession of the midwife is, in fact, one of the extraordinary abilities attributed to a small animal, the weasel,[24] whose common name, *donnola*, is significantly derived from the word *donna* 'woman'. In popular tales, this agile little creature often transforms itself into a woman who skilfully practises the profession of nurse and/or midwife but is also depicted as a witch and a lustful being. The weasel embodies all the stereotypes attributed to women: in popular beliefs, it loves its young so much that it can bring them back to life, is tireless in mating practices (it goes into heat even while nursing), and is often identified with the bride, the godmother, or the midwife (Dovetto 2011).

30.4 Conversational styles and pragmatics of discourse

Research on gender and language has long identified several peculiarities that characterize the female conversational style, which can also be applied to Italian despite the challenges inherent in attributing these characteristics generally to the female gender. These peculiarities include a greater incidence of polite and euphemistic expressions, the use of tag questions (i.e., declarative statements formulated with a questioning intonation), and, more generally, a tendency towards unplanned speech with frequent usage of expressions that convey uncertainty and hesitation, as well as a preferential use of semantically empty terms. These strategies are aimed at modifying the illocutionary force of linguistic acts which, in the so-called 'typically female' conversational style,[25] are realized through forms of attenuation in the assertive intensity of utterances.

This results in a conversational mode that is described as powerless, or weak (Orletti 2001).

In more recent times, the globalization of the labour market has driven a conscious use of gender-marked strategies in the construction of social and professional roles, leading to a feminization or masculinization of communication styles depending on the type of employment. The typically feminine style prevails in the emotional labour sector, particularly in service sectors, while the typically masculine style dominates in more competitive professional fields.

Among Italian women in prestigious professional contexts, the principle *do as men do* seems to hold true, which is a key focus in many public communication courses and in training programmes for female managers (De Meo 2006). The results of a survey conducted on women aged between 33 and 67, for the most part married and with children, who hold managerial roles in major research centres across Italy, showed that the women interviewed perceived their public communication style as lacking the characteristics traditionally associated with the female gender (De Meo 2009). Assertive and confident, the interviewees do not report softening their statements or limiting their responsibility. They do not allow themselves to be interrupted, they manage the aggressiveness of public communication without anxiety, and are decidedly more oriented towards *report talk* (a conversational style focused on asserting opinions and judgements about reality, typically considered masculine) than towards *rapport talk* (a conversational style aimed at creating and maintaining relationships, typically considered feminine).

Another linguistic element that can mark a *powerless* conversational dynamic is represented by discourse markers. The frequency of discourse markers in spontaneous speech allows for experimental verification of the incidence of these mitigating forms in female conversational speech. Discourse markers are forms of linguistic connexion that tend to emphasize the structuring of discourse, and, therefore, its interactive dimension.[26] In discourse structuring, these forms can subsume an introductory, clarifying, or even emphatic value of the conveyed content, giving relevance to statements by highlighting the speaker's intentions. This category of lexical elements is also characterized by so-called outwardness to

propositional content (or 'semantic dispensability'), as shown by certain properties of discourse markers, such as interchangeability, unbound position within the utterance, and the possibility of forming 'clusters' and 'chains' (e.g., *appunto così però insomma, al limite va beh* lit. 'exactly so yet in the end, at the limit okay') (Bazzanella 2001b).[27]

An analysis conducted on materials from the *CLIPS* corpus did not find a significant presence of linguistic elements in the group of women that are typically considered characteristic of the female variety of 'genderlect' (Dovetto and Senza Peluso 2009).[28] Eighteen dialogues from the corpus were selected using the 'map task' method, which allows for the collection of high-quality, semi-spontaneous informal speech in a laboratory setting. The task is a game based on verbal interaction between two participants, each of whom has a map. The two speakers cannot see each other, so they can only interact verbally and must reconstruct the path on the map, which depicts small figures. One speaker (the Instruction Giver) has a map with a predefined path, including a starting point and a destination, connecting the figures. The other speaker (the Instruction Follower) has a map with partially different icons from those on the Giver's map and no pre-drawn path. The Giver must guide the Follower in reconstructing the path. The game creates a relatively spontaneous verbal exchange between the two participants since, although they are aware of being recorded, they become so engrossed in the close dialogic interaction that they forget about it. The eighteen dialogues are evenly divided into nine dialogues between male speakers (with a total of approximately one hour and 34 minutes and 24 seconds of conversation) and nine dialogues between female speakers (with a total of approximately one hour and 47 minutes and 59 seconds of conversation).[29] Considering the diastratic variable, apart from gender differences, the selected corpus is homogeneous in terms of the speakers' ages (18–31 years), their socio-cultural level (they are university students), and the interactional context, which involves the same type of task. With regard to the diatopic variable, the dialogues come from nine different locations (Bergamo, Cagliari, Catanzaro, Florence, Genoa, Naples, Palermo, Perugia, and Rome): for each location, there is one dialogue between men and one between women. The discourse markers analysed are classified

based on function, concerning the two macro-categories of interactional and metatextual functions.[30]

Interactional functions include markers for requesting/confirming, attention/agreement, used to capture and maintain attention, which in turn include: markers for requesting attention (e.g., *eh! senti, allora vediamo* . . . 'hey!', 'listen', 'let's see'); markers for requesting agreement (e.g., *cioè ti torna come figura, no?* 'it makes sense, doesn't it?'); markers for confirming agreement (e.g., *sì, okay ci giri intorno* 'yes, okay, you go around it'); fillers, used to keep the conversation going, sometimes indicate a planning difficulty (e.g., *mh / come ti posso spiegare?* 'hmm / how can I put it?'); phatic elements, used to create, strengthen, or highlight an individual's belonging to the group, thus emphasizing the phatic aspect of social cohesion, such as in the case of parenthetical vocatives and allocutives (e.g., *sei pronto, Paoli?* 'are you ready, Paoli?'), or used to emphasize shared knowledge (e.g., *come sai* . . . 'as you know'); modulators, used to strengthen or mitigate the propositional content (e.g., *insomma, può anche non farla, voglio dire, comunque la fa voglio dire* 'well, s/he can also not do that, I mean, s/he does it anyway').

Metatextual functions include markers that indicate the articulation of various parts of the text (opening, body of the discourse, closure) or topic changes (e.g., *allora dico che riscende e allora va un'altra volta verso la parte destra* 'so I'm saying that it goes back down, and then it goes again towards the right side'), focalizers that regulate cognitive-level processing (e.g., *ma stanno proprio al centro* 'but they are right in the centre'), and reformulators, such as paraphrases, corrections, exemplifications (e.g., *senti no praticamente ho sbagliato io / dietro sotto, scusa passando sotto* 'listen, no, basically I made a mistake / behind, underneath, sorry, going underneath').

The results of this analysis first show that where more time is spent completing the task, there is also a higher total number of discourse markers produced, as well as more words spoken overall, regardless of the speakers' sex. Additionally, the number of words produced contradicts the common stereotype of excessive female talkativeness. For example, in the Roman dialogue, women complete the task in about half the time compared to men, but also produce about half as many discourse markers and approximately half the

total of words. The average values of words produced per minute of conversation for each dialogue further highlight that the number of words is not linked with the speakers' sex but rather with the time spent on the task. The average rate of words produced per minute is slightly higher for men (175.50/min) compared to women (166.36/min). In the Neapolitan variety, men produce as many as 209.30 words per minute (compared to the male average of 175.50/min and the overall average of 170.93/min). Generally, a higher average is observed in men compared to women. As for the percentage of discourse markers produced overall concerning the number of words, although it is higher for women (15.34 per cent) compared to men (13.90 per cent), it is not enough to attribute to the female participants in the selected dialogues a notably greater tendency to produce these linguistic forms.

For each dialogue and each participant, the numerical consistency and percentage relative to the total number of words produced were evaluated for metatextual markers, which were counted together with modulators, phatic expressions, and markers that express a request or confirmation of attention and agreement. These markers, which emphasize the interactional aspect of the linguistic act, should be more prevalent in a conversational style inclined towards solidarity and cooperation, which appears to characterize the female variety of genderlect. The comparison of the averages for female (11.31 per cent) vs male (10.23 per cent) production of these types of markers again shows no noticeable difference between the two groups of speakers.

A different strategy for analysing the data led to the exclusion of markers more closely related to the specific linguistic task (*map task*) from phatic elements, modulators, and metatextual markers, such as requests or confirmations of attention and agreement. These elements might be indicative not so much of a particular conversational style, but rather of the specific type of interaction. In this case, however, the results show even more homogeneous data between the female group (2.64 per cent) and the male group (2.84 per cent).

Regarding the qualitative-quantitative analysis of the forms used, the difference between men and women, although minimal, is mainly observed in the markers for requesting or confirming attention and agreement. These are more prominent in interactions between

women, especially concerning certain lexical types (e.g., the interjections *eh* and *mh* and the adverbial forms *sì* 'yes', *okay*, and *no*, with a clear prevalence for the assertive form).[31]

In particular, in female dialogues, as well as among individual female speakers, the use of *no?* as a request for confirmation and agreement occurs more frequently than among men (seventy-one occurrences in dialogues between women vs twenty-eight in dialogues between men). This interrogative form shares a semantic content—which it is possible to paraphrase with *sei d'accordo con quanto sto dicendo / mi segui, no?* 'do you agree with what I'm saying / you follow me, right?'—with other discourse markers (also present in the corpus), such as *vero?* and *giusto?* 'right?', but it differs in the degree of certainty with which the speaker's hypothesis is presented.[32] Every instance represents modes of controlling the interaction by the speaker towards their interlocutor, among which *no?* as a request for attention and confirmation assumes significance, given its status as a typical interjection of hesitant or insecure people (Poggi 1981).

The same form can also take on the value of a rhetorical question, where it explicitly expresses complete confidence in the informational content of the linguistic act rather than uncertainty. When used to feign insecurity, it can underline a condition of inferiority in the role, thereby eliciting the interlocutor's benevolence and encouraging them to accept or follow the speaker's propositional content.[33] Essentially, this linguistic form, while strongly interactional, could, through rhetorical pretence, mask an inversion of power dynamics in terms of interactional dominance, despite explicitly requesting cooperation and highlighting role disparities.[34] Emphasizing the effect of meaning in the explicit communicative content, the use of the negative-interrogative marker could thus both indicate an increase in the indeterminacy of the communicative act and, in less explicit ways, reflect a reference to different (linguistic) 'rules of the game'. The interpretation of these rules must take into account co-textual and contextual elements.

From the overall analysis of the lexical types used in dialogues as discourse markers, a close correlation emerges between individual speakers and their preferential use of certain markers. Beyond evaluating gender differences in conversational styles, this finding provides greater insights, particularly regarding idiosyncratic

variability in terms of individual and psychological characteristics and its close interrelation with diachronic variability. This research on discourse markers within conversational dynamics confirms the existence of a close correlation among multiple variables, from which the quantitative and qualitative prevalence of markers ultimately depends. As highlighted in previous studies (Bazzanella and Fornara 1995), gender is not the determining factor in the variable; more influential than sex are context and conversational role.[35] The incidence of various dimensions of variability, firstly diamesic and diachronic, but certainly also diastratic for social role and gender, and idiosyncratic, is complex, making it difficult, if not impossible, to assess the specific weight of each dimension.

30.5 Conclusion

In the Italian language the relationship between gender and linguistic behaviour interacts with multiple variables, such as age, social class, level of education, occupation, social networks, both close and distant, in which speakers are involved, situational variables like the formality of the situation, the role played in the communicative exchange, the goal of the exchange, and the 'encyclopedias' of those participating in the communicative event, including their expectations. In this complex of factors, gender certainly occupies a significant space, and in societies where roles are (or have been) differently oriented, language reflects (or retains) traces of this difference. Italian moves dynamically within this space, preserving more marked traces of this difference in its lexicon, but as shown by conversational style, it reacts more than yesterday to diachronic and diastratic variables rather than (or in addition to) gender variables alone.

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[1] As emphasized by Violi (1986), the greatest theoretical weakness around the concept of 'language and sex' lies in its general approach, which shifts the focus from language itself to the society that produces and shapes it. Thus, language is investigated as a reflexion and product of a pre-existing social mechanism rather than as an expression of identities that

are dynamically co-constructed within society. Today, there is a tendency to replace the term *sex* with *gender* to emphasize that sexual identity is socially constructed, avoiding the biological determinism implied by the term *sex* and the consequent reductively dichotomous view of reality. In the field of sexual difference, there have been crucial discussions of the complexity of the relationship between the body and everything that is socially, culturally, and linguistically constructed: see Irigaray (1975) and Cavarero (1987).

[2] The phenomenon of 'vocal tract normalization' comes into play in the perception of vowels, i.e., when the listener assigns the perceived sound to one category rather than another only after the same vowel produced by a man and a woman, corresponding to two physically different sounds, has been recognized as the same vowel, i.e., 'normalized' (Ferrero, Magno Caldognetto, and Cosi 1995; Albano Leoni and Maturi 1995).

[3] For more on female voice differences, see Albano Leoni (2017).

[4] Both concepts of *Effort Code*, and *Production Code* are connected to the *Size Code* of Ohala (1984). *The Effort Code* regards the distribution of energy in speech production and is responsible for prominence phenomena, and *Production Code* relates to respiratory dynamics. These codes lead both to affective interpretations, related to the speaker's characteristics, and to informational interpretations related to the characteristics of the linguistic message (Gussenhoven 2002; Gurrado and Sorianello 2017).

[5] In these studies, the voices of Italian politicians are compared with French and Brazilian politicians. The results revealed a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural tendency in the use of voice across different communicative contexts, showing dependency on context, the audience addressed, and persuasive goals. Generally, the voice range profile widens in rhetorical formal discourse in which the speaker must be more persuasive. However, there seems to be a difference in cultural influence between Italian and French in the perception of charisma and the interpretation of its signals. Acoustic features such as pitch (normal, higher, or lower) and types of pauses (short or long) can affect the perception of charisma: Italians prefer a high-pitch voice with shorter pauses, while the French prefer a low-pitch voice and long pauses.

[6] Sorianello and Gurrado (2017) and Gurrado and Sorianello (2017) challenge not only the innateness of the opposition mentioned but, more importantly, the methodology used for data collection that led to assigning the nearly universal correlation between voice (high-pitched vs low-pitched) and perceived personality traits (submission vs dominance).

[7] Counterexamples are presented in Sornicola (2009).

[8] Trudgill (1972; 1974) interprets the correlation between variety choice and gender as a tendency for men to use 'hidden' prestigious forms—non-standard but vernacular varieties—while women are more sensitive to 'open' prestigious forms, namely, those recognized by all members of society. Objections to these considerations are found in Cameron and Coates (1989), and for Italian, in Orletti (2001; 2007) and Sornicola (2009). Binazzi (1995) reveals the ambiguity of these considerations when the interplay of the gender variable with all other sociolinguistic variables is not considered: the example of *scodella* 'bowl, dish' used preferentially by young women in Florence, can be interpreted as a tendency towards the use of vernacular forms, but also, given the limited availability of synonymic alternatives, as a tendency towards the use of the standard.

[9] The availability of 'traditional' forms here should be understood as the presence of dialectal (non-standard) forms (e.g., *pizzicagnolo* 'vendor of charcuterie') vs more recent (standardized) forms (e.g., *gabinetto* 'toilet').

[10] Similarly, Sogos (1995), studying the vocabulary of women in Macomer in the province of Nuoro (Sardinia), confirms the expected tendency of women towards prestigious models and their rejection of forms perceived as marked downwards. It also shows how the gender variable interacts significantly with the age variable (the preference for correct and prestigious forms is lower among young women). Furthermore, it highlights the difficulty that informants have in abstracting from marked forms in diatopy (Sardinianisms), especially when these belong to the domains of 'home' and 'family'.

[11] In these cases, the recoverability of the coreferential relationship is possible only through imprecise identification relations (*sloppy identity*). For example, *parlò um-milanese e-ddisse kosì // noi̯ə, da kṵesto fatto ke-mmò parlavənə, il fatto di kṵesto ragattso k-à fatt-ô ʃkertsə //* 'a Milanese spoke and said this // we, from this fact that they were just saying, that fact about this boy that made a joke': sometimes the speaker abruptly introduces a pronominal expression into the conversation that has no anaphoric or cataphoric relationship with any definite description within the text; in this case the referent cannot be recovered co-textually, but rather through 'encyclopaedic knowledge'. At other times the speaker uses a pronominal expression inappropriately to refer to something he or she has in mind, without thinking to provide the listener with further information (examples in Sornicola 1979).

[12] The same type of phenomenon, attributable to the broader linguistic property of *metalinguistic reflexivity* (De Mauro 2008) and associated with the condition of so-called *solitude* (Pennisi 2005, which assigns this linguistic condition of pure self-reflection, unlike *loneliness*, to a specific neural construct, the *Default Mode Network*), tends to replace public communication in elderly people, partly due to the greater isolation typically experienced by this group of speakers. However, it also belongs to various pathologies and, in any case, to all those categories of speakers who, for different reasons, find themselves at the margins of social life.

[13] An initial empirical response regarding Italian, in relation to Lakoff (1973b; 1975) that opened research on gender and language, comes from Berretta (1983). The investigation concerns differences in female and male speech. Berretta's work reveals two different evaluative responses related to the social background of the informants. More specifically, only middle- and upper-class men and women exhibit linguistic attitudes towards female and male speech that align with the stylistic characteristics identified by Lakoff. In contrast, lower-class women display divergent attitudes, showing positive views towards female speech.

[14] Until the early decades of the twentieth century, the voices available for acoustic analysis were exclusively male. The first analysed Italian female voices and the first corpus date from 1968 (Ferrero 1968).

[15] On what we are able to deduce about speakers' identity just by hearing their voice, see Albano Leoni (2022:40–42).

[16] The gesture of linking arms, for example, which reduces the distance between bodies to zero and implies a certain degree of confidential openness, is more common among women regardless of the diatopic variable. However, it is marked diastratically, as it is predominantly used with individuals from the same social strata (Grassi 1995).

[17] Hereby it is important to consider the influence of upbringing, which was more formal in the past and created a sort of modesty in communication between different sexes. This attitude explains the lesser use of gestures by adult women compared to younger women, who are in turn more relaxed and aligned with peers of the opposite sex (Grassi 1995).

[18] Buona donna, donna allegra, donna a pagamento, donna da/di partito, donna da prezzo, donna da trivio, donna del peccato, donna del pubblico, donna del sollazzo, donna di casino, donna di cattivo affare, donna di facili costumi, donna di mala fama, donna di malaffare/male affare, donna di mala vita, donna di/del marciapiede, donna di mercato, donna di mestiere, donna di misericordia, donna di mondo, donna di perduta vita, donna di/da piacere, donna di porta, donna disonesta, donna di strada, donna di vita, donna fornicaria, donna girovaga, donna malfamata, donna meretrice, donna perduta, donna prezzolata, donna profana, donna prostituta, donna pubblica, donna pubblicata, donna venale, donna venduta, mala donna.

[19] Larger numbers (eight hundred for the female genitals and six hundred for prostitute) are reported by Yaguello (1978).

[20] The source is Sercambi, *Novelliere* (*c.*1400) (Boggione and Casalegno 2000, s.v.).

[21] See Cortelazzo and Zolli (1999, s.v. *baldracca*). In the sixteenth century, as Benedetto Varchi testifies, there was a tavern in Florence by this name where so-called *donne di piacere* ('women of pleasure') could be found (Nocentini 2010, s.v. *baldracca*). *LEI* volume VI (s.v. **bot(t)-*: 1455–1603, particularly 1535–1536, 1601) traces the term instead to the root **bot(t)* meaning 'swelling, cavity', hence to 'a fat person with a big belly', while the *Deonomasticon Italicum* (Schweickard 2001, s.v. *Bagdad*: 173–180, particularly 178) accepts the connexion of *baldracca* with the name of an ancient district of Florence, also referencing the tavern mentioned by Varchi.

[22] Tommaseo and Bellini (1865–1879) records masculine *ciccantone* as meaning 'buffoon', e.g., 'mattaccini, o zanni, o ciccantoni, che, come gli antichi Osci e Atellani, ancora oggi con grossissima lingua bergamasca, o norcina . . . fanno arte del ridere' ('buffoons, or clowns, or dullards, who, like the ancient Oscans and Atellans, still today, with their loud Bergamasque or Norcian language . . . practise the art of making people laugh'), while for the feminine form it gives (s.v. *ciccantone*) 'e nel f. *ciccantona* dicesi per donna di mondo, meretrice' ('and in the feminine *ciccantona* it is said of a worldly woman, prostitute'). The quotation from the entry *ciacco* meaning 'pig' but referring to the same feminine form, is interesting: 'Una *ciccantona* di questi paesi, sudicia, ciacca, rancida, la più cenciosa e la più orsa femminaccia che io vedessi mai' ('[a *ciccantona* from these parts, filthy, piggish, rancid, the most ragged and most bearish virago I have ever seen').

[23] The masculine form is recorded in the latest edition of the *GRADIT* (De Mauro 2007c).

[24] *Mustela*, according to the scientific classification.

[25] Illocutionary force refers to the communicative function of linguistic acts in specific contexts, i.e., the way in which the statement is meant to be understood. The term indicates the pragmatic status of the utterance.

[26] Discourse markers are elements that, by partially losing their original meaning, take on the value of serving to emphasize the structuring of discourse, connecting textual elements, both within and between clauses, and clarifying the placement of the utterance within an interpersonal dimension, hence highlighting the interactive structure of the text (Bazzanella 1995; 2001b).

[27] It is difficult to formulate a complete list of these linguistic elements, whether they be considered a particular type of connective or regarded as 'fillers', because they primarily constitute an open class from the perspective of their morphological and syntactic categories, which are not predetermined. As a result, their occurrence exhibits extreme variability, particularly on an individual level.

[28] *CLIPS* is a corpus of dialogic and broadcast speech consisting of approximately one hundred hours of recordings, stratified both diaphasically and diatopically (www.clips.unina.it).

[29] In the selected material, there are no dialogues between speakers of different sexes. The dialogues examined are perfectly symmetrical in the attribution of roles to the two genders.

[30] For a more detailed comparison, see the functional classification of discourse markers in Bazzanella (2001b). These markers exhibit a taxonomic weakness (Bazzanella 1995) due to their intrinsic polyfunctionality, making it particularly challenging to categorize them outside their specific context. Therefore, each instance should be carefully evaluated within its context of occurrence.

[31] In the selected dialogues, the interjective types *eh* and *mh* represent interjections that function as discourse markers for confirming attention/agreement: *ah, ah!, ahah, eh, eh!, mh, mhmh, oh, oh!*

[32] The use of interrogative negation corresponds to the expression of a lower degree of certainty (Poggi 1981).

[33] See Orletti (2000) on asymmetrical relations.

[34] In the dialogic interaction of the map task, the Giver guides the game, providing the necessary instructions for the Follower to follow the path indicated on the map. Consequently, the Giver has greater control over the moves and the organization of the sequences.

[35] Bazzanella and Fornara (1995) examine job interviews conducted in Turin and Milan for mid-level positions. In this case, the authors found that female interaction is characterized by a more supportive communication style. The analysis highlights the importance of a multidimensional perspective that considers the multiple variables at play and their complex interactions. As Marcato and Thüne (2002) stress, the problem of gender-fair usage in Italian remains unsolved.

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Part V

ITALIAN OUTSIDE OF ITALY

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Chapter 31

Italian in Switzerland

Laura Baranzini

31.1 Introduction

Contrary to a simplistic idea of a two-way relation between language and nation, there are Italian-speaking territories outside Italy which are not the result of a history of migration. Within the geographical (but not political) area of the Italian peninsula, there are two nations other than Italy whose official language is Italian, namely the Republic of San Marino and the Vatican City. In addition, a strong though irregular trend towards emigration has characterized Italian society since the unification of Italy. Currently almost 5.8 million Italian citizens live abroad (2022 data from the 2021 *Anagrafe degli italiani residenti all'estero* ('Register of Italians Resident Abroad')—Ministero Interno 2022); since many more Italians and citizens of Italian descent have renounced their Italian citizenship, the actual number of Italian speakers abroad is presumably considerably higher. As we shall see below, a certain proportion of these Italian speakers reside permanently in Switzerland. Furthermore, there are linguistic realities which are geographically close to Italy and which, for historical reasons, are characterized by a considerable presence of Italian-speaking inhabitants, in particular Croatia and Slovenia.[1]

Italian in Switzerland is noteworthy for at least two reasons: on the one hand, there is a significant rate of Italian immigration to the whole of Switzerland,[2] including the German-speaking and French-speaking cantons, and, on the other, a part of the territory contiguous to Italy is historically and traditionally Italian-speaking and has Italian as its official language.

Switzerland is the only country outside Italy with a traditionally Italian-speaking area, where the transition from Latin to the vernacular (in the specific case at hand, Lombard) led naturally to the current Italian language situation. The development of the language over the centuries follows a process parallel to those that have affected all the regions of present-day Italy (for a brief reminder of the key moments that led to Italian-speaking Switzerland becoming part of the Swiss territory, see §31.2.3).

For the description of the varieties of Italian in Switzerland, their location inside or outside the traditionally Italian-speaking area serves as a first criterion. On the basis of this macro-criterion, Moretti (2005) proposes a classification (later enriched in Berruto 2012b) of no less than eleven varieties of Italian present in Switzerland illustrated in Figure 31.1.

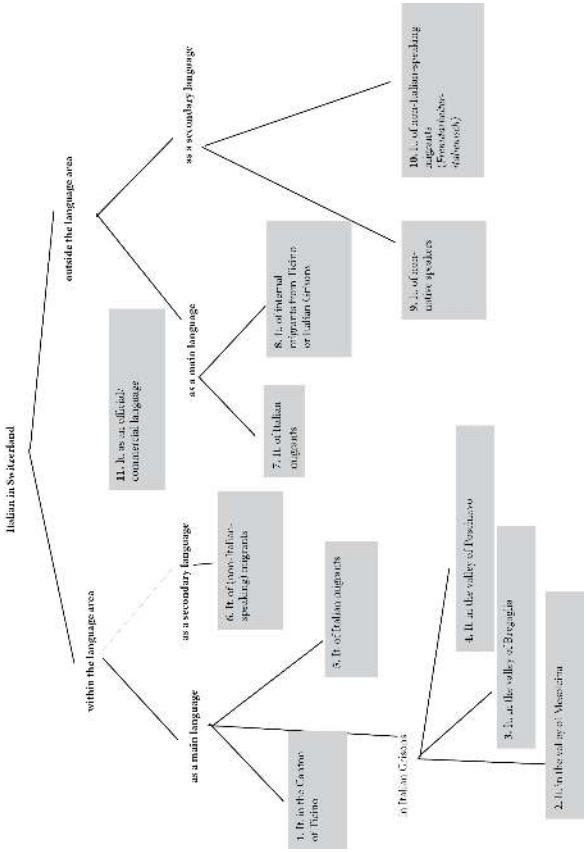


Figure 31.1 Varieties of Italian in Switzerland. Source: Adapted from Moretti (2005) and Berruto (2012b)

In addition to the main criterion of localization, Figure 31.1 also involves the opposition of 'native vs non-native speaker' as well as a more fine-grained geographical subdivision within the territory where Italian is traditionally spoken, and the distinction 'Italian vs Swiss descent' in the case of speakers outside the Italian language area.

Straddling the territorial and non-territorial varieties is variety 11 in Figure 31.1, the so-called federal variety (also known as 'Helvetic Italian'; cf. Lurati 1976; Berruto 1984; Pandolfi 2006; Filipponio 2017; Egger 2019). This variety of Italian is produced and used by the institutions of the Swiss federal government as well as by large companies (both private and public) operating nationwide. In most cases this variety originates outside the Italian-speaking territory, but is depicted as transversal, precisely because its

existence is due to the very nature of Italian as an official national language and, as such, it concerns all speakers of Italian inside and outside the Italian-speaking area. One of the most characteristic features of this variety is the close contact it maintains with the other two major national languages (German and French) and with English. It is a hybrid variety, whose texts are only partly originally written in Italian: they mostly result from translation processes from German and French texts, and are generally produced by native speakers of the Swiss variety of Italian or Italian of Italy (now resident in Switzerland), as well as, in some cases, by non-native speakers (translators or other speakers with varying degrees of competence in Italian). This federal variety reaches all Italian-speaking people in Switzerland through official or commercial communications and websites. Within the Italian-speaking territory, it is also conveyed by official cantonal documents and by the media, which both have as a model, among other things, federal regulatory and administrative writing.

Figure 31.1 allows us to grasp the composite and multiform nature of the Italian language in Switzerland by systematically considering specific classification criteria. The selection of the relevant criteria lends itself to debate concerning, for example, the internal subdivision of the native varieties within Italian-speaking territory. If a partial differentiation between the Italian language of the Ticino/Tessin (henceforth simply referred to as Ticino) and that of Grigioni/Grischun/Graubünden/Grisons (henceforth simply referred to as Grigioni) is conceivable, the existence of different varieties for each Italian-speaking valley in Grigioni is not so clear-cut. What is not entirely convincing is not so much the fact that differences between the Italian of discontinuous territories have been observed—indeed, such differences are described in the literature and are expected precisely in view of the history and distribution of the Italian of Grigioni (cf., for example, Picenoni 2008; Janner and Todisco 2020; and, for Bregaglia, Bianconi 1998)—but, rather, the idea that one can always identify separate varieties of the language from observing specific peculiarities. Ideally, such a move would presuppose a robust and numerically significant set of features, although it cannot be taken for granted that this is actually the case for all the situations considered here.

It can certainly be argued that, in view of the small scale of the linguistic situation being described, more weight—including quantitative—is inevitably given to phenomena which, in other contexts, would only be observed qualitatively. It can also be argued that, on a theoretical level, establishing a threshold value above which a fine-grained sub-classification of varieties can be considered legitimate is not an easy task. However, based on relevance, other geographical distinctions might have more weight (for instance, the possible linguistic differentiation between Sopraceneri and Sottoceneri regions of Ticino, or the differences between urban, rural, and mountain

contexts). Other criteria could also be more relevant in the sub-categorization than political or geographical criteria, including, for instance, age: some, though not systematic, data on age bias reported by the *Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana* in 2023 suggest that age is not a negligible factor in the configuration of a variety within a given territory.

The above considerations are, of course, intended only as a purely theoretical reflection on other possible criteria for identifying the varieties of Italian in Switzerland. The geographically based description outlined in the scheme consistently depicts the complexity and variety of the presence of Italian in Switzerland, and highlights two major linguistic realities: one linked to the traditionally Italian-speaking area of Switzerland and another one external to it, but in close linguistic contact with Italy and its dialects—also those linguistically more distant from Lombard. These two linguistic realities—territorial and extra-territorial—are both transversally affected by the peculiar pan-Swiss variety, located outside the territory, but addressed above all to the citizens within it. This contributes to the shaping of Italian-speaking Switzerland in unusual ways, in particular with regard to the diaphasic dimension.

31.2 Italian in Switzerland

31.2.1 Overall situation

Switzerland is a multilingual nation. Its multilingualism is manifested in different ways. As a consequence, the status of Italian varies according to the levels of enforcement considered. At a national level, three languages are recognized as national languages in the federal Constitution of 1848: German, French, and Italian (in descending order of number of speakers). Romansh was added in 1938. Of these four languages, only the first three also enjoy the status of official languages at federal level; with the revision of the Constitution in 1996, Romansh was also explicitly assigned the status of official language, but only for communication between the federal authorities and Romansh-speaking citizens (Christopher and Casoni 2020). The difference between the status of German, French, and Italian on the one hand and Romansh on the other lies in the fact that all the Confederation's regulatory and administrative texts are systematically and simultaneously rendered in the first three languages; the versions thus obtained are recognized as official texts. Furthermore, citizens have the right to use these

languages when addressing the Swiss authorities and institutions, which in turn have the duty to respond in the language used by the citizen. As for Romansh, it 'is an official language in dealings with persons who speak this language', or, in other words, '[p]ersons who speak Romansh may address the federal authorities in its idioms or in Rumantsch Grischun'.[3] The authorities answer in Rumantsch Grischun' (Confederazione svizzera, 2021).

In particular, the 2007 'Federal Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities' (Confederazione svizzera, 2021) is explicitly intended 'a. to strengthen quadrilingualism as one of Switzerland's fundamental characteristics; b. to consolidate the internal cohesion of the country; c. to encourage individual and institutional plurilingualism in the national languages; d. to preserve and promote Romansh and Italian as national languages', and it is based on the following principles: 'a. it shall ensure that it treats the four national Swiss languages equally; b. it shall guarantee and apply linguistic freedom in all its areas of activity; c. it shall take account of the traditional linguistic composition of Switzerland's regions; d. it shall promote understanding between the linguistic communities' (Confederazione svizzera, 2021).

This language regime applies, as already mentioned, to all contexts of institutional communication at a national (federal) level: we can say that from this point of view, the three official languages are equivalent and enjoy the same status. However, one must take into account the fact that most of a citizen's life, including communication with institutions and political authorities (be it unilateral or bilateral), takes place within a canton, as it is mainly at the cantonal level that most of the legislation is implemented and applied and where most public affairs are managed.

While Switzerland is multilingual at a national level, the cantons are essentially monolingual and, when they are not, the language areas within them are quite rigidly delimited. This is due to the language question being addressed on the basis of the so-called 'principle of territoriality' (Confederazione svizzera 2022), which associates each language with its own territory. Each Canton chooses its official language(s): seventeen monolingual cantons have German as their official language, four have French, and one (the canton of Ticino) has Italian. Three cantons are officially bilingual and recognize both French and German as official languages. Only one canton is officially trilingual: in the Canton of Grigioni, German, Italian, and Romansh are official languages.

With regard to the two Swiss minority languages (Italian and Romansh), the Ordinance on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities of 2010 (Confederazione svizzera 2022) states that the cantons of Ticino and Grigioni receive financial support explicitly aimed at preserving and promoting 'the Romansh and Italian languages and

cultures in the Canton of Graubünden' and 'Italian language and culture in the Canton of Ticino'.

The cantonal recognition of official languages, combined with the principle of territoriality, however, leads to paradoxical situations that do not fit well with an 'idealized' vision of multilingualism: all languages other than the official language of a canton are, in practice, equated. Thus, Italian and, for example, Hungarian are equally foreign languages (in as much as they are not official languages of the canton) in any German- or French-speaking canton (Lüdi 2008:196).

31.2.2 Italian outside Italian-speaking Switzerland

In all domains regulated at the cantonal level (including, for example, education), Italian-speaking citizens residing outside the Italian-speaking territory are not granted any language rights, even though they numerically represent the largest proportion of Italian speakers in Switzerland: indeed almost 53 per cent of Italian-speakers residing in Switzerland (of Italian or Swiss Italian origin) live in a non-Italian-speaking area. This percentage roughly corresponds to 358,000 speakers (Casoni et al. 2021).

Historically, the decennial national surveys show how Italian speakers steadily increased in the twentieth century until they reached their highest presence (11.9 per cent) in 1970, coinciding with a peak of migratory movement from Italy to Switzerland, when there was an important demand for workers. Since the 1980s, this influx has considerably declined: this trend is reflected in the progressive decrease in the number of Italian speakers—due, in part, to the return of workers to Italy and, in part, also to the generational turnover within the remaining community, which inevitably led to a progressive loss of language skills among second- or third-generation Italians (Moretti 2005; Schmid 2002). A partial rebound in arrivals from Italy has been observed since 2007, the year when the migratory balance became positive again. However, more recent immigration is different in several respects (Natale and Krakenberger 2017): the numbers are lower, it no longer involves just workers and people working in the manufacturing sector, but also graduates and people working in the tertiary sector. There has been a shift from predominantly dialect-speakers to Italian-speakers with skills in other working languages such as English, French, or (Swiss) German. In this regard, Italian no longer seems to also fulfil the function of a vehicular language between non-Italians as it did in the first wave of migration in many working environments (for the phenomenon of Italian as a *Fremdarbeiteritalienisch*, i.e., a variety of Italian used among foreign workers, see Berruto 1991).

31.2.3 Italian within Italian-speaking Switzerland: description, data, and historical background

The territory that corresponds to 'Italian Switzerland' does not constitute a single political or administrative unit,[4] and is not recognized as such in its entirety. In fact, it comprises the entire territory of the Canton of Ticino and four valleys in the Canton of Grigioni. Two of these, the Mesolcina valley and the Calanca valley, are contiguous with Ticino (as well as with each other), while the other two, the Valposchiavo and the Bregaglia valley, are detached from each other as well as from the rest of the Italian-speaking Swiss territory (but not from Italy), as illustrated in Figure 31.2.

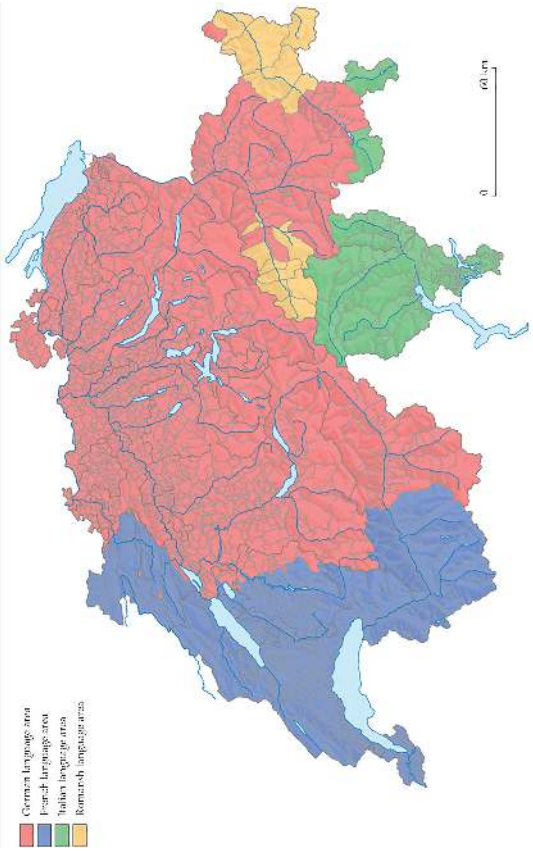


Figure 31.2 Language areas of Switzerland. Main languages. Source: Structural survey (2020), adapted from Federal Statistical Office (2023)

According to the most recent data for 2021 (Federal Statistical Office 2023), in Switzerland 8.3 per cent of the resident population declare Italian to be their main language (in the questionnaire it is possible to give more than one answer to this question, so it is possible that Italian is not the only declared main language), but only 47 per cent, corresponding to about 320,000

speakers (Casoni et al. 2021), reside in the Canton of Ticino or in the Italian-speaking valleys of the Grigioni.

The Italian-speaking part of Switzerland is in its own right a linguistically and culturally Italian area and therefore cannot be assimilated with all other areas where Italian arrived as an imported language and was grafted onto a different language reality. The territory that corresponds to today's Canton of Ticino belonged to the Duchy of Milan until the mid-fifteenth century (Agliati 2022; Bianconi 2001), and was then progressively annexed to Switzerland with the statute of *baliaggio* ('subject territory'), until it reached its current extent in 1521. However, it was only in 1798 that the emancipation of this territory began, culminating in 1803, with the Napoleonic Act of Mediation, in the birth of the Canton of Ticino, with its own constitution similar to that of the other cantons (Agliati 2022). The annexation to Switzerland, firstly as a *baliaggio* and later as a canton, has never interrupted or modified the linguistic reality of the territory, which has been fully and continuously Lombard. Like the neighbouring regions of Italy, standard Italian spread mainly among the more educated classes through the written language until the first half of the twentieth century. In the second half of the century, however, it also spread in the spoken language as a mother tongue transmitted within the family context, as well as a primary socialization language, strongly eroding the space of dialect, particularly since the 1970s (with a slight but perhaps significant delay compared to the situation of neighbouring Italy, Bianconi 1980).

The history of the Canton of Grigioni is partially distinct (Hitz 2018); before the end of the eighteenth century, the territory was organized under the name of the Three Leagues Union and was an allied country of Switzerland. In addition to Ticino, its Italian-speaking territory is closely linked to Valtellina, Chiavenna, and Bormio, which belonged to the Three Leagues from 1512 to 1797 (Hitz 2018).

31.3 The concept of pluricentricity

31.3.1 The pluricentric languages

As already noted, what distinguishes Swiss Italian from other cases of official presence of Italian outside the borders of Italy is the existence of a variety of Italian resulting from the natural linguistic development of a historically Italian-speaking territory and community. This particular sociolinguistic configuration is to be related to the concept of pluricentricity. The notion of

pluricentricity began to appear in the linguistic literature from the end of the 1960s (initially for Germanic languages, in particular English and German), based on the possibility that a language may develop around more than one centre of standardization of the norm (Stewart 1968; Kloss 1978). With the work of Clyne (1984; 1992), initially on German and English but later extended to many other languages, the discussion has spread in sociolinguistics so that observing languages specifically through the lens of pluricentricity has become customary. Different national varieties of a language have begun to be distinguished, and their differences described as specific characteristics and not as deviations from a norm (Clyne 1992:1), thus abandoning the idea that a language is, by default, monocentric, and can only be reflected in a single standard form, embodied by an ideal variety spoken in a single nation.

If we look at the criteria systematized in Muhr (2012), which in particular brings together various aspects of Clyne's reflections (Clyne 1992), we can see that, in order for a language spoken in more than one nation to be defined as pluricentric, it is first of all necessary that a national border exists and that in both nations the language considered has the official status of a national language (alone or together with others), presenting itself as a developed and complete language capable of performing all communicative functions in every context. The differences between the two nations regarding the language must be sufficient to ensure the identification of two specific varieties. These must be recognized as such by the speakers and in some way associated with recognizing one's own identity.

31.3.2 Italian as a pluricentric language

As far as Italian is concerned, the question in terms of possible pluricentricity has been raised rather recently, precisely since the works of Pandolfi (2009; 2010), Berruto (2011), Pandolfi (2011; 2016), and Hajek (2012), in which the hypothesis is put forward that the Swiss variety of Italian could fall within the definition of national variety, potentially making Italian a pluricentric language. In these descriptions, the possible second centre of standardization—the Swiss one—is, at most, cautiously characterized as a 'rudimentary centre' (in the terms of Ammon 1989) and modalized expressions such as 'weakly pluricentric language' are always preferred (Pandolfi 2009; 2011; Berruto 2011). The hypothesis, again taken up for instance in Moretti and Pandolfi (2019), has more recently evolved into a more assertive recognition (Baranzini and Casoni 2020; Baranzini and Moskopf-Janner 2020; Baranzini and Ricci 2023); significantly, Italian also appears in the list of pluricentric languages established by the International

Working Group on Non-dominant Varieties of Pluricentric Languages (www.pluricentriclanguages.org). The Swiss variety of Italian, on the other hand, has fundamentally all the defining characteristics of a national variety, and its reduced scope in terms of both number of speakers and sphere of influence does not appear to be a sufficient counter-argument (this possible objection is already addressed in Berruto 1991). This aspect, in fact, does not affect the determination of language pluricentricity, since '[a]lmost invariably, pluricentricity is asymmetrical, i.e., the norms of one national variety (or some national varieties) is (are) afforded a higher status, internally and externally, than those of the others' (Clyne 1992:454).

In sum, the dynamics of the different national varieties of a pluricentric language is in most cases articulated around a dominant variety and one (or more) non-dominant varieties (Muhr 2012:26). Among the features differentiating non-dominant varieties we find those collected in Table 31.1 (Muhr 2012:39–41), in which each feature is given a value relative to its validity for the Swiss variety of Italian: '+' indicates that a feature can be associated with the Swiss variety of Italian, while '–' would indicate its absence; the double symbol '±' indicates that the described feature is only partially found in the Swiss variety of Italian, while '– ↑' indicates that the feature does not apply to the variety because in the relevant respect the Swiss variety of Italian shows a stronger position than a prototypical non-dominant variety.

Table 31.1 Features of non-dominant varieties/nations and common language attitudes and language behaviour (adapted from Muhr 2012)

	Features	Swiss Italian
1.	Have a small number of speakers (compared to the dominant nations).	+
2.	Are varieties in nations other than the country of origin of the language ('historical heartland') and therefore cannot claim historical rights.	– ↑
3.	Are varieties that were set up during colonial expansion and/or the split of nations of contiguous language areas.	– ↑
4.	Have little political, economic, and linguistic power and therefore low status.	±
5.	Have to legitimize their norms and to cope with insinuations that their norm is 'dialectal' or 'provincial' and motivated by 'nationalism'.	+
6.	Have little or no impact on the general norm of the language.	+

	Features	Swiss Italian
7.	Are minor full-centres, half-centres, or rudimentary centres.	+
8.	Have insufficient or no codification of their national norms and no codifying institutions or such that are not sufficiently equipped.	+
9.	They often show 'linguistic schizophrenia': the proper national norm is heavily practised but officially depreciated—the official norm rarely practised but officially highly appreciated. This language behaviour results in uncertainty among the speakers of non-dominant varieties about their linguistic competence and in shame and guilt for not being able to master the official norm properly.	+
10.	Have a strong tendency to orientate their codification on exonormative linguistic rules and by that to exclude many generic features of the proper variety.	+
11.	Have a tendency to devaluate the status of their proper norms by marking them as 'colloquial', 'regional', or 'dialectal'.	+
12.	Are scarcely present in the global electronic and print media and not available to a large audience and therefore not gaining status through global presence as is the case with the dominant varieties.	±
13.	Do not spread/export their norms and have no institutions for spreading the language.	+
14.	Are usually not represented in international institutions (EU, UNO, UNESCO) as an official language.	+
15.	There is strong uncertainty about the correctness of the proper standard norm and, in case of doubt, give preference to the dominant norm.	+
16.	There is an extremely limited and very often undifferentiated knowledge of the norms of the proper national variety that is mostly restricted to shibboleths. This can be explained by the fact that they are not made aware of this in school.	+
17.	There is considerable uncertainty in distinguishing 'local' and 'national' standards and a tendency to ignore pan-regional similarities of their own variety and to accentuate instead the regional differences.	+
18.	There is general uncertainty when it comes to the question of what standards are to be taught in schools or in what way one should treat the norms of the dominant variety.	+
19.	There is a tendency of self-devaluation of non-dominant-native norms as 'dialectal' by their own speakers which contributes to the vicious circle of self-devaluation.	+

	Features	Swiss Italian
20.	Reluctance of the elites of the non-dominant varieties to express solidarity with the national norms as they are often considered a symbol of low social status (dialectally marked).	±
21.	The cultural elites in the non-dominant nations tend to succumb to norms from the dominant nation(s).	±
22.	Convergence is generally in the direction of dominant varieties when speakers of different national varieties communicate.	±
23.	This kind of behaviour will be particularly strong in hierarchical societies where social advancement is not primarily achieved by personal merit but, rather, by obeying set norms and expectations.	?
24.	There is usually reluctance to codify the native norms; this is due to the anxiety of the cultural elites of creating a new language which would sever the link with the dominant variety and, in the process, reduce their linguistic market value.	?
25.	The effect of codification is often minimized by codifying only those features of the non-dominant varieties that are compliant with the existing norms of written language.	?
26.	The adaptation of native expressions to the phonological and morphological norms of the written language and, in the process, defacing its intelligibility and blurring its origin.	?
27.	There is a tendency to ignore linguistic innovation in the non-dominant varieties as they might lead to language separation.	?

The description fits perfectly with Italian in Italian-speaking Switzerland at least for point 1: the number of Italian-speaking people is strongly skewed in favour of Italy, where there are 60 million speakers, while in Italian-speaking Switzerland there are fewer than 300,000; concerning points 5, 11, and 19: the variety is perceived externally—and often also by the speakers themselves—as a substantially dialectal and incorrect variety, due to a lack of awareness and mastery of 'good Italian'; as for point 6, the influence of the Swiss variety of Italian on standard Italian is undoubtedly non-existent—it is interesting to note, however, that since it participates in many innovative phenomena that involve northern Italian, the Swiss variety of Italian can also be recognized as part of the innovative linguistic tendencies that contribute to shaping the standard; regarding point 7: the Swiss centre does not constitute a full centre in Ammon's (1989) terms.

On the other hand, points 2 and 3 do not fit the case of the Swiss variety of Italian, but this discrepancy speaks in favour of the Swiss variety of Italian as a variant of a pluricentric language, since the status of the variety is reinforced by its being a traditional, non-exported variety.

Regarding point 4, if the lower linguistic weight and consequent lower status of the Swiss variety of Italian in comparison to standard Italian are undeniable, the characterization of its political and economic power is not so obvious: as part of Switzerland, the Swiss variety of Italian is part of a strong country and economy. For example, Switzerland's gross domestic product per capita is around 80,000 CHF (Federal statistical office 2022) while that of Italy is around €28,000 (ISTAT 2023); one cannot therefore compare this situation to other cases of non-dominant variants where there is a strong political-economic imbalance with the community of the dominant variety). However, this status linked to economic and political power is in no way linked to Italian: the language usually associated with Switzerland from the outside is German (or, secondarily, French); the Italian-speaking area, besides having little or no visibility, also coincides with one of the most economically disadvantaged cantons in the entire country.

As regards the points relating to codification (8-9-10), we note that the Swiss variety of Italian does not in fact have any work explicitly codifying the language; the partial exceptions to this situation do not necessarily seem to promote this variety or are scarcely effective in the dissemination and promotion of the standard among speakers. Among works not authentically promoting the Swiss variety of Italian, there are works of ludic and folkloristic nature: their aim is to present an extremely limited number of characteristics, either as curious expressions whose origin may be interesting to learn as long as they remain confined within the sphere of linguistic oddities often explicitly indicated as to be avoided (cf., for example, Savoia and Vitale 2008) or, on the contrary, as folkloristic expressions to be valued and protected as an important part of the community's identity (cf. Cantone Ticino 2012) by selecting them from among those referring to a rural and stereotypical vision of the speakers. Since 1995, the Italian Zingarelli dictionary has mentioned some thirty-four Helvetisms (Pandolfi 2017:339), giving, again, a reductive and distorted image of the Swiss variety, and reducing it to a label too similar to the one marking many other terms within the dictionary as being regional. On the other hand, scholarly publications, which study and present the variety from a sociolinguistic perspective, remain largely confined to the academic sphere, without really succeeding in resonating with speakers, institutions, the media, or the educational world.[5] There is, however, a fair amount of dissemination of part of the standard through model speakers and writers, linguistic authorities, and typically the media; this is why the value attributed to feature 12 has been partially revised in Table 31.1. A number of studies, including recent ones (Cignetti

2009; De Cesare 2009a; Ferrari 2009a; 2009b; Lala 2009; Mandelli 2009; Ricci 2009; E. Roggia 2009; Baranzini and Moskopf-Janner 2020; Baranzini and Ricci 2023) show how a substantial part of the linguistic characteristics of the variety is also regularly attested in these types of more formal texts. This implicitly contributes to codifying the norm of the non-dominant variety.

This standard is not exported (point 13), even though there is a research institute dealing precisely with the study of Italian in its Swiss context, the Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana (OLSI), a cantonal university (USI, Università della Svizzera italiana), as well as a university of applied sciences (SUPSI, Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana), which contribute to giving visibility, even if not always deliberately, to specific linguistic phenomena and habits. With regard to point 14, the Swiss variety of Italian is not represented in international institutions; it appears, however, as a language on its own in the main computer operating systems and word processing programmes available on the market (actually, this is a purely nominal recognition: we are not aware, for instance, of any differences in automatic language correction and spelling checks in accordance with the language variety selected).

The points concerning linguistic awareness and linguistic uncertainty, namely points 15–19, are central, and all the cases described apply to the Swiss variety of Italian: speakers are not fully aware of a substantial part of the characteristics of their variety, and within these they do not know how to locate phenomena according to their diffusion and origin. Sociolinguistic reflection is rarely addressed in schools and, when it is, it is limited to recommendations to avoid local formulations and to adapt to the norm of the dominant variety.[6]

What is less clear is the adaptation of more cultivated speakers to the dominant variety—either in more formal contexts or in interaction with speakers from different backgrounds (items 20–22): an urge to adapt does exist, but is attenuated by two different factors, namely the lack of awareness regarding many linguistic choices (see above), which does not allow for a completely voluntary switch to the dominant standard, and—more importantly—the absence of diaphasic markedness of a large part of the features of the Swiss variety of Italian, which facilitates their appearance even in domains in which the language is generally more formal. Finally, at this stage, it seems rather difficult to assign a clear value to the last points of the list (23–27).

Globally, the features described above outline a type of variety in which the Swiss variety of Italian can easily be recognized, be it at the level of linguistic power, or at the level of internal and external social status, or at the level of explicit codification. Moreover, in the short list of varieties following the definition of the features, Muhr (2012) cites Swiss Italian as the first

example, associating this variety with a lack of codification, prestige, and institutional representation (Muhr 2012:41).

31.4 Description of the variety

31.4.1 Theoretical issues

Distance—*Abstand* in the terms of Kloss (1978)—is therefore a necessary requirement,[7] even if for obvious reasons we lack an explicit, clear quantitative threshold establishing how many autonomous features are required before one can actually speak of distance. A quantitative indication cannot be given because it would be impossible, in principle, to identify criteria that would make it possible to establish a precise figure (Berruto 2011:22; Pandolfi 2017:329), and probably also because such a figure depends on the size of the second centre and a factor consisting in the perception by the language community must also be taken into account. Over and above the data external to the language which we have already mentioned (e.g., political boundary, official recognition, identity value), attempting to isolate and describe distinctive features is therefore not only a legitimate operation, but also one of fundamental importance in order to systematize such features and outline precisely the partial autonomy and relevance of the variety, at least on a qualitative level. Whenever possible, the description will be accompanied by quantitative hypotheses.

The very notion of distance—internal, linguistic distance—between two (potential) varieties is fundamental and at the same time self-evident: for one to be able to speak of two centres of norm emanation, two different standards, etc., it is clearly necessary for two distinct varieties of the same language to be clearly identifiable. However obvious, the notion is not without problems: in particular, while it is easy to intuitively understand what kind of phenomena are being referred to, it is not at all easy to quantify them, nor to numerically delimit the thresholds of 'closeness' or 'distance' between two language varieties. The quantitative aspect is not, however, the only relevant one: it is also important to define which features fall within the range of the distinctive characteristics of the variety, and—no less importantly—it is necessary to establish from which reference variety of Italian the Swiss one should be distinguished: is it the 'standard' Italian (with all the defining difficulties that this entails, for which see Chapter 26) or the closest urban regional *koiné*, i.e., a generically Lombard Italian?

Both questions give rise to an autonomous reflection and to a third point of discussion concerning the two above-mentioned aspects. When questioning the nature of the relevant features for characterizing a variety, the question arises whether the differences between languages should occur at each linguistic level and which levels are the most relevant. In the literature on the subject, one can encounter considerations that tend to downplay the extent of the differences between the Swiss variety of Italian and the Italian of Italy based on the fact that most differences are lexical (for instance Pandolfi 2017:329). It can be hypothesized that the deeper the level at which features emerge (typically morphosyntax), the more legitimate it is to speak of distinct varieties. The lexical level is considered to be particularly superficial, not capable of affecting the structure of the language itself (as well as, probably, the prosodic-intonational level). On this view, it follows that morphosyntactic and textual aspects have greater weight and relevance in that they are structural elements of the language.[8]

The first consideration we can make in this regard is based on facts: lexical differences are by far the most numerous, along with phonological-prosodic differences. However, it would not be correct to reduce the Swiss variety of Italian to a set of lexical variants, as differences can be identified at all linguistic levels: morphological, syntactic, as well as textual differences (Berruto 1980; Pandolfi 2006; Moretti 2011). The prevalence of lexical differences is not so unexpected, actually: what makes it possible to consider the Swiss variety of Italian a different geographical variety of the same language (and not a distinct language) is precisely a common extended linguistic core, particularly at a structural level. A deep structural distance would plead in favour of a language akin to Italian but alien to its system, whereas lexical differences are a prototypical manifestation of geographical variation. Moreover, if we broaden our gaze by considering other Indo-European languages traditionally counted among pluricentric languages such as Swedish, German, English, or French, we can observe that the disproportion between lexical and phonological aspects of variation and those of a morphosyntactic nature marks the relationships between different varieties of a pluricentric language.

Considering now the second question we introduced at the beginning of this section, namely, to which variety should the Swiss variety of Italian be compared in order to determine whether there is actually sufficient linguistic 'distance' to postulate the latter's autonomous existence, two main perspectives should be distinguished. The first consists in adopting standard Italian as the reference variety, in spite of definitional difficulties. It is true that the very concept of 'regional Italian' is defined precisely, insofar as it differs from a reference variety that we can identify as the explicitly codified variety (see Chapters 38–41). In an attempt to investigate what the main features of the new standard of the Swiss variety of Italian might be, in

comparison with the standard of Italy, the only objective instruments of comparison are perhaps those whose primary function is to describe the reference standard (dictionaries, manuals, grammars, etc.). However, the problems related to choosing the standard of Italy as the reference variety for the comparison may lead to the adoption of a different perspective.

The linguistic fragmentation of Italy and the existence of so-called standard regional Italians entail that each regional variety factually differs from the standard of Italy; in a hypothetical comparison with the standard, this would impede our understanding of whether, and to what extent, the Swiss variety of Italian differs from other regional Italians, and in particular from the Lombard variety. It is therefore legitimate to assume, on a theoretical level, that a comparison aimed at postulating the possible existence of a distinct Swiss variety should be made using Lombard regional Italian as a model. This second approach has the undisputed advantage of highlighting the possible uniqueness of the variety. It is not, however, without difficulties. On the one hand, finding substantial identity between Lombard regional Italian and the Swiss variety of Italian would entail denying the very existence of the Swiss variety; on the other hand, once the features exclusive to the Swiss variety of Italian have been pointed out, it is not conceivable to eliminate from its description all the features it has in common with the adjacent regional Italian. These features, although shared (and sometimes definitely pertaining to all varieties of northern Italy), do contribute to the characterization of the individual variety in that they differ from the standard of Italy and most other regional Italians. Clearly, if every feature shared by two or more regional Italians were to be entirely removed from the list of phenomena characterizing them, we would end up with a reductive and unrepresentative overview of the set of features perceived by the speakers as typifying and characterizing a variety. This second question thus also leads to a reflexion about the first issue, namely the selection of the relevant features in the definition of the Swiss variety of Italian.

Moreover, it must be pointed out that the presence of a boundary and the diffusion of traits in different linguistic communities may lead to different connotations and perceptions of phenomena which are only superficially identical; an *a priori* exclusion of such phenomena would prevent us from grasping potentially relevant differences, not expressed in terms of presence vs absence but, for example, in terms of distribution within the diaphasic dimension of variation.

In the following description of the Swiss variety of Italian we will occasionally specify which features are exclusive to this variety and which are instead shared at least with Lombard regional Italian; however, we shall not aim to draw definite boundaries.

31.4.2 Phonology

A particularly significant example of the coexistence of generically northern and typically Swiss features is represented by phonological-prosodic phenomena. As is well known, the Italian-speaking linguistic reality is marked by great fragmentation, particularly in the spoken language, due to well-known historical factors. It is therefore possible to draw linguistic boundaries encompassing specific features of phonetic realization (e.g., the opening of tonic vowels, the tendency to geminate or degeminate consonants, etc.) at different levels of detail, resulting in a set of local linguistic realities. From this point of view, the Swiss variety of Italian fully falls within the family of Lombard varieties and, for other features, within the more generically northern family.

The main features of the Swiss variety of Italian shared with other northern regional Italian varieties (for an overview, see Chapter 38) described in the literature (Berruto 1980; Moretti 2011; Baranzini and Casoni 2020; and, especially for the lexical level, Petralli 1990; Pandolfi 2006; 2009) are the following:

- The tendency to degeminate some long consonants (e.g., *sessanta* 'sixty' [seˈsanta] for standard [sesˈsanta]).
- The degree of openness of tonic /e/ and /o/, which characterizes in various realizations all regional Italians (for example, in the northern varieties the *e* of the diminutive suffix *-etto/-etta* is systematically open, unlike the standard central Italian variety, cf. *borsetta* 'handbag' [borˈsɛtta] vs [borˈsetta]).
- The tendency for more speakers to realize the alveolar trill /r/ with a more retracted place of articulation (cf. the free allophones [ʀ] and [ʁ]).
- The systematic voiced realization of intervocalic /s/ (as in *cosa* 'thing' [ˈkɔza] vs Tsc-It. [ˈkɔsa], *asino* 'donkey' [ˈazino] vs Tsc-It. [ˈasino]).
- The devoicing of some final occlusives (e.g., *nord* 'north' [ˈnɔrt] for Tsc-It. [ˈnɔrd]).

However, more specific features which distinguish the Swiss variety of Italian from neighbouring Lombard varieties can also be detected. Among these more exclusive features we can recall here:

- The reading of many acronyms in accordance with the German alphabet, not only when they are actually of German origin (cf. the brand *BMW* realized as [beɛmˈve] vs Tsc-It. [biɛmmeˈvu]), but also when the acronym

is entirely in Italian (e.g., *PPT*,[9] read as [pepeˈte], or *AMB*,[10] [aɛmˈbe]). This trait is apparently in decline, and quantitative data could show whether an age bias influences language use in these cases.

- In general, a pronunciation closer to the original language for most Gallicisms and Germanisms (e.g., *foehn* 'hair-dryer' pronounced [ˈfø:n] as opposed to the widespread—but not exclusive—pronunciation [ˈfɔn] in Italy, or *dépliant* 'leaflet' [depliˈã] as opposed to such realizations as [ˈdeplian(t)]). As for Anglicisms, the tendency is not clear cut: alongside [kolˈgejt] for the toothpaste brand *Colgate* (cf. [kolˈgate] in Italy), there are examples such as *puzzle*, more often pronounced [ˈputs:le] in Switzerland than in Italy (vs [ˈpaz(o/ɔ/ə/e)l]).
- The reduction—'sometimes leading to complete disappearance' (Moretti 2011)—of intervocalic /v/ (e.g., *dove* 'where' [ˈdowe] instead of [ˈdove]).
- The palatal realization of the clusters [n] + [j] and [l] + [j] (as in *niente* 'nothing', *junior* 'junior' [ˈɲente], [ˈʤuɲor] for [ˈnjɛnte], [ˈʤunjor], and *lievito* 'yeast', *olio* 'oil' [ˈʎevito], [ˈɔʎo] for [ˈljɛvito], [ˈɔljo]).
- Although there is a tendency to realize the alveolar fricative preceded by liquid or nasal as an affricate (Moretti 2011), leading to pronunciations such as [ˈpeŋʦo] or [intsaˈlata] for *penso* 'I think' and *insalata* 'salad' (vs [ˈpɛnso], [insaˈlata]), which is a pan-northern feature,[11] in the Swiss variety of Italian a partially divergent tendency is also at work, unlike in Lombardy, leading to the voiced realization of the alveolar affricate after a nasal (e.g., [ˈmarʣo] and [loˈrenʣo] instead of [ˈmarʦo] and [loˈrɛnʦo] for *marzo* 'March' and *Lorenzo*).

Two facts are particularly worth noting: not only, as Moretti (2011) observes, is there a 'strong internal variation, leading from very marked pronunciations at the diatopic level to pronunciations close to the standard', often due to diastratic factors (and, until a few decades ago, to the prevalence of dialect in the speakers' individual repertoires); also, diatopically marked intonational features—which tend to decrease (Bianconi and Patocchi 1990; Antonini and Moretti 2000) in line with the diminishing presence of dialect and the general tendency of contemporary Italian to attenuate the more accentuated regional traits—are partially dependent on the diaphasic dimension, at least in terms of their models. The intertwining of the diaphasic, diastratic, and diatopic components thus leads to models of more formal language which tend to be less diatopically marked at a phonological level (a prototypical case is the language of the media), and to a greater markedness of these features among speakers more seldom in contact with diaphasically high varieties of Italian.

The phonological aspect of the variety is thus for the most part generically Lombard (or northern), while for more specific aspects of the intonational contour or the realization of certain sounds, diatopic markedness remains partially anchored to—at least—diaphasic, if not diastratic, markedness.

31.4.3 Morphosyntax

The same difficulty in clearly delimiting linguistic boundaries can be found when observing morphological or syntactic phenomena usually associated with the Swiss variety of Italian. These include the following:

- Constructions with different valency patterns such as the oscillation between the transitive and intransitive uses of *aver bisogno* 'need' (cf. 1) or the alternation between the prepositions *a* 'to' and standard *di* 'of' in *essere capace a/di* 'be able to'.
- The oscillation in the head of certain prepositional phrases, particularly between the prepositions *di* 'of' and *da* 'from, by', is often cited as a characteristic feature (e.g., Berruto 1980; Moretti 2011: *abiti da poche pretese* 'unpretentious clothes', *pausa da dieci minuti* 'ten-minute break'), but is not absent in texts of other geographic areas. A more precise quantitative survey would be helpful in determining the exact nature of the phenomenon.
- The spreading of determinerless temporal expressions alongside those with the determiner typical of the standard Italian (e.g., *settimana prossima* 'next week' vs *la settimana prossima* lit. '(the) next week', see example 2).
- The systematic presence of the article preceding affective variants of kinship terms not preceded by the possessive (*portalo alla mamma* 'take it to (lit. the) mummy' vs *portalo a mamma* 'take it to mummy').
- The absence, other than in formal, written, or narrative contexts, of the preterite (*passato remoto*), which is always replaced by the analytic perfect (*passato prossimo*).
- The systematic use of the article before proper names, at least in informal speech. It is used before feminine nouns also in other regional varieties of Italian, but the frequency of use and productivity of the phenomenon also with masculine nouns is geographically more limited in northern Italy. In spontaneous speech this usage is systematic in Switzerland.[12]

These are not exclusively phenomena of the Swiss variety of Italian, but they are remarkably widespread in Italian-speaking Switzerland and, for some of them, only sporadic or marked in Italy (diatopically—see for instance the transitive use of *aver bisogno*, which is limited to certain areas and not systematic, often not known outside these restricted confines—or diaphasically, as with temporal phrases not introduced by a determiner which are felt as a poorly controlled deviation from the norm, perhaps due to northern influence). Instead, the usage is generalized and completely normalized in the Swiss variety of Italian, as the following authentic examples collected in the press of the Canton of Ticino show:

1	Quanto	spazio	ha	bisogno	la	mobilità?
	how.much	space	have.3SG	need	the	mobility

'How much space does mobility need?' (Riccardo De Gottardi, newspaper *Azione*, 22 May 2023)

2	Settimana	prossima	i	parlamentari	federali	saranno	chiamati	ad affrontare […]
	week	next	the	mps	federal	be.FUT.3PL	called	to confront.INF

'Next week, members of the Federal Parliament will be called upon to tackle […]' (daily newspaper *Corriere del Ticino*, notizia ATS, 26 May 2023)

Even in this case, however, it is possible to identify features that occur only in the Swiss variety, particularly at the morphological level:

- Due to the influence of French, some nouns have a different grammatical gender from the standard used in Italy. This is neither productive nor numerically consistent. In particular, the literature mentions *meteo* 'weather (forecast)', feminine in the Swiss variety of Italian and masculine in Italy, and *metro* 'tube, underground', which can be masculine (and pronounced *à la française*) in the Swiss variety of Italian while in Italy it is generally feminine and with the word stress on the first syllable—although, again due to French influence, there is a widespread Lombard masculine use associated with the Milanese network, as well as a pan-Italian masculine usage nowadays perceived as somewhat outdated.

3	La	meteo	ci	dà	una	tregua	fin	dal	pomeriggio	di oggi.
	the.FSG	weather	us=	give.3SG	a	truce	from	by.the	afternoon	of today

'The weather will offer some respite starting from this afternoon.' (Paolo Contangelo, daily newspaper tio.ch, 16 December 2022)

- The literature cites constructions allowing for an order of constituents partially different from that of the standard language spoken in Italy. This mainly involves adverbs such as *più* '(any) more', *maggiormente* 'more, most', *meglio* 'better' (4) which may precede, in more formal writing, the infinitive in a number of subordinates, following the standard syntactic order of French (cf. Cerruti and Pandolfi 2015); we can also mention the

adverb *rispettivamente* 'respectively' (5): not only does it assume a syntactic position which differs from that which is most frequent in Italian, probably following a syntactic order close to that of German, but it also has a more generic meaning of disjunctive conjunction, reducing its semantic scope.

4 Venerdì 25 maggio dopo le otto di sera, il suo micio Capu, un
Friday 25 May after the eight of evening the her cat Capu a
Persiano di 9 anni, CHE NON USCIVA, è USCITO, per
Persian of 9 years that NEG exit.PST.IPFV.3SG be.3SG exited for
non più far ritorno a casa (cf. standard of Italy: . . . *non far più ritorno* . . .)
NEG anymore do.INF return to home

'On Friday May 25th after 8 pm, her cat Capu, a 9-year-old Persian, who did not usually go outside, went outside and has never come back home' (*Corriere del Ticino*, 12 June 2012, from Baranzini and Casoni 2020)

5 Per i biglietti (Print@Home-Tickets) e i buoni (Print@Home-Buoni)
for the tickets (Print@Home-Tickets) and the vouchers (Print@Home-Buoni)
stampati a casa, così come per i biglietti mobili, il cliente
printed at home thus as for the tickets mobile the customer
deve – per quanto possibile – assicurarsi, che i biglietti
must.3SG for as.much.as possible ensure.INF=self that the tickets
rispettivamente i buoni siano protetti contro l' uso
respectively the vouchers be.SBJV.3PL protected against the use
improprio (es. fotocopiare, modificare, stampare da non autorizzati)
improper ex. photocopy.INF modify.INF print.INF by NEG authorized

'For tickets (Print@Home-Tickets) and vouchers (Print@Home-Buoni) which are printed at home, as well as mobile tickets, the client must—as far as possible—ensure that the tickets or the vouchers are protected against unauthorized use (e.g., copying, modification, printing by non-authorized persons)' (website www.arena.ch, from Baranzini and Casoni 2020)

- The use of syntagmatic verbs involving a preposition is a phenomenon found in the dialects, and therefore more generally northern and often diaphasically marked (see §38.4.1). The prevalence of these verbs is remarkable in the Swiss variety of Italian,[13] and is in many cases less marked diaphasically. This may reflect a geographical difference as well as a more general opposition between urban and rural contexts. The meaning of the expression can simply reinforce or specify the meaning of the verb (e.g., *fare là* 'prepare, cook', lit. 'make there') or can be not (fully) compositional as in *marcare giù* 'take note' (lit. 'mark down'), *tirarsi insieme* literally and figuratively 'pull oneself together' (Baranzini and Casoni 2020).[14]

6	E	cosa	l'	ha	spinta	a	tirarsi	insieme?
	and	what	you=	have.3SG	pushed	to	pull.INF=self	together

'And what prompted you to pull yourself together?' (question from an interview published in the daily newspaper www.laregione.ch, 25 March 2021)

- The strengthening of nominal and pronominal phrases by means of the postnominal deictic particles *lì*/*là* 'there' and *qui*/*qua*, 'here' is a feature generally associated with contemporary Italian; however, compared to the standard of Italy, the Swiss variety of Italian shows peculiar forms such as adverbial strengthening in the form *su lì* lit. 'up there', *giù là* 'down there' instead of the forms *lassù* lit. 'there.up' or *laggiù* lit. 'there.down'.
- Another phenomenon to be treated as a hypothesis that requires further quantitative testing (Baranzini and Casoni 2020) is the increase—not limited to the language of young people—in the frequency of clipped forms. These mainly involve school-related terms such as *mate*, *fra*, or *geo* (cf. *matematica* 'mathematics', *francese* 'French', *geografia* 'geography') and toponyms such as *Belli*, *Giubi*, or *Sambe* (cf. *Bellinzona*, *Giubiasco*, *San Bernardino*), but not necessarily so, e.g., *A doma!*, *Buon app!*, *Tranq!* (cf. *A domani!* 'See you tomorrow!', *Buon appetito!* 'Enjoy your meal!', *Tranquillo!* 'Take it easy').

Apart from differences in grammatical gender—even though limited to just a few individual instances—we can see that morphosyntactic phenomena are always present as alternatives within the system, and do not completely replace the variant used in Italy which remains available as a free variant.

31.4.4 Textuality and pragmatics

As far as syntactic-textual construction is concerned, existing studies (Ferrari 2009a; 2009b; De Cesare 2009a; 2016b; Lala 2009; Mandelli 2009; E. Roggia 2009) have dealt in particular with journalistic language and institutional/administrative language, noting a general tendency of the Swiss variety of Italian towards a more traditional, less innovative and less 'brilliant' syntax and text construction. Notably, there are fewer stylistic-expressive borrowings from speech and literary Italian, and the syntax is less fragmented and less complex, with a less dynamic handling of the information structure.[15]

Among the socio-pragmatic uses serving as 'linguistic signals of socio-cultural practices' (Baranzini and Casoni 2020) of the two different language communities, the following are cited in the literature as typical of the Swiss variety of Italian:

- The different handling of pronominal address forms used in public (institutional or commercial) communication (see also §11.1.2): the form *tu*, preferred in Italy, is replaced in the Swiss variety of Italian by the polite form *lei* or the plural *voi*;

7 Avete domande, possiamo offrirvi una consulenza o volete
have.2PL questions can.1PL offer.INF=you.PL a consultation or want.2PL
notificare un sinistro?
notify.INF an accident

'Have you got questions, can we offer advice, or do you wish to report an accident?'
(homepage of the Swiss website of Zurich insurance company—www.zurich.ch)

8 Assicurazioni Zurich: Proteggiamo il tuo mondo
insurances Zurich protect.1PL the your.SG world

'Zurich Insurance: we protect your world' (title on the homepage of the Italian website of Zurich insurance company—www.zurich.it)

- The much less frequent use—compared to the standard of Italy—of academic, honorary, or professional titles in addressing individuals (e.g., *dottore* 'doctor', *avvocato* 'lawyer').
- The almost systematic use of distinct morphological feminine forms for the nouns relating to professions and social roles. Although we lack recent quantitative studies, the data presented in Pescia (2010; 2011) show significant differences in frequency between the two varieties. The debate on this topic in Italy has been quite heated in recent years, and the use of these forms in public language has increased there too. At this point in time it is not possible for us to say whether this has resulted in a reduced gap between the two national varieties.

31.4.5 Lexicon

Finally, we consider lexis which, as already noted, represents the area of key variation in the Swiss variety of Italian. The lexical phenomena characterizing this variety are indeed productive and numerically consistent but, unlike phonetic phenomena (which are also very much present), they are more often specific to the Swiss variety. To better illustrate this specificity, it is useful to consider the main influencing factors determining the differences between the Swiss variety of Italian and the standard variety in Italy.

As discussed at the beginning of §31.4, the range of lexical variation resulting from the encounter between Italian and Lombard dialects of the territory might seem less relevant because it parallels the geographical variation found in all regions of Italy, and also because it is felt to be more

markedly regional. At a theoretical level, it is indeed important to distinguish the features resulting from dialectal influence typical of each variety of regional Italian—perceived as such by speakers and characterized by a diaphasic connotation—from those of which the speakers are unaware and which may therefore also appear in the productions of educated speakers in more formal varieties of language. The first category includes terms such as *brozzo* 'dirty', *slozzo* 'soggy', and *biotto* 'naked', while the second, probably smaller, category includes items such as *padella* (only 'frying pan' in the standard of Italy) for *pentola* 'pot' and *pioda* for *beola* 'gneiss stone tile'. In general, however, we can consider most terms of dialectal origin as part of diaphasically marked regional variation, and we can assume, for many of these terms, substantial continuity with the areas neighbouring Italian-speaking Switzerland, with which the latter shares much of the dialectal substratum.

From this perspective, we can say that the Swiss variety of Italian is in all respects a regional variety of Italian, and that it features the typical characteristics of all the geographical varieties of Italian. What distinguishes it, however, are other influencing factors, which are not active (or not systematically so) in other regional varieties of Italian. The main factor is a direct consequence of the close contact with German and French of the Italian language in Switzerland. The two major national languages penetrate the Italian-speaking linguistic reality with terminology, expressions, and locutions, as well as syntactic and textual calques. This is observed within the sphere of institutional, legal, and administrative writing—in which German, and to some extent French, play an unmistakably predominant role and Italian is either the result of translations or a source language, but almost always accompanied by a German or French model—in the commercial communication on a national scale, or simply in the 'linguistic landscape' to which the Swiss Italian-speaker is exposed (from the labels on commercial products to the systematic translations of touristic information, instructions, posters, etc.). Sometimes the penetration of French and German is realized in the form of loanwords without adaptation, such as (from German) *schlafsack* (It. *sacco a pelo*) 'sleeping bag' and *zibac*, *zwieback* (It. *fetta biscottata*) 'toasted biscuit', and (from French) *crevettes* (It. *gamberetti*) 'shrimps' and *trottinette* (*monopattino*) 'scooter', through morphologically adapted loanwords such as *classatore* (It. *raccoglitore*) 'binder' (cf. Fr. *classeur*) or by means of calques where the foreign origin is less visible, for example in the case of *licenza di condurre* for *patente di guida* 'driving licence' (cf. Fr. *permis de conduire*).

This aspect of variation has the peculiar characteristic of being frequently conveyed through the written language and, often, through public texts showing a certain degree of formality. Thus, these forms do not undergo any change in status on a diaphasic level when they are integrated: they become

part of the speakers' standard lexicon and their place within the norm is re-established and reaffirmed by their regular reappearance within model texts (Ammon 1989; 2015).

Similar considerations can apply to another fundamental factor of variation, namely that arising from the need for the Swiss variety of Italian to adapt to the different social, political, and administrative realities of Switzerland: different institutions, different organizations, and different state bodies active in society predictably require an adequate vocabulary, which is not necessarily borrowed from the Italian of Italy but represents a Swiss peculiarity, often represented in parallel in the different national languages and designating specific extralinguistic referents not directly transferable to the Italian reality.

Alongside these influencing factors, we can mention other trends, which, although less marked, seem to contribute to the characterization of the variety. On the one hand, we can observe a generic tendency towards linguistic conservatism, probably attributable to the peripheral nature of the Swiss variety of Italian: it is distant and politically detached from the major centre of enactment of the norm and therefore less involved in movements of language innovation (Petralli 1990:135). On the other, two morphological processes of lexical formation, although also present in the Italian standard, seem to be more productive in the Swiss variety of Italian, namely, formation by abbreviation or acronym and formation by exploiting brand names as a new generic lexicon. If the data resulting from the *lìdatè* project reported by the *Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana* in 2023 seem to confirm this tendency towards a greater diffusion of certain abbreviated forms and of certain brand names (among many others we can mention here *natel* for *telefonino* 'mobile phone', *tipp-ex* for *bianchetto* 'correction fluid', *stabilo* for *evidenziatore* 'highlighter (pen)'), we still have no evidence that this is not also the case for other forms, widespread in Italy and absent in the Swiss variety of Italian; once again, these observations must therefore be confirmed in the future by quantitative studies.

None of the categories listed here are clearly separated from each other; moreover, in many cases a lexical item cannot be unambiguously assigned to a particular category. In other words, the origin of a term in the Swiss variety of Italian may not allow for unique categorization for two different reasons: in some cases the term actually belongs to two different, non-exclusive categories; in other cases different factors would have led to the same result, therefore only a thorough study of the history of the term would allow us to know which factor was actually at play in a specific case. An example of the first case is that of terms used to describe a typically Swiss reality based on German calques (e.g., *cassa malati* 'health insurance (company)'; cf. Ger. *Krankenkasse*): the overlap between these two categories is here particularly noticeable. An example of the second case is that of terms which used to exist

(or are attested with a different meaning) in standard Italian and still exist in French, German, or Swiss German; in such cases, it is not clear whether they are archaic forms surviving in Swiss Italian or whether language contact has led to their reappearance, their shift in meaning, or their conservation, e.g., *spagnolette* 'peanuts' (cf. It. *arachidi* or *noccioline (americane)*), *mantello* '(over)coat' (cf. It. *cappotto*).

Since the analysis proposed in Petralli (1990) (later taken up with a few modifications in Pandolfi 2009 and Moretti 2011), however, the most widespread classification of the characteristic terms of the Swiss variety of Italian has not focused on its origin, but on the relation that the signified or the signifier entertains with the forms of the standard in Italy. In particular, the different forms are classified as absolute, lexical, or semantic Helvetisms (in Petralli, Helvetisms are called *ticinesismi* 'ticinesisms').

The first category (Petralli 1990:99) concerns forms with no counterpart in the Italian of Italy, be it in form, meaning, or referent (in other words, the term does not exist and the referent is not an object or concept that is part of the cognitive environment normally activated in Italy). The second category (Petralli 1990:110) includes terms not existing in the Italian of Italy because the standard expresses the same meaning through an alternative form, be it a lexical item or a lexicalized expression.

When the form occurs in the two geographical varieties of Italian but with different meanings, Petralli (1990:117) places it in the third category. This results in two types of Helvetisms attested only in Switzerland (namely, absolute and lexical Helvetisms) and one type consisting in terms which are also present in the standard but with a different meaning (semantic Helvetisms).

The category having the least success in later descriptions in the literature is Petralli's fourth category of Helvetisms (Petralli 1990:125), the very vast category of sociolinguistic Helvetisms. This includes all the forms attested in the two varieties, but with a different diaphasic, diachronic, or diastratic connotation. Within this category we could classify the above-mentioned archaisms, or terms whose meaning is more generic, or which are more formal, and so forth.

In Table 31.2 we offer some examples of the four categories proposed by Petralli (1990).[16]

Table 31.2 Petralli's taxonomy (adapted from Petralli 1990)

	examples	remarks (in relation to the form found in peninsular Italian)

	examples	remarks (in relation to the form found in peninsular Italian)
absolute 'ticinesismi'	*fleischkäse* (a particular kind of processed meat)	This kind of processed meat is not known in Italy.
	corso di ripetizione (military term) 'call-up / refresher course'	Military service in Italy does not include regular call-ups of all citizens.
	modine 'stakes indicating the space to be occupied by a future construction'	In Italy, such masts are not commonly used.
lexical 'ticinesismi'	*trattanda* 'item on the agenda'	The same meaning is expressed in Italy by *punto all'ordine del giorno*.
	bilux 'high beam headlights / signal made with high beams'	The same meaning is expressed in Italy respectively by *fari abbaglianti* and *lampeggiamento* or *segnale fatto con gli abbaglianti*.
	sagex 'polystyrene foam'	The same meaning is expressed in Italy by *polistirolo* (*espanso*).
semantic 'ticinesismi'	*cremino* 'single portion coffee creamer'	In Italy the same term designates a type of chocolate, a type of ice cream on a stick, or a type of fried snack.
	azione 'special offer'	In Italy the same term only means 'act, activity; share'.
	evidente 'simple, commonplace, obvious'	In Italy the same term only means 'visible, manifest'.
sociolinguistic 'ticinesismi'	*fuoco* 'household'	This is an archaic term.
	educatore 'social worker / child development worker'	In Italy this term is less specific, generally meaning 'educator; educationalist'.
	lapis 'pencil'	This is an archaic or Tuscan form.

As with any attempt to schematize a complex reality, Petralli's taxonomy also shows a number of critical points, which we will list below (and see Figure 31.3).

- The distinction between semantic and sociolinguistic *ticinesismi* should probably be represented on a continuum, depending on the extent of the gap in meaning; this entails accepting the risk of including in the same category both terms having a clear semantic link with the same Italian form and terms which, by contrast, have a completely unrelated meaning. The example of *fuoco*, cited by the author as a 'sociolinguistic ticinesismo with a diachronic mismatch' (Petralli 1990:125) is an effective illustration of this aspect: is there a threshold value from which the meanings of the two terms are too distant to allow us to consider the Swiss term a 'semantic ticinesismo'? Or is the criterion purely linguistic, and in that case a term having the same origin as its Italian counterpart would in all cases fall in the category of 'sociolinguistic ticinesismi'? The risk of this second perspective is to create a non-transparent classification, visible only to linguists and not reflecting the real perception by speakers.

• The distinction between absolute and 'lexical ticinesismi' on the one hand, and

between ‘lexical’ and ‘semantic ticinesismi’ on the other, causes confusion, in that it involves two defining criteria of a different nature, one related to form and the other to meaning, placing them on the same classificatory level: hierarchizing the taxonomy would allow us, in my view, to simplify the representation. A first dichotomy could be based on the criterion of form existence: ‘does the same lexical form exist in the two varieties?’. If the answer is no, one could resort to a second dichotomy, this time distinguishing between terms that have a corresponding item—albeit different—in the standard lexicon of Italy (these would thus be labelled ‘lexical ticinesismi’) and terms that do not (these would be labelled ‘absolute ticinesismi’); if the answer is yes, one could again distinguish between cases in which the referent of the term in the sense employed in the Swiss variety of Italian exists and those in which it does not. This would allow us to resolve some paradoxical cases such as that of *cremino* (in Switzerland referring to a ‘single-serving portion of coffee creamer in a plastic container’): according to the purely formal criterion, this term turns out to be a ‘semantic ticinesismo’; however, considering the semantic criterion as having primary importance, we should instead classify it as an ‘absolute ticinesismo’, because it designates an object which is essentially unknown in Italy.

- Within the category of lexical and semantic ticinesismi, Petralli includes two phenomena which, in my opinion, deserve to be distinguished: the terms used *in place of* the standard Italian equivalent (e.g., *tipp-ex* for *bianchetto* ‘correction fluid’ or

sagex for *polistirolo* ‘polystyrene foam’) and those which, instead, constitute *an alternative* to a standard form which is widespread and in use also in the Swiss variety of Italian (e.g., *a dipendenza di* and *a seconda di* ‘depending on’, or *trottinette* and *monopattino* ‘scooter’).

- In general a multifaceted reality such as that of the lexicon of the Swiss variety of Italian and its relation with the standard lexicon of Italy is reduced to a binary system based on presence vs absence of a certain form or meaning or referent; this carries the risk of losing sight of a central and pervasive aspect of the variety, namely the characterization of the Swiss variety of Italian in terms of speakers’ preference, probability of use and, ideally, frequency data. In other words, the exclusive form of the Swiss variety of Italian seems just as characterizing as the lack of a form that is part of the speakers’ repertoire but never occurs or occurs with less probability than the alternative form.

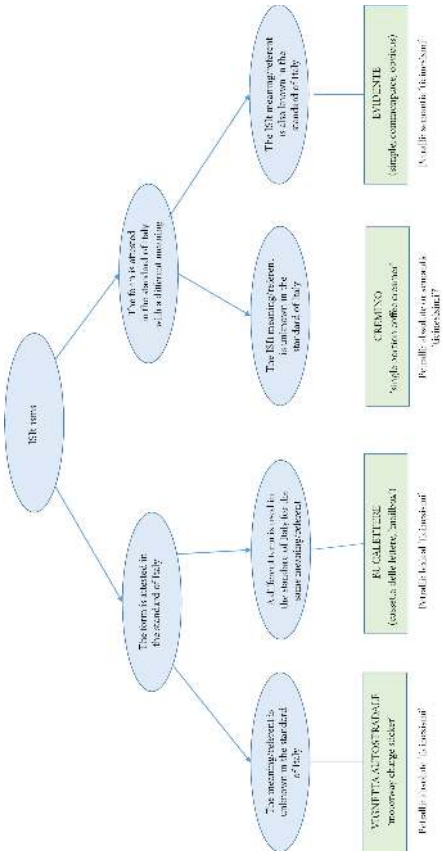


Figure 31.3 Hierarchical reinterpretation of Petralli's (1990) taxonomy.

A more complete representation of the lexical distribution of the Swiss variety of Italian could therefore take into account all of the above-mentioned factors: the origin of the term, its relation to the form of the standard in Italy in its use in Switzerland, and its relation to the standard lexicon of Italy according to the distinctions proposed by Petralli (1990). Below (Table 31.3), we propose an initial attempt to synthesize the various criteria: we are well aware of the limits and of an inevitable degree of arbitrariness that such a representation entails.

In the left column, we have divided the categories by origin of the term, while the distribution in the columns depends on the relation of the term in the Swiss variety of Italian with the form of the standard of Italy. When the term is labelled 'substitute', the form of the standard of Italy is considered tendentially as not being in use in Switzerland; this type of labelling is to be understood qualitatively, and does not mean that there cannot be occurrences of the Italian standard form in Switzerland as well. It is a partly impressionistic approximation intended to show a clear preference for the Swiss form and a consequent partial connotation of the Italian standard form. The categorization does not take into account a hypothetical dialogical exchange with Italian speakers; in this case we would probably see a partial

adaptation of lexical choices. All items not having a corresponding form in use in standard Italian, for instance, because the corresponding concept or object is missing, are also considered substitute forms.

The columns including coexisting variants allow us to admit the case of substantial equivalence and two cases in which the Swiss variant is marked at different levels.[17] The main diastratic component involved is that of age, but a lack of awareness of dialectal markings may also have an influence. Often, then, code-switching/mixing also appears in educated speakers with a playful-expressive intent, if the context allows it.

As for the indication 'E(xclusive form)', it brings in the criterion of whether the signifier of the term also belongs to the standard lexicon, pointing out forms not present in Italy, which would therefore roughly correspond, in the terms of Petralli (1990), to the two categories of 'absolute' and 'lexical' *ticinesismi*.

Table 31.3 Proposal for a synoptic taxonomy

origin	substitute term	co-existing variants		
		free distribution	diaphasic markedness	diastratic markedness
dialect	*pioda* ***E*** 'stone tile' *grotto* ***E*** typical simple tavern	*cala* ***E*** 'snowplough' *neh?* 'isn't it?'	*palta* ***E*** 'mud' *inzigare* ***E*** 'provoke, irritate'	*pettole* ***E*** 'troubles' *marcare giù* 'take note, write down'
German	*azione* 'special offer' *cassa malati* ***E*** 'health insurance (company)'	*schlafsack* ***E*** 'sleeping bag' *guggen* ***E*** 'carnival band'	*laborantin* ***E*** 'medical laboratory technician' *mèrci* ***E*** 'thank you'	*tip top* ***E*** 'impeccable' *tippare* ***E*** 'type into the cash register'
French	*classatore* ***E*** 'binder' *bouillotte* ***E*** 'hot water bottle'	*trotti(nette)* ***E*** 'scooter' *trousse* 'toiletry bag'	*avantutto* ***E*** 'first of all' *chinarsi su* 'address (a matter)'	*chaise longue* ***E*** 'lounger' *autocollante* ***E*** 'self-adhesive sticker'

origin	substitute term	co-existing variants		
		free distribution	diaphasic markedness	diastratic markedness
archaic Italian	*ghette* 'tights' *passeggiata* 'school trip'	*spagnolette* 'peanuts' *salario* 'salary'	*fuoco* 'household' *disco su ghiaccio* 'hockey'	*lapis* 'pencil' *carta gommata* 'sticky tape'
Swiss reality	*vignetta* 'motorway road tax disk'	*autopostale* ***E*** 'bus'	*civilista* 'person on civilian service'	*zucchino* 'German-speaking Swiss person' (derogative or ironic)
brand name	*tipp-ex* ***E*** 'correction fluid' *sagex* ***E*** 'polystyrene foam'	*caotina* ***E*** 'hot chocolate' *nescafé* 'instant coffee'	*cutips* 'Q-tips' *securitas/securino* 'security guard'	*migros-data* 'expiry date' *perles* 'angle grinder'
acronyms/ abbreviations	*BKS* 'facing brick'	—	*Belli* ***E*** Bellinzona, toponym	*mate*, *geo*, *ita* Maths, geography, Italian
?	*pittore* 'painter' *bucalettere* ***E*** 'letterbox'	*a dipendenza di* ***E*** 'depending on' *caselline* 'times tables'	*da parte a* ***E*** 'beside' *fiacca* 'blister'	*fotbalino* ***E*** 'table football'

31.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sketched a description of the Swiss variety of Italian, placing it in its political, historical, and social context. This has allowed us to observe it as a non-dominant variety of a pluricentric language and to list its main internal linguistic features. Starting from the existing descriptions, a critical discussion has been developed, leading to a reasoned proposal for the classification of the linguistic phenomena—in particular lexical ones—

allowing us to identify the Swiss variety of Italian as a distinct variety. The collection, discussion, and dissemination of the data and reflections presented here represent a contribution both at a descriptive and a speculative level, but also have an impact on the perception of the status of this language variety, possibly strengthening its autonomy as a consequence.

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[1] For an in-depth description of the presence of Italian outside traditional Italian-speaking borders, see Chapters 32 and 33.

[2] Italian-speaking Swiss citizens living in these regions are of course also included in the number of Italian-speaking residents.

[3] Romansh Grischun is an artificial common standard form of Romansh created in the 1980s in order to unite the five separate languages.

[4] Or 'Italian-speaking Switzerland', but the Constitution of the canton of Ticino notably defines the canton as 'a democratic republic of Italian culture and language', thus defining language not so much as an accident unrelated to a deeper cultural identity, but as one of the components of a more complex and articulated 'Italianness'.

[5] The Federal Chancellery also issues a terminology database in the four national languages and in English (www.termdat.ch), which, however, has only a minimal influence on most speakers.

[6] It should be noted, however, that DFA-SUPSI (Dipartimento Formazione e Apprendimento—Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana) and OLSI are currently preparing new material aimed at school teachers specifically focused on the Swiss variety of Italian (REPSI project—Repertorio lessicale dei regionalismi della Svizzera italiana in ambito scolastico).

[7] But not sufficient, as illustrated in the previous section: the large number of varieties of Italian in Italy do not lead to an equal number of standard languages according to the given definition.

[8] Within this perspective, socio-pragmatic differences should probably be included in the first group of linguistic differences.

[9] *Poste, Telefoni e Telegrafi* 'Post, Telephones, and Telegraphs', name of the Swiss Post Office in use until 1997.

[10] *Azienda Multiservizi Bellinzona* 'Bellinzona Multiutility Company', name of the electricity and water company in Bellinzona.

[11] This feature also characterizes other regional Italians such as those spoken in central Italy.

[12] 'L'insegnamento della volpe mi ha fatto pensare quando eravamo al triatlon, io ero convito [sic] che battevo il Samuel, (il Samuel è un compagno di classe che andava nella 4B) ma il Samuel si è veramente impegnato e ce l'ha fatta, da li ho ricevuto un piccolo colpo' ('The lesson about the fox made me think of when we were doing the triathlon, I was convinced I would beat [the] Samuel ([the] Samuel is a classmate attending form 4b), but [the] Samuel really made an effort and succeeded, from that moment on I got a little shock'), school essay SEAS5110, from corpus DFA-TIscrivo, collected by DILS–SUPSI team within FNS DoRe research project, 13DPD3_136603 e FNS 100012_156247.

[13] The data from LIPSI (Pandolfi 2009), for example, show a clear prevalence of *lì* 'there', *là* 'there', *su* 'up', and *giù* 'down' (not necessarily within verbal constructions) compared to LIP and C-Oral-Rom corpora. The number of tokens of verbal polylexical expressions (Pandolfi 2009:90) also point in the same direction.

[14] For a more detailed classification of the different types of particle verbs, see §38.4.1.

[15] More recent investigations on Swiss and Italian constitutional texts also generally come to the same conclusions, qualifying the style and text construction of the Swiss constitution as more canonical (cf. Ferrari 2022).

[16] Only some examples are taken from Petralli. Many are proposed here because they effectively represent the class under consideration.

[17] When the Swiss term almost systematically replaces the Italian one, we will consider the Italian variant as that taking on a particular connotation when it is used in Switzerland.

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Chapter 32

Italian in the Mediterranean area

Daniele Baglioni

32.1 Introduction

On 16 July 1628, the English consul in Constantinople Thomas Roe wrote a letter to his Dutch counterpart Cornelius Haga. The letter is in English, a fact perfectly normal in present-day diplomacy, but rather exceptional in the early modern Ottoman Empire, even between native speakers of Germanic languages, as can be inferred from Roe's preliminary apologies:

> My very good L(ord),
>
> [. . .] I write y(ou)r exc(ellency) in English for my owne ease, & inabilitye in glorious Italian, & to practise y(o)u in y^{t} language, w(hi)ch you profess to love.[1]

There are two points of interest in these opening lines. The first one is that Roe apologizes for not writing in Italian, thus indirectly revealing that Italian, though not being the language either of the hosting nation or of the addressee, served in Constantinople, the largest city of the Mediterranean basin, for international communication involving Westerners. The second one is that Italian was perceived as 'glorious', that is as a prominent language, whose prestige derived not from its alleged pleasantness and melodiousness, according to a stereotype widespread in western Europe at the time (Stammerjohann 2013), but from its connexion to political power, or, in Roe's words, 'glory'.[2]

How had Italian acquired this status in the early modern Mediterranean, despite being, as observed by Bruni (2013a:9–21), 'a language without an empire', because of the long-lasting political

fragmentation of Italy? What were the factors that had favoured its international diffusion and supported its circulation throughout the Middle Ages? To what extent had the Mediterranean diffusion of Italian brought it into contact with other languages, both Romance (Occitan, Catalan, Spanish) and non-Romance (South Slavic, Greek, Turkish, Arabic), and with what effects? These are some of the questions which this chapter will attempt to answer. The analysis will be divided into three parts. The first focuses on the rich written documentation in Italian from both the medieval Mediterranean (§32.2), especially the so-called 'Venetian Levant' (i.e., the areas of the eastern Mediterranean politically and economically influenced by Venice), and the Ottoman Empire (§32.3). The second part seeks to reconstruct the oral circulation of Italian (including the pidgin-like variety referred to as Lingua Franca) on the basis of the accounts of travellers and other observers, as well as of the numerous Italian loanwords still present in the languages of the Mediterranean (§32.4). The last section is given over to particular insular contexts in which Italian has been a stable part of the local repertoires up until the modern period, deeply affecting the local languages through long-lasting contact (§32.5).

32.2 Italian dialects in the medieval Mediterranean

Located in the centre of the Mediterranean, with a coastline approaching 8,000 km in length, Italy has always been naturally linked with the other countries of the Mediterranean basin, playing a crucial role in commerce between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. This is especially true from the Middle Ages onwards, when Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and, to a lesser extent, Amalfi, Ancona, and other port cities of the Italian Peninsula emerged as international trading hubs, in constant and intense contact with Byzantium and the Arabic states, thanks to an extensive network of Italian merchants in the harbours of the Levant and North Africa. A turning point is represented by the Fourth Crusade and the subsequent Fall of Constantinople (1204), after which Venice, the main financer of the expedition, is awarded 'One Quarter and One Half [of a quarter]

of the Empire of Romania', i.e., of the defeated Byzantine Empire (Lane 1973:42). This event marks the beginning of Venice's domination of the Adriatic and of a great part of the Aegean, either through direct administration of the new territories (as in the case of Crete taken over in 1212 and held for four and a half centuries until 1669), or through the rule of influential families of the Venetian aristocracy such as the Sanudos and the Querinis, respectively dukes of Naxos and earls of Stampalia (modern Astypalea). By the late thirteenth century Genoa became Venice's main competitor in the Levant, thanks to its possessions in Crimea (above all the settlement of Kaffa, today Feodosija), as well as its control of the important island of Chios (1304–1566). As a consequence of this territorial expansion, the influence of the Italian republics rapidly spreads throughout the area, even in those regions formally independent of the Italian republics, as is the case with Ragusa (modern Dubrovnik, on the Dalmatian coast), which, despite freeing itself from Venetian domination in 1358, remained in the cultural sphere of the former ruler until the eighteenth century, and the Latin kingdom of Cyprus, administrated by the Frankish dynasty of the Lusignans and long contested first by Genoa (which occupied the port of Famagusta from 1374 until 1464) and then by Venice (which gained control of the island in 1489). As for the shores of North Africa, colonies of Venetian, Genoese, and Pisan traders are documented in the main port cities, especially Tunis, throughout the Middle Ages (Julien 1986, II:122f., 139, 151).

The presence of Italo-Romance-speaking merchants, brokers, and officers in several trading centres of the Mediterranean leads to the development of local varieties of the metropolitan dialects. The most attested and studied is the so-called 'Outremer Venetian', or 'veneziano de là da mar', a term coined by Folena (1968–1970) that has prevailed over analogous denominations, such as 'colonial Venetian' (Bidwell 1967; Cortelazzo 2000) and 'eastern Venetian' (Muljačić 2002). Actually, the term refers to a heterogeneous set of linguistic varieties, sharing a common origin from the Levant (understood as a general geographic label comprising the eastern Adriatic, Greece, and the Middle East), as well as a few recurrent morphological features (the persistence of the old form of the masculine singular definite article *lo*—mostly replaced in Venice by that time by its modern variant *el*—the well-attested conservation of

etymological *-s* in the second-person singular of verbs, and frequent occurrences of overt realizations of the third-person plural expressed by the ending *-n(o)*).[3] Furthermore, since writers were often non-natives (such as subjects of Venetian-ruled territories addressing the authorities, local partners of Venetian merchants, autochthonous translators of diplomatic acts), the texts display contact phenomena with the local languages, as well as with other Romance languages of common use in local administrations (such as French in the Crusader States and their satellites). These characteristics occur in most corpora that have been edited and studied in recent decades: the Ragusan documents analysed by Dotto (2008), the Cypriot acts and letters examined by Baglioni (2006), and the Cretan governmental and judicial records investigated by Eufe (2006). They can also be found in single documents remarkable for their early date such as the pact between the Venetian duke Pietro Ziani and the Sultan of Aleppo al-Ẓāhir Ġāzī, dating from 1207–1208 and thus counting as the earliest text entirely written in Venetian, although available in a later copy (Belloni and Pozza 1990). Further records still lie unpublished in the State Archives of Venice and in minor archives both in Italy and abroad. Among them, the mostly unpublished documentation kept in the State Archives of Zadar (Croatia), concerning both the administration of the city (under Venetian rule from 1202 to 1358) and of other cities in Dalmatia, is of particular interest because of the high degree of interference shown by the texts, in which Slavic and, possibly, Dalmatian influence determines some phonological modifications.[4]

As for Genoese, Toso (2008; 2020) has proposed the label 'genovese d'oltremare' ('overseas Genoese') for the language of the vernacular texts written in the Mediterranean areas ruled and/or economically influenced by Genoa, both on the shores of the Black Sea and in the Greek-speaking Levant (the island of Chios, the port of Famagusta, the districts of Galata and Pera in Constantinople). However, these texts are much fewer than the records of Outremer Venetian and do not generally display features enabling us to classify their language as other than metropolitan Genoese. The reason has probably to do with the different modalities of colonization, since Genoa, unlike Venice, was more interested in controlling ports and trading routes from afar than in exploiting local resources through groups of permanent settlers. Additionally, Genoese was less used

than Venetian for administration, whereas Latin prevailed, both in Genoa and abroad. Nevertheless, despite its scarcity and lack of characterization, the corpus of Genoese texts written in the Mediterranean area includes significant documents such as the vernacular translations of the treaty between the Tartar *khan* of Crimea and the Genoese consul of Kaffa (1380–1381) and the pact between the emirate of Tunis and the Republic of Genoa (1465), both made on the spot by Genoese interpreters.[5] A wider variety of text typologies is attested in the territories directly administrated by Genoa. In Chios, for instance, Genoese was employed for public inscriptions, as documented by a still extant stone located at the entrance of the main harbour warning sailors not to pollute the sea (Toso 2020: 37), whereas in the Cypriot city of Famagusta, in 1447, an edict against violence on women was proclaimed in Genoese to the local population, mostly made up of Greeks, Syrians, and Jews (Polonio 1966:215; Baglioni 2016:43–45). Indeed, the indigenous dwellers of these territories must have often resorted to the rulers' language, although very few records of this practice have survived. An isolated testimony is the letter written in 1373 by some notable Greeks of Chios to the Genoese officer Raffe Patee (Raffaele Paterio), whose language does not reveal any trace of Greek interference, thus hinting at the intermediation of a Genoese scribe (Toso 2020:36).

Although less widespread than Venetian and Genoese, especially after the crushing defeat inflicted by Genoa on Pisa at Meloria (1284), Pisan had also a major role in the Mediterranean. One of its earliest records outside of Italy is the will of the Venetian merchant Pietro Veglione written in 1263 in Tauris (modern Tabriz, in Iran) by a scribe who, as clearly emerges from the language (Stussi 1962; Petrucci 2000:28), was Pisan. The rest of the documentation concerns diplomacy, starting from the pact between Pisa and Tunis of 1264 (Castellani 1982a:383f.) to the treaties with the sultans of Egypt (between 1221 and 1291) and Fez (1358), all translations of Arabic originals made in North Africa by Pisan interpreters (Petrucci 1996; Franceschini and Marjani 2023). The latest text dates from 1366 and is the most interesting, since Pisan is written in Arabic characters, most probably by an interpreter whose mother tongue was neither Pisan nor Arabic, as suggested by frequent errors in both languages. It is the translation of a diplomatic letter sent from the emir of Bona and Bugia (modern ʻAnnāba and Bigˇāya, on the

Algerian coast) to the duke of Pisa Giovanni dell'Agnello, granting Pisans commercial privileges in the two ports. The text is the only known example in which an Italo-Romance variety is written in Arabic script. It was probably a personal note taken by the emir's interpreter and ambassador in Pisa—who had learned Pisan through oral contact with the Italian merchants but must have not been familiar with the Latin alphabet—presumably with the purpose of reading it out loud before the duke.[6]

Turning to southern Italian dialects, written evidence of their Mediterranean circulation is scanty, except for Sicilian in Malta (on which see §32.5). A rather exceptional case is represented by a bilingual Latin-Arabic letter written on a papyrus in Egypt or in the Near East, probably dating from the ninth century, whose heavily vernacularized Latin displays southern Italian features (such as the second-person *si* < *ses 'you are' and the form *binne* < *ˈvenu̯it 'it came'), recently interpreted 'as potential evidence of a commercial and personal network linking Italy, Egypt, and/or the Near East at a very early date' (D'Alessio 2026:243).[7] As for the late Middle Ages, Zinelli (2012) has drawn attention to half a dozen documents concerning the fiefs of Niccolò Acciaiuoli and his family in Morea (modern Peloponnese), a territory administrated by the Angevins of Naples from the late thirteenth to the first decades of the fifteenth century. Most of these documents are in Tuscan, Acciaiuoli's mother tongue. Nevertheless, they randomly show Neapolitan features and, in some cases, even whole passages in Neapolitan, suggesting the existence of an '*Outremer* Neapolitan' which had vanished by the end of the fourteenth century (Montuori 2023:130). However, the only text of the collection entirely written in a southern vernacular, Nicola di Bojano's record of Marie de Bourbon's possessions, is not in Neapolitan, but in a less prestigious and documented variety, Molisan. Barbato (2023) has recently re-edited the text, providing it with a thorough linguistic commentary that shows the clear influence of both Outremer French and Greek (especially in relation to local designata such as *vellanita* < βαλανίδια 'acorns [used for dyeing]' and *sputicà* < δεσποτικά 'chore'; Barbato 2023:12f.).

The picture would not be complete without a reference to the correspondence of the Italian merchants in Italy with their partners scattered in the major hubs of the Mediterranean basin. Although these texts do not attest to local varieties of the Italian dialects, since

their writers neither resided for long periods in the same place nor used Italian for all their interactions, nonetheless they are of great interest for linguists, since they show a high degree of interference not only of other languages on Italian, but also of Italian varieties on each other. This is particularly evident in the letters sent to Pignol Zucchello, a trader of Pisan origin long resident in Venice, by his Tuscan partners in Crete and Alexandria, in the years between 1336 and 1349 (Morozzo della Rocca 1957). As noted by Tomasin (2019a:17), the language of the letters, despite its Tuscan morphology, contains forms such as *pevere* 'pepper', *amisi* 'friends', *nievo* 'nephew', and *mamole* 'girls' clearly borrowed from Venetian, thus revealing a significant degree of linguistic integration of the writers into the Venetian Levant. Analogous phenomena of inter-Romance contact can be observed in the western Mediterranean, where the presence of Italian merchants, along with their Provençal and Catalan counterparts, was massive. Again Tomasin, on the basis of the extraordinary archive of the Tuscan trader Francesco di Marco Datini, consisting of thousands of documents dating from the second half of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries, has edited and studied the letters sent to Francesco by the Jewish merchant Bondí de Iosef (Tomasin and Menichetti 2018) and the Majorcan broker Bartol de Cavalls (Tomasin 2019b; 2020), both showing remarkable intermixing of Italian (Tuscan) with, respectively, Provençal and Catalan.[8]

32.3 Italian in the Ottoman Empire

The diffusion of Venetian, Genoese, Pisan, and other Italian dialects in the medieval Levant paved the way for the extensive use of Italian in the early modern Mediterranean, whose eastern and southern shores were under Ottoman domination from the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries (that is, in the 120 years between the seizure of Constantinople in 1453 and the definitive conquest of Tunis in 1574) to the nineteenth century. This period was without doubt the acme of the international expansion of the Italian language, both in the Mediterranean area and in Europe. However, there is a remarkable

difference between the diffusion of Italian in the Ottoman Empire and the prestige of the same language in sixteenth-century France, England, Spain, and other European countries. As a matter of fact, whereas in Renaissance Europe Italian spread thanks to the great success of Italian literature and arts, imitated by the numerous Italianates who crowded the European courts, in Constantinople and the Ottoman provinces Italian was rather 'accepted as a diplomatic and commercial lingua franca' (Lewis 2004:25), thus as a functional language for international relations and trading between Ottoman subjects and Westerners (not only Italians), and even between Westerners not sharing the same language (as already seen in §32.1).[9]

The reasons for the use of Italian as an international language throughout the Ottoman Mediterranean, from the Middle East to the Barbary Regencies of North Africa, still await a full explanation. An aspect that emerges quite clearly from the sources is that, unlike in Europe at the time, Italians played a minor role, mostly limited to the action of the so-called Levantines (descendants of Italian families that had settled in the coastal cities of the empire) and renegades (Christians who had converted to Islam in order to collaborate with the Ottoman authorities). The main contribution was given by local interpreters, above all Greeks whose families originally came from the Aegean, where they had long been in contact with Italo-Romance varieties (Minervini 2006:52). In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a major part was also played by Sephardic Jews, i.e., Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, who were native speakers of Romance languages and therefore rapidly learned Italian, though generally only achieving a basic interlanguage with strong Spanish and Portuguese interference.

As for the domains of use, Italian was often employed for diplomacy, that is, for treaties, official correspondence, and 'capitulations' (commercial privileges granted by the Sultan to the European nations), which were usually translated from Turkish by the 'dragomans', a term of Arabic origin designating the interpreters both of the Porte (the Ottoman government) and of the European consulates (Di Salvo and Muru 2016). The earliest translations, dating from the second half of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, display prevailing Venetian features (Baglioni 2019b). From the end of the sixteenth century, the Italian of the Ottoman

documents becomes barely distinguishable from the Tuscan-based administrative language in use in contemporary Italy (Bruni 2013a:163–214). The translations were made in the Levant and then sent to Europe, where they were, if necessary, translated into such languages as English, Dutch, and Spanish in accordance with the nation involved in the agreement. The replies from the European parties came back by the same route, i.e., drafted in the language of the sending power, translated into Italian and, finally, from Italian into Turkish. This practice, dubbed by Lewis (2004:24) 'two-tier translation', is repeatedly attested in the modern age, for instance in the Hispano-Ottoman armistice of 1581 (Skilliter 1971), translated from Turkish into Italian by the Grand Dragoman Hurrem bey (an Italian renegade from Lucca), and in the correspondence between the Sultans, the Grand Vizier, and other Ottoman functionaries and the Crown of England in the late sixteenth century (Skilliter 1965; Lewis 2004:34). Less frequently, the documents were written by the dragomans directly in Italian, as is the case with the Turkish-Polish capitulations of 1502 and 1519 (Kołodziejczyk 2000:210–212, 218–221) and the Turkish-French capitulations of 1536 (Charrière 1848, I:283–294). The most striking case is the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca between the Ottomans and Russia, from as late as 1774, generally acknowledged as a milestone in the history of the decline of the Ottoman power: the peace, which followed the Russian victory in the war of 1768–1774, was agreed by the two parties on the basis of the Italian text, which was later translated into Turkish and Russian (Bruni 2013a:192–200).

Italian was also used in all writing activities connected to trading with Westerners, such as safe-conducts, deeds of sale, and bills of lading (see those registered in Constantinople by the English merchant William Harborne in the years 1579–1580, edited by Skilliter 1977). These documents were usually written by non-professional interpreters, in most cases local brokers or even the merchants themselves, and are, therefore, less refined than the Italian translations made by the dragomans, often showing the interference of the writers' native languages. Similar features are shared by the letters of the 'beys' (governors of the provinces) and other local authorities to their European partners, that were translated by occasional interpreters, due to the lack of professional dragomans out of Constantinople. An interesting case of such 'low

diplomacy' is represented by the hundreds of missives sent to the grand dukes of Tuscany from Ottoman functionaries scattered in several cities of the empire (Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Sidon, Chios, Alexandria, Sarajevo), between the late sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries, when Tuscany could not rely on its own ambassador to the Ottoman government. A selection of these letters, held in the State Archives of Florence, displays a curious mixture of bureaucratic Italian and Spanish and Portuguese features (both in the vocabulary and in the morphology and syntax), hinting at the fact that the translators had been recruited among the Sephardic Jews trading between Tuscany, North Africa, and the Levant (Baglioni 2011).

A further context of intensive use of Italian is represented by slave ransoms, which were extremely frequent in the golden age of Ottoman privateering (sixteenth–seventeenth centuries), especially in the Barbary Regencies. Slave ransoms, together with other kinds of private deeds (sale contracts, powers of attorney, bills of lading), were registered in Italian in the European consulates of Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis, as has been pointed out by Cremona in several works (Cremona 1996; 1997; 1998; 2000; 2002; 2003). The analysis of a selection of documents from the French and English consulates of Tunis has shown that Italian was regularly employed in all deeds concerning Westerners (French, English, Spaniards, Portuguese, Flemish, Germans, and, of course, Italians), thus as a common language both among Europeans and between Europeans and Ottoman subjects, the most frequent case being the release of a Christian slave from his Arab or Turk master (Baglioni 2010). The Italian of these texts is generally characterized by evident contact with French (the native language of most of the scriveners) and also, surprisingly enough, with Spanish, probably because the deeds copied in the registers were originally drafted by Sephardic Jews trading between Tunis and Livorno (the so-called *Ġrāna*). As for the lexicon, these documents, just like the translations of treaties, capitulations, and diplomatic letters, display frequent loanwords from Turkish, mostly designating Ottoman offices and honorific titles such as *adabascì* 'lieutenant of the Janissaries' (Trk. *odabaşı*), *agà* 'general officer' (Trk. *ağa*, *LEI Or* 44–46), *arzo* 'petition' (Trk. *arz*, *LEI Or* 204–205), *balucobascì*/*balucbasì* 'captain of the Janissaries' (Trk. *bölük başı*, *LEI Or* 453–455), *bascià* 'high

dignitary' (Trk. *başa*), *bei* 'lord' (Trk. *bey*, *LEI Or* 409–414), *caddì* 'Islamic judge' (Trk. *kaḍı*), *dai*/*dei* 'head of the janissaries' (Trk. *dey*), *divano* 'military council' (Trk. *divan*), *saccagì* 'janissary charged with protecting and supporting diplomatic representatives or merchants' (Trk. *yasakcı*; Schweickard 2014). In some cases, however, Ottoman referents are expressed through Italian words that had undergone semantic specialization in the Mediterranean context, generally via calquing (see *(Alta) Porta* 'the Ottoman government in Constantinople', from Trk. *bab-ı ali* 'High Gate', Lewis 1988:20; *Gran Signor* 'the Ottoman Sultan', from Byz. Gr. *megas afthendis* 'Great Lord', Lewis 1982:84). The fact that most European languages borrowed the corresponding terms from Italian, and not directly from Turkish or other oriental languages (cf. Eng. *Porte*, *Grand Seigneur*—which, despite its French form, is an Italian loanword), confirms the importance of Italian as an intermediate language in the relations between the Ottomans and the Europeans.

It is not clear when exactly Italian ceased to serve this function. Lewis's claim that 'Italian seems to have remained the best-known European language among Turks for some time, and as late as the nineteenth century' (Lewis 1982:84f.), is all in all correct, although French had largely replaced Italian in nineteenth-century Constantinople for both diplomacy and other international uses. The decline of Italian at the Porte is likely to have followed the evolution of Ottoman diplomacy, especially in relation to the regime of capitulations, dismissed in the early nineteenth century. As a consequence, approximately in the same period the central figure of the dragoman disappears, the last Grand Dragoman of the Porte, a Greek named Stavrakis Aristarchis, was removed from office, exiled, and finally killed in 1822 (Strauss 1995:209). Nevertheless, Italian did continue to circulate as a language for international business, both in Istanbul and in other Ottoman cities. The most remarkable case is the Egyptian metropolis of Alexandria, where Italian is reported to have been in common use throughout the nineteenth century (Banfi 2017:120–123), thanks also to the Italian labourers and engineers who had moved to Egypt for the construction of the Suez Canal (1859–1869). As late as 1906, Luigi Antonio Balboni, author of a three-volume history of the Italians in Egypt (Balboni 1906), reported that Italian, though rapidly yielding to French and English, still had a relevant part in Alexandria's linguistic landscape,

since many shop signs were written in that language (cited after Cifoletti 1986:29f.).

32.4 On the trail of the spoken language

The large amount of Italian texts written throughout the Mediterranean by a highly heterogeneous range of writers, from the Middle Ages to the dawn of the twentieth century, clearly hints at a circulation of the same language also at a spoken level. This ready inference is confirmed by writers and intellectuals, who between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries repeatedly drew attention to the wide diffusion of spoken Italian on the Mediterranean shores, comparing it with its more limited circulation in Europe. For instance, in an oft-quoted passage of his *Battaglie per diffesa dell'italica lingua*, published posthumously in 1582, the Paduan humanist Girolamo Muzio asserts that, unlike in England and Germany, 'our language' is perfectly understood 'from the Pillars of Hercules [. . .] to the Ionian Sea', and even 'in Asia, in Egypt, and on the Barbary shores' (Muzio 1995:117). More than two and a half centuries later, in 1853, the novelist, essayist, and lexicographer Niccolò Tommaseo, born in the Dalmatian port of Sebenico (Šibenik), informs us that 'Italian was, and still is, the language of commerce in the Levant, much more popular than French both in the Levant and in the rest of Europe' (cited after Bruni 2013a:175f.). It is not only the Italians who witness the extensive use of Italian in the Mediterranean context. The French traveller Pierre Balon, who visited Chios in 1554, notes that the language of the local population is 'partially Greek, partially corrupted Italian, like Genoese' (cited after Toso 2020:50). As late as 1811, an illustrious Englishman, Lord Byron, affirms that in Athens his 'current tongue is Levant Italian' (cited after Bruni 2013a:140), a linguistic variety most likely to be identified with the one mentioned, more or less in the same years, by the Greek-born poet Ugo Foscolo in his *Epoche della lingua italiana*,

and described as an Italian-based 'itinerary and mercantile language' circulating throughout the Mediterranean (Trifone 1994).

Despite such plentiful evidence, it is extremely difficult for scholars to discern the main characteristics of this 'Levant Italian', whose non-Tuscan features must have been much more abundant than those emergent in the dragomans' translations and even in the private deeds of merchants, modelled on the literary-based language of bureaucracy. As a matter of fact, linguists solely rely on indirect, fragmentary sources, an important part of which is represented by Italian loanwords in the languages of the Mediterranean. The pioneering studies by Vidos (1939), Kahane, Kahane, and Tietze (1958), and Cortelazzo (1989), recently updated by two contributions by Tomasin (2006; 2010a), have shown the great quantity of words of Italian origin concerning seafaring, both in Romance (French, Provençal, Catalan, Spanish, Portuguese) and in non-Romance languages (Croatian, Albanian, Greek, Arabic, Maltese, Turkish). These loanwords, which cover all aspects of marine navigation, from the different kinds of ships and their components to on-board equipment, types of manoeuvres, and wind names, usually display northern Italian features such as intervocalic voicing (Gr. *kouverta* 'deck', Trk. *kadına/kadena* 'fetters of the galley slave', Mlt. *gregal* 'north-east wind'—It. *coperta*, *catena* 'chain', *grecale*), and assibilation of palatal consonants (Trk. *kuzine/guzine* 'caboose', Maghrebi Ar. *bartūz* 'hatchway'—It. *cucina*, *pertugio*). As a result, their form clearly indicates a major contribution of Venetian and Genoese, although it is generally impossible to distinguish between the two, unless the lexical type is attested only in one dialect, as is the case with Crt. *skvar* 'shipyard' (from Vnz. *squero*), and Pt., Sp., Cat. *carena* 'keel' (from Genoese *carena*). Obviously, north Italian features prevail in loanwords of languages spoken in former Venetian and Genoese possessions, not only in the sphere of seafaring, but also commerce, military, food, and home life. This is the case with Albanian (Di Giovine 2008; Dashi 2013) and many modern Greek dialects (Fanciullo 2008), which have been strongly influenced by Venetian (in the Greek dialect of Chios, though, the Genoese component predominates, as shown by Toso 2020:73–88). In these areas, especially on the islands of Crete and Cyprus, the long-lasting influence of the Italian dialects might even have affected

the phonetics of the indigenous languages, leading to phenomena of prosodic convergence.[10]

Useful data also come from literary imitations of foreigners' talk, which occur frequently in the Venetian comedies and poetry of the sixteenth century in relation to the numerous Slavs and Greeks either resident in Venice or travelling to the city for trade and other purposes. Due to the parodistic intent of the imitations, aimed at ridiculing the characters through a series of highly repetitive and thus easily recognizable features, the data provided by this kind of testimony need to be critically interpreted and often prove unreliable, especially when they result in puns and other jokes clearly addressed to the Venetian audience. Nevertheless, the main recurring phenomena of both Slavs' and Greeks' Venetian as attested in the Renaissance literature (i.e., 'schiavonesco' and 'greghesco') must have been inspired by real linguistic habits that can be explained through the interference of South Slavic languages and Greek. This is the case, for instance, with mid-high vowels raising (in forms like *candila* 'candle', *bucha* 'mouth', *pa(d)run* 'landlord'), shared by both 'schiavonesco' (Cortelazzo 1989:132–134) and 'greghesco' (Lazzerini 1977:60f.) and attested in the Latin and Italian loanwords of Croatian and Greek (Gr. *kandila*, Crt. *parun*). Typical of 'greghesco' are also postnasal sonorization (*tembo* 'time', *consolamendo* 'consolation', *fiango* 'heap') and nasal deletion/insertion before a voiced stop (*ademo* 'let's go'—Vnt. *andemo—andesso* 'now'), as well as lexical loanwords, calques, and frequent code-switching.

A very particular case is represented by the linguistic variety referred to in contemporary sources as 'Lingua Franca' or 'Franco'.[11] Originally a general label including all European languages, especially Romance languages, from the sixteenth century onwards the term designates more specifically a simplified variety of Italian that was used in Algiers and in other cities of North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean for basic communications between Arabs, Turks, and other Ottoman subjects on the one hand and all Westerners on the other. Ever since Hugo Schuchardt's seminal essay *Die Lingua Franca* (Schuchardt 1909), scholars have been debating the real nature of Lingua Franca, both in relation to its uses and internal structure. Despite Schuchardt's and other major linguists' conviction that this variety had a medieval origin, one that

was already circulating, in an embryonic state, at the time of the Crusades, recent studies have demonstrated the clear connexion between Lingua Franca and the Ottoman-ruled North African Regencies where it seems to have served as a very elementary means of communication between local masters and European slaves (Minervini 1996; Baglioni 2018). A further issue has to do with the typology of Lingua Franca, which has often been considered a contact language, in the view of some scholars even 'the earliest known recorded pidgin' (Velupillai 2015:25), possibly the basis of all European-based pidgins and creoles through several processes of relexification (Whinnom 1965). Conversely, other scholars (Aslanov 2014; Brown 2022) have been sceptical about the existence of this language on account of the repetitiveness of its sources—often consisting of literary parodies—and the untrustworthiness of its main testimony, an anonymous *Dictionnaire de la langue franque* published in Marseille, in 1830, for the needs of the French soldiers sent to Algiers in the aftermath of the conquest of the city.[12] Although the real nature of Lingua Franca remains 'elusive' (Nolan 2020), the clear predominance of the Italian (and Romance) lexicon (Baglioni 2017) and the general lack of substratum phenomena attributable to Arabic, as well as the high degree of morphological and syntactic variation from source to source, rule out identification of Lingua Franca with a full-fledged pidgin, and rather suggest an interpretation of this variety as a fossilized interlanguage—that is, as a very basic variety of foreigners' Italian.[13]

The circulation of Lingua Franca rapidly declined in the first half of the nineteenth century, when privateering was no longer a menace and, consequently, the number of European slaves in the north African cities dramatically decreased. However, in the second half of the century the use of Italian was reinforced by a large quantity of immigrants (e.g., fisherfolk, miners, craftsmen) from various parts of Italy, most of whom settled in Tunis and in the nearby districts of La Goulette and Carthage. Since the majority of the immigrants came from Sicily, a Sicilian-based *koiné* developed in the area (Banfi 2017:127), serving as a means of communication internal to the Italian community, though generally understood by most Arabs. The main characteristic of this dialect, attested by the fictitious dialogues published in the local humoristic magazine *Simpaticuni* ('fine fellow'), is a high degree of intermixing between Sicilian, Tunisian

Arabic, and French, with frequent code-switching from one language to another (Lakhdar 2006; Zlitni 2015). The same magazine contains examples of how the Italian of the local Arabs must have sounded (see, for instance, *Zzai tu billiettu bir assistari?*, corresponding to standard It. *Ci hai (tu) il biglietto per assistere?* 'Do you have the ticket to attend (the show)?', cited after Lakhdar 2006:377), displaying remarkable interference of local Arabic on both phonology (vowel raising, adaptation of /p/, /ʎ/ and /tʃ/ as respectively /b/, /lj/ and /ts/) and morphology (article deletion). This situation changed from the 1930s onwards, when French gradually became the normal language for interethnic communication. However, residual traces of the original Sicilian-Tunisian Arabic bilingualism have been recently observed in former members of the Italian community of Tunis born in the 1940s, who, although having moved to Italy fifty to sixty years ago and despite their age, have proven able to reproduce the polylanguaging practices they experienced in their childhood (D'Anna 2020).

32.5 The Ionian islands, Malta, and Corsica

In the areas that have been considered in the previous paragraphs, Italian was used as an international means of communication and/or as the normal option within the Italian communities, whereas the local populations resorted to their own languages for intra-ethnic interchange. However, in some islands geographically and culturally near to the Italian Peninsula, Italian became an integral part of the local repertoires, both as a written language for administration, education, and literature, and as a spoken variety (generally in the form of a specific regional dialect) for everyday conversation. As a result, these territories long shared a sociolinguistic situation analogous to that of the Italian Peninsula, until drastic changes of political circumstances, between the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, led to a fast process of de-Italianization.

This is the case with the Ionian islands, designated in Greek by the name Heptanese (i.e., 'the Seven Islands'). This small archipelago, located off the west coast of Greece and facing Italy across the Ionian Sea, is the only region of the Greek-speaking world that has never been ruled by the Ottomans. It remained under Venetian domination from the end of the Middle Ages until the fall of the Republic of Venice in 1797. Later, after a two-year period of French administration, it became an independent republic (1800–1807), and was subsequently ceded again to France, then to Britain, which established its own protectorate until 1864, when the islands were finally united with Greece. Despite the alternation between several rulers for most of the nineteenth century, Italian remained the official language of the archipelago and, more notably, of its main centre Corfu, where it was commonly employed for judicial administration during the British protectorate (Mackridge 2009:170; 2014). Thanks to the prestige of Italian culture, especially of the former ruler Venice, Italian did also serve as a literary language, learned by local intellectuals, belonging to the islands' nobility and upper middle class, and used by them alongside their native Greek dialect. The case of Ugo Foscolo (see §32.4) is particularly emblematic: born in Zante (modern Zakynthos) to a father of Venetian origin and a Greek mother, in 1788 he moved with his family to Venice, where he gradually mastered Italian to the point that he became the most important Italian writer of his epoch, in Italy and abroad (i.e., during the years spent in exile in London, from 1816 until his death in 1827). His fellow countrymen Andreas Kalvos and Dionysios Solomos followed a different path: they started writing poems (for Kalvos, also tragedies) in Italian and then were converted to the Greek language, into which they transposed linguistic and stylistic structures of Italian (Banfi 2017:88–94).[14] As for the spoken language, the Venetian dialect long remained the favourite means of conversation of educated people, who, in this way, aimed to distinguish themselves from the uncultivated Greek-speaking population (Banfi 2014:316). Italo-Romance varieties were also widespread within the large Jewish community of Corfu, that had given hospitality to many Italian Jews after their expulsion from the Kingdoms of Sicily (1493) and Naples (1510–1541). This explains why, in the early modern era, the most popular Romance language among Corfiot Jews was a southern Italian dialect, sometimes

referred to as *Pugghisu* 'Apulian', although its main features remind one of Sicilian (Lelli 2013). This dialect, attested by a series of liturgical hymns and other texts written in Hebrew characters (Sermoneta 1990), later yielded to a Venetian-based variety strongly influenced by Greek (especially in the area of morphosyntax), so-called *Corfioto*, which is still spoken today, though severely endangered (Vardakis 2023).

A much deeper influence of the Italian language and culture characterizes the history of Malta, which was politically united to Sicily from the eleventh to the first half of the sixteenth centuries. As a result, all through the Middle Ages the Sicilian dialect served, along with Latin, as the main language for administration, whereas the local variety of Arabic, the ancestor of modern Maltese, was exclusively used for spoken communication (Brincat 2011:65–103; 2023:158–164). In 1530, the Maltese archipelago was granted by the Emperor Charles V to the knights of Saint John, a Crusader military order which, after the fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, had persisted in its functions in Rhodes, until being expelled from the island by the Ottomans in 1522. As soon as they settled in Malta, the knights, who had already employed Italian for some of their proceedings and regulations, adopted Italian as the official language of the archipelago. As shown by Brincat (2003), the earliest documents of the knights in Malta display Venetian features as a result of the diffusion of Outremer Venetian in Rhodes and the rest of the Aegean Sea (see §32.2). Nonetheless, by the 1560s a Tuscan-based bureaucratic language, almost indistinguishable from that rapidly spreading in coeval Italy, already prevailed both in official acts and in notarial deeds (Basaldella 2024). In the same years, the Maltese educated classes showed increasing interest in contemporary Italian literature, as proven, for instance, by two verses of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* copied into a notarial register dating from 1565–1575, a few decades after the final edition of the poem (Basaldella 2018). By the end of the sixteenth century, Italian had replaced Sicilian (and Latin) as the main written language of the archipelago, although Sicilian, along with Maltese, continued to be used at a spoken level.[15] The prevalence of Tuscan-based Italian as the language of administration, education, and literature lasted up until the modern era. It survived the expulsion of the knights in 1798 and the British rule of the archipelago, first as a protectorate (1800–

1813), then as a Crown's colony (1813–1964), although the increasing diffusion of English seriously compromised its status in the last decades of British domination. In the period from the sixteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries, Italian was also widely spoken, most probably in a variety strongly influenced by Sicilian (Alfieri 1995), and served as a vehicular language, in the capital Valletta and the whole area of the Grand Harbour, for the frequent interactions between the local population and foreigners (Agius 2022). Today Italian is still popular in the archipelago, thanks to the high exposure of the population to the Italian media, although most Maltese have only a passive competence in the language (Caruana 2006). Evident traces of the long-lasting contact with Sicilian and, to a lesser extent, Italian are still to be found in the Maltese language in both its lexicon (Comrie and Spagnol 2016; Brincat 2017) and its phonology and grammar (Aquilina 1959; Borg 1978; Azzopardi-Alexander and Borg 1997).

A case apart is represented by Corsica, for several reasons. The island has been linked for most of its history to Italy, from Pisan domination (eleventh to thirteenth centuries) to the much longer (but linguistically less impacting) Genoese rule (1284–1755). Furthermore, the autochthonous language of the island, Corsican, is a variety of Tuscan, therefore assigned by dialectologists to the Italo-Romance group (Nesi 2010; Ledgeway 2016a). As a result, both historical and linguistic factors led to a natural predisposition of the local population towards Italian, which was long perceived as a 'roof language' (Goebl 1988:830), serving as a standard for the Corsican dialects which lacked for centuries a written tradition. It is no wonder then that when, in 1755, the island managed to shake off the Genoese yoke and proclaimed its independence, thanks to the efforts of the leader of the resistance movement Pasquale Paoli (1725–1807), the language chosen for the Constitution of the new-established republic was Italian (Matarrese 1993:23f.). The predominance of Italian persisted even when the island passed to France in 1768–1789 as 'an untamed non-Francophone block' (Marchetti 1989:105). Throughout the nineteenth century, Italian continued to be regularly employed in local courts and to be taught in schools, especially in rural areas (Durand 2003:42), notwithstanding the attempts of the Parisian government to impose French (Blackwood 2004). Furthermore, Italian was portrayed by

the island's intellectuals as the indigenous language of Corsica (in opposition to French), thus as the most suited for local literature; a notable example is Salvatore Viale's poem *Dionomachia* (1817), considered a masterpiece of Corsican poetry, although it is written in the same Tuscan-based literary language as that used by Italian poets, except for a brief serenade in the local language (Giacomo-Marcellesi 1988:825f.). It was only from the second half of the nineteenth century that the island's bourgeoisie replaced Italian with French, a proficiency in which had become an important means for social mobility (Nesi 1994; Durand 2003:43). Soon after, Corsican independentists ceased to identify themselves with Italian and started resorting systematically to the local language for literature and other written uses, thus setting in motion a process of standardization that is still far from concluded. Nowadays, Italian is perfectly understood all over the island, but seldom spoken. Nonetheless, the reintroduction of Italian as a roof language for Corsican has recently been proposed by some intellectuals, and might lead, in a not-so-near future, to a revival of the Italian language on the island (Durand 2003:112–119).

32.6 Final remarks

At the end of this survey, a few considerations can be drawn. The first is that, despite the lack of political unity of the Italian Peninsula until the late nineteenth century and, consequently, of a national colonial expansion, Italian managed to spread throughout the Mediterranean as an international language for commerce and diplomacy as early as the late Middle Ages. This was the result of Venetian, Genoese, and Pisan influence in the Levant and North Africa, exerted through trade and direct administration of major hubs and islands. A crucial contribution was made by the adoption of Italian by the Ottomans, who regularly employed Italian for communication with Westerners, both written and oral, thus lending it the prestige of an 'imperial' language. Consequently, Italian became the unmarked option for Ottoman-European interchange, and even for communication between Europeans of different

nationalities, as is the case with the British and Dutch consuls examined in §32.1.

A further consideration is that, unlike in continental Europe, in the Mediterranean context Tuscan did not play a central role, whereas Venetian, Genoese, Pisan, and Sicilian (in Malta and Tunis) had the lion's share. This is not to say that Tuscan-based literary Italian was absent from the Mediterranean scenario. On the contrary, from the sixteenth century onwards the written language of diplomatic instruments and trading documents is barely distinguishable from that used in contemporary Italian chanceries, and in particular areas, such as Malta and Corsica, the educated classes learned Italian at school and even composed poetry in Italian. Nevertheless, evidence from loanwords clearly shows a predominance of the dialects at a spoken level, which were presumably affected by contact phenomena with the local languages, as well as with other Romance languages of Mediterranean circulation. These phenomena must have been particularly evident in the foreigners' varieties of Italian, as can be inferred by their literary parodies. Conversely, the Italian-based simplified variety referred to as Lingua Franca, serving for elementary communication between north African Muslims and European slaves, does not display significant traces of interference, at least according to its repetitive and mostly unreliable sources.

Finally, it is noteworthy that all over the Mediterranean basin, from Constantinople to Tunis, from Alexandria to Corsica, the use of Italian rapidly declined in the same period, that is, between the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. This was due, on the one hand, to the fall of the Ottoman Empire and, on the other, to the colonial expansion of Britain and France, which gradually eroded the prestige of Italian as the most popular western language in the area. However, Italian did leave significant traces in the local languages, in the form of loanwords and even, in the notable case of Maltese, of phonological, morphological, and syntactic interference.

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[1] National Archives, State Papers, 97/14/196. The first lines of the letter are published and commented upon in Baglioni (2022a:133).

[2] In Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*, the adjective *glorious* is defined as 'boastful, proud, haughty, ostentatious' and 'noble, illustrious, excellent' (

https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=glorious [consulted 25 July 2023]), a sense that it presumably had also in the early seventeenth century.

[3] An updated overview can be found in the essays gathered in Baglioni (2019a).

[4] For Zadar see Vuletić (2019). Similar phenomena also occur in documents from Ragusa and Split (Granzotto 2022).

[5] The texts have been edited respectively by Desimoni (1887) and Marengo (1901:166–176).

[6] The text has been edited and transcribed in Latin script by Amari (1863:119–122). A first attempt at linguistic analysis is provided by Baglioni (2015), followed more recently by Franceschini and Marjani (2023). For a general overview of the diplomatic use of Pisan and other Italian vernaculars in the Mediterranean until 1453, see Baglioni (2022b).

[7] The letter, part of the Michaelides collection acquired by the British Library in 1979, has been edited by D'Ottone Rambach and Internullo (2018).

[8] An overall account of language contact involving Italo-Romance in medieval Europe, as witnessed by archival records, is provided by Tomasin (2021). See also Chapter 34.

[9] This observation does not apply to those eastern Mediterranean regions that remained in the Renaissance under Venetian rule, most notably Crete and Cyprus, where the influence of the coeval Italian literary vogues strongly modelled the local production both in Italian and in the autochthonous Greek dialects (see Holton 1991 and Grivaud 2009, for Crete and Cyprus, respectively; a useful overview from a linguistic perspective is given by Banfi 2014:226–239).

[10] This hypothesis is the basis of two research projects hosted by the University of Oxford: 'Greek in Contact. Intonation and diachrony: how language contact shapes intonational patterns' (ESRC Grant ES/R006148/1, PI Mary Baltazani: https://greekincontact.phon.ox.ac.uk/research), and 'Mapping prosodic convergence in Cyprus: a geo-historical acoustic investigation of the effects of insularity at a linguistic crossroads' (Research funded by John Fell Fund award 0011309, PI Elinor Payne: http://www.phon.ox.ac.uk/mapping-cypriot). Both sites consulted on 25 July 2023.

[11] For a general overview, despite the diversity of perspectives, see among others Dakhlia (2008); Cifoletti (2011); Nolan (2020); and Operstein (2022).

[12] The entire text of the *Dictionnaire*, consisting of a list of 2,035 French words with their corresponding terms in Lingua Franca, followed by a series of dialogues for everyday conversation, has been transcribed and commented upon by Cifoletti (2011:25–135).

[13] See Minervini (2010) and Baglioni (2021; 2024). Despite her interpretation of Lingua Franca as a pidgin, Operstein (2022:336) acknowledges that 'it is likely that there existed a continuum of ways of speaking L[ingua] F[ranca] in Algiers, and elsewhere in North Africa, that ranged from basilectal to acrolectal', with the acrolect of Lingua Franca based on the spoken and written Italian of the Barbary Regencies.

[14] On Solomos and his method of composition, consisting in ‘a draft of the poem (or of a part of a poem) in Italian prose’ followed by a translation of ‘the Italian prose draft, bit by bit, into Greek verse’, see Mackridge (1989:29).

[15] One could cite, as evidence of this trilingualism, the acts of the Maltese Tribunal of Inquisition (1561–1798), in which the minutes of the notaries are in Italian (and Latin), as well as the reported questions of the inquisitors, whereas the answers of the prisoners are in a Tuscanized variety of Sicilian, with occasional switches to Maltese (Basaldella 2022).

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Chapter 33

Italian around the world

Raffaella Bombi

33.1 Italian migration

Italian migration represents a complex phenomenon, from a linguistic point of view as well, insofar as the mobility of large numbers of individuals has played a central role as a vehicle for the spread of the Italian language beyond its national borders. From the second half of the 1800s until the following century, Italy was at the forefront of major migratory phenomena along routes that led considerable numbers of its citizens abroad. At least four central phases of the Italian diaspora can be identified (Bernini 2010), prior to the more recent phase of neo-emigration. The first, the so-called Great Emigration, after the Unification of Italy (1861) between 1876 and the first decades of the twentieth century, is characterized by migratory waves of a size unparalleled in contemporary European history in terms of both biointensity and numbers. The second phase occurred between the two world wars with Italians relocating to countries in western Europe as well as much further afield. This was followed by the third post-World War II phase (1945–1976), with migrations to destinations such as Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, and Australia. A fourth more recent migratory phase began in the 1970s with numbers decreasing by 2005. This was finally followed by a more recent phase of 'neo-emigration' involving an upswing in Italian mobility from 2006, with a peak at the time of the global economic crisis of 2008/2009 (Colucci 2017:19–35). Overall, the exodus of Italians around the world in the years following Italy's unification (Vedovelli 2011), which led to the expatriation of more than 25 million Italians (Turchetta 2005:4f.), involved multiple

destinations, not only Europe (France, Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, Switzerland, and the countries of the Mediterranean basin) but also further overseas to Latin America (especially Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay), North America (United States, Canada), Oceania (Australia, New Zealand), and Africa.

33.2 Categories of Italians abroad: from *oriundi* to *italici*

It is essential to establish the metalinguistic constructs and devices by which the status of Italians abroad is determined (Bombi and Orioles 2011:11–29). For some years it has been noted that we are now increasingly dealing less with the word 'migrants', since 'within a little more than a decade Italian migration has ceased to be such; expatriate compatriots have now definitely become the Italians in the world' (Signorelli 2009:487). The overall picture regarding Italians around the world comes from the *Anagrafe degli italiani residenti all'estero* ('Registry of Italians Resident Abroad') established by the Ministry of Home and Foreign Affairs to register those with Italian citizenship residing outside Italy. According to data from the annual report by the Ministry, the 'legally' Italian community resident abroad consisted of 5,806,068 people on 1 January 2022 (Licata 2022). Within the macro-construct of Italians around the world and well beyond the 5 million registered, we must consider the large number of *oriundi*, a broad category encompassing descendants of Italian emigrants who were born outside Italy. The Missionaries of St. Paul (Scalabrinian Fathers) estimate, for example, that the total figure of Italian *oriundi* is close to 80 million people and it is Latin America, in particular the continental area, that hosts the largest number (Licata 2012:21). Within this area, Brazil hosts the largest number of individuals of Italian descent (25 million, viz. 13–14 per cent of the total population), but in percentage terms it is Argentina that holds the record with 20 million *oriundi* (50 per cent of the population), immediately followed by Uruguay (40 per cent). The United States, of course, holds a major position with about 18 million

oriundi, equivalent to 6 per cent of the population (Bombi-Orioles 2014:302–323); Australia and Canada are also important countries for Italian migration. In this framework, Piero Bassetti's innovative notion of *Italico* 'Italic' (and *Italicità* 'Italicity') which, giving new meaning to the ancient linguistic term *italico*,[1] provides an important tool for reviewing, enhancing, and broadening the breadth of our understanding of *italianità* 'Italianness' (Bassetti 2001; 2008:193–204). In the essay *Let's wake up, Italics*! (Bassetti 2017), the differences between the traditional notion of *italianità* and the innovative notions of *Italic* and *Italicity* are highlighted; the latter involve a plurality of subjects who, regardless of their geographical dislocation, constitute a transnational community of reference for Italians around the world, playing a strategic role in enhancing and strengthening the expansive force of the Italian language and culture everywhere (Orioles 2014:109–116). More specifically, according to Bassetti, *Italicity* and *Italics* refer to a broad and complex community that can play a strategic role in revitalizing Italian identity, culture, and language worldwide. In Bassetti's own words:

> the Italic presence in the world is the result of the migratory phenomena and mobility that have characterized our history but [. . .] Italics are not just Italian citizens in Italy and abroad. They are, above all, the people of Canton Ticino, Dalmatia and San Marino, and their descendants; Italian Americans, those of the two Americas and of Australia; as well as Italian speakers and all those people who might not have a drop of Italian blood in their veins, but nonetheless embrace our country's values, lifestyle, and shared behavioral models. I estimate that we are talking about approximately 250 million people. (Bassetti 2017:2)

Finally, a category of Italians abroad for which Di Salvo (2017:451–465) has provided a detailed analysis is that of *expats*, who leave Italy to settle abroad temporarily or permanently for employment purposes and professional integration in their new country. These exemplify the recent phenomenon of neo-emigration.

33.3 The linguistic repertoire of migrants and its evolution

Italian migration across the world constitutes a complex phenomenon that varies according to a great number of factors such as the historical period of migration, the motivations that variously prompted individuals to migrate, and the linguistic profiles of the different migratory waves. The first waves are characterized, from a linguistic point of view, by three distinct phases identified by Vedovelli as: (i) 'parallelism', in that 'the linguistic dynamics which involved on the one hand the Italian migrants around the world and on the other the Italian society of origin, developed along parallel paths showing, despite distances and separations, similar or comparable outcomes'; (ii) 'discontinuity', highlighting 'the gap that occurred during the second great wave of migration abroad, namely that of the post-World War II period'; (iii) and the shift characterized by the progressive exit of Italian out of the space associated with the linguistic identity of the young and very young descendants of Italian immigrants (Vedovelli 2011:99–106). Vedovelli observes that if the emigrant population, at least until the Second World War, presented a limited mastery of Italian, in that their first language was a dialect or minority language, the subsequent progressive increase in linguistic competence in Italian is reflected in the change of linguistic repertoires abroad. This fascinating theme attracted the attention of Tullio De Mauro whose *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (De Mauro 1963:51–60) and *Storia linguistica dell'Italia repubblicana* (De Mauro 2014a:62–67) took the world of migration as a new a field of linguistic research within the framework of a focus on the sociolinguistic profiles of the history of the Italian language.

Anyone wishing to approach the study of languages in a scenario of mobility must therefore bear in mind that it is impossible to restrict the investigation to 'the standard variety but [one] must be open to taking into account—this is De Mauro's viewpoint—the complex variational and interlinguistic context in which the Italian communities around the world find themselves, as well as the communication networks which they use to interact' (Orioles 2017:40).

33.4 Contact linguistics, sociolinguistics, attrition in migratory contexts

The movement of such a large number of Italians abroad gave rise to a series of linguistic and sociolinguistic transformations in the multilingual global spaces inhabited by Italian migrant communities, involving different linguistic varieties of the Italian peninsula (Italian, dialects, and minority languages) which, in turn, co-existed and interacted with the languages of the host countries. The perspective adopted in this chapter to define the various factors which influence the Italian language abroad is that of language contact and interference, the sociolinguistic processes of language shift and language maintenance, and the paradigm of language attrition.

The complex multilingual situations and different theoretical approaches and methodologies of investigation of Italian in migration contexts have been expertly outlined by Bettoni and Rubino (2010:457–489) and Rubino (2014b:125–140). They note that this field of studies has a long tradition that initially focused on the introduction into the migrants' speech of lexical elements from the new linguistic context. Later studies, beginning in the immediate post-war period, mark the transition to a more systematic research agenda thanks to the works of Menarini (1939; 1947). Finally, Italian language in migration countries became the subject of systematic research from the mid-twentieth century, thanks to the progress of studies of multilingual repertoires, beginning with Weinreich's theoretical classification (1953), and approaches focused on sociolinguistics, language contact, language attrition, and language maintenance and shift. In terms of contact linguistics, we will examine the different categories of language contact (Gusmani 1986; 1987; Orioles 2006:165–181) in multilingual migratory linguistic spaces following the effects of interference, namely loanwords and calques involving the imitation of foreign words and their assimilation and integration into Italian,[2] but also much inner consequence of contact and interference. In fact interference

generated by language contact goes beyond lexical borrowings and involves the entire language system of the replica language, in that it 'implies the rearrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of foreign elements into the more highly structured domain of language, such as the bulk of the phonetic system, a large part of morphology and syntax, and some areas of vocabulary' (Weinreich 1953:1). Besides maintaining that a prolonged phase of contact can have such significant repercussions as to ensure that 'language contact can result in such far-reaching changes that the affected language assumes a different structural type' (Weinreich 1953:42), Weinreich also highlighted how an even more intense mixing can lead to the formation of a third language not structurally related to the original languages. To define this outcome, Weinreich (1953:69) adopts the metaphor of 'crystallization' of new languages from contact. These observations were the subject of specific in-depth studies, particularly within the theoretical model of Thomason (2001) who identifies the three major types of contact languages: pidgins, creoles, or bilingual mixed languages. By 'bilingual mixed language' Thomason means 'a language that did not arise primarily through descent with modification from a single earlier language. There are two types of mixed languages (or contact languages). On the one hand there are pidgin and creoles [. . .] on the other there are bilingual mixed languages' (Thomason 2001:217; see also Thomason 1997:75 and Berruto 2006:153–169). For the purposes of this study, contact languages come into play whenever the languages of emigrant communities establish deep relationships of osmosis with local languages, constituting interferential varieties developed in various contexts of transoceanic emigration areas. The communication requirements in areas of migration therefore led to the formation of mixed languages including, for example, *Taliàn* (lit. '(I)Talian') or *vêneto brasileiro* (lit. 'Brazilian Venetan') and several *Cocoliches* (cf. §33.5.4).

Given the different power relations between varieties in multilingual repertoires in migration areas, sociolinguistic processes emerged giving rise to processes of language shift, maintenance, or obsolescence in accordance with the Fishman model (1964:32–70). The two poles around which the dynamics of 'shift' can be assessed are those concerning the degree of endangerment (Orioles 2022:107–125) and obsolescence, as well as the degree of

maintenance. They are visible, on the one hand, in the drift and possible death of the migrant language in the face of the dominant language of the host country or, on the other hand, in language maintenance which can lead to the coexistence and also revitalization of the migrant language alongside the dominant language of the host country. These dynamics of language shift—through which generations move quickly from the trilingualism of the first generations (dialect, Italian, new language) to predominant monolingualism among the third generations (Bettoni and Rubino 2010:456f.)—should be considered alongside the study of language contact and attrition (Scaglione 2018:159–170). Studies on language contact therefore appear alongside those on language attrition which, in the perspective of Andersen (1982), involves the onset of changes determined by the limitations of use and the impoverishment in the language skills of migrants as a result of competition with a language of greater prestige. Dynamics of attrition are therefore created across generations of Italian speakers abroad as they shift towards more prestigious languages such as English or Portuguese and Spanish in South America. Prifti, Bettoni, Scaglione, and Di Salvo are some of the researchers who have analysed in depth, and in various linguistic contexts, the phenomena of attrition which occur migration varieties in situations of highly asymmetrical contact. In these linguistic repertoires, drastic phenomena of erosion can occur in grammar leading to a reduction in the number of available lexical, phonological, morphological, and syntactic categories according to a 'process' which tends to preserve high functional performance units and structures and those that have an immediate equivalent in the dominant language.

By contrast, cognitively more complex forms and structures, characterized by less transparency or a high degree of specialization and complexity, are imperfectly acquired. Attrition of the complex Italian verb system is a frequent consequence and it is verb morphology that is heavily affected giving rise to erosion of Italian grammar. In particular, the complexities of the verb system are simply not acquired in their totality, due, for example, to limited sustained exposure to the relevant linguistic data. Thus, in her analysis of structural attrition in the speech of US-born younger members of the community from Lucca (Italy) in San Francisco, Scaglione (2000:95–98) found that the last parts of the verb

paradigm to be eroded are the present and imperfect indicative, whereas the analytic present perfect expands and it is used instead of the synthetic preterite as the only form of the perfective past. The conditional and above all the subjunctive are rarely attested. Pragmatics is also subject to attrition and in the bilingual discourse of Italian migrants from Lucca in San Francisco one frequently finds English discourse markers, as seen in the works of Scaglione. Similarly, Di Salvo (2012) deals with the identification of discourse markers in the Italian communities of Bedford and Cambridge in an extensive study on Italian in the UK. What emerges from the works of the two scholars is the diffusion in spoken Italian of numerous discourse markers such as 'you know', 'well', 'that's all', 'so', 'I mean', 'all right', 'anyway'. Among the most widespread discourse markers among the speakers of Italo-American in San Francisco is the loanword *you know* (It. *sai*) (Scaglione 2003:45–67) and *well* in Cambridge (Di Salvo 2012:99f.).

Consequently, tried-and-tested methodologies in language contact and sociolinguistics, as well as new and productive directions of research emerging in the burgeoning field of studies known as 'migration linguistics', prove particularly relevant in understanding the Italian linguistic events in migration contexts marked by multilingual repertoires (Krefeld 2004).

33.5 The Italian language overseas

In areas where Italian migration has occurred, complex situations of contact between languages and cultures are created with the consequent development of new linguistic and cultural spaces, where the plurality of languages that have spread across the world from Italy and the linguistic realities of the host countries enter into contact. In these multilingual repertoires of Italians around the world (Di Salvo 2019), there arise phenomena involving the interaction between Italian, dialects, minority languages, and local languages resulting in language shift and, above all, language interference and attrition in the various Italian migrant communities. We must also take into consideration the remarkable

differences in the Italian language as used by different generations of migrants, especially between the first generation and the second and third generations. The extensive literature on Italian abroad portrays a complex situation in the many and extensive areas of the world where the Italian language is present (Giovanardi and Trifone 2012; Coccia et al. 2021).[3] In what follows I provide some data on some of the main varieties of Italian spoken around the world and, in particular, discussions of Italo-American and Italo-Australian followed by some remarks about *Italiese* in Canada, and *Taliàn* and *Cocoliche* in Brazil and Argentina, respectively.

33.5.1 Italian in the United States

Italian in the United States provides us with a picture of an elaborate situation as the Italian language, just like in other countries of migration, is markedly heterogeneous. It has undergone complex processes of change in both diachronic and synchronic perspectives conditioned by the linguistic spaces of arrival, the individual areas of departure of migratory flows that are diatopically differentiated and mainly of southern origin and the (socio)linguistic situations of the different generations involved. All these can determine the formation of new linguistic realities resulting from interpenetration between the different linguistic identities of the people involved and the languages of the host country (Vedovelli 2014: 54). Prifti in his detailed analysis of Italian migration to the United States observes that, from a linguistic point of view, three main migratory phases turn out to be significant. The first is that of the Great Emigration (1880–1927), which was characterized by a situation of diglossia between native dialect and American English. The second phase involves triglossia between American English, native dialect, and a certain degree of knowledge of Italian, which is also characterized by the transition from dialect to Italian and their respective regional and national cultures. Finally, the third phase is the most recent which, although quantitatively less significant, is qualitatively important for the path of linguistic change brought about by contact between Italian and American English and by the phenomena of linguistic attrition.

Italians living in the United States have thus contributed to the formation of a new means of communication, Italo-American, a variety formed during the last century when the exodus of Italians to foreign lands from different regions and belonging to social categories deprived of means and culture was numerically significant. In relation to this variety, Menarini (1947:152f.) had already observed that there was no comprehensive study, noting that the realization of such a study would be difficult since we are dealing with languages that lack uniformity. Italo-American is thus in Menarini's view 'still made up of the various Italian idioms (language and dialects) which have not substantially lost the essential features of their linguistic structure: the penetration of English has been neither rapid nor profound, limiting itself more to a partial replacement of vocabulary and a modest lexical contribution related to local concepts' (Menarini 1947:172f.). A more realistic characterization appears to be that of Milani according to whom Italo-American 'is the result of the coexistence and intersection of various Italian and Anglo-American languages [. . .] it is characterized by modifications in lexicon, phonetics, morphology and syntax with a reduction of vocabulary from standard Italian and with interferences of various kinds' (Milani 1992:14). Regarding other definitions of Italo-American, Haller in his numerous works defines it as a linguistic continuum in Italo-American communities that 'moves from dialectal Italian to Italianized dialect, to pidgins of Italo-American type, to archaic dialects. These varieties are used alongside English with varying levels of proficiency and in different combinations according to generation, period of emigration, regional origin in Italy, and schooling. [. . .] The "high" variety used most frequently in emigrant communities is dialectal Italian' (Haller 1993:7). More recently, Prifti (2014:382) uses Italo-American to mean a 'set of contact varieties that are hierarchically related to each other in a particularly dynamic degree structure', what he terms an 'archigradatum' in reference to the type of individual and communal linguistic space identified by De Mauro and Vedovelli. Starting from an analysis of the areas of departure of individual migrants, Prifti's research is based on the varieties of different points of arrival through interviews conducted mainly between 1999 and 2010 in circumscribed geolinguistic spaces including New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, and Florida (Vedovelli

2014:657). We now turn to some of the main characteristics of the different linguistic levels of Italo-American.

The lexical level is known to be very receptive to linguistic interference, which contributes to the enrichment and renewal of the lexis, and is most readily found in areas of strong multilingualism peculiar to areas of migration. Many interesting cases of lexical features from contact between Italian and the language of the host country have attracted the interest of scholars who highlight the difference between entries that are highly important due to the stability of the foreign words that entered the entire linguistic system of Italo-American communities and those that are confined to individual geographical areas or specialized fields. The type of replications may fall between the categories of faithful or adapted loanwords and calques, in particular, semantic loans and loan translations.

The numerous English loanwords that have entered the lexicon of Italo-American present different categories at different stages of contact. Alongside phonetically unintegrated borrowings, we can find borrowings which are integrated into the structures of the replica language. Among the latter are the loanwords *renta* 'rent' and the related verb *rentare* 'to rent', both integrated into Italian structures whose vitality is signalled through the creation of numerous derivatives such as *rentaro* 'tenant' (cf. non-Tuscan agentive suffix *-aro* in (regional) forms such as *tassinaro* 'taxi driver', *metallaro* 'heavy metal fan', see §1.4.2.1); and one of the most famous Italo-American terms still sporadically in use, *pezzo/pezza* 'dollar', an adaptation of *piece* (Prifti 2014:264–266). Among loan translations we can recall here: *super-martedì* < Eng. *super-Tuesday*, an American technical word in the field of political elections, *bassa città* < *downtown* (cf. It. *in centro* lit. 'in centre'), *prendere una fotografia* < *to take a photo* (cf. It. *fare/scattare una foto(grafia)* lit. 'to do/shoot a photo(graph)'), *guardare come qualcuno* < *to look like someone* (cf. It. *somigliare a* 'to resemble'), *venire nervoso* < *to get nervous* (cf. It. *agitarsi* 'to become agitated' vs *nervoso* 'irritable'). There are numerous cases of integrated loanwords, termed *prestiti camuffati* 'camouflaged loans' by Gusmani and Bombi (Gusmani 1986:117–125; Bombi 2020:127–137), including *fattoria* 'factory' (cf. It. *fattoria* 'farm'), *introdurre una persona* 'to introduce a person' (cf. It. *presentare una persona*

vs *introdurre* ‘to insert’) and *primarie* ‘primary elections’ (cf. It. *primarie* ‘primary.FPL; female head doctors’) and the last two items are today also widespread in contemporary Italian with the same value. As for English loanwords in Italo-American in the mass media, mainly newspapers written in Italian and radio and television programmes for Italo-American communities, Haller dwells on the quantity and quality of Italian in the mass media which is also dense with adapted Anglicisms including *riservare* (Eng. ‘to reserve’) in the sense of ‘to book’ (cf. It. *prenotare*), *realizzare* (Eng. ‘to realize’) in the sense of ‘to understand’ (cf. It. *capire*), but especially with unintegrated Anglicisms such as *convention*, *caucus*, *deregulation* (Haller 1993:61–99).

In terms of phonetics and morphosyntax, we may also highlight a number of phenomena involving English words that have entered Italo-American and that are not connected to specific areal, age, or generational variables. In relation to vowels, we can observe:

- the addition of a paragogic vowel to English words ending in consonant: *greeni* (< Eng. *green*), *storo* (< Eng. *store*), *elevatore* (< Eng. *elevator*), *misteccu* (< Eng. *mistake*) (in this latter example there is also lengthening of the underlying final consonant [k]);
- the addition of an epenthetic vowel: *bisinis* < Eng. *business*;
- the addition of a paragogic vowel *-i* to the infinitive of English verbs without *to*, e.g., *filli* (cf. It. *sentire* ‘to feel’), *ringhi* (cf. It. *suonare* ‘to ring’; Menarini 1947:155), since Italian words typically end in a vowel;
- stress shift to the oxytone position in some paroxytone or proparoxytone words, e.g., *cuntrì* < Eng. *country, beibbì* < Eng. *baby*.

As for consonants, some of the most significant features include:

- the loss of the glottal voiceless fricative [h] such as in *ollu*, *ausa*, *edde* < Eng. *hall*, *house*, *head*;
- the replacement of the voiceless and voiced dental fricatives [θ] and [ð] by [t] and [d], e.g., *natingo* < Eng. *nothing* and *dat* < Eng.

that; in the former case we may also find the voiceless labiodental and alveolar fricatives [f] and [s], e.g., *moufu/mus* < Eng. *mouth*;

- the assimilation of the consonant clusters /dm, dn/ realized as the geminates /mm, nn/, e.g., *good morning* > *cummoni* (Menarini 1947:155–160), *cubbai* < Eng. *good bye*.
- the simplification of geminates: [baˈtu:to] < *battuto* 'beaten' (Prifti 2014:339);
- the aspiration of the voiceless plosives /p t k/: *piccolo* [ˈp^{h}i:koło] 'small'.

Turning now to morphosyntax, some of the main features that characterize Italo-American are:

- agreement for gender and number between nouns and their modifiers and between nominals and verbs is often not made. While some of these patterns are found in non-standard varieties, once cannot rule out the effects of language contact from English in such contexts which, for example, lacks inflexional marking for gender, e.g., *idee moderni* lit. 'ideas (FPL) modern (MPL)' (cf. It. *idee moderne*), *la libertà è stato* . . . lit. 'the.FSG freedom.FSG is been.MSG' (cf. It. *la libertà è stata*) where we can see the agreement for number but not for gender; *la gente sono semplici* 'the.FSG people.FSG are simple.PL' (cf. It. *la gente è semplice* 'the.FSG people.FSG is simple.SG'), while here there is an agreement *ad sensum* (Haller 1993:15f.);
- reduction of the verb system under attrition variously manifested in the sporadic use of the subjunctive and conditional; the generalization of perfective auxiliary *avere* 'have' at the expense of *essere* 'be' due to the influence of English (Prifti 2014:339f.), e.g., *forse perché ho cresciuto sempre parlando in italiano* 'perhaps because I have grown up always speaking Italian' (cf. It. *sono cresciuto* lit. 'I am grown').
- English language borrowings in Italo-American also involve processes of morphophonological integration where derivational morphemes of the model language are replaced with Italian suffixes that are morphophonologically similar (cf. It. *-eria* in

argenteria ‘silverware (factory)’, *birreria* ‘brewery’, *macelleria* ‘butcher’s shop’), e.g., *cannery* > *canneria* ‘canned meat factory’, *bakery* > *bacheria* (Menarini 1947:157, 162; Prifti 2014:278).

33.5.2 Italian in Canada with a particular focus on *Italiese*

Across Canada, particularly in the large urban centres of Montreal and Toronto, and in the whole of Ontario as well, there is a large community of Italian descent that settled in Canada at the end of the nineteenth century. The Italian migratory chain reached its peak after the end of the Second World War when in 1951 the Italian and Canadian governments established a bilateral agreement to promote Italian migration. Approximately 25,000 Italians arrived in Canada after the agreement and today they represent the fourth most significant group in Canada after English, French, and German nationals. The linguistic varieties which Italian immigrants come into contact with include an assortment of regional varieties of Italian, Italian dialects, and local languages, as well as many other idioms of immigrants from other countries, as well as French and English with which Italian comes into strict contact. As a consequence, the effects of language contact, language shift, and language attrition are frequently observed in this complex dynamic linguistic country.

In particular Toronto, Ontario, but the whole of Canada too come to assume the role of an ideal laboratory for understanding the current condition of the Italian language in the global world (Vedovelli 2018:23f.) and Canada has been transformed into a paradigmatic example of a multilingual and multicultural world. Systematic attention to the linguistic aspects of Italian migration to Canada dates back to the early 1970s when two opposing trends emerged among researchers: on the one hand, those who describe the everyday speech of Italo-Canadians exclusively as the result of the failure to adequately use both Italian and English; on the other hand, those who regard the new mixed repertoire of the Italo-Canadian community as a new linguistic system complete with its own norms and which will be referred to as Italian (Machetti

2011:413–428). In Canada, the result of this continuous mixing of languages in a multilingual context is the new linguistic variety of Italo-Canadian known as *Italiese*, a *koiné* spoken by the Italian Canadian community in Ontario and in other parts of English-speaking Canada and therefore a combination of Italian and English, a dynamic language of immigration in Canada. The glottonym was probably created by Clivio who in 1985 used it to refer to the 'particular type of Italian, tinged with more or less acclimatized English influences, that constitutes the normal linguistic code of almost all speakers of Italian-Canadians in Ontario'. *Italiese* refers to a hybrid language, the result of contact between standard Italian, the regional dialects of Italy, and English, defined not only as a 'creative language', but also as a 'language of power' (Casini 2020) in that it identifies a group of cohesive and determined people in the new migratory situation. It provides an important vehicle of communication for Italians who, most often, spoke one of the dialects of the Italian peninsula but in their daily interactions in Toronto and in Ontario the language used was English (Casini and Bancheri 2022:11).

Features of *Italiese* surface at all levels of linguistic analysis (Casini-Bancheri 2022 and Danesi 1985). For example, in relation to vowels, speakers of *Italiese* merge the following vowels: /i:/ and /ɪ/ become /i/; /u:/ and /ʊ/ become /u/; /e/, /ɛ/, and /æ/ become /e/; /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/ become /o/ (Clivio 1985; 1986). In the consonant system one can mention here the insertion of the velar [g] with English words beginning with [w], e.g., [ˈguisele] for *whistle* and the omission of [h] in [ˈola] for *hall*. In terms of morphology, English nouns and adjectives used in *Italiese* are integrated according to the Italian morphological pattern through adjunction of the grammatical morpheme *-o* for the masculine singular, *-a* for feminine singular, and *-i* for plural, e.g., *basamento* < Eng. *basement*, *billo* < Eng. *bill*, *trocco* < Eng. *truck*, *asiuranza* < Eng. *assurance*, *cecca* < Eng. *cheque*. Lexical loans in the *Italiese* verb system are integrated into the Italian first conjugation (with infinitive in *-are*), e.g., *deliverare* 'to deliver', *pusciare* 'to push'. Verbs are conjugated according to the normal rules of Italian with prevalence of the present indicative, imperfect indicative, and analytic perfect, e.g., *io puscio* 'I push', *lui/lei puscia* 'he/she pushes', *pusciavo* '(I) was pushing', *ho pusciato* '(I) have pushed'; *io delivero* 'I deliver', *lui/lei delivera*

'he/she delivers'; *deliveravo* '(I) was delivering', *ho deliverato* '(I) have delivered'; *io parco* 'I park', *lui/lei parca* 'he/she parks', *parcavo* '(I) was parking', *ho parcato* '(I) have parked' (Casini-Bancheri 2022:100). Another characteristic of Italiese is its degree of creativity in the lexicon such that among speakers of *Italiese* there is a tendency towards the addition of new meanings to existing Italian lexemes. This is the case with *classe* (It. 'class(room)') that takes on the associated meaning of North American English 'class, course' (cf. It. *corso accademico*), *luce* (cf. It. 'light') for 'traffic light' (cf. It. *semaforo*), *muovere* (cf. It. 'move') for It. *traslocare* 'to move house', *acconto* (cf. It. 'down payment, deposit') for It. *conto bancario* 'bank account', *licenza* (cf. It. 'permission') for 'driving licence' (cf. It. *patente*), and *applicazione* (cf. It. 'commitment; enforcement') for 'application' (cf. It. *domanda*).

33.5.3 Italian in Australia

The Italian language in Australia is the result of a more recent migratory process than migration to North America and occurred in the 1950s and 1960s bringing to Australia, as Rubino (2014b:125f.) notes, the majority of Italians who are on that continent today. The Italian spoken in Australia, the result of interference between dialect speakers, does not differ much formally from Italo-American, and alongside the numerous cases of interference, there are also phenomena of attrition (Bettoni and Rubino 2010:460–466; see also Rubino 2014b). Rubino (1989:88) describes Italo-Australian as a dynamic variety that presents, in parallel with other migration areas, the characteristic of mixing three codes in the repertoire of the Italians of Australia, namely dialect (the dominant language for most first-generation immigrants), Italian (in its popular and regional varieties), and English (the official language). Italo-Australian is used as a means of communication by Italian migrants to Australia, whose long history dates back to the nineteenth century. Italian migration became a mass phenomenon in the post-Second World War period and the Italo-Australian community today still reflects the high linguistic vitality of the Italian language (Rubino 2017:49–73). This Australian variety of Italian is referred to by numerous

terms such as Italo-Australian, the Italian of Australia and, beginning in 1967, Australitalian, a term coined by Andreoni (1982) to which was added the Italian translation *australitaliano* in 1982. With this term Andreoni intends to highlight the fundamental characteristics of Australitalian, that is, a kind of symbiosis of English with Italian at various levels of analysis. Bettoni (1984) calls it a 'highly flexible communicative norm, which allows bilingual speakers to make transfers according to their own needs and tastes, and proves functional as long as it allows mutual understanding to be achieved', highlighting its pragmatic use, especially among speakers of the second and later generations.

In the Italo-Australian phonological system, vowels and consonants present some marked differences with respect to their articulation in the Italian and English phonological systems. In his works on Italo-Australian, Rando (1968:17) presents numerous cases of the phonological integration of English loanwords in relation to vowels (see also Rando 1967; 1991).

In relation to the Italo-Australian vowel system, we can note the following phenomena:

- the replacement of [a:], which in Anglo-Australian Rando defines as a very open and long vowel, by [e] in tonic position: *gang* > *ghenga*, unless it is followed by [r] which blocks the process;
- the short vowel [ʌ] approaches [a] (Eng. *son* [sʌn] becomes *son* [san]) while *bus* [bʌs] is also written *basse*, and *cup* is spelt *cappe*.

In the consonant system we can note the following phenomena:

- the allophonic aspiration of the bilabial, alveolar, and velar voiceless plosives [p], [t], [k], e.g., *perché* [pʰerˈkɛ] 'because; why'; *tempo* [ˈtʰɛmpo] 'time; weather', casa [ˈkʰaza] 'house' (Bettoni 1981:55);
- the alveolar realization of the original Italian voiced and voiceless dental plosives [t] and [d] (e.g., *tutto* [t'uto], *convento* [kon'vɛnto]);
- the fricativization of the rolled Italian consonant [r], e.g., *parlare* 'to speak' realized with the replacement of the Italian voiced

alveolar (poly)vibrant [r] with the corresponding English fricative;

- the loss of the glottal fricative [h] in both pronunciation and spelling.

An important feature of the attritional process of migrant Italian spoken in Australia is the reduction in both nominal and verb morphology:

- In nominal morphology there is a tendency towards a formal reduction of allomorphy in the definite article. For instance, with masculine plural nouns not only do the definite articles *i* and *gli* freely alternate, e.g., *i zocoli* 'the clogs' (cf. It. *gli zoccoli*), *gli olandesi* 'the Dutch', but the allomorph *gli* is rarely used, e.g., *i zii* 'the uncles', *i studi* 'the studies' (cf. It. *gli zii*, *gli studi*).
- Verb morphology also displays some cases of attrition. Notable is the fact that whereas the paradigms of the indicative and the conditional (e.g., *mi piacerebbe ritornare* lit. 'me please.COND.3SG return.INF (= I'd like to go back)') are productively used, the subjunctive is often recessive (Bettoni 1991:380), witness its replacement with the indicative in *speriamo che l'inverno non viene tropo freddo* 'let's hope that the winter isn't too cold' (cf. It. *venga* 'come.PRS.SBJV.3SG' vs *viene* 'come.PRS.IND.3SG').

In terms of syntax, interference gives rise to a number of phenomena such as:

- The definite article is generally omitted with possessives in accordance with the English model: *questa sarà mia cuginetta* 'she will be my cousin' (cf. It. *la mia cuginetta* lit. 'the my cousin'), *era mio compleanno* 'it was my birthday' (cf. It. *il mio compleanno* lit. 'the my birthday'), *mia famiglia e miei genitori* 'my family and my parents' (cf. It. *la mia famiglia e i miei genitori* lit. 'the my family and the my parents') (Bettoni 1991:377). Sometimes the articles are also omitted with abstract or generic nouns, again in accordance with English syntactic usage, e.g., *non è come inglese* 'it's not like English' (cf. It. *l'inglese* lit. 'the English'), *pensa che gioventù qua è tropo* [. . .] *indipendente* 's/he thinks that youth

around here are too [. . .] independent' (cf. It. *la gioventù* lit. 'the youth').

- The adoption of specific English word orders as in the case of the unmarked post-participial placement of *ancora* 'yet' in *Voi non mi avete scritto ancora* 'you haven't written to me yet' (cf. its pre-participial placement in It. *Voi non mi avete ancora scritto* lit. 'you haven't yet written to me', although it might also be a case of influence of the regional Italian southern Italy where the unmarked order is also post-participial).
- The prenominal placement of adjectives in accordance with English syntax, witness the prenominal placement of *giovanile* 'juvenile' before *delinquenza* 'delinquency' in *giovanile delinquenza* (cf. It. *delinquenza giovanile*).

33.5.4 Italian in South America: *Talià̀n* and *Cocoliche*

Latin America occupies a central role in the linguistic history of Italian emigration in the world since it has welcomed an extremely large number of Italian emigrants. Today Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay present the greatest numbers of subjects of Italian descent (§33.2) who, in comparison to other territories and destinations, maintain strong ties with Italy and their Italian heritage. This frequently leads to cultural rediscoveries and makes Latin America the most open territory to the discovery of Italy and the (re)conquest of the Italian language (Bagna 2011:305–357).

The presence of Italian emigrants in South America (Poli 2018:207–228), particularly in the River Plate area, and the linguistic peculiarity of this area, characterized by contact between River Plate Spanish and not so much with Italian as with southern and northern dialects (in particular with Genoese and Venetian) has given rise to the formation of mixed languages, such as Argentinean *Cocoliche* and Rioplatense *Cocoliche*, spoken between Argentina and Uruguay, a mixed Italian-Spanish linguistic variety involving and altering all areas of language including 'vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonetics, producing a mixture, an unstable, often

incomprehensible hybridisation' (Cancellier 2018:150; see also Cancellier 2001:73), e.g., *mujer* [muˈkere] 'lady; wife' (cf. Argentinian Sp. [muˈxer]), *manyar* 'to eat' (cf. It. *mangiare* vs Sp. *comer*), free relative *lo che* (lit. 'the which') in, for instance, *lo che vuoi* 'what you want' (cf. It. *ciò/quel(lo) che* 'that which' vs Sp. *lo que*).[4]

Remaining within South America,[5] the Venetian-based Italo-Romance variety spoken in Brazil, *Taliàn* or *Veneto Brazilian/Riograndense*, was and still is the mother tongue of many of the new generations of Italo-Brazilians who arrived in Brazil in the final decades of the nineteenth century. It is a mixed variety which was adopted for communication between Venetan settlers of different origins who did not have, or who were only partially familiar with, the Italian language (cf. Marcato 2007:149). Used since the first families settled in the Brazilian regions and who spoke different dialects, today it is a common communication system used alongside Portuguese in the relevant areas of Brazil (Corrà 1998: 257–265; 2009: 53–60).[6] Some of the features of *Taliàn* include:

- strengthening of [r] in Venetian words (including in spelling) due to Portuguese influence, e.g., *morrire* 'to die' (cf. Pt. *morrer* vs Ven. *morir*), *terribile* 'terribile' (cf. Pt. *terrível* vs Ven. *teribile*);
- presence of a prosthetic [e] before s + consonant, e.g., *estrada* 'road' (Pt. *estrada*);
- metathesis of /r/, e.g., *praché* 'because; why' (cf. Brazilian Pt. *pra que* vs Ven *parché*);
- adoption of Portuguese gender and number inflexions, e.g., *paur-o* 'fear-MSG' (cf. It. *paur-a* 'fear-FSG', Pt. *med-o* 'fear-MSG'), *parentá* 'kinship' (It. *parentel-a*, Pt. *parentalha* vs Ven. *parentó*; Meo Zilio 2002b:32).

33.6 Concluding remarks

This contribution provides a selective overview of the situation of the Italian language in different parts of the world following mass migrations which saw 25 million Italians leave their country of origin to create Italian communities in North and South America, Australia, and in other parts of the world. A final major factor, which especially today plays a role in the maintenance of Italian abroad, is the cultural component. Italian has always been the language of cultural heritage, art, archaeology, music, and literature, and this precious value remains intact. Beyond the identity and the cultural components, today a third new strategic factor can be added: the *Made in Italy* brand—with the products of Italian creativity and excellence in various sectors such as design, quality craftsmanship, fashion, and cuisine—which have become central and contributed to the spread of Italian products as well as to the promotion of the Italian language throughout the world. And there is another new and all-pervasive phenomenon today—that is, the widespread diffusion of the Italian language in the semiotic universe and in the (virtual) linguistic landscape, where Italian becomes a concrete element of the identity values of a community, of its history, and of its culture. Vedovelli, Turchetta, and Casini have recently studied this phenomenon in Toronto (Ontario) and in Japan. The linguistic landscape, a research field in which some researchers have begun to move, refers to 'the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region' (Landry and Bourhis 1997:23). Numerous studies have recently shown the existence of a correlation between vitality and the presence in the linguistic landscape of a language. Language signs in linguistic landscapes 'can take on symbolic value to the rooting of a language in a community, in a certain mostly urban geographic space, emphasizing the presence of an "other" ethnic identity within a context in which the majority of individuals do not share that identity' Costantini and Pierucci 2019:93). Similar dynamics can also be observed in the virtual linguistic landscape (Ivković and Lotherington 2009), in which the use of a heritage language plays the role of an identity marker. The presence of traces of written Italian on Facebook contributes, for example, to the revitalization in this social network community of a new variety of 'digital' Italian (Ferrini 2021:112–128). In addition, a strategic and innovative role is played by online communication where the 'virtual networks' conveyed by the internet

and social media are able to create a new territory of aggregation among Italians abroad, to spread linguistic and cultural information 'in' Italian and 'about' Italian culture (Bombi 2019:31–42; Tavosanis 2017:113–127).

The support of institutions has also played an important role in enhancing the spread and maintenance of the Italian language around the world. From the late nineteenth century, a central function has been played by the Dante Alighieri Society and by the projects and initiatives promoted over the years by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the Italian Cultural Institutes. The role of the *Italians in the World Report*, mainly due to Delfina Licata, editor of the publication promoted by the Migrant Foundation of the Italian Bishops' Conference, is strategic since each year it provides information and documentation to better understand the phenomenon of Italian mobility in the world in the past and today (Licata 2023:95–104). Here it is apt to invoke Bruni's characterization of Italian, unlike many other major Romance languages or English, is 'without an empire', yet still appears capable of 'taking its place' among the world's languages (Bruni 2003).

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[1] *Italico* is used by Bassetti with a novel meaning in contrast to its established use in historical linguistics where it refers to the peoples of ancient pre-Roman Italy.

[2] In what follows, we adopt *loanword* to refer to the reproduction of a single foreign word without substitution, e.g., *lavorare in accounting* 'to work in accounting' (cf. It. 'nella contabilità'); *vacazione* < Eng. *vacation* (cf. It. *vacanza* 'holiday'), and *calque* to indicate the reproduction of the meaning of a foreign model using the lexicon of the replica language. More specifically, there are two main types of calque, namely *semantic loan* and *loan translation*, the former indicating the process of reproduction of the internal polysemous forms of foreign models, e.g., *lavorare duro* 'to work hard' where *duro* 'hard' keeps the English meaning, and the latter, which is much more frequent, involves the reproduction of both the structure and semantic motivation of a foreign model, e.g., *ritirarsi dal lavoro* < Eng. *to retire from work*.

[3] Among the earliest contributions on the force of expansion of the Italian language that should be mentioned is that of Vidos in 1932 (published as Vidos 1965). On Italian as a language of culture in Europe, on Italianisms, and judgements on the Italian language, there are the important contributions by Stammerjohann (1997; 2010; 2013); Bruni (2003; 2013); Maraschio, De Martino, and Stanchin (2012); and Folena (1983), which examine the fortunes of Italian from a broad perspective. With regard to an overview of Italian communities abroad, in addition to Di Salvo and Moreno (2017), important reference works on Italian in the USA are Haller (1991; 1993; 2006; 2010; 2023) and Prifti (2014); Italian in

Canada has been the subject of Turchetta and Vedovelli (2018) and Casini (2019); for South America Bagna (2011:305–357) and Meo Zilio (2002a; 2002b).

[4] There is also Lunfardo, a kind of underworld slang formed in the most infamous environments of Buenos Aires. Born in Spanish-speaking environments, it is rich in influences of languages and dialects of the immigrants, in which a central role is played by the Ligurian contribution of Genoesisms to Lunfardo in particular (Toso 2011:165–176).

[5] There are many mixed languages in South America, including *Portuñol*, which mixes Portuguese and Spanish in the border areas between Brazil and Uruguay, and also *Portulian*, which has its origins in the fusion of Brazilian Portuguese and Italian and has left traces in Italian migration literature.

[6] Following the Federal Constitution of 1988, Brazil promulgated in 1992 the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (enacted in 1966), which includes Article 27 on the use of minority languages. This involved the recognition as national languages (and subsequent inclusion in the *Inventário nacional da diversidade linguística* 'National inventory of linguistic diversity') of those languages that have been spoken continuously in the country for at least three generations, including *Taliàn*, which enjoys co-official status in five municipalities in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

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Part VI

ITALIAN IN CONTACT

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Chapter 34

Italian in contact

The Middle Ages

Lorenzo Tomasin

34.1 Boundaries and sources

It is necessary to focus first on what we call ‘old Italian’, that is, the pre-standard Italian of the Middle Ages. Rather than being a single system characterized (only) by the usual dimensions of linguistic variation, old Italian may be considered a diasystem made up of the sum of the various local Italian systems (dialects, vernaculars) of Italy. It would be inappropriate or underproductive here to limit the horizon of linguistic description to a single local system (such as Florentine) or even to a regional system (such as the ensemble of Tuscan dialects) to study the premises of modern (or common, or standard) Italian, based on old Florentine merely on the grounds of a set of structural properties, codified by the grammatical tradition. Thus, if we consider old Italian (or the medieval Romance of Italy) as a linguistic and historical category in the sense widely accepted by the tradition of Romance linguistics, we must look at the whole set of Italian vernaculars as a field of contact between the Romance of Italy and other linguistic systems (Romance or non-Romance).[1]

In modern times, the formation and development of the Italian language have tended to take place independently of the dialectal background, so that the linguistic contact of Italian itself can be studied largely independently of the local vicissitudes of individual vernaculars.

However, this is not the case for the medieval period, before the establishment of the Tuscan-based literary language, the grammatical codification of Italian, and its standardization as a written language.

The case of linguistic contact is a particularly revealing example. If we were to consider linguistic contact only in terms of languages with which Tuscan or

Florentine had direct contact, we might conclude that some languages did not interact at all with Italian in the Middle Ages.

Many of the elements that modern Italian has inherited from episodes of medieval contact with other languages are not the result of a direct encounter between Tuscan (or Florentine) and those languages. Rather, they are the result of contacts that took place during the Middle Ages in various other regions of Italy, from the north, which was exposed to direct contact with the Gallo-Romance domain and Germany, to the Aragonese territories in the south of Italy, and to Arabic Sicily.

As a peculiar exception, we will consider the case of contact between Italian (Italo-Romance) and Latin, that is, the interference between local vernaculars and the common denominator (or cultural 'roof language') of all of the medieval Romània, separately from any other form of written tradition. Literacy itself in the Middle Ages almost automatically implies knowledge of Latin, at least in a basic form, and exposure to Latin, even as a spoken language, was a common experience of religious and civil life for almost everyone in Western Christianity at the time. Contact with Latin is therefore ingrained in medieval Romance. But contact with it follows a different dynamic from that of any other language.

In terms of spatial limits, we will focus mainly on the phenomenology of linguistic contact within the Italian territory, occasionally widening our gaze to the European background (another chapter of this handbook is devoted to the spread and circulation of Italian in the Mediterranean area). This is why, for example, a fascinating context such as the east coast of the Adriatic—the non-Italian offshoot of Italo-Romance during the Middle Ages—will not be examined here.

Turning to the long chronological phase of the Middle Ages (which we have globally characterized as the pre-standard period), we can distinguish two further sub-periods: the early Middle Ages, in which Romance is not attested in a direct written form, and the late Middle Ages, in which written sources in the vernacular become increasingly frequent and widespread, and in which several local writing traditions flourish in many urban and regional contexts throughout Italy, especially from the thirteenth century onwards (the phase from the tenth to twelfth centuries remains a grey area with rare written attestations: for an overview see Frank and Hartmann 1997). As for the earliest period (i.e., before the early textualization of Romance in Italy: for this label, see Maiden and Zaccarello 2004), linguistic contact between Italo-Romance and other languages is well attested, in particular through the following sources:

- morphosyntactic calques and morpheme borrowing;
- morpho-lexical loans;
- loanwords and lexical calques, detectable also in medieval Latin sources;

- toponyms and personal names of foreign origin.

Linguistic contact in the late Middle Ages can be studied on the basis of written sources which testify directly or indirectly to a phenomenon whose concrete spoken dimension is, of course, inaccessible. For this type of source, it is necessary to consider carefully the hybrid nature of medieval written production (according to Avalle 1993:55 'perhaps no other age has experienced the phenomenon of cultural hybridism so deeply and so widely') in order to assess the weight and significance of the contact, the dynamics of which are often different from those of modern written production. In addition to the above-mentioned sources (which remain valid in the late Middle Ages), we also find, for this later phase:

- multilingual or linguistically mixed literary texts;
- texts written by Italians in other languages;
- texts written by non-Italian authors in old Italian;
- translations (notably into old Italian).

Some of these sources represent more indirect indices of linguistic contact, since they do not in themselves imply the presence of multilingual individuals (it is not necessary to speak Arabic to use a word of Arab origin, or French to baptize a son or daughter with a French name).

An additional criterion for defining the ensemble of the categories mentioned is possible by sorting the different languages in contact with Italian. If we consider only those languages in which the majority of the listed sources are richly available, we find (besides Latin), Romance and non-Romance languages, such as French, Provençal, and Catalan, on the one hand, and Germanic languages, Greek, and Arabic on the other. As we shall see, contact with the Hebrew language in the context of Jewish communities is a partially different matter.

34.2 A case apart: Latin and Romance in the Middle Ages

Latin cannot be regarded as a proper contact language for Romance throughout the Middle Ages. Not only did the same literacy at almost every level necessarily involve some knowledge of Latin,[2] and not only was the vast majority of the population of western Europe exposed to spoken Latin in the peculiar form of the religious language normally used for Christian rites, but in the late Middle Ages Latin was not (or was not only) a naturally acquired

language, had no native speakers, and had a different status from any living language, so that the same concept of translation must be carefully evoked when considering the production of medieval *volgarizzamenti* ('vulgarizations'). This is a field in which translation theory has produced some interesting models, from the humanist debate of Leonardo Bruni's time on the relationship between ancient and modern languages, to the book of Folena (1991), *Volgarizzare e tradurre*, a turning point in the history of translation.

It would be vain to examine here the whole phenomenology of structural interference between medieval Latin and Romance in Italy, from the persistent flow of Latinisms into the vernacular lexicon at almost all levels to the never-ending absorption of syntactic traits evidenced by the Italian prose and verse of the origins:[3] this field of study has long been the subject of research of Romance linguists, and produced some masterpieces of Romance philology and Italian linguistics at the end of the twentieth century, such as Segre (1963), on the prose of the *Duecento*, Brambilla Ageno (1964) on the verb in old Italian, Dardano (1969) on the origin of vernacular prose, and Durante (1981) on the structural evolution from Latin to Italian, which shed light on the early development of Italian prose and on its deep relationship to the structures of Latin.

There is no structural aspect of Italian and no type of medieval text that avoids the influence of Latin or the concrete presence of elements (lexemes, phrases, idioms, syntactic constructs, textual architectures) directly inherited from what was the written language par excellence. The same notion of bilingualism seems controversial when applied (as it is sometimes done in the scholarly literature) to the interference of Latin with Romance in the Middle Ages, although the classical doctrine of the Neogrammarians considered the learnèd words of Romance—that is, Latinisms, immune to phonetic and morphological change—like proper loanwords.

Perhaps it is more interesting to focus here on the simultaneous presence of Latin and Romance in medieval Italian texts. Thus, the origins of Romance literature in general, and of Italian written production in particular, are marked by texts in which an as yet uncodified Romance *scripta* is embedded in a (more or less) regular Latin environment so that its linguistic specificity is revealed and highlighted by the contrast with Latin.

We may take the case of the so-called *Indovinello veronese* 'Veronese riddle', a text written in the margin of a manuscript made in Spain in the seventh (or eighth) century and then passed from Pisa to Verona between the eighth and the ninth centuries (it is still uncertain where exactly the two lines were written). In this text, the combination of this enigmatic line with a second line (written by a different hand, but on the same occasion and as a kind of answer) in perfect Latin is one of the elements that leads us to read the riddle as a Romance text. The impeccable linguistic form of the religious formula acts as an agent of contrast:[4]

+ Se pareba boves alba pratalia araba & albo versorio teneba & negro semen seminaba

+ *Gratias tibi agimus omnip(oten)s sempiterne d(eu)s*

He pushed oxen, ploughed white meadows and sowed black seed. / *We give you thanks, eternal and almighty God.*

If we look at the oldest vernacular texts written in Tuscany, in the case of the *Postilla Amiatina* (brief annotation at the end of a legal document of 1087 drawn up in the Monte Amiata area; cf. also §1.2), the notarial Latin with which the sentence begins slips imperceptibly into the vernacular of the final part, which is completely Romance (Castellani 1976:103):

«Ista cartula est de caput coctu ille adiuvet de ill rebottu qui mal consiliu li mise in corpu»

This little document is about 'baked head': may he help him from that rogue who put bad advice into his body

(for further, more recent interpretations of this text, see now Breschi 2018a; 2018b)

The archaic and linguistically mixed texts of the earliest French and Provençal literature (such as the *Aube* of Fleury, or the *Sponsus*) are absent from the earliest Italian production. A later literary tradition, flourishing especially towards the end of the Middle Ages, is that of the semi-literate or semi-Latin sonnet, which combines Latin and Romance by alternating them, sometimes verse by verse. Semi-Latin sonnets of this kind were written, especially between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, in a pre-humanist or even humanist atmosphere, developing a stylistic trait already present in Dante's *Comedy*. Dante himself is nowadays usually considered the author of the poem *Aï faus ris . . .* , where the poet complains about the behaviour of a woman referred to as 'false laughter': it is a *morceau* where French, Latin, and Italian alternate in a regular sequence (the text comes down to us in a Bolognese manuscript: Brugnolo 1978; 2018–2021). Here is the first stanza (text and translation from Chiamenti 2009):

Aï faus ris, pour quoi traï m'avez
oculos meus? et quid tibi feci,
che fatta m'hai sì dispietata fraude?
Iamque audissent verba mea Greci!
Se ounques autres, dame, et vous saves
che 'ngannator non è degno di laude.
Tu sai ben come gaude
miserum eius cor qui prestolatur:
je l'esper [t]ant, et pas de moi ne cure.
Ai Dieus, quantes malure
atque fortuna ruinosa datur
a colui ch'aspettando il tempo perde,
né già mai tocca di fioretto il verde.

> Alas, false smile, why did you betray my eyes? And what have I done to you, for you to do me such a merciless fraud? Even Greeks would have listened to my words! If ever others knew, you, my lady, at least well know that a deceiver is not worthy of praise. You know so well how much delight the saddened heart of one who waits can feel: I crave for her so much, and she cares not for me. Alas, God, what a malaise, and what a ruinous misfortune is inflicted on someone who, while waiting, wastes time and never touches a flower in its green.

Some popular or musical poems of the fourteenth century contain a mixture of Italian and Latin verse: this is the case of the *strambotti* studied by Duso (2004:XV). The most regulated and refined version of this poetic technique is shown in some sonnets by authors such as Giovanni Quirini (†1333), one of the earliest imitators of Dante's *Rime* outside Tuscany, and Niccolò de' Rossi (1290–post 1348). The composition of similar texts continued—increasingly marginally—and was revived by the Baroque in a very different cultural climate.

34.3 Old French

Among the living languages in contact with old Italian, the Gallo-Romance languages are the most influential. The contexts of contact are both written and spoken, both literary (through the massive diffusion of the French epic in Italian society, and not only in the cultivated milieu: see Palumbo 2013) and non-literary (through the dissemination of technical knowledge, philosophy, science, and economics via texts written in French). To understand how deep the penetration of French culture went in the Italian Middle Ages, one only has to consider that a significant number of Italian *volgarizzamenti* of the Bible itself were translated not from the original Hebrew or Greek text (of course), nor from the Latin *Vulgata*, but from French versions produced in the thirteenth century. The linguistic impact of French-Italian contact in the Middle Ages can be seen on many different levels.

Some morphosyntactic traits of French origin in old Italian can be detected in features such as the prepositional gerund phrase (*in andando* lit. 'in going' for *andando* 'going', Dante, *Purgatorio* 5.45: cf. Fr. *en allant*). At the morpho-lexical level, suffixes such as *-iere* < -ĀRIU (the type *cavaliere* 'knight', *cameriere* 'manservant' with its Latin adaptations is attested in Italy before 1100, Cella 2003:56–58), *-aggio* (OFr. *-age*, < -ATICUM: e.g., *viaggio* 'voyage'), or *-ardo* (OFr. *-hard*, of Frankish origin: e.g., *codardo* 'coward') have an enormous spread in Italian, both in poetry and prose.

As for the lexicon, Cella (2003) also collects several hundred Gallo-Romance lexemes from the corpus of the *OVI* database of old Italian.

According to Castellani (2000:102f.) 'from France come to us some verbs indicating essential operations of everyday life: *mangiare* "to eat", which by the mid-twelfth century had already joined the indigenous *manicare* (< *MANDICARE, in turn from MANDUCĀRE ["to chew"], preserved in the old Italian forms with the accent on the root, *manuca*, etc.), then replaced it completely in the modern age [. . .]; *svegliare* "to wake" (OFr. *esveiller* *EXVIGILARE), that appears from the earliest times beside the indigenous *destare* *DEEXCITARE; and nouns that we might imagine to be totally sheltered from any foreign influence, for instance *coniglio* ["rabbit"] [. . .] CUNĪCULUS, which if it were Tuscan (instead of going back to OFr. *conil*, or OPrv. *conilh*) would be *conicchio*'.

The personal names of late medieval Italy are also influenced by cultural and linguistic contact with France and the French language: not only are the names of the heroes of French epics widely spread beyond the Alps, but even a typically late medieval name such as Francesco (literally 'French') shows at least an indirect influence of French culture (sometimes overestimated, as Gambino 2023 argues in a recent paper on the name of 'Francesco'—Francis—of Assisi).

However, the most important and widespread result of linguistic contact between old French and old Italian is the production of texts in the so-called Franco-Italian. Dozens of works of verse and prose were written in French by Italian authors between the early thirteenth and the late fifteenth century, with so much interference and so much mixture of languages that it is difficult to accept the traditional view of Franco-Italian as an autonomous variety of French or as a distinct literary language. As Morlino (2015) argues, it is a linguistic and cultural constellation that includes all Italian authors who consciously choose to write in French, using this language as an acquired literary code (in the same sense as Latin was a learnèd language, and as Provençal or Galician were languages specifically used also by non-Provençal or non-Galician poets for their literary production). The earliest products of this *nebula* are some translations (from Latin or Arabic) carried out in Italy in the first half of the thirteenth century. And its latest fruits are the poems written by authors such as the anonymous author of *L'Entrée d'Espagne* (first decades of the fourteenth century), or Nicolò da Verona, who lived during the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century (see Limentani 1976), inscriptions, and a large number of poems, make up the rich catalogue of Franco-Italian literature. Its masterpieces are works such as Marco Polo's *Devisement dou monde* (also known as the *Milione*, shortly afterwards translated into various Italian vernaculars: see Bertolucci-Pizzorusso 1975).

The *Milione* was set down in the prisons of Genoa by Rustichello da Pisa, a Tuscan who used French both for his literary production (he wrote an Arthurian compilation, a French prose text full of Tuscan elements: see Cigni 1994) and for his collaboration with Marco Polo, who probably dictated to him the story of his twenty-six-year journey to China. For the manuscript

considered closest to the original version of the *Devisement dou monde* see Burgio and Eusebi (2018).

Thus, in the case of the *Tresor*, written by Brunetto Latini, the Florentine master of Dante, during his stay in France (Beltrami et al. 2007), we have an author who is able to use a refined literary Italian, inspired by classical Latin and reinforced by the habit of translating from the learnèd language (his *Rettorica* is a translation, or rather a re-elaboration, of Cicero's *De inventione*: see Pfister 2009), and a French rich in Italianisms, acquired through literary readings and reinforced during his exile.

This is the passage in which the trilingual Brunetto (he could write in Latin, Florentine, and French) explicitly justifies his choice of language for the *Livre dou Tresor*:

> Et se aucun demandoit por quoi ceste livre est escrit en roman selonc le patois de France, pouis que nos [so]mes ytaliens, je diroie que ce est par .ii. raisons: l'une que nos [so]mes en France, l'autre por ce que la parleure est plus delitable et plus commune a touz languaiges. (ed. Beltrami et al. 2007:7)
>
> If someone were to ask why this book is written in Romance according to the dialect of France, while we are Italian, I will say that it is for two reasons: the first is that we are in France, the second is that this language is the most pleasant and the most widespread of all languages.

The language of some of the most reliable manuscripts of Brunetto's *Tresor* displays some phonomorphological and lexical features associated with overseas French, i.e., French spoken in the Middle East, a language of exchange between merchants of European origin during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This circumstance has led to the suggestion that Brunetto himself may have used a French that was, at least in part, similar to that of Italian mercantile circles (a sophisticated analysis of Brunetto's language has been proposed by Zinelli 2008). Moreover, it is a fact that the French written by Italian authors of the period does not seem to have been modelled on the language written and spoken in France, but rather on that of certain international Mediterranean *milieux*.

According to Folena (1978:29), the expansion of French in Italy during the Middle Ages correlates with the expansion of French and Italian in the Levant during the Crusades and the ephemeral experience of the Latin Empire: the use of French in Italy, therefore, seems to be linked to an 'international adventure' in the Middle East rather than in France. In particular, French comes into contact with many Italian medieval contexts not because of geographical proximity, but because of a cultural choice, 'for its international appearance, as a *metastratum*', as Folena points out, alluding to the categories of *superstratum* and *adstratum* in the geolinguistic tradition. At the same time, but for—at least in part—different reasons, a strong linguistic and cultural contact between French and Italian can be observed also in the Angevin Kingdom of Naples, where French was not only a prestigious literary language but also the language of the local Chancery.

34.4 Old Provençal

The linguistic contact between old Italian and old Provençal is usually associated with the literary influence of the poetry of the troubadours: a literary vogue that occurred partly in Italy as well, where a significant number of the poets who fled Provence during the thirteenth century lived and wrote (on the Italian diaspora of Occitan poets, see Lachin 2008). The importance of linguistic contact between Provençal and Italian culture in this area is illustrated by the poems of Raimbaut de Vaqueiras (late twelfth to early thirteenth century), which alternate old Italian (in a generically northern form: *Bella, tan vos ai preiada BDT* 392.7; *Eras quan vey verdeyar*, *BDT* 392.4: here together with other Romance languages such as French, Gascon, and Galician-Portuguese) with the 'normal' Occitan language of the troubadours tradition.[5]

But perhaps the most famous episode of linguistic contact between old Italian and Provençal is found in the verses of Dante's *Purgatorio*, where the troubadour Arnaut Daniel intervenes with a short speech in Provençal, composed by Dante mostly by combining elements and quotations from troubadour poems he knew (*Purgatorio* 26.139–149, ed. Bellomo, Carrai 2019:453f.):

> El cominciò liberamente a dire:
> «Tan m'abellis vostre cortes deman,
> qu'ieu no me puesc ni voill a vos cobrire.
> Ieu sui Arnaut, que plor e vau cantan;
> consiros vei la passada folor,
> e vei jausen lo jorn qu'esper, denan.
> Ara vos prec, per aquella valor
> que vos condus al som de l'escalina,
> sovenha vos a temps de ma dolor!»
> Poi s'ascose nel foco che li affina
>
> He began to speak freely: 'So much I like your courteous request that I cannot and will not hide myself from you. I am Arnaut, who weeps and sings; I see with regret the past folly, and happily see the joy I await. Now I beseech you, in the name of that virtue that guides you to the top of the ladder, that you remember my sorrow in due time.' Then he hid in the fire that purifies them.

Apart from such spectacular examples of linguistic mixing, the most significant linguistic heritage for the whole Italo-Romance domain is lexical. Several Gallo-Romance lexemes that entered the Italian language during the Middle Ages can undoubtedly be linked to the circulation and assimilation of some key poetic Provençal words, such as *coraggio*, OPrv. *coratge* 'courage',

but also ‘heart’; *drudo*, OPrv. *drut* ‘lover’; *gioi’* (a by-form of *gioia* in old Italian), maybe OPrv. *joi* ‘joy’; *rimembrare*, OPrv. *remembrar* ‘remember’.

As for grammatical loans, it is possible that the spread of the conditional periphrasis derived from an infinitive + the imperfect indicative tense forms of HABERE ‘have’ (e.g., It. *amaria*, ‘I would love’ COND.3SG—one of the two types of conditional regularly attested in old Provençal) was fostered in Tuscan and in northern dialects (where the indigenous type derives from the infinitive + the preterite forms of HABERE: e.g., Flo. *amerebbe*, Vnt. *Amarave*, cf. §1.4.2.2) by the literary language, where this form is very frequent, and in particular through the passage from Provençal to Sicilian, and from Sicilian to Tuscan (see Castro forthcoming, although Assenza 2021 assumes that this form of the conditional may also be indigenous to the Sicilian dialect).

It is worth remembering that not only was the intellectual lexicon or the terminology of courtly Occitan culture imported into Italian through the poetry of the troubadours, but also there were some interesting transfers from the poetic lexicon to other fields of medieval culture. This is for instance the case with the expression *per fin amor* ‘for courtly love’, originally referring to the system of values and beliefs of the courtly culture, and then adapted, in the Italian commercial *milieu* of the fourteenth century (if not before), to a typical usage of finance and commerce, that is, the disguised interest in financial transitions (*per fin amor* means ‘without interest’, but the expression conventionally masked the real conditions of the financial agreement: Tomasin 2016).

During the late Middle Ages, other episodes of linguistic contact between old Provençal and old Italian can be observed in Mediterranean trade. Some of the earliest examples of the use of old Italian by non-Italian craftsmen in archival documentation are the letters of the Provençal (and Jewish) merchant Bondì de Iosef, who was active in both Provence and Tuscany at the end of the fourteenth and at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Some of his letters are written in Italian (with Tuscan as the target language) with a considerable number of Provençal features, both on the graphic level (see for instance the use of <lh> and <nh> for the palatal lateral and nasal, respectively), and on the phonomorphological level (Menichetti and Tomasin 2018; Tomasin 2021:69–100).

Some linguistic hybrids, comparable to those of the Franco-Italian texts mentioned above, can also be found at the crossroads of Italian and Provençal poetic writing: apart from the case of Raimbaut de Vaqueiras mentioned above, and apart from the Italian troubadours who wrote poems in Provençal, the same cultural environment of the courts and cities, for instance Treviso, where Franco-Italian literature flourished, was also open to Provençal influence. It is the perception of Provençal culture as substantially being one with French culture (according to Formisano 1996:118, ‘whatever one can say, the Gallo-Romance culture of the Middle Ages is substantially unitary, and must have appeared as such [. . .] in the eyes of the Italians’) that allowed

Occitan interference in some vernacular texts written in Italy, where the *Vidas* ('literary biographies') of the troubadours were probably written and collected by Uc de Sant Circ, an Occitan poet in exile.

34.5 Catalan

Linguistic contact between old Italian and Catalan can be observed in three main areas: in Sicily from 1282, in Sardinia from 1323, and in the Kingdom of Naples from 1442. The peak period of contact, i.e., the fifteenth century, corresponds to that of the expansion of the House of Aragon in the Italian islands and in the south of the peninsula. Contacts in the rest of Italy (but never later than the end of the fifteenth century) were more occasional, due to trade and navigation rather than politics.

All lexical elements of Catalan origin remaining in common Italian pass through the contact that occurred during the medieval age in those areas. This contact, therefore, precedes the formation of Tuscan-based literary Italian and is independent of it. Some interesting episodes of contact between Tuscans and Catalans occur mainly outside Italy, but are not particularly relevant for the presence of Catalan elements in modern Italian. Since contact with Catalan ceased almost completely after the end of the Middle Ages, it can only be studied outside the Florentine and Tuscan lineage on which literary Italian is based.

The study of Italo-Catalan linguistic contact has for a long period been hindered by the fact that Catalan studies have remained entangled with studies on Ibero-Romance generally, which have traditionally paid more attention to the history of Castilian and are reluctant to make a clear distinction between the documentation of the expansion of Spanish outside Iberia and the expansion of other languages of the peninsula. As for Sardinia, where Aragonese rule began in 1323–1326, Catalan is so deeply rooted that there is still a Catalan-speaking community in Alghero. In the rest of the island, the language of the Crown of Aragon gradually gave way to Castilian from the end of the fifteenth century, but the use of Catalan continued until the seventeenth century, both in bureaucracy and in the literary language. In Sicily, the earliest sources for the study of this area are mainly, but not exclusively, chancery documents, such as the letters from the court of Duke Martin of Montblanc (then Martin I of Aragon and finally Martin II of Sicily, 1356–1410), studied by Varvaro (1977).

In Naples, a truly Catalan court lasted for less time than in Sicily and Sardinia (about half a century), but it also left a deep trace both in ancient documentation and in the modern dialect (Barbato 2000). In particular, Catalan is used, alongside Neapolitan and Latin, in the surviving documents

of the chancery of Alfonso the Magnanimous (a bilingual Castilian-Catalan speaker, cf. Soler 2018), preserved in the Chigi manuscript J VIII 292 of the Vatican Apostolic Library, relating to the acts of 1451–1453. However, many traces of the use of Catalan in the city appear in various literary works (in the broadest sense) from fifteenth-century Naples. They show how Catalan and Castilian were actually mixed in use and, above all, in the perception of Italian speakers, who often mixed the two languages in their correspondence with Iberian personnel. As for the opposite influence, a notable case is that of the Neapolitan chronicler Lupo de Spechio, a Catalan who writes in Italian around the middle of the fifteenth century (Compagna Perrone Capano 1990). Another source, still largely ignored, for the study of Italo-Catalan linguistic contact is the large number of commercial letters between Catalans and Tuscans in the Datini Archive in Prato, dating from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries: Catalonia and the Balearic Islands were provinces of the vast commercial empire administered in the eastern Mediterranean by Francesco di Marco Datini (1335–1410, see Tomasin 2017a; 2019b/2020).

One of the main problems posed by the texts on linguistic contact between Catalan, Castilian, and Italian is the difficulty of clearly distinguishing the Catalan elements, given the notable structural proximity: in addition to phonological or morphological criteria, the chronology of attestation can be helpful (but must be applied carefully). Thus, an Ibero-Romance loanword attested in Sicily before the fifteenth century is usually taken to be a Catalan word, and the same is generally true for the whole Italian peninsula. Many Catalan borrowings remain in the areas affected by the contact, and sometimes Catalan words pass from the dialects of southern Italy into common Italian: this is the case with words such as *aguzzino* 'jailer' (Cat. *alugutzir*, of Arbic origin, *DECat* 1.193), *cavallerizzo* 'riding master' (Cat. *Cavallerís*, *DECat* 2.648), *gramaglia* 'mourning clothes' (Cat. *gramalla*, *DECat* 4.608), *impresa* 'enterprise' (Cat. *empresa*, *DECat* 6.418, s.v. *pendre*), *intrallazzo* 'racket' (Cat. *entrellaçar*, *DECat* 5.19): Coluccia et al. 1995; Barbato 2000. The historical divide between the period when Catalan was the most influential Ibero-Romance language on the Italian peninsula and the golden age of Castilian influence on Italian corresponds to the end of the Middle Ages (the case of Sardinia is, as we have said, quite different). The Spanish period begins in Naples in 1503, and ideally ends in the era of *Spagnolo e spagnoli in Italia* ('Spanish and Spaniards in Italy', the title of a famous book by Beccaria 1968), which was to shape the Italian language—and especially its lexicon—throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, basically eclipsing the role of Catalan.

34.6 Germanic languages

The attempt to explain some structural features of the Romance languages as a result of contact between Latin (or early Romance) and Germanic was promoted in particular by scholars such as von Wartburg, who emphasized the role of the superstrate in the construction of Romance (see von Wartburg 1980). Today, we believe that 'it is groundless to speak of Romance languages as Latin-Germanic hybrids', as Varvaro (1995:144) argues. As for old Italian, the influence of contact first with Gothic and then with Longobard can only be observed at the lexical level, or in the numerous onomastic relics (both toponyms and personal names) of the Germanic penetration into Italy during the early Middle Ages.

Latin had already absorbed Germanic lexemes in antiquity (the so-called 'palaeogermanisms'): for example various words related to war, clothing, politics, and agriculture (Varvaro 1995:143 notes that, for example, *alce* 'elk' is already documented in Caesar, *ganta* 'goose' and *sapo* 'soap' in Pliny, etc.). The flow of Germanic lexemes is uninterrupted from classical to late antiquity, and from antiquity to the Middle Ages, due to the continuous relations between the Germans and the Latinized (then Romance) populations of Italy and Gaul. What changed significantly over time were the ethnic and linguistic characters of the Germanic populations that came into contact with Latin and Romance. With regard to the decisive period of the early Middle Ages, three phases are usually distinguished (although not always correctly, see Mastrelli 1993): the Gothic period (the Ostrogothic kingdom began with Odoacer in 476 and immediately became the successor of the Empire, partly also in terms of legitimate continuity of the structure and organization of the state), the Longobard period (from the sixth to the eighth century, with the creation of the Longobard kingdom in northern Italy and the duchies of Spoleto and Benevento in southern Italy), and the Frankish period, corresponding to the Carolingian Empire, which began in the eighth century and is linguistically linked to the phase of Gallo-Roman influx, since the Franks in Italy were a bilingual aristocracy using both Frankish and old French.

The result of such a complex stratification is a remarkable enrichment of the lexicon, the specific origin of which can be reconstructed on different and complementary criteria, such as (according to Lubello 2010b) the chronology of attestations (for example, to distinguish Ostrogothic from Visigothic loanwords, the latter already attested in imperial Latin); areal diffusion (for example, attestation both in Gallo-Romance and in Italo-Romance usually excludes a Longobard origin); phonetic criteria (for instance, the effects of the second High German consonant shift can be observed in some Longobard loanwords, and can be used as a chronological clue, such as the doublet *panca* vs *banca* 'bench'; or the words *balco(ne)* 'balcony' and *palco* 'platform, stage', both from Longobard); and semantic criteria (the diffusion of Longobard terms, such as *sala* 'farm or country house', widely detectable in placenames).

According to Morlicchio (2011:225), 'with regard to the Germanic presence in Italy, loanwords must not be considered as occasional events, induced, for example, by commercial relations that do not necessarily imply a bilingual context, but rather as symptoms of bilingual linguistic competence, or at least of close contact between two groups of speakers'. Combining the above-mentioned parameters, old Italian lexemes of Germanic origin can be classified respectively as (Ostro-)Gothic words,[6] Longobard words, Frankish words, or as German words of uncertain origin. Here is a selection of lexemes whose origin is relatively uncontroversial:[7]

Ostrogothic: *arringo*, *arengo* 'contest, field for competitions' from *hrings (Castellani 2000:58); *aspo* 'reel' from *haspa (Castellani 2000:58; Lubello 2020:33); *banda* 'band' from *bandwo (perhaps via Byzantine Greek, with major diffusion in Italian dialects and a large set of derivatives and composed lexemes, already in old Italian: *LEI Germ.* 1.282–359); *bega* 'quarrel' from *bēga (Arcamone 1994:769; *LEI Germ.* 1.705–11); *elmo* 'helmet' from *helm (Castellani 2000:61; Lubello 2020:33); *fiasco* 'flagon' from *flasko (Castellani 2000:57); *melma* 'mud' from *milma (Arcamone 1994:769; Castellani 2000:60); *nastro* 'ribbon' from *nastilo (Arcamone 1994:769; Castellani 2000:60; Lubello 2020:33); *recare* 'to bear' from *rechan (Castellani 2000:61); *smaltire* 'to dispose, to digest' from *smaltjan (Arcamone 1994:769; Castellani 2000:61; Lubello 2020:33); *stecca* 'stick' from *stika (Arcamone 1994:769; Castellani 2000:60).

Longobard: *arraffare* 'to grab' from *hraffōn (Castellani 2000:90); *astio* 'rage' from *haifsts (Arcamone 1994:769; Castellani 2000:60f.); *balcone* 'balcony' and *palco* 'stage' from *balko / *palko (Castellani 2000:77; *LEI Germ.* 1.127–170, and see above); *panca* and *banca* 'bank' from *pank (*LEI Germ.* 1.361–516, and see above); *bara* 'coffin' from *bāra (*LEI Germ.* 1.566–585); *biacca* 'white lead' from *blaihha 'make-up' (*LEI Germ.* 1.919–928); *bica* 'mow' from *bīga/*bīka (*LEI Germ.* 1.748–754); *bisticciare* 'to bicker' from *biskīzzan (*LEI Germ.* 851–857); *schernire* 'to mock' from *skrimjan (Castellani 2000:90); *scherzare* 'to joke' from *scherzōn (Castellani 2000:90).

The Frankish component is less abundant, and almost all lexemes of such origin, viz. *guanto* 'glove' from *want (Arcamone 1994:779; Castellani 2000:93; Lubello 2020:41) or *dardo* 'arrow' from *dard (Castellani 2000:93) may be mediated by old French.

Apart from the lexical elements, the Germanic languages did not provide the Romance languages in Italy with any significant morphological features. The only case of a morpheme of Germanic origin in old Italian (inherited by modern Italian through literary use) is perhaps the suffix *-engo* or *-ingo* (the latter attested in Tuscany), which appears in words such as *camerlengo*/*camerlingo* 'chamberlain' (usually considered a direct loanword from Frankish, Larson 1995 s.v.), *spedalingo* 'manager of a hospital' (*TLIO*, s.v.), or the adjective *maggengo* 'of the month of May' (for the old Italian,

attested only in the Milanese Bonvesin de la Riva: *TLIO*, s.v., then in the modern literary Italian: *GDLI*, s.v.). We are dealing with isolated loanwords (possibly mediated by French), rather than with a productive suffix. Early medieval contact between old Italian and the Germanic languages is attested through toponyms: a large number of Italian names of towns and villages refer to the early medieval presence of Germanic populations, with a particular abundance in the Longobard period. Unlike other groups, the Longobards produced a whole series of toponyms which are characterized by recurrent morphological forms or forms which are repeatedly attested in many regions: this is the case of the typically Longobard words *sala* 'farm' (the microtoponym *La Sala* is still widely attested in Tuscany), *far(r)a* 'small immigrant village' (from *Farra di Soligo* near Treviso to *Fara in Sabina* near Rieti) and *braida* 'field' (from *Brera* in the centre of Milan to *Braia* in Lunigiana). More rare and uncertain are the Italian toponyms that could refer to the settlement activity of other Germanic populations, such as the numerous place names linked to the ethnonym *Goth* (*Goito*, *Pragoito*, *Gódega*, *Gódego*, etc.: for Germanic toponymy in general, see Pellegrini 1990 and Arcamone 2007).

From the very end of the Middle Ages, the Italian-German glossaries, written in Venice in 1424 by an otherwise unknown Master George of Nuremberg which come down to us in several manuscripts, are among the most important bilingual dictionaries of modern Europe.[8] The glossaries were accompanied by short fictional dialogues between Italian and German merchants. Here is, for example, a passage from the Tuscan version of this conversation manual (Rossebastiano 1984b:35f.):

> Buone—*Ghuote* (Good day)
>
> È buona pacie nella Magna?—*Ist guter frid in tauczen landen?* (Is there good peace in Germany?)
>
> Sì in tale luogho e in tale no—*Jo an etleicher stat und en etleicher nicht* (Yes in some places, and not in others)
>
> Adunque non si va ben sichuro—*So fiert man nicht sicher* (So, travelling is not safe)
>
> Meffé, egli è rischio—*Truen, es ist verlich* (I'faith, it's risky)
>
> È moria nella Mangna?—*Stirbt es in tauz landen?* (Is there the plague in Germany?)
>
> E· v'è stata gran moria—*Ess hat wol fast gestorben* (There was a great dying)

On the basis of the production of such texts, a flourishing tradition of bilingual or multilingual conversation manuals developed from the early period of the printing press to the end of the Middle Ages. The German glossaries, which were originally intended to support the commercial activities of Germans and Italians in late medieval Italy (German was generally considered to be one of the most difficult languages for Tuscan merchants to learn, cf. Tomasin 2021:181), and which were usually accompanied by fictional dialogues translated into many languages, provided a model for a multilingual *vademecum* that was extended to almost all

European languages. This model was largely independent from the cultivated tradition of the great academic lexicography, based on the literary tradition and on linguistic purism. This is why the works in this tradition devote significant space to the non-literary lexicon and to the regional varieties of Italian. Thereby, linguistic contact offers especial insights into the real situation of spoken Italian in less cultivated social contexts in Italy and generally in Europe.

34.7 Greek

The contact of old Italian with Byzantine Greek is the continuation of what Latin had experienced for many centuries with Greek. In fact, during antiquity, Greek had been the most important language of contact for Latin, so much so that not only the basic lexicon (including some invariables such as κατά, which has various Romance continuations, viz. It. *cada-uno* 'each-one') but also the morphological and syntactic structures were profoundly influenced.

The relations and exchanges between Romance and Greek are therefore uninterrupted and represent the same continuity of the passage between Latin and Romance.

Byzantine Greek loanwords in Italo-Romance cover a wide range of semantic areas, from maritime activities (*galea* 'galley', Gr. γαλία, and *sartia* 'shroud', Gr. ἐξάρτια, or the zoonyms *balena* 'whale', Gr. φαλαίνα and *delfino* 'dolphin', Gr. δελφίνος) to the administration (*anagrafe* 'registry office', Gr. ἀναγραφή; *catasto* 'cadastre', Gr. κατάστιχον); from trades (*bottega* 'store', Gr. ἀποθήκη; *polizza* 'policy, bill', Gr. ἀπόδειξις) to everyday life (*grotta* 'cave', Gr. κρύπτη; *indivia* 'endive', Gr. ἐντύβια; *prezzemolo* 'parsley', Gr. πετροσέλινον; *smeriglio* 'emery', Byz. Gr. *σμερίδιον etc.: examples from Castellani 2000:149–215).

In some cases, the bridge between Greek and Italian is the dialects of territories of the Byzantine Empire in Italy, or the centres in a stronger relationship with it. For example, the word *anguria* 'watermelon' comes from Greek (ἀγγούριον) to Italian via Venetian; and a similar process occurs with words like *pistacchio* 'pistachio' and *scampo* 'shrimp' (cf. Tomasin and D'Onghia 2020, and, on Greek words in Venetian, Cortelazzo 1970). In other cases, a dual penetration (from southern Italy and from the Exarchate of Ravenna) has been assumed, as for It. *magari* 'maybe, perhaps' (cf. Cortelazzo and Zolli 1999, s.v.).

One of the oldest Italian glossaries from the early Middle Ages comes from northern Italy and is also a suggestive (and partly mysterious) document of

linguistic contact between Italian and Greek. The tenth-century Glossary of Monza contains a list of sixty-five Greek words (written in the Latin alphabet), together with their translation into a Latin which is very close to Romance. The names of the days of the week, for example, are particularly characteristic, so that they have been used in various attempts to localize the text: however, it is not possible to assign it to a specific area. From the edition of Castellani (1976:44):

dominica	curiaci	'Sunday'
lonis [lu-?]	deftera	'Monday'
marti	triti	'Tuesday'
mercor	tetras	'Wednesday'
zobia	pefti	'Thursday'
vener	parascui	'Friday'

The glossary was probably produced in the context of relations between a monastery in northern Italy and the ecclesiastical circles of Byzantine Italy: environments in which it was necessary, or at least useful, for Italian travellers or officials to acquire a rudimentary knowledge of Greek.

Widespread and long-lasting situations of bilingualism characterized the territories that remained in contact with the political, military, and commercial structures of the Byzantine Empire until the end of the Middle Ages. The production of texts in Greek characters is even more extensive and long-lasting in southern Italy, where Greek was spoken even after the end of direct Byzantine rule (Greek-speaking areas remain today in southern Calabria and Salento). In Apulia, Lucania, Calabria, and Sicily, Romance texts in the Greek alphabet were produced at least from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. A particularly widespread genre is that of interlinear or marginal glosses (generally found in manuscripts written in Greek and produced mainly in the monastic environment), but autonomous religious texts are also attested. Even more interesting, though rare, are the poetic texts (recently edited by Maggiore 2021), which document a cultural environment linked on the one hand to the Sicilian school of the court of Frederick II, and on the other directly to Gallo-Roman poetic models.

Another domain of Italo-Greek linguistic contact in the Middle Ages is the learnèd lexicon: Greek is notoriously unknown to Romance culture overall in the late Middle Ages, but this does not prevent many terms of Greek origin

from being absorbed into old Italian through the mediation of medieval Latin. Dante—whose words of Greek origin have been studied by Migliorini (1970)—knew various Greek terms of the intellectual lexicon (e.g., *filosofo*, *peripatetico*, *prosopopeia*) thanks to the encyclopaedic works of the Latin Middle Ages, which sometimes explained (more or less accurately) the structure and origin of Greek words, which of course could not be verified by Western readers. The phonetic structure of Greek words remained largely unknown to the scholars of the medieval Romance domain so that in Dante's *Comedy* many nouns and proper names of Greek origin are traditionally accented on the last syllable, unlike their real phonetic structure in Greek (*poesì* 'poetry', *Purgatorio* 1.7, and as for anthroponyms, *Carón*, *Inferno* 3.109, *Fetòn*, *Inferno* 17.107). Greek was rediscovered in the context of Florentine pre-humanism of the fourteenth century. In the work of authors such as Giovanni Boccaccio, the conditions for the recovery of Greek as a language of culture, studied and learned by scholars in the following century, were to produce the great revival of Hellenic culture in early modern Italy. The fall of Constantinople (1453) ends the Byzantine period and, thanks to the exile of many Greek scholars to the West, marks the beginning of a new period of Italo-Greek linguistic contact.

34.8 Hebrew

Old Italian was in contact with Hebrew from the period of the early textualization of Italian. Nevertheless, the status of Hebrew in the Jewish communities of the European Middle Ages is, in a sense, similar to that of Latin: its written form is widely used and quite widespread in the rituals of these communities, but Hebrew is usually not spoken in social life and in the contexts of interaction with non-Jewish people. Against this historical background, the term Judaeo-Italian (*giudeo-italiano*) is used on the one hand to refer to texts written in old Italian between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries using the Hebrew alphabet and, on the other hand, the notion of Judaeo-Italian vernaculars (*parlate giudeo-italiane*), refers to the Italo-romance varieties, with lexical borrowings from Hebrew, used by Jews in modern times (see Aprile 2012).

For Italian Jews of the Middle Ages, Hebrew was a language of culture, used in religious and literary circles. The forms of linguistic contact between Hebrew and Romance are thus remarkably peculiar, and almost none of the parameters which are normally considered—structural borrowing, loanwords, hybridity, code-mixing, and code-switching—are easily applicable to the case of Hebrew in the Italian Middle Ages. Some interesting cases of allography should be mentioned here, as well as some cases of translation from Hebrew

into Old Italian. Among the most important documents are the Romance glosses to Hebrew texts, attested already in the tenth century, or the thirteenth-century *Judaeo-Italian elegy* (or *Elegy of the 9th of ʿāv*, the name of the religious celebration to which it is linked), the *Alfabetin* (religious texts of the fourteenth century), and the work of Rabbi Moses da Rieti (born in 1388).

The glosses in Judaeo-Italian on Jewish religious, philosophical, or grammatical texts are attested especially in the southern Italian peninsula from the early Middle Ages: the oldest ones are from southern Puglia, date back to the tenth–eleventh centuries and testify to the traditional co-existence of Romance and Hebrew in the religious life of the Italian Jewish communities. As Minervini (2014:1143) argues, with reference to late medieval central Italy, 'rituals were also translated, especially for the use of women'. The *Judaeo-Italian elegy*—which Gianfranco Contini included in the collection of the *Poeti del Duecento*, i.e., in the canon of thirteenth-century Italian poetry—is a poem in which an anonymous author recalls and laments some of the dramatic episodes of the dispersion and persecution of the *iente de Zion*, the 'people of Zion'. It was probably composed in the linguistic area between Marche and Abruzzo, and is tinged with some southern linguistic elements. The composition of the elegy is linked to religious rites: the text opens and closes with prayers. According to Natale (2018b:23) 'the lexicon of the *Elegy* is almost devoid of the Hebrew element': as in the case of some allographs in the Greek alphabet, almost no linguistic element lays bare the Italo-Hebrew contact which is, however, spectacularly revealed by the graphic layout and, in this case, also by the content of the text.

More recent than the *Elegy*, the *Alfabetin* are a translation from Aramaic into Romance, drafted in the Hebrew alphabet in Sicily, or perhaps in Calabria, of the religious service of Shavuot (corresponding to Pentecost), written at the end of the fourteenth or at the beginning of the fifteenth century, edited by Sermoneta (1994) and recently studied by Minervini (2014). The linguistic elements related to interference between Romance and Hebrew are those typical of translation: some syntactic elements (such as the use of the present participle for the present or future indicative, or the absence of the copula); some traditional Judaeo-Italian terms (such as *olocastu* 'sacrifice', or *ricattari* 'redeem'); and some Hebrew lexemes inserted into the Italian text (*qorban* 'sacrifice'; cf. Minervini 2014:1142f.).

The name of Mosè da Rieti is one of the few that can be linked to medieval text-production in Judaeo-Italian (the others are usually anonymous). Mosè wrote a series of philosophical, religious, and moral works both in Hebrew and in Judaeo-Italian (based on literary Italian rather than on local vernacular): this is the case of a treatise on natural philosophy and on the deeds of God (published by Hijmans Tromp 1989), written in the first decades of the fifteenth century. It is precisely from central Italy that the oldest Judaeo-Italian translations of biblical books come (cf. Cassuto 1934; Cuomo

1988; 2000): the area between Lazio, Umbria, and Abruzzo, together with Puglia, is the medieval epicentre of Judaeo-Italian; conversely, in later times, Judaeo-Italian varieties developed particularly in the north of the peninsula, in Tuscany, and in Rome, whose Judaeo-Italian production flourished in the early modern period.

The medieval Judaeo-Italian texts have in common with the Greek-Italian allographs the fact that they are normally written in Italo-Romance with scarce Jewish influences: when they are translations from Hebrew, the authors often tend to follow very faithfully the syntax of the originals, but this does not affect the substantial Romance structure and appearance of the texts, despite the intimate link with the Jewish culture. As for onomastic traces of Hebrew in old Italian, the success of biblical names in Jewish communities can be observed already in the Middle Ages; conversely, Hebrew names absorbed by the Christian tradition are, of course, all filtered through the Latin of biblical translations and devotional literature.

34.9 Arabic

The contact between old Italian and Arabic is naturally intense in the Mediterranean context of the Crusades, overseas trades, and political relations with the Islamic states of the Asian and African coasts (see also Chapter 32). In Italy, this contact took place mainly in two situations: the Arab domination of Sicily and the penetration of Arab culture through translations and adaptations, as well as the transmission of ideas and skills, especially in the fields of medicine, astronomy, and philosophy.

The period of spoken and written vitality of Arabic in Sicily extends from the ninth to the thirteenth century, although the end of Arab rule was already marked by the arrival of the Normans in the eleventh century (Barbato 2005). Moreover, the use of this language continued for several centuries among the Sicilian Jewish communities (see §34.8). It is therefore a shorter period than for the Iberian peninsula: perhaps this is why we do not find in Italy (at least for the moment: discoveries are always possible) any phenomena of linguistic contact and hybridism typical of Arab Spain, such as the use of Romance in poetic compositions written in Arabic, or the systematic use of the Arabic alphabet for Romance varieties (which happens in Italy only sporadically: cf. the thirteenth-century Pisan document published by Baglioni 2015).

Borrowings from Arabic into old Italian are essentially lexical and concern areas such as agriculture, architecture, technology, and material culture. There are numerous Sicilian place names of Arabic origin, such as toponyms related to Ar. *qual'a* 'castle' (*Calatafimi*, *Calatrasi*, *Caltabellotta*, etc.), as well as pre-Arabic toponyms transmitted through Arabic, such as Girgenti (Latin

form of the Greek toponym Ἀκράγαντα, now *Agrigento*, Pellegrini 1990:287f.).

Some Arabic terms that entered Sicilian during the Middle Ages are inherited by modern Italian: they are Arabic words of Italian mediated by Sicilian. This is the case of terms such as *sciarra* 'brawl', Ar. *šarra* 'brawl'; *zàgara* 'orange blossom', Ar. *zahr* 'flower', and *zibibbo*, a grape variety, Ar. *zibīb* 'raisins'.

A detailed overview of linguistic contact with Arabic has been provided by Caracausi (1983); important complements are offered by the collection of studies by Pellegrini (1972) and an in-depth analysis of various lexemes of Arabic origin is included in Varvaro (2014). Even more important, and the starting point for any further study of the Italian-Arabic (as well as Turkish and Persian) contact, is Schweickard (2023–2024). An important channel of contact with Arabic is that of scientific and philosophical knowledge. Various Arabic treatises (especially on medicine) were translated in Italy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and a considerable part of the anatomical, pharmaceutical, mathematical, and medical terminology that emerged in the Italian Middle Ages was directly influenced by Arabic.

Among the works considered by Schweickard (2017), there are also texts written in Latin (or translated from Latin), but using Arabic terminology for the scientific subjects: it is the case, for example, of the *regimina sanitatis* (health and hygiene manuals) in which one may find terms such as *carambia* 'carob, locust' (Ar. *ḫarrūb/ḫarnūb*) and *turbit* 'polypodium' 'cathartic drug made from the root of jalap plant (Ipomea turpetum)' (Schweickard 2017:137) < Ar. *turbid* (viz. in Gregorio's *Libro de conservar sanitate*, Tomasin 2010b).

Many of the Arabic terms of medieval medicine have not survived into modern scientific language, but some—also conveyed by very successful literary works—have also entered the common language and have been taken up in modern Italian. This is the case of various Arabisms used by Dante, such as *zenit* 'zenith', Ar. *samt* 'way, direction'; *nuca* 'nape', Ar. *nuḫāʿ* (a term introduced by the Salerno School of Medicine in the eleventh century); or *assassino* 'assassin', Ar. *ḥaššāšīn*, pl. of *ḥaššāš* 'hashish user' (Pellegrini 1970a).

Some terms introduced into the field of commerce and techniques by Italian navigators had a long survival in the Italian of the following centuries. A particularly significant case is that of a doublet imported through a parallel process: the Italian words *dàrsena* 'dock' and *arsenale* 'shipyard, arsenal' derive from Ar. *dār-aṣ-ṣinā* 'shipyard', but they entered one probably through Tuscany (perhaps thanks to the Pisan merchants), the other through Venice, where the term *ar(s)sanà* is used already in the thirteenth century to indicate the great shipyards of the city, and is subsequently adapted as *arsenal*, a form attested from the beginning of the fifteenth century and probably influenced by adaptations of the same word in overseas French (Tomasin 2022).

As mentioned above, Arabic in many cases serves as a bridge language for other languages, such as Persian ('prior to early modern times, Persian elements entered Italian almost exclusively via Arabic', Schweickard 2017:142); and in some cases, Arabic words penetrate Italian through Turkish during the Ottoman period. Again, the fall of Byzantium in 1453 and the beginning of the Turkish domination of the eastern Mediterranean can be seen as the boundary between the medieval and the modern phases of contact between Italian and the Oriental languages of the eastern Mediterranean.

34.10 In lieu of a conclusion

If we combine the criteria established in the first paragraph with what we have noted and commented on in the following paragraphs, language by language (or group of languages), we can summarize the presence or absence of traces of linguistic contact as in Table 34.1 (excluding Latin for the reasons we have explained).

Table 34.1 Presence or absence of traces of linguistic contact

	French	Provençal	Catalan	Germanic languages	Greek	Hebrew	Arabic
morphosyntactic borrowings	+	–	–	–	–	+	–
morpho-lexical borrowings	+	+	–	–	–	–	–
lexical borrowings	+	+	+	+	+	–	+
onomastic traces	+	–	-	+	+	+	+

With regard to the sources that we have found to be the most typical of the late medieval period, see Table 34.2. Again, French (apart from Latin) seems to be the language most involved in the contact dynamic, which naturally favours the Romance languages—but not necessarily the closest in structural terms. The brackets allude to the fact that in medieval Italy, as we have said, Hebrew is not a living language but a learnèd language of culture, like Latin.

Table 34.2 Sources of linguistic contact

	French	Provençal	Catalan	Germanic languages	Greek	Hebrew	Arabic
multilingual or mixed literary texts	+	+	–	–	–	–	–
literary texts written by Italian speakers	+	+	–	–	–	+	–
literary texts written in old Italian by speakers of other languages	–	+	–	–	–	(+)	–
non-literary texts written by Italian speakers	+	–	–	–	–	–	–
non-literary texts written in old Italian	–	+	+	+	+	(+)	+

Of course, new discoveries are always possible, and some situations might be assessed differently by applying different criteria to the study of linguistic contact: these schemas describe the state of our current knowledge.

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[1] On the notion of 'old Italian' (*italiano antico*), see Tomasin (2019:149–176; 2026).

[2] That is true also for merchants, traditionally considered as the typical non-Latinized (or better, less-Latinized) writers of the Middle Ages.

[3] On the notion of Latinisms and learnèd terms in the old Italian situation, see Guadagnini and Burgassi (2018).

[4] The most recent edition and commentary of the riddle has been provided by Patota (2020), who postulates an emendation of the *incipit* ('Separes se pareba boves . . .': 'he pulled two separate oxen').

[5] On Raimbaut de Vaqueiras's poems and in general on the poetic use of Italian by non-Italian poets, see Brugnolo (2009).

[6] Visigothic loanwords were already imported from Latin in classical and late antiquity, through the contact with the West Germanic populations of the imperial borders mentioned earlier: but it is not always easy to distinguish Visigothic from Ostrogothic lexemes (Arcamone 1994:767f.).

[7] See Morlicchio (2011:227): 'the alternation of forms with and without the results of the second consonant mutation cannot be considered a definite indication of alternation between Gothic (or Franconian) forms that maintain the Germanic consonantism, and Longobard forms, which instead show a change in consonantism'.

[8] Adolfo Mussafia pioneered in the nineteenth century the study of bilingual glossaries; this tradition has been intensively studied by Alda Rossebastiano (1984a).

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Chapter 35

Italian in contact

The modern period

Alessandro Carlucci

35.1 Introduction

This chapter is aimed not only at describing the effects of language contact on the Italian language in the modern period, but also at fostering a more effective dialogue between two linguistic sub-disciplines, namely the history of the Italian language and contact linguistics. Nowadays, as we shall see, scholars in contact linguistics pay relatively little attention to major languages, such as Italian, which have a history of codification, institutional support, and written use in a wide range of formal contexts. By contrast, linguists working on the history of Italian refer to language contact to explain a vast number of disparate changes (see also Chapter 34), but their discussions are usually organized according to the influence of different languages and tend to focus predominantly on individual words or expressions. However rich, their material is rarely selected on the basis of the relevance that changes in Italian may have for the theory of language contact and change, and it is not usually arranged according to the overall impact of contact on the various structural levels of the Italian language. After a preliminary discussion of relevant concepts from the study of language contact and change (§35.2), I will start my survey of the Italian case with an historical overview of the main contact situations which have affected the

development of Italian (§35.3). I will then organize my material into two further sections: one devoted to cases where contact with other languages has affected individual lexical items and affixes (§35.4), and the other to cases where contact has affected structural patterns which can be (more or less productively) applied to different units of speech (sounds, morphemes, words, and phrases) in Italian (§35.5).

The evidence used in the following sections belongs to the 'modern' period in the history of Italian. For the purposes of the present chapter, it is helpful to consider this period as starting during the first half of the sixteenth century.[1] If a date had to be chosen, it should probably be 1525, the year of publication of Pietro Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua*. Bembo selected and codified the Tuscan variety of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and, to a lesser extent, Dante as a clear model for literary use (the *Prose* also offered a grammatical sketch of this variety). The prevailing of Bembo's views over those of the other authors involved in the contemporary debates on language (cf. §§4.3.2–3) represents a symbolic turning point, in that it fully marked the separation between Italian—by now a language with a superior status similar to that of Latin—and the other Romance varieties of Italy, including the group of Italo-Romance varieties spoken in Tuscany (most notably Florentine) from which Italian had originally emerged. Bembo's proposals changed the course of the process of *pre-standardizzazione* 'pre-standardization' (Maraschio and Manni 2006) which had arisen during the fifteenth century, and in accordance with his proposals, during the sixteenth century 'a barely supra-regional variety of Tuscan used by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century writers became set down as a norm and swiftly acquired the function of a literary standard' (Varvaro 2013a:343). While the literary standard was accepted for written production across increasingly large parts of Italy and beyond,[2] we only have limited evidence suggesting that 'the standard' was widespread 'not just in the written form but [. . .] in the spoken form as well' (Varvaro 2013a:343). Literacy rates were low, and, in most oral communication settings, even the literate continued to speak their local varieties, which came to be identified as the *dialetti* 'dialects' of Italy because of their lower sociolinguistic status. During the nineteenth century, this situation began to change thanks to historical phenomena such as mass migration, the introduction of compulsory military service and free education, as well as the

emergence of a national network of increasingly tighter connections in areas such as transport, trade, and administration, following Italy's political unification in 1861. In the twentieth century, the shift to Italian was accelerated by industrialization, urbanization, and the spread of the media, especially television. During the second half of the century, Italian finally began to be regularly spoken by large masses of the population and largely replaced the dialects in all domains of use. As we shall see, this historical and sociolinguistic background has various implications for our understanding of the role of language contact in the development of modern Italian.

35.2 Language contact and change: theoretical and methodological issues

35.2.1 Different languages and different types of contact

Modern Italian (as defined above) is not the typical object of study of contemporary scholarship on the role of contact in language change. Most of this scholarship focuses on 'dialectal varieties, especially linguistic islands surrounded by other languages, which are not subject to linguistic norms' (Sala 2013:236), or on other varieties which are similarly spoken by language minorities '[in] the absence of institutionalized language norms' (Matras 2011:211). Sala refers to the situation in which these languages find themselves as one of *direct contact*, and he states that the effects of this type of contact are 'generally much more important than in indirect contact' (Sala 2013:188). As shown by this quotation, direct contact is usually opposed to *indirect contact*.[3] We can clarify what the latter is by referring to a specific example. Indirect contact is nowadays the dominant type of contact between English and what McLaughlin (2018) calls 'European standard languages' or 'European standards', in order to distinguish them from the varieties of French, Italian, and

Spanish spoken in predominantly English-speaking countries and territories as a result of migration or other historical factors. 'Rather than the widespread societal bilingualism' that defines situations of direct contact, in the case of standard languages 'most of the contact with English takes place indirectly' (McLaughlin 2018:655) through elite bilingualism (restricted to certain socio-cultural or professional groups), passive competence, language teaching and learning, and various forms of translation (including interpreting and dubbing) in old and new media.

Departing from the dominant research trends, McLaughlin (2011; 2018) and Pountain (2011) have called for the application of up-to-date concepts from contact linguistics to the study of languages such as modern Italian as well. Both authors stress the significant role that indirect contact is capable of playing in the diachronic development of languages which have a rich history of written production and normative codification, and which are the dominant, and (*de facto* or *de jure*) official, languages in one or more countries. As we have seen, McLaughlin uses the notion of *standard* to refer to these languages. Pountain (2011:607) turns to Kloss's notion of '*Ausbau* language' to identify 'standardized' languages which have undergone 'reshaping and elaboration'. Pountain criticizes the insufficient attention paid by Romance linguists to 'the forces acting on an *Ausbau* language', which are 'quite different in many respects from those acting on a language which does not have *Ausbau* status' (Pountain 2011:607). He focuses on the historical role of Latin as an international language of intellectual and religious life, whose impact on Italian and other Romance languages has been far from negligible (see also Cornillie and Drinka 2019; Pountain and Wislocka Breit 2021). McLaughlin points instead towards the potential effects of today's contact with English. She builds on the views of Crystal (2012) and others to claim that the importance of indirect contact has increased thanks to globalization, which favours passive familiarity with English, and to the emergence of the Internet, including its automatic or semiautomatic forms of translation.

35.2.2 Different outcomes

Cross-linguistic transfers from a source language to a recipient language raise several questions which have long occupied the minds of historical and contact linguists. Which modules, within the recipient language, are more receptive (and which more resistant) to contact-induced variation and change? And why? Broadly speaking, the permanent outcomes of language contact can be placed on a scale which includes various levels of lexical and grammatical change. On the lowest level of the scale, contact only leads to peripheral lexical change, which normally affects nouns but can also affect 'verbs, adjectives, and adverbs' (Thomason 2001:70), whereas at the highest level we find radical change in core lexical and grammatical structures of the recipient language, 'including structural borrowing that results in major typological changes' (Thomason 2001:71). According to some linguists, the place on the scale depends primarily on the structural similarity and genealogical proximity between the source and recipient languages, while others give priority to sociolinguistic and historical factors such as the type and duration of contact, and the relative prestige of the two languages. All this is linked to another fundamental question: why does borrowing take place at all? Prestige is a frequently mentioned motivation for borrowing, not only the prestige of the source language, but also the prestige of the varieties of the recipient language which are at the forefront in propagating cross-linguistic transfers. Also frequently mentioned is the 'gap hypothesis' (Matras 2020:161). According to this hypothesis (which is not unproblematic from the point of view of general linguistic theory, see Matras 2020:242), borrowing helps to fill a gap in the recipient language. While the role of 'grammatical gaps' (Kuteva 2017:167) is often difficult to pin down, the gap hypothesis is easier to verify in the case of lexical borrowing: when new referents (new objects, new ideas) need to be designated, speakers may well borrow words which are already used by another language community, especially when the referents themselves come from this other language community. Even in this case, however, the gap hypothesis has limited predictive value: some communities prefer to avoid words which have a foreign phonological form and use their own linguistic resources to designate new referents (this is how French and Spanish have populated the new semantic field of information technology, whereas Italian, as we shall see, has extensively borrowed from English).

In recent years, the traditional contrast between grammar and lexicon has been terminologically and conceptually refined by Kuteva (2017), who speaks of *replication* vs *borrowing*, Renner (2018), who speaks of *structural borrowing* vs *material borrowing*, and Matras (2020), whose distinction between *pattern replication* and *matter replication* has been widely accepted.[4] In my presentation of Italian data I will largely follow these distinctions, albeit with one deviation. Recent frameworks assign to pattern replication all those cases where the speakers of the recipient language have not replicated the 'phonological material/phonetic substance' (Kuteva 2017:166) of source-language models. Such cases include, most notably, calques (e.g., It. *superuomo* 'superman' from Ger. *Übermensch*, It. *sangue blu* 'blue blood' from Sp. *sangre azul*) and semantic borrowings (e.g., It. *cancellare* 'to erase, to delete', which has acquired the additional meaning of 'cancelling' an event, a flight, etc., through the imitation of English). I consider this type of influence in the section on *items* (§35.4), together with cases of matter replication. I restrict the section on *patterns* (§35.5) to distributional and syntactic developments which go beyond individual words or expressions.

When the long-term outcomes of language contact go beyond individual items, we also need to distinguish between: (1) cases where contact results in the addition of new structural patterns to the recipient language; and (2) cases where contact triggers the expansion of patterns which already existed in the recipient language (including an increase in their frequency and productivity), or it simply supports ongoing change, if the patterns in question were already expanding (see Thomason 2001:70, 88–90, 148; Matras 2020:258f., 270f.). Most scholars use the general term *structural borrowing* for both types of outcome. For the second type, however, it seems preferable to speak of *structural influence* (with reference to the role of the source language) or *rearrangement* (with reference to the recipient language), because 'borrowing' may suggest the adoption of an entirely new pattern from the source language by the speakers of the recipient language. A third theoretical possibility, that of structural loss, is less relevant to our discussion: as far as standard Italian is concerned, no detailed studies exist on contact as a factor leading to the contraction, and potential loss, of structural patterns, except for McLaughlin's work on the 'reduction in the use

of [. . .] the pronominal passive' (2013:449) in texts produced under the influence of English.

Cross-linguistic evidence suggests that *structural borrowing* in the narrow sense, i.e., as 'the introduction of really new structure', is 'exceedingly rare' (Backus 2014:96). Even in situations of intense and prolonged direct contact, 'where arguably an entirely new construction *could* be added', it is in fact 'much more common to extend the use of an existing structure because of influence from a similar structure in the other language, than to introduce a completely new grammatical pattern' (Backus 2014:96, emphasis in the original; see also Pountain 2011:644 and Renner 2023. Guardiano et al. 2016:148 formulate a *Resistance Principle* in order to formalize the idea that contact can lead to structural change by capitalizing on existing tendencies in the recipient language, but it cannot introduce completely unfamiliar structure).

The three types of structural outcome introduced thus far intersect another distinction concerning the way in which contact contributes to change. This other distinction is somewhat blurred by the general use of a common label, *contact-induced change*, which may suggest that contact is the sole cause of a particular change. For the subtype where contact supports ongoing change, it seems preferable to follow McLaughlin's (2011:109) terminological proposal and speak of *contact-influenced change*. Indeed, 'a growing body of evidence suggests that multiple causation—often a combination of an external and one or more internal causes—is responsible for a sizable number of changes' (Thomason 2020:34). On the basis of this kind of cross-linguistic evidence, Heine and Kuteva (2005:265f.) conclude that traditional methodologies, which treated internal development and contact with other languages as alternative causes of change, should be abandoned, to be replaced by approaches which pay more attention to the interaction between internal (or, more precisely, *endogenous*) and external (or *exogenous*) factors.[5]

35.3 Historical context and contact situations

During the modern period, various languages have left traces in the Italian lexicon: from Turkish (cf., for example, It. *caffè* 'coffee') to Japanese (e.g., It. *cachi* 'persimmon', probably through French), Russian (e.g., It. *pogrom*, possibly via English), and Portuguese (e.g., It. *samba*). Although many other languages could be added to this list, it is evident that the cultural and linguistic significance of language contact has been greater in the case of a relatively small number of source languages. Within the Romance languages, Spanish and French clearly stand out. The history of contact between Italo-Romance and Ibero-Romance varieties spans across the centuries and encompasses very different sociolinguistic situations. Catalan and Castilian influences were already strong in Sardinia, Sicily, and the Kingdom of Naples at the end of the Middle Ages (see Chapter 34). During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Italian migrations to Argentina and other Latin American countries created situations of direct contact, which led to the emergence of hybrid speech forms—too variable and unstable, according to most scholars, to be considered fully fledged contact languages—mixing elements from Spanish, Italian, and some of Italy's dialects (the most famous case is that of Cocoliche: see Maiden 1995a:269–271; Jones and Pountain 2013:386f.; Ennis 2015; Smith 2020:443; and §33.5.4). However, the most significant influence exerted by Spanish on modern Italian came from Spain's political control of Italy. A global imperial power for most of the early modern period, Spain consolidated its dominant position in Italy with the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559). Not only Sicily, Sardinia, and the south of Italy, but also the Duchy of Milan, remained under Spanish rule until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the Peace of Utrecht (1713) sanctioned the role of the Austrian Empire as the new dominant power in Italy.

At least before the advent of English as a global language, French was the modern language which played the most significant role in the history of Italian. In part, this is due to cultural factors such as the international influence of France during certain periods (the Grand Siècle of Louis XIV, the Enlightenment, the Belle Époque) and the role of French as the universal language of diplomacy. This role remained unchallenged until the end of the First World War, when the United Kingdom, and especially the United States, called it into question at the 1919 peace conference in Paris (Tillman 1961:82f.;

Crystal 2012:86f.; Northrup 2013:110–113). In studies of Italy's cultural and linguistic history, the term *gallomania* is often employed, with reference especially to the eighteenth century (see Matarrese 1993:53–60; Morgana 1993:693f.; Cella 2015:106–110). During this century, French was normally used by the Grand Tour travellers who reached Italy (see also Tosi 2020), and it was *à la mode* in various sectors of Italian society (It. *moda* 'fashion' is itself a late seventeenth-century borrowing from French). Translation from French began to prosper, and as late as the twentieth century it was still common to use French translations as sources for translating popular works into Italian, i.e., to use French as the source language, even if the originals were not in French. Some members of the sociocultural elites overcame the need for translations by studying and using French, as is confirmed by the expansion of French language teaching, the proliferation of grammars and bilingual dictionaries, the circulation of publications in the original language, and the use of French in letters and diaries (Dardi 1992:18–35; Vitale 2001; Morgana 1993). In a sense, the *intellettuali* 'intellectuals' and the wealthy *dame* 'ladies' of the time (to use two other words whose development was strongly influenced by French) led the way into what would later become a less elitist phenomenon in post-Unification Italy, when French acquired a dominant position within Italy's educational system. This dominant position remained unrivalled until the second half of the twentieth century, when English surpassed French as the most studied foreign language (Dardano 2020d:118; Schirru 2019).

In addition to these factors, which are not exclusive to Italy, specific geographic and political reasons have long meant that Italy has particularly close links to France. Human mobility from Italy to France was never a mass phenomenon comparable, for instance, to Italian migrations to North America; nonetheless, more or less regular flows have existed since the Middle Ages for purposes such as commercial activity, temporary work, artistic and intellectual exchange, and political exile, including permanent forms of migration (on Italian migration to France and Belgium, see Barni 2011:205–244). On several occasions during the modern period, French governments tried to bring Italy into their sphere of influence. This strategy reached its peak during the revolutionary and Napoleonic period (1796–1814), when the French gained control

of most of Italy and placed some of its territory under direct French rule, and again during the so-called 'Second War of Italian Independence' (1859). The name of the Rue de Solférino, in the centre of Paris, refers to one of the battles of this war and bears testimony to the thousands of French soldiers who died to liberate Italy from Austrian rule. One of the key driving forces behind Italy's independence and unification was the Kingdom of Sardinia, which had Turin, in the northeastern region of Piedmont, as its capital and included Nice and Savoy (which were handed over to France in 1860, as a reward for its military support). When the leaders of this pre-Unification state became leaders of the new Kingdom of Italy, they were still much more comfortable using French than Italian (see, for example, Serianni 2017:371–381 for the case of Italy's first prime minister, Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour). Today, the small region of Valle d'Aosta, in the north-easternmost corner of Italy where local Gallo-Romance (Francoprovençal) varieties are spoken, has official French-Italian bilingualism. In the rest of Italy, although French has certainly given way to English, it remains a significant presence in education and society.

As far as Germanic languages are concerned, German should be mentioned for the role it has played since the nineteenth century in fields such as science and technology, and as the language of authors (especially Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche) who had a significant influence on Italy's intellectual and political life. Migration to Germany, and to German-speaking parts of Switzerland, was substantial especially during the twentieth century (see Barni 2011:263–303). In Switzerland, moreover, Italian is not only a language of migrants, but it is also the language of Ticino and (together with German and Romansh) of the Grisons/Graubünden (according to the 2020 Federal population census, Italian is spoken by 669,870 people in Switzerland, including speakers of local Italo-Romance dialects; for further discussion see Chapter 31). German was one of the languages spoken by the soldiers and officers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and later by those of Nazi Germany who occupied Italy in 1943, following the collapse of the alliance between the two countries, but were driven out by the advance of Allied troops. Some communities in northern Italy speak different German varieties; the largest of these communities lives in Trentino-Alto Adige, which borders Austria and has official German-Italian

bilingualism. All together, these communities consist of approximately 300,000 speakers (Palermo 2020a:272).

Contact between English and Italian was a relatively marginal phenomenon until the mid-nineteenth century. Since then, both direct and indirect contact have been growing exponentially: the latter as a result of the increasing interest in the language and culture of Britain and the United States, the former because of large population movements from Italy to English-speaking countries (not only the United Kingdom and the United States, but also Australia and Canada), which continued until the 1970s. Because of certain sociolinguistic aspects in the history of Italian (see §35.1), it is reasonable to assume that Italo-Romance dialects were initially the dominant languages of migrants. However, recent research (on Italian-language newspapers, theatre, and literature in English-speaking countries, as well as on radio and television programmes) has rejected the idea of migrants as exclusively dialect-speaking and has shown that at least some of them were able to use some form of Italian (e.g., in the letters they sent to their families in Italy: see Salvatore 2017). What remains true, on the other hand, is that the many lexical borrowings from English which appeared in the language of Italian communities did not enter the Italian language as a whole, possibly because of the low prestige of the varieties used by Italian communities abroad (as suggested by Tosi 2006). Even when returning migrants took their Anglicisms to Italy, these borrowings only spread to local dialects and varieties of Italian (e.g., Sic. *bbaccàusu*/*bbeccàusu* 'toilet' from American Eng. *backhouse*), with the exception, perhaps, of It. *ghenga* 'gang, group of friends' from Eng. *gang* (Birken-Silverman 1996; Prifti 2014:264–279; 2017; Carlucci 2018:98–101). Today, direct contact with English is probably having a less negligible impact on standard Italian. The number of Italian migrants to English-speaking countries is smaller, but still significant (Ruberto and Sciorra 2017; Alberio and Berti 2020). Moreover, many of these migrants belong to highly educated up-and-coming groups, whose speech varieties are therefore more prestigious, and, thanks to easier and cheaper travel and digital communication, they have much higher levels of interconnection with the speech community in Italy than earlier migrants did (Prifti 2014:123–125; Pepe 2022).[6]

From 1943 to 1945, the military occupation of Italy by US and British forces provided another situation of direct contact. But the most durable consequences of the Second World War concern indirect contact. After the war, Italian culture entered a period of intense Americanization through books, films, music, advertising, as well as economic and political ties to the United States and its allies. English has influenced Italian through its dominant role in international organizations, most notably the European Union, especially after the United Kingdom joined it in 1973, and as a source language in translations and dubbing (Alfieri, Contarino, and Motta 2003; Garzone and Cardinaletti 2004; Pavesi 2005; McLaughlin 2013; Sileo 2017; Ondelli 2020). Recent data reveal that over 90 per cent of all the films, series, and other audio-visual products distributed in Italy 'are imported [. . .] and therefore dubbed' (Viola 2022:178), and *c.*80 per cent are imported 'from English-speaking countries, predominantly from the USA' (Viola 2016:187). Previously concentrated in secondary and higher education, in 2003 the study of English was extended to all primary-school pupils in Italy, and English is currently also used as a medium of instruction (alongside Italian) in schools and universities (Schirru 2019; Pulcini 2019).[7]

Calls for the protection of Italian from the influence of modern foreign languages have recurrently emerged (see, for example, Marazzini 1999; Pulcini 2019). The Fascist regime (1922–1943) officially endorsed these puristic attitudes, but the permanent impact of its language policies on the actual development of Italian did not go much further than a few cases of successful lexical replacement such as *autista* for *chauffeur* 'driver' borrowed from French (Migliorini 1990a:237–239; Klein 1986). Other proposed substitutes such as *coda di gallo* and *arlecchino* for the Anglicism *cocktail* (Tesi 2005:204f.) were ultimately unsuccessful, as was the attempt to eradicate *Lei* as a polite address form of supposed Spanish origin (see §35.4.4 and §11.4). More precisely, some (e.g., Migliorini 1990a:39) consider this attempt largely but not entirely unsuccessful, while others (especially Maiden 1995a:179, but see also Migliorini and Baldelli 1964:335 and Renzi 1993:362) believe that the post-war reaction against Fascist impositions actually favoured the expansion of *Lei*.

Finally, a significant role has been played by Latin and Greek, not only as the classical languages of two of the most influential

civilizations in human history, but also as the languages studied and used in more recent periods by educated elites, scientists, medical professionals, and members of the clergy. Latin, in particular, plays a dual role in the history of Italian, in that it is both its ancestor language and a prestigious language with which Italian has been in contact throughout its history. With regard to the theory of language contact and change, it should be observed that contact with Latin and Greek is an important example of indirect contact. The definition of them as 'dead languages' is largely misleading, especially in the case of Latin, which long 'continued to be used fluently in certain sectors of Romance-speaking societies, and so was in many respects a living and dynamic language' (Pountain 2011:628). Nonetheless, once it had transformed into the various Romance languages, Latin was 'no one's native language', even if it continued to have some 'highly competent virtual native writers and speakers amongst its users' (Pountain 1998:160). Moreover, since the nineteenth century, Italian has spread to sectors of society where even passive competence in Latin is virtually absent. In sum, if we look at the Italian-speaking community as a whole during the modern period, it is clear that its members have not been in a situation of large-scale bilingualism and regular interaction with native speakers of Latin or Greek.

35.4 Outcomes of contact: items

35.4.1 An overview of lexical borrowing

Nouns, verbs, and adjectives are the parts of speech which have been most affected by contact. However, there are also other items which replicate the form and/or meaning of exogenous models, including adverbs (*fifty-fifty* 'in two equal parts' from English, *idem* '(in) the same way' from Latin, *pressappoco* 'approximately' on the model of Fr. *à peu près*),[8] interjections (*alt* 'stop' from Ger. *Halt*, *chapeau* 'well done, hats off' from French, *salve* 'hello' from Latin, *voilà* 'here it is, all done' from French, *wow* from English), and discourse

markers (*dopotutto* 'after all' on the model of Fr. *après tout*). The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century influence of Fr. *malgré* contributed to the grammaticalization of *malgrado* (originally a compound noun *mal* 'bad' + *grado* 'liking' (= 'dislike') which was often used in adverbials meaning 'to someone's dislike, against someone's will') as a concessive preposition which can introduce also inanimate elements, as in *malgrado i problemi* 'despite the problems' (Dardi 1992:63f.; Migliorini [1960] 2001:491).

The traditional distinction between adapted and non-adapted borrowings requires qualification. A nineteenth-century Anglicism such as *bistecca* 'beefsteak.FSG' shows clear signs of adaptation to Italian phonology and inflectional morphology (cf. plural *bistecche*). If we look at a more recent Anglicism, e.g., *trend*, we notice that this noun is normally invariable (plural *trend*) and its spelling does not show any signs of adaptation. However, nouns are still assigned masculine or feminine gender (masculine in the case of *trend*, as shown by article and adjective agreement within the phrase *i trend economici* 'the economic trends'). In the case of verbs, morphological adaptation remains obligatory even for the most recent borrowings (e.g., *taggare* 'to tag on social media'); they are assigned to the first conjugation (with infinitive in *-are*). Finally, the fact that a loanword is not orthographically adapted does not mean that it is pronounced in the same way as in the source language: for instance, the nasal vowels of standard French are not retained in common Italian pronunciations of borrowings such as *fondant* 'fondant' (Fr. [fɔ̃dɑ̃], It. [fonˈdan]).

De Mauro (2007a) provides the most comprehensive discussion of borrowing with regard to the composition of the modern Italian lexicon. His discussion is based on the dataset of the *Grande dizionario italiano dell'uso* (henceforth *GDU*). This dictionary was first published in 1999, and a revised and enlarged edition appeared in 2007. This later edition contains 260,709 lemmas, including not only content words but also function words and bound morphemes (affixes and combining forms). De Mauro shows that almost half of the lexicon consists of endogenous formations produced through derivation, compounding, and other word-formation processes. Latin accounts for the hereditary stock of the Italian lexicon (11,014 items which seem to have undergone popular, uninterrupted transmission from Latin to Italian) as well as the largest number of

loans (32,334 items). Lexical borrowing from Latin has been intense throughout the modern period. According to De Mauro's figures, 2,171, 5,846, and 1,477 Latinisms were first recorded during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, respectively; while the figures for later centuries are as follows: 2,619 (sixteenth century), 1,233 (seventeenth century), 1,200 (eighteenth century), 5,054 (nineteenth century), 12,303 (twentieth century), and 8 (twenty-first century). The other major sources of lexical borrowing are English (8,468 items, i.e., 3.2 per cent of the total number of lemmas in the *GDU*), Greek (6,116 items, 2.3 per cent), French (5,354, 2 per cent), Spanish (1,134, 0.4 per cent), and German (708, 0.3 per cent).[9]

De Mauro highlights that a large proportion of loans is typically used in technical and scientific discourse. Anglicisms, for example, are going through a phase of expansion: they were 6,292 in the 1999 edition of the *GDU*, and their number stood at 8,468 in 2007; however, 1,093 and 4,782 of them were classified as belonging predominantly to technical usage in 1999 and 2007, respectively (cf. De Mauro 1999:1170; 2014a:136f.). Lexical borrowing has certainly been stronger in sectorial varieties of Italian. A recent, striking example is that of information technology, a domain where it is not particularly unusual to produce Italian sentences in which all the content words come from English, as in *mi hanno hackerato il computer e l'account email* 'my computer and email account have been hacked', or *formatta l'hard disk cliccando con il mouse* 'format the hard disk by clicking with the mouse' (see also Beccaria and Graziosi 2015:92).

It is interesting to check the role that the same source languages have played in shaping the highest-frequency core of the Italian lexicon. In all languages, this part of the lexicon tends to be resistant to borrowing, and, especially in Italian, it has been remarkably stable over the centuries. I have used the *Nuovo vocabolario di base della lingua italiana* (De Mauro 2019), which contains 2,000 lemmas classified as core vocabulary (*vocabolario fondamentale*): these lemmas account for 86 per cent of all the tokens in the corpus of 18,843,459 words on which this dictionary is based, and reach 91 per cent in the recordings of spoken Italian included in the corpus. I have checked the etymology of each core-vocabulary item (using Cortelazzo and Zolli 1999 and Nocentini 2010, as well as the *GDU*) and have produced the following figures: 647 borrowings from Latin

(32.3 per cent of the core vocabulary),[10] 117 from French (5.8 per cent), 20 from English (1 per cent), 10 from Greek (0.5 per cent), 4 from Spanish (0.2 per cent), and 1 from German (0.05 per cent).

Borrowing from Latin has clearly had an exceptionally important role in shaping the core vocabulary of Italian. This outcome can be explained with reference to the prestige of the source language, the long duration of contact, and the structural congruence between the source and the recipient language. Also noteworthy is that borrowing from English remains a mainly peripheral phenomenon: while English is the second source of borrowings in the entire *GDU*, it is well behind French in the core vocabulary where French has provided basic terms such as *blu* 'blue' (< Fr. *bleu*) and *papà* 'dad, father' (< Fr. *papa*, though see Tomasin 2017b).

35.4.2 Combining forms

As already mentioned, the data about lexical borrowing discussed in the previous section include both independent words and bound morphemes. The latter represent an extremely small minority in comparison to independent words; however, from the point of view of the study of language contact and change, it is interesting to note that Italian has borrowed a number of bound morphemes. It should also be noted that in modern Italian (with the exception, perhaps, of scientific terminologies), foreign bound morphemes 'are not borrowed directly' (Bombi 2017:274) but are extracted from morphologically complex loanwords and subsequently attached to native lexical material (cf. Gusmani 1986:137–164 and Seifart 2015). In some cases, language contact has led to an increase in the functions and productivity of bound morphemes which already existed in Italian (cf. Malkiel's 1978 notion of *appui* 'support').

The first group to be discussed consists of combining forms and has a somewhat intermediate status between words and affixes (this intermediate status is reflected in the terminology used by Italian linguists, who speak of *affissoidi* 'affixoids' or *semiparole* 'semi-words'; De Mauro uses *confissi* to indicate combining forms). Unlike affixes, which are used to form derived words, combining forms are formative elements used in compound words. Some borrowed

combining forms are relatively common: *audio-* (from English), *chilo-* ‘thousand’ (from French), *cyber-* (from English), *-gate* ‘scandal’ (after Watergate, and therefore from American English), *mini-* (from English), *techno-* ‘techno (music)’ (from American English), and *video-* (from English). As shown by these examples, the remote etyma are often Latin or Greek. Of Greek origin is also *auto-* ‘self, one’s own, by oneself, independently’, which until the late nineteenth century was essentially an opaque morph appearing in learnèd words such as *autarchia* ‘autarchy, self-sufficiency’. Speakers who did not know Greek would not necessarily analyse it as a separate formative element. This state of affairs began to change as a result of lexical borrowing from modern languages. Calques of English words containing *self-* have strongly favoured the expansion of Italian *auto-*, as confirmed by the history of *autogoverno* (from Eng. *self-government*), *autocritica* (from *self-criticism*), *autocontrollo* (from *self-control*), and other compound nouns discussed by Iacobini (2003). The model of English words such as *autobiography* (cf. It. *autobiografia*) or *autopilot* (cf. It. *autopilota*) has probably also favoured the expansion of *auto-*. Today, *auto-* is widely used to form nouns which stand to reflexive verbs in the same way that action nouns stand to the basic transitive verb as in: *autodifesa* ‘self-defence’: *difendersi* ‘to defend oneself’ = *difesa* ‘defence’: *difendere* ‘to defend’ (see also Iacobini 2015). Italian has thus filled a gap in its structure by creating a productive morphological exponent for a relationship which already existed at the morphosyntactic and semantic levels. It is also possible to attach *auto-* to reflexive verbs, e.g., *autodifendersi* ‘to defend oneself alone, without the involvement of others’.

35.4.3 Affixes

The other group of bound morphemes, which modern Italian has borrowed from other languages, are derivational affixes. Most of them belong to scientific terminologies and their use is normally confined to specialist varieties of Italian (e.g., *-uro*, from French, in *cloruro* ‘chloride’). In common language, we have the marginally productive prefix *sur-* from French (cf. It. *surriscaldare* ‘to

overheat'), as well as a case of semantic borrowing from English whereby *-ese* has acquired a new meaning referring (sometimes disparagingly) to linguistic varieties or styles (*aziendalese* 'language of business', *giovanilese* 'language of young people', *politichese* 'language of politicians'). The productivity of some Italian suffixes has been boosted by the influence of individual source languages or the combined influences of multiple source languages. Since the eighteenth century, agentive *-ario* (a semi-learnèd continuant of -ARIU(M), as in *bibliotecario* 'librarian') has greatly expanded under the influence of its French cognate *-aire* (Lo Duca 2004a:204–206). In the case of *-ale* (as in *dirigenziale* 'managerial') and *-izzare* (as in *nazionalizzare* 'to nationalize'), the influence of French has been supplemented, since the twentieth century, by that of English.

Language contact has also been the main factor leading to the transformation of *co-* from a prevocalic allomorph of *con-* 'with, joint(ly)' (< CON-; cf. CUM) into the only productive form of this suffix (Iacobini 2003; 2015). Migliorini (1990a:56) attributed this change to contact with English, starting with the borrowing of *cobelligerante* 'co-belligerent' and *cobelligeranza* 'co-belligerency' in 1943. At least in the case of *cogestione* 'joint management', however, earlier occurrences in Italian written texts point towards contact with French (Carlucci 2017b; 2018:45f.). It should also be stressed that *co-* is invariant, whereas *con-* undergoes total or partial phonological assimilation to the following consonant (*corresponsabile* 'jointly responsible', *comproprietario* 'joint owner', etc.). Two remarks can therefore be added. First, *co-* satisfies the requirements of being less bounded and more transparent, which have been identified in cross-linguistic studies of affix borrowability and which also favour the contact-induced expansion of a pre-existing affix allomorph (see Winford 2003:91–100). Second, the expansion of *co-* goes in the direction of a more uniform match between a function and its formal expression.

35.4.4 Pronouns and particles

Castellani (1990) discusses the use of the third-person singular direct object clitic pronoun *lo* in combination with the verb *essere* 'be', in

sentences where *lo* refers anaphorically to a preceding predicative complement. Basic examples are provided by Serianni (1988:215), who also lists other copulative verbs permitting the same use of *lo*: *crederai che sia ingrato$_1$, ma non lo$_1$ sono* 'you may think I'm ungrateful, but I'm not [lit. it]', *è avaro$_1$, anche se non lo$_1$ sembra* 'he is stingy, even though he doesn't seem so [lit. it]' (coreferential predicative complements underlined). According to Castellani (1990), this particular anaphoric use of *lo* is not attested in texts written by Tuscans before the end of the sixteenth century and is due to the combined influence of French and northern Italo-Romance varieties.

Before the modern period, grammatically feminine expressions such as (*la*) *vostra signoria* 'your lordship' already occurred in Italian as exceptionally formal and deferential forms of address (see §11.4). Verbs and pronouns occasionally showed morphosyntactic agreement with them; normally, however, the second person continued to be used and gender agreement remained anchored to the sex of the addressee. During the Spanish domination of Italy, the use of such expressions was extended to a wider range of interlocutors and it became normal to address someone in the third person, hence the establishment of the third-person singular feminine pronoun *Lei* (and, to a lesser extent, the original subject form *Ella*) as a common form of address indicating social distance and formal respect. Given that Spanish had undergone a similar development, it is plausible that contact with this language influenced Italian (further developments were different in the two languages: while Sp. *vuestra merced* evolved into a new pronoun *usted* through gradual phonological reduction, It. *Lei* has largely replaced both *vostra signoria* and the reduced variant *vossignoria*). Although linguists assign nothing more than a secondary role to language contact in the genesis of this address form (see especially Migliorini 1957a:187–196 and Brunet 1978), *Lei* has been widely considered a legacy of Spanish rule and was already the target of various denunciations before the Fascist period (see also Niculescu 1974:122–127; Lepschy and Lepschy 1988:39).

The use of *sì* 'yes' (with an interrogative intonation) to answer the telephone instead of *pronto* 'hello', and sometimes together with it (*sì, pronto*), is widely attributed to dubbing of English-language

films (De Mauro [1963] 2002:122; Migliorini and Baldelli 1964:343). Viola (2022) collects corpus evidence which suggests not only that dubbing has contributed to this expansion of the pragmatic functions of *sì*, but also that this change is not restricted to the particular context of telephone calls. According to this scholar, 'contact with an analogous use of *yes?* in English is one of the causes of the change' (Viola 2022:190) which has resulted in the use of *sì* as an 'invariant follow-up', a type of discourse marker which speakers use when they want to signal to their interlocutor that they are paying attention, 'as an encouragement to go on and elaborate on a topic or as a reply when being called' (Viola 2022:183). In Viola's sources, this innovative use of *sì* is not documented before the 1960s; however, Menarini (1947:14) had already mentioned it in his notes on the Italian dubbing of US films.

35.5 Outcomes of contact: patterns

35.5.1 Phonology

In its earliest stages, the Italian phonological system placed particularly strict constraints on the acceptability of proparoxytonic words, on the combination of consonants, and on which sounds could occur in word-final position (Italian has not subsequently undergone regular sound change, so the original constraints are still visible in the hereditary lexicon; see, for example, Krämer 2009:22–43, 127–142, 234–249). Already in the late Middle Ages, however, lexical borrowing from Latin led to a partial relaxation of those constraints (Devoto [1974] 1999:257–259, 275f.). With the spread of Italian as a spoken language in post-Unification Italy, phonotactic restrictions were further relaxed as a result of multiple factors (De Mauro [1963] 2002:402–413), three of which have to do with language contact: phonological influence from non-Tuscan dialects, lexical borrowing from modern foreign languages (as in the already mentioned case of *trend*, containing the previously prohibited word-final cluster [nd]), and the increased circulation of learnèd

borrowings from classical languages (such as *capsula* ‘capsule’) containing originally unacceptable consonant clusters ([ps] in this example). The other factors were of a different nature: the tendency to base pronunciation on spelling (in the case of *tecnico* ‘technical, technician’, for instance, [ˈtɛkniko] would be preferred to [ˈtɛnːiko], the latter being increasingly perceived as uneducated) and the use of acronyms pronounced as single words (such as FIAT [ˈfiat], with [t] originally excluded from this position). Today, the new distribution of consonants which has resulted from this progressive relaxation of combinatory restrictions appears widely in loanwords and neologisms (see also Maiden 1995a:249f.).

35.5.2 Compounding

With reference to endocentric subordinative $[N+N]_N$ compounds, the expansion of the modifier-modified head-final order of modification, typical of Germanic languages, is widely attributed to language contact, especially to the recent influence of English on Italian (De Mauro [1963] 2002:224; Scalise and Bisetto 2008:128; Renzi 2012:73f.; Iacobini 2015; Dardano 2020d:125f.). Traditionally, the dominant order in Italian was the opposite head-initial order (cf. §17.2), with the modifier (henceforth MR) following the modified (MD) element as in *pescespada* ‘swordfish’ (cf. *pesce* ‘fish’ and *spada* ‘sword’). In calques, the internal order of modification was often adapted, as in the case of *fine settimana* (MD-MR), from Eng. *weekend* (MR-MD). The MR-MD order was found in lexical remnants of Latin morphology (e.g., It. *terremoto* ‘earthquake’) and in some loanwords, but its productive use was restricted to non-native strata of the lexicon, especially to combining forms of Greek and Latin origin. The combined influence of Latin and Germanic languages, and also some French types (cf. It. *capoluogo* ‘county town’, lit. ‘head/chief place’ from Fr. *chef-lieu*), has progressively changed this state of affairs. Since the Middle Ages, and with particular intensity since the late eighteenth century, the MR-MD order has appeared in an increasingly large number of compounds, such as *agopuntura* ‘acupuncture’ (cf. *ago* ‘needle’ and *puntura* ‘pricking’), *cartamodello* ‘paper pattern’ (cf. *carta* ‘paper’ and

modello ‘pattern’), *ferrovia* ‘railway’ (cf. *ferro* ‘iron’ and *via* ‘way, road’), in which both elements were probably perceived as native words at the time when these compounds were formed. Carlucci (2021) extracts eighty-nine such compounds from previous publications and observes that only twenty-five of them have likely models in other languages (such as Ger. *Eisenbahn* and Eng. *railway*, in the case of *ferrovia*), thus ruling out the possibility of seeing all Italian head-final MR-MD compounds as calques in which the order of modification has not been adapted. This development (which has by no means led to the disappearance of the head-initial MD-MR order) can be considered as a case of ‘morphological borrowing’ (as defined by Gardani 2020:103) and should be placed on a relatively high level in the scale of the possible outcomes of contact, in view of the fact that the borrowed pattern has been extended to hereditary and nativized lexemes. At least for modern Italian, however, it seems preferable to speak of morphological influence, in that the head-final MR-MD order already existed in Italian before the sixteenth century (see Micheli 2020).

According to Grossmann and Rainer (2009), $[A+A]_A$ coordinative compounds of the type *etico-politico* ‘ethical-political’ first appeared in Italian during the seventeenth century as calques ‘of corresponding Neo-Latin compounds’ (the term ‘Neo-Latin’ is employed by the authors to clarify that compound adjectives such as *ethico-politicus* did not exist in classical Latin, except for the isolated case of *sacrosanctus* ‘sacrosanct’; see also Hatcher 1951). For other effects of contact on Italian compounding and other word-formation processes, especially blending, see Iacobini (2015) and Bombi (2017).

35.5.3 Syntax

35.5.3.1 Tense and aspect

Especially in the eighteenth century, the use of *andare a* ‘to go to’ + infinitive to express immediate futurity (and of its past counterpart *venire di/da* ‘to come from’ + infinitive, which later fell out of use) was supported by French influence (Durante 1981:220; Dardi 1992:62), and it was still denounced as a Gallicism in the twentieth

century (Panzini 1950:24). Today, sentences such as *andiamo a riscaldare il sugo* 'let's now heat up the sauce' are often heard in television cookery shows, and in journalism we find *il latte andrà a costare 1 euro e 20 centesimi* 'milk is going to cost / will end up costing one euro and twenty cents' (both examples are quoted in Renzi 2012:103); they clearly show semantic weakening of the motion verb *andare*, but their temporal-aspectual value is variously defined and much debated (Lindschouw 2017:403; Strik Lievers 2017:176–183). On the whole, this verb periphrasis is rare in modern Italian and does not seem to have ever reached the levels of grammaticalization of Eng. *be going to* + infinitive, Fr. *aller* + infinitive, or Sp. *ir a* + infinitive.

A lively, ongoing debate concerns the role of contact with English in the development of progressive *stare* 'stand' + gerund (see Bertinetto 1989–1990:30; 2000:567; Ondelli 2021a; 2021b). Although the grammaticalization of this verb periphrasis started much earlier, since the nineteenth century there has been an expansion not only in terms of frequency, but also in the range of verbs to which *stare* + gerund can be applied. A wider use than in earlier periods has been observed, for example, with (telic and atelic) non-durative verbs (as in *sto partendo* 'I am leaving' and *si sta spaventando* 'he/she is getting frightened'), as well as with meteorological verbs (*sta piovendo* 'it is raining'). Durante (1981) argues that this expansion has been supported by Eng. *be* + V-*ing*. Some studies validate this view (Degano 2005; Viola 2016), while others reject or drastically reduce the validity of Durante's contact explanation (Brianti 2012; Cortelazzo 2012). At any rate, it is unlikely that internal grammaticalization processes and contact with English are the only causes of the expansion of *stare* + gerund; the influence of southern Italo-Romance dialects, which make extensive use of progressive 'stand' + gerund (cf. Ledgeway 2000:§3.3.2.2.2), should also be taken into account.

Contact with English has also been invoked to explain a change in the distribution of Italian non-finite forms. In subordinate clauses, either a present or a past perfective infinitive can generally occur (e.g., *penso di avere ragione* 'I think I am right' or *penso di aver avuto ragione* 'I think I was right'); however, in subordinate clauses introduced by *grazie di* (or *per*), it seems that the possibility of using a present infinitive has only recently been added to the pre-existing

possibility of using a perfect infinitive (as in *grazie di averci ascoltato* 'thank you for listening [lit. having listened] to us'). Vanelli and Renzi (2002) attribute the appearance of *grazie* 'thanks' *di* 'of' (or *per* 'for') + present infinitive to English influence, but they stress that, for example, *grazie di ascoltarci* is interpreted differently from its formal equivalent *thank you for listening to us*. In the English sentence, the Utterance Time coincides with the Reference Time and the Event Time includes or precedes the Reference Time, which essentially means that the listening takes place either at the same time of, or before, the thanking. In the Italian sentence, the listening takes place at the same time of, or after, the thanking (the Utterance Time coincides with the Reference Time, but the Event Time includes or follows the Reference Time). Vanelli and Renzi (2002:490) therefore conclude that the English model has been adapted to the system of temporal references of Italian non-finite forms. It must be observed that, by stating that the English gerund-participle (*-ing*) necessarily expresses anteriority or simultaneity, Vanelli and Renzi (2002:488) exaggerate its difference from the Italian present infinitive. They mention road signs saying *Thank you for driving carefully through our village*, which drivers see when leaving a village. However, given the appropriate context, similar signs can also refer to an action which has yet to take place as in the case of Border Force signs saying *Thank you for treating our officers with respect*, which are displayed in those areas of British airports where arriving passengers join the queue for passport control. The temporal interpretation of the English *-ing* form depends on the pragmatic and semantic properties of the verb in the matrix clause (Stowell 1982; Huddleston 2002:159–162). In the case of *thank*, there appears to be variation among speakers: the use of this verb (and of its nominal equivalent *thanks*) for unrealized actions or events is 'increasingly found in public notices' (Leech 2014:198), even though some speakers find it odd or even unacceptable. Nonetheless, Vanelli and Renzi's claim that the temporal properties of the Italian present infinitive have not changed remains valid. Finally, another noteworthy claim made by Vanelli and Renzi (2002:486) is that Italian has filled a gap in its structure: language contact has resulted in the lifting of a particular constraint which previously excluded the causal clauses introduced by *grazie di* (or *per*) from taking present infinitives.

35.5.3.2 Clefts

Migliorini ([1960] 2001:490) attributed the appearance of cleft sentences (see §23.3.4) such as *è Mario che mi ha parlato* 'it was Mario that spoke to me', to the eighteenth-century influence of French. This construction foregrounds an element of the sentence (not necessarily the subject, but also a complement, as in *è a Milano che vorremmo andare* 'it's Milan we'd like to go to', or other elements). Compared to *Mario mi ha parlato* 'Mario spoke to me', in the corresponding cleft sentence *Mario* occupies a focus position. However, Migliorini noted that this construction could capitalize on sentences such as *è Antonio, che è venuto a salutarmi* 'it's Antonio, who has come to say hello to me' (with an appositive relative clause) or subject clauses such as *è manifesto che ha ragione* 'it is obvious that he/she is right', which already existed in Italian. Subsequent research has produced more detailed descriptions of the types, functions, and history of cleft sentences in the Romance languages (Sornicola 1991; Dufter 2008; 2009), and, crucially, it has shown that cleft sentences (especially the type with the subject as the foregrounded element) occurred in Italian well before the modern period (Roggia 2012). Once again, it is also important to mention the role of Italy's dialects, specifically the extensive use of clefting in northern Italo-Romance varieties (cf. Poletto and Vanelli 1997; Bonan and Ledgeway 2024). Therefore, the role of French is nowadays considered in a different light; some (e.g., Panunzi 2011) still consider it significant, but only in the sense that French influence has probably boosted the use of cleft sentences in modern Italian.

35.5.3.3 Superlatives

Superlative structures have twice been the target of exogenous influence. In the eighteenth century, contact with French boosted the 'relative superlative with repetition of the article' (Migliorini 1984:328), as in *l'uomo il più ricco del mondo* 'the richest man in the world' (lit. 'the man the more rich of the world', cf. Fr. *l'homme le plus riche du monde*), but its use later receded (modIt. *l'uomo più ricco del mondo* lit. 'the man more rich of the world'). In the late

twentieth century, Italian borrowed from English the 'ordinal relative superlative' (Berruto 2017a:47) of the type *il secondo più importante* 'the second most important', *la sesta città più grande del Brasile* 'Brazil's sixth biggest city' (the second example is discussed in Renzi 2012:71; see also Pulcini 2022:237, who calls for further investigation into the idea of a recent borrowing from English on the basis, among other things, of earlier occurrences of the ordinal relative superlative in Italian texts about geography, where it remains to be clarified whether these sporadic attestations originated in translations from English). The new type seems to have become permanently embedded in Italian syntax, and to be gaining ground against the pre-existing type *il secondo per importanza* (lit. 'the second for importance'), with which it is currently in competition.[11] In the pre-existing type, the complement can—and sometimes needs to—be introduced in different ways (not only by *per* 'for', but also *quanto a* 'as for', *in termini di* 'in terms of', etc.) and contains a noun (*importanza* 'importance' in the example just given) which is lexically retrieved or derived from the adjective by various morphological means. Moreover, related nouns may be semantically or stylistically unsuitable: for instance, in the case of 'Italy's second coldest city', neither *freddezza* nor *freddo* would seem to be entirely suitable (?*la seconda città d'Italia per freddezza/freddo*). The new construction can be applied consistently to this case (*la seconda città più fredda d'Italia*) and other similar ones, including when a past participle is used as an adjective (compare *la seconda città più visitata* lit. 'the second city more visited' to *la seconda città per numero di visitatori* lit. 'the second city by number of visitors', both meaning 'the second most visited city'). Once again, contact seems to produce a more uniform match between a function and its formal expression.

35.5.3.4 Coordination

Berruto (2012c), Renzi (2012), and other Italian linguists attribute a particular type of coordination involving prepositional phrases, as in *da e per l'aeroporto* 'to and from the airport', to structural borrowing from English. In English, this particular case is part of a wider phenomenon known as 'delayed right constituent coordination'

(Huddleston, Payne, and Peterson 2002:1343). Berruto (2012c:103) speaks of 'double prepositional government'; Renzi (2012:72) speaks of 'coordination of prepositions with ellipsis of an identical noun phrase' and states that its model is to be found in English *to and from the airport*. Until recently, the order of the elements was adapted in Italian (*da e per*, lit. 'from and to'), but the order of the source language is now occasionally found (see Carlucci 2018:63f.). In fact, structural arguments (see Fabbri 1987) and textual evidence suggest that endogenous factors, too, contributed to the emergence of this particular type of delayed right constituent coordination, which already occurred in guidelines issued by Italy's national railway service in the 1920s (see Carlucci 2018:40). Finally, a comment should be added concerning one of the real examples collected by Renzi (2012:73): *per sedersi accanto a, una volta riconciliato con, i molti compagni* 'in order to sit next to, once reconciled with, his many companions' is similar to the examples used by Huddleston, Payne, and Peterson (2002:1344) to claim that delayed right constituents 'occur predominantly in coordination, but they are found in some subordinative constructions too'.

35.5.3.5 Multiple interrogatives

Contact with English has led to the appearance of 'a new interrogative structure, a *wh*-clause with a double or multiple focus' (Berruto 2017a:47). Those who have described this recent development in Italian agree that sentences such as *Chi è chi?* 'Who's who?', *Chi è andato dove?* 'Who went where?', *Chi fa che cosa?* 'Who does what?' do not find any comparable pattern either in the current structure of the language or in previous historical stages. This construction typically occurs in the titles of biographical reference books (on the model of the British *Who's Who*) and celebrity magazine columns. According to Benincà (1993), when extended creatively and unpredictably beyond these conventional contexts, the use of multiple interrogative elements produces sentences which most speakers struggle to understand. Berruto's (2017a) data confirm that multiple interrogatives remain rare in spoken Italian; nonetheless, Berruto questions Benincà's views about the formulaic nature of the construction, claiming that it has recently become

marginally productive in Italian (see also Renzi 2012:96). According to Berruto (2017a:49), this is another case of structural gap filling.

The only cases reviewed in this section which would count as *structural borrowing* in the narrow sense of the term (cf. §35.2.2) are multiple interrogatives and, perhaps, the ordinal superlative. For other outcomes of contact at the syntactic level, see Renzi (2012); McLaughlin (2013); Cerruti (2015); and Dardano (2020d:126f.). These studies confirm that exogenous influences have largely capitalized on existing possibilities and tendencies within modern Italian.

35.5.4 Implications and desiderata

We can now use a table to reorganize the notions concerning structural change introduced in §35.2.2, and we can conclude that the dominant outcome in the case of modern Italian is contact-influenced rearrangement (in bold in Table 35.1). Needless to say, the three main types of effect outlined in Table 35.1 are not mutually exclusive: structural addition is likely to generate rearrangement and may also lead to loss of pre-existing structure in the recipient language.

Table 35.1 Outcomes of language change

effect cause	structural addition	structural rearrangement	structural loss
exogenous (monocausal)	contact-induced addition (structural borrowing *stricto sensu*)	contact-induced rearrangement	contact-induced loss
exogenous + endogenous (multicausal)	contact-influenced addition (structural borrowing *stricto sensu*)	**contact-influenced rearrangement**	contact-influenced loss

effect cause	structural addition	structural rearrangement	structural loss
endogenous (monocausal)	endogenously motivated addition	endogenously motivated rearrangement	endogenously motivated loss

This finding has implications for the theory of language contact and change. It calls for further empirical and theoretical analysis of contact-influenced change, i.e., of the interaction between endogenous and exogenous factors, which is relatively underdeveloped due to the traditional focus on the reductive dichotomy between endogenously and exogenously motivated change. The traditional preference for monocausal approaches has also resulted in the undertheorization of the combined influence of multiple languages as a cause of change, which we have repeatedly encountered in our review of modern Italian (see also §§35.4.2–4). Finally, specific research needs to verify whether contact-influenced rearrangement is typical of cases where the recipient language is a relatively prestigious and standardized variety, such as modern Italian, or is the most common outcome irrespective of the type of contact and languages involved. The Italian case may have something to offer on this point too, for example, through systematic comparisons of the effects of contact with the same source languages on standard Italian and on the varieties of Italian migrants to relevant countries.

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[1] On the different sociolinguistic situation in medieval Italy, see Chapter 34.

[2] On the use of Italian outside of Italy, see Part V of this handbook.

[3] Indirect contact is also referred to as 'learnèd' (Thomason 2001), 'distant' (Winford 2003), or 'remote' (Viola 2016) contact.

[4] See also Matras and Sakel (2004; 2007) for earlier formulations of the distinction between *pattern* and *matter* replication.

[5] In Romance historical linguistics, some famous debates revolved precisely around the need to choose between contact and autonomous internal development as alternative causes of change (see Sala 2013 and Smith 2020).

[6] It should also be borne in mind that the study of Italian as a heritage or foreign language has been a numerically significant phenomenon in some English-speaking countries, as in most of the other countries mentioned in this section (see Turchetta 2005; Vedovelli 2011; Giovanardi and Trifone 2012; Coccia et al. 2021).

[7] In Italy, English is the language most used to teach other subjects within the framework of *Content and Language Integrated Learning*, which was introduced in the 1990s and has since been sporadically applied at various school levels, especially in secondary schools, where it became compulsory in 2003 (Cinganotto 2016; Minardi 2021; Pulcini 2023:211). On the rapid expansion of English medium instruction in Italian universities, see Costa and Coleman (2013); Broggini and Costa (2017); and Salomone (2022).

[8] The variant *pressappoco* prevailed over others, such as *a poco presso*, which more closely replicated the internal syntactic structure of the French model (Dardi 1992:367f.).

[9] Cf. De Mauro (2005; 2014a:132–137, 213–226) and Mancini (2020:163–168). These publications are also based on the *GDU* dataset but provide slightly different figures. Percentage calculations are my own.

[10] The number of lemmas inherited from Latin is 795.

[11] When the ranking is implicitly based on size or other inferable properties, another pre-existing option is to use the ordinal on its own: *Marsiglia, la seconda città della Francia* lit. 'Marseille, the second city of France', *il K2 è la seconda montagna della Terra* lit. 'K2 is the second mountain in the world' (the latter example is among those retrieved by Pulcini 2022:234 in the Italian Web 2020 corpus, while I am grateful to Adam Ledgeway for suggesting the former).

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Chapter 36

Italian and immigrant languages

Francesco Goglia

36.1 Introduction

With the onset of mass immigration in the 1980s, extensive research has been conducted to investigate the linguistic outcomes of immigration in Italy from various angles, aligned with the chronological development of the migration phenomenon. Initially, scholars focused on the acquisition and use by immigrants of Italian as a second language, addressing the urgent need to teach Italian to adults with diverse linguistic backgrounds (Bernini and Giacalone Ramat 1990; Giacalone Ramat 2003). This line of inquiry also encompassed studies on the L2 Italian varieties spoken by members of specific immigrant communities, such as the Chinese (Banfi 2003), Igbo-Nigerians (Goglia 2004), Peruvians (Vietti 2005), and Moroccans (Mori 2007). Subsequently, another critical area of investigation emerged, focusing on the examination of linguistic repertoires within individual immigrant communities. This included analysing language attitudes, choices, and instances of code-switching involving Italian and immigrant languages[1] (Guerini 2006; Goglia 2011; Baldo 2017; Siebetcheu 2020; Lombardo 2021). As the immigrant population in Italy became more settled, including the second generation, research expanded to encompass macro-level studies on emerging multilingualism, involving both Italian and immigrant languages (Chini 2004; Bagna 2007; Barni 2008; Fusco 2017; Goglia and Fincati 2017; Chini and Andorno 2018). At the same time, researchers also started to explore the maintenance of immigrant languages and the gradual shift towards Italian (Chini 2011; Chini and Andorno 2018). Furthermore, there has been

growing interest in studying the presence and vitality of Italian and immigrant languages in the linguistic landscape of Italian cities (Barni and Bagna 2010; Uberti-Bona 2016; Minuz and Forconi 2018).

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on Italian and immigrant languages in Italy. Drawing examples from my own research on various immigrant communities and relevant studies in the field, I will delve into several key aspects. Socio-demographic information on immigration and immigrant languages in Italy is presented in §36.2, while §36.3 discusses the main features of Italian spoken by first-generation immigrants. Moving forward, §36.4 explores the linguistic repertoires of immigrants, and §36.5 focuses on the study of code-switching between Italian and immigrant languages. In §36.6, initial insights into immigrant language maintenance and the shift towards Italian are examined. Additionally, §36.7 highlights studies on the presence of Italian and immigrant languages in the linguistic landscape of Italian cities. Finally, §36.8 offers some concluding remarks and proposes a new direction for the study of multilingualism and immigrant communities in Italy.

36.2 Immigration and immigrant languages in Italy

In Italy mass immigration began in the 1980s and the 1990s, in particular, saw the arrival of increasing numbers of immigrants to the country. The trend has continued, and Italy has rapidly become a highly multicultural and multilingual country. Contrary to other countries, the Italian National Census does not have any questions on the language(s) spoken by individuals. We can therefore only rely on statistics on the number of foreigners residing in the country by nationality. Since the 2000s, there has been a rapid rise in migration to Italy to 5,036,000 (Ministero del Lavoro 2021). Five immigrant communities represent 50 per cent of the total immigrant population in Italy: Romanians, Albanians, Moroccans, Chinese, and Ukrainians

(Ministero del Lavoro 2021). The remaining immigrants come from a variety of countries, making the picture of immigration in Italy highly varied (Table 36.1).

Table 36.1 Largest groups of immigrants by nationality in Italy, 1 January 2021

country of origin	population	
Romania	1,145,118	
Albania	421,591	
Morocco	414,249	
China	288,923	
Ukraine	228,560	
Philippines	157,665	
India	153,209	
Bangladesh	138,895	
Egypt	128,095	
Pakistan	121,609	
Moldova	118,516	
Nigeria	113,049	
Sri Lanka	107,598	
Senegal	106,198	

Source: Ministero del Lavoro 2021

However, the information on nationality cannot provide a clear picture of the linguistic or ethnic affiliation of any individual or community. This is the case, for example, with Indian or Nigerian immigrants who may speak very different languages in accordance with the region of the country they come from. At the same time, some immigrants may speak a particular variety of a language as, for example, Arabic in the case of Moroccans, Egyptians, and Tunisians, or English in the case of Nigerians, Ghanaians, and Indians (cf. Bagna et al. 2018). Another reason why the national statistics on the nationalities of foreign residents cannot provide a clear picture on immigrant languages spoken in Italy today is that some speakers of immigrant languages may not appear in those statistics simply because they are Italian thanks to the acquisition of Italian citizenship or because they have an immigrant background.

Regional and city-based statistics on nationalities of immigrants allow for a more detailed picture of immigrant populations residing in a particular region or city which may differ from the national data. For example, in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, among the largest immigrant communities there are Serbians, Croatians, Kosovars, Bosnians, and Macedonians (Fusco 2017:100), while in the city of Padua Nigerians represent the fourth immigrant community (Goglia 2023:100).

In 2014, ISTAT (the Italian office for national statistics) and the Ministry of the Interior published the results of a survey on languages spoken by foreigners residing in Italy. The survey asked for the mother tongue of foreign citizens. Table 36.2 shows the first ten declared mother tongues.

Table 36.2 Declared mother tongue of foreign citizens older than 6 years of age

mother tongue	number	%
Romanian	798,364	**21.9**
Arabic	476,721	**13.1**
Albanian	380,361	**10.5**

mother tongue	number	%
Spanish	255,459	**7.0**
Italian	162,148	**4.5**
Chinese	159,597	**4.4**
Russian	126,849	**3.5**
Ukrainian	119,883	**3.3**
French	116,287	**3.2**
Serbian; Croatian; Bosnian; Montenegrin	93,289	**2.6**
Other languages	950,269	**26.1**
Total	**3,639,227**	**100**

Source: data from ISTAT (2014).

Italian is the fifth mother tongue of foreign residents, who were born in Italy in 79.9 per cent of cases (ISTAT 2014). This percentage includes children and teenagers of immigrant origin born in Italy whose parents are first-generation immigrants. According to Italian law (*ius sanguinis*), children born in Italy of foreign parents hold their parents' citizenship until the age of 18, when they are entitled to apply for Italian citizenship. Media and institutions refer to these as the *seconda generazione* 'second generation'. Among the immigrant communities that declared Italian as their mother tongue, there are Albanians (16.8 per cent), Moroccans (12.1 per cent), and Romanians (11.1 per cent), all three communities with the highest number of members of the second generation (ISTAT 2014). The survey provides us with partial information on immigrant languages, as 26.9 per cent of respondents declared more than one language as their mother tongue. However, it fails to provide a full picture of the multilingualism of immigrants as immigrants' linguistic repertoires

are often more complex; many immigrants have a complex linguistic repertoire which includes other languages of their country of origin and languages learned through their life, such is the case of Moroccans who, besides Moroccan Arabic, may also speak Berber and French, or Indians who may also speak Hindi and English (the national lingua francas) together with their ethnic language(s).

36.3 Italian of immigrants

The first linguistic outcome of mass migration to be studied was the acquisition and use of Italian as an L2 by immigrants. This focus reflected the new urgent need to teach Italian to adult immigrants with different linguistic backgrounds, as well as the challenges of institutions faced with this task. The first large-scale project on the Italian of the immigrants is the *Pavia project*, a longitudinal collaborative project including several Italian universities, which focused on non-guided acquisition of morphology, syntax, and phonology by participants with eleven different mother tongues (among others Bernini and Giacalone Ramat 1990; Vedovelli et al. 2001; Giacalone Ramat 2003). Since the *Pavia project*, the study of Italian L2 has grown considerably, producing many publications on speakers of different languages: Chinese (Banfi 2003), Tamil-speaking Sri Lankans (Spina 2013), Nigerians (Goglia 2004), Moroccans (Mori 2007). These studies adopted a language acquisition approach: the focus was on the way adult speakers in a non-guided situation reach a native-like competence, with particular attention to the various steps along an interlanguage continuum towards the exact matching of the target language; any deviant form in the interlanguage was analysed as an incorrect step towards the 'correct' target-like one. The acquisition stages of the verb forms have been studied extensively, in particular the overextension of second- and third-person singular verb forms, the use of a tripartite verb system based on the functional opposition between present, past participle (alternating with the *passato prossimo*, the Italian analytic perfect tense), and the infinitive, the simplification of nominal morphology (gender and number agreement, definite

articles, word order, etc.). The following examples are from Goglia's study (Goglia 2004) of the Italian interlanguage of Igbo-Nigerians in Padua (2004) and represent initial stages of Italian language use and acquisition.

1	L: […],	io	piaci		abiti	lì	perché	io	piaci	tutta	gente
		I	please.2SG		live.2SG	there	because	I	please.2SG	all	people
		abiti	a	Treviso							
		live.2SG	at	Treviso							

'[…], I like living there because I like all the people who live there in Treviso (Goglia 2004:55)

In example (1), participant L extends the second-person singular form of the verb *piacere* 'to please' to the first person and the second-person singular form of the verb *abitare* 'to live' to the third. The verb *piacere* is used as a transitive verb, without any dative clitics encoding the EXPERIENCER (cf. It. *mi piace abitare lì* 'me= please.3SG live.INF there'). The example also shows a generalized use of subject pronouns despite Italian being a null subject language.

The following example shows the present target-like form *abita* used with the preposition *per* 'for' instead of the preposition *da* 'since' and the past participle *provato* (tried) used to express the past instead of the analytic perfect (*passato prossimo*). In terms of noun-adjective agreement, we can see that both *un'altra posto* (standard Italian *un altro posto*) and *un'altra paese* (standard Italian *un altro paese*) are not target-like; the form *un'altra* seems to be generalized in the corpus and the correct gender agreement is used by more proficient speakers.

2	Int:	In altre città italiane secondo te com'è la situazione?										
	B:	Non	lo	so,	perché	per	quattro	anni	abita	in	Padova,	
		NEG	it=	know.1SG	because	for	four	years	live.3SG	in	Padua	
		mai	provato	un'	altra	posto	in	un'	altra	paese.		
		never	try.PTCP	a.F	other.FSG	place.M	in	a.F	other.FSG	country.M		

Int: 'In other Italian cities, according to you, what is the situation like?'
B: 'I don't know, because I have lived in Padua for four years, I have never tried a place in another town.' (Goglia 2004:57)

As in the case of first-generation adult immigrants acquisition takes place mostly in interactions with Italian speakers without any formal education, a very important factor is the availability of the input. The kind of Italian with which first-generation immigrants are likely to come into contact is above all spoken, hence highly variable and less constrained by norms. Written Italian does not represent a

priority for the first generation of migrant workers, who are more concerned with everyday effective oral communication. Furthermore, the Italian in the input may also contain geographical and social features, and depending on the region, Italo-Romance dialects are very likely to appear in communicative situations in which immigrant workers find themselves such as factories, local shops, or interactions with the elderly. For example, in the Veneto region, the use of the Veneto dialect is very widespread and immigrants need to learn some dialect too in order to understand and communicate effectively at work (Goglia 2022).[2]

A first attempt to apply a contact-linguistic approach to the study of Italian spoken by immigrants is that of Vietti (2005), who analysed the variable use of Spanish and Italian functional words in the Italian of Peruvians in Turin as the initial stages of an emergent ethnolect. Cohal (2014) analysed the changes that occur in the Romanian language of immigrants following prolonged contact with Italian. In Goglia (2006; 2009) I abandoned my previous language acquisition approach and adopted a communicative approach, assuming that adult immigrant speakers do not aim to achieve native-like ability, but rather effective communication in a range of communicative contexts such as workplaces, administrative offices, and shops. Furthermore, these speakers may not be interested in any kind of integration into the host country, nor in any deeper knowledge of Italian. In the last ten years, the attention of researchers has moved to the analysis of the linguistic repertoires of immigrant families (§36.4) and the initial study of language maintenance (§36.6) in order to understand the learning needs of students of immigrant origin in schools (Favaro 2017; Cognigni and Vitrone 2017; Chini and Andorno 2018).

36.4 The linguistic repertoires of immigrants

The study of multilingualism in immigrant communities often involves the description of their linguistic repertoires, the set of

codes shared by speakers, and their functional distribution in different domains, evaluating the restructuring of these repertoires in Italy.

Several studies have discussed the linguistic repertoires of specific immigrant communities, including among others Ghanaians in Bergamo (Guerini 2006), Igbo-Nigerians (Goglia 2006), Burkinabè in Spilimbergo (Pordenone) (Baldo 2017), Filipinos in Turin (Mazzaferro 2017), Cameroonians in various Italian cities (Siebetcheu 2020), Sri Lankans in Naples (Maffia 2020), and Romanians in Venice province (Lombardo 2021). These studies provide a description of both the pre-migration and post-migration linguistic repertoires.

36.4.1 Pre-migration linguistic repertoires

In relation to pre-migration repertoires, in his seminal article on the multilingualism of immigrants Mioni (1998) had already stressed that many immigrants have complex linguistic repertoires upon their arrival in Italy. Most importantly, he defined this multilingualism as additive because it is acquired as a result of everyday communication as opposed to the more European-like multilingualism which emerges as a result of education. Complex linguistic repertoires of immigrants coming from Africa and Asia may include: one or more local languages, one or more lingua francas, and in some cases also pidgin and creole languages. Mioni (1998) suggested a three-level diglossic relationship to describe the complex linguistic repertoires of immigrants from African countries, with high, middle, and low language(s). This is exemplified in Table 36.3 by the linguistic repertoire of Nigerians (Goglia 2011).

Table 36.3 The Nigerian linguistic repertoire

high language	Nigerian English
middle languages	Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, etc.

low languages	Nigerian Pidgin English, Nigerian local languages

The description of the pre-migration linguistic repertoires of a community is often based on questionnaire and interview data in which participants state the languages they used to speak in their country of origin. However, recent sociolinguistic research has emphasized the importance of examining individual migrants' trajectories in contemporary migration as these may have an influence on migrants' linguistic repertoires and identities in their host destinations (Blommaert 2010; Pauwels 2016; Tovares and Kamwangamalu 2017). In Baldo's (2017:132) study on the Burkinabé in Spilimbergo (Pordenone), seventeen of his forty participants stated that they had lived in another country before arriving in Italy, namely the Ivory Coast and Cameroon with periods of residence up to three years. A long period of residence in another country may already reshape and add new linguistic resources and useful knowledge to migrants' linguistic repertoires.

Immigrants may follow different trajectories even in Italy. In the same study on Burkinabé, Baldo identified a shared community trajectory among his participants, arrival at Rome's Fiumicino airport, then straight to Naples where there is a large Burkinabé community and then to other Italian cities (Baldo 2017:133). Another example is that of the Bangladeshi community in Italy whose members initially lived mainly in Rome before moving to other parts of Italy, particularly the regions of Lombardy, Veneto, and Friuli Venezia Giulia which were offering job opportunities in their factories and shipyards (Giacomello et al. 2018).

In other European countries the pre-migration linguistic repertoires of some immigrant communities may include a pluricentric variety of the national language(s) of the host country, for example Zairians in Belgium (Meeuwis 1997) and Algerians and Moroccans in France (Giacomi, Stoffel, and Véronique 2000), but this is not the case for the majority of immigrants in Italy because of Italy's short colonial past and the absence of previous cultural links with Italy, including no substantial knowledge of the Italian language when they move to the country. An exception are the first waves of migration of Ethiopians and Eritreans to Rome, Milan, and Bologna who could already speak Italian. It is important in this case to

distinguish between different migratory waves as Italian is absent in the pre-migratory linguistic repertoires of younger Ethiopians and Eritreans who have migrated more recently due to historical events and changing language policies. The ongoing project *Pratiche linguistica migrazionali: l'italiano e le altre lingue per i parlanti della comunità eritrea di Milano* ('Migrational linguistic practices: Italian and the other languages of speakers from the Eritrean community in Milan') aims to investigate the linguistic repertoires, language practices, and language maintenance and shift among different generations of Eritreans in Milan.[3]

36.4.2 Post-migration linguistic repertoires

The post-migration linguistic repertoires of immigrants in Italy include the addition of Italian, the dominant official language of the country, mainly as the high language and, as is the case in other immigrant contexts, the languages of the countries of origin are downgraded to low languages. For example, Igbo-Nigerians in Padua add Italian as a high language (and in some cases the Veneto dialect as a low language) to their already complex linguistic repertoire made up of Nigerian English, Igbo, Nigerian Pidgin English, and some knowledge of other Nigerian languages (Goglia 2015; 2018). A very similar case is the post-migration linguistic repertoire of Cameroonians in Italy which includes Italian together with French as the high language, local Cameroonian languages, Camfranglais and Cameroonian Pidgin English as the low languages (Siebetcheu 2020).

First-generation and second-generation speakers may use their own language(s) within the community. In the case of endogamous marriages, the immigrant languages may be spoken also between parents and children. In the following extract, taken from an interview in my data, Projita, an Italian-Indian (Punjabi) girl described the use of languages in her family.

3 Int: Come usate le lingue in famiglia?
Projita: A casa parliamo punjabi e poi a scuola e fuori con gli amici parliamo italiano, e poi con la televisione abbiamo imparato hindi perché è molto simile alla nostra lingua. Anche i miei genitori parlano italiano, ma loro capiscono, ma preferiscono invece parlare in punjabi, quindi parliamo tutti in punjabi a casa ...e poi è facile perché abbiamo anche parenti in India quindi non capirebbero se parlassi solo italiano.
Int: E con i tuoi fratelli e amici?
Projita: Con mia sorella e mio fratello parliamo in italiano e anche con amici italiani parlo italiano, ma con amici indiani, con loro parlo in punjabi.

Int: 'How do you use the languages in your family?'
Projita: 'At home we speak Punjabi and then at school and outside with friends we speak in Italian, and then through television we learned Hindi because it is very similar to our native language. My parents speak Italian as well, but they understand, but they prefer to speak Punjabi instead, so we only use Punjabi at home ... and also it was easier because we also have relatives in India as well so they would not understand if I only spoke Italian.'
Int: 'And with your siblings and friends?'
Projita: 'With my sister and brother I speak Italian and also with my Italian friends I speak Italian and with my Indian friends, I also speak with them in Punjabi.'

The language use that Projita describes exemplifies the choice of languages in three important domains of language use: family, school, and friendships. Punjabi is still used in the family by parents in communication between themselves and with their children. Projita's statement about her parents 'but they understand [Italian], but they prefer to speak Punjabi instead' may reveal their low proficiency in Italian. Projita explains the use of Punjabi in the family is also necessary to communicate with relatives in India. Hindi, a pan-Indian national language, is also part of the family linguistic repertoire through television. Elsewhere in the interview, Projita explains that her parents have favoured the use of Punjabi at home unlike other Punjabi families who have prioritized Italian. Although Punjabi is used as the main language in the family, Projita reveals that she speaks Italian with her siblings which is a sign of incipient language shift. In the area of friendships, there is a split between the use of Italian with Italian friends and Punjabi with Indian friends. As expected, Italian dominates in the area of education where immigrant languages have no place. The maintenance of the family language(s) is part of the individual

family's language policy and is also the individual speaker's choice (Spolsky 2012).

In the following extract, Ngozi, an Italian-Nigerian (Igbo) 24-year-old girl of a family who used to live in Italy but who is now living in the United Kingdom, explains her family's use of languages and preference for Italian in Italy at the expenses of Igbo.

4 Int: I tuoi genitori parlano igbo tra di loro, e voi figli?
Ngozi: Penso che la ragione principale per cui noi non lo parliamo è stata . . . quando ci siamo trasferiti dall'Italia . . . penso che quando eravamo in Italia i nostri genitori ci parlavano in italiano perché pensavano fosse importante per noi e quando ci siamo trasferiti qui, abbiamo dovuto imparare l'inglese, ma i nostri genitori volevano farci mantenere l'italiano quindi non c'è mai stato un momento della nostra vita in cui ci siamo concentrati per imparare igbo.
Int: Quindi l'igbo è un po' . . .
Ngozi: Un po' come la terza opzione e anche se tutte le lingue sono importanti, penso che i miei genitori non si sono resi conto . . . anche se l'inglese e l'italiano sono probabilmente lingue più importanti da imparare per il business e sai [. . .]

Int: 'Do your parents speak Igbo between themselves, and with you children?'
Ngozi: 'I think that the main reason why we do not speak it was . . . when we moved from Italy . . . I think that when we were in Italy our parents spoke to us in Italian because they thought it was important for us and when we moved here, we had to learn English, but our parents wanted us to maintain Italian so there has never been a moment in our life in which we have focused on learning Igbo.'
Int: 'So Igbo is a bit . . .'
Ngozi: 'It is a bit like the third option and even if all languages are important, I think that my parents have not realized . . . even if English and Italian are probably more important languages to learn for business and you know [. . .]'

Ngozi labels Igbo as 'the third option' after English and Italian. After emphasizing that all languages are important and that her parents did not realize it, Ngozi reproduces her parents' ideology which considers English and Italian more important for their children's future. The case of Ngozi is different from that of Projita in which Punjabi is transmitted to the children. In both cases Punjabi and Igbo are important markers of identity, but in the case of Igbo-Nigerians, they often prioritize the use of languages perceived as more important for their children's careers such as Italian in Italy and English in the United Kingdom. Similar attitudes and policies towards the languages of their country of origin have been observed among Cameroonian immigrants who choose not to teach their

children Bamiléké languages but prioritize instead Italian and French (Siebetcheu 2020). Burkinabé immigrants in Spilimbergo (Pordenone) similarly prioritize their children's knowledge of French and English in addition to Italian (Baldo 2017). Ghanaians in Bergamo show a preference for English (Guerini 2006), while French-speaking immigrants from Tunisia, Morocco, Congo, and Mauritius tend to favour Italian and French (Alessandrini 2022). In all cases, favourable ideologies towards French and English and a consequent abandonment of local African languages are already ongoing in the country of origin; the immigration context in Italy simply accelerates the downgrading of the local African languages.

36.5 Code-switching Italian-immigrant languages

The study of code-switching in immigrant communities has grown over the last twenty years,[4] reflecting the development of immigration as a more permanent phenomenon: first-generation migrants who have already lived in Italy for a long time and the appearance of the second generation. The use of languages of the repertoire in specific communicative domains, outlined in the previous section, does not mean a neat compartmentalization. At a micro-level, speakers may choose to mix languages according to a variety of factors, including semantic needs, change of topic, change in participant constellation, sociolinguistic norms, and speaker's preference for one language (Auer 1995).

Numerous studies have focused on code-switching in conversations among first-generation adult immigrants and within immigrant families, encompassing both the first and second generations (Chini 2003; D'Agostino 2004; Mosca 2006; Guerini 2006; Goglia 2006; Mazzaferro 2017; Lombardo 2021; Tramutoli 2021). These studies investigate the linguistic repertoires of specific immigrant communities and examine instances of code-switching that arise during spontaneous conversations among their members.

For instance, Guerini (2006) conducted an extensive analysis of code-switching functions in spontaneous interactions among first-generation Ghanaian immigrants residing in Bergamo. Their linguistic repertoire included Twi, Ghanaian English, Ghanaian Pidgin English, Italian, and Bergamasco. Goglia (2006; 2011), on the other hand, examined code-switching as a communicative strategy in conversations among adult Igbo-Nigerians in Padua, considering the linguistic repertoire of Igbo, English, Nigerian Pidgin English, Italian, and Venetan. Similarly, Mazzaferro (2017) discussed multilingual language practices among the Philippine community in Turin where the linguistic repertoire consisted of Tagalog, English, local Philippine languages, and Italian. Lombardo (2021) presented a comprehensive study on code-switching between Italian, Romanian, and Venetan dialects among Romanians in the province of Venice. In another study, Tramutoli (2021) explored code-switching in the speech of Senegalese immigrants in Pescara, whose linguistic repertoire included Wolof, French, and Italian.

36.5.1 Code-switching among first-generation migrants

Various other studies have also investigated the linguistic repertoires of immigrants and provided insights into code-switching. For instance, Berruto (2009a) explored the restructuring of complex linguistic repertoires among three immigrant communities in northern Italy (Nigerians in Turin, Ghanaians in Bergamo, and Pakistanis in Milan) and offered examples of code-switching. Bonomi (2010) examined the use of Italian and Spanish among Ecuadorian and Peruvian immigrants in Milan and presented several instances of code-switching. Furthermore, Chini (2003) investigated immigrant families and their linguistic repertoires, analysing code-switching differences between first and second generations in thirteen immigrant families from various countries. Additionally, several studies have investigated multilingualism in Palermo across different immigrant communities, with some touching upon code-switching (Amoruso 2002; D'Agostino 2004; Amoruso and Scarpello 2005). For instance, Mosca (2006) studied conversations between

Senegalese immigrants and Italians in Vercelli, offering insights into the use of Piedmontese/Italian code-switching.

Research on code-switching commonly distinguishes between alternations, alternating languages between utterances or sentences, and insertions (the use of a word or a phrase in a different language) (Matras 2009). Examples (5) and (6) show instances of insertional code-switching. Example (5) is from Bonomi (2010) who discussed the case of Italian insertions in the Spanish of Ecuadorian and Peruvian immigrants in Milan. In this situation, the typological similarities between the two languages trigger frequent instances of code- switching. Bonomi's interviews were conducted in Spanish and the Italian insertions are used to express concepts that are part of life in the host country such as *magazziniere* 'warehouse man' related to the interviewee's job (Bonomi 2010:63).

5	Eh,	trabajo	de	magazziniere
	eh	work.1SG	of	warehouse.man
	'Eh, I work as a warehouseman'			

(6) is from Tramutoli (2021) who studied code-switching Italian-French-Wolof in the speech of Senegalese immigrants in Pescara. In the extract, two Senegalese immigrants talk about the possibility of launching a business based on reselling Italian clothes in Senegal. The language of the conversation is Wolof with insertions in French (bold type), Italian (plain typeface) and English (italics). While the insertions in French and English may be already part of so-called Urban Wolof, the insertions in Italian *cento paia* 'a hundred pairs' show how Italian insertions are part of in-group communication.

6 P: *Business*, waaw! Man dama gis ni am na **possibilité**, am ay dall yu bari, lu ma … cento paia.
K: cento paia?
P: cento paia; am na **possibilité** am ko fi maay liggeey.

P: 'Business, yes! I have seen there is a possibility, I've got many shoes … totally a hundred pairs.'
K: 'A hundred pairs?'
P: 'A hundred pairs; there's a possibility that they are where I work.'

Tramutoli (2021) found that Italian switches are gradually substituting French switches in the mixing with Wolof and attributed it to the linguistic similarities of the two languages. I would like to add also that this could also be due to the similarities in prestige and power between French (high language in Senegal) and Italian (high language in Italy).

Some studies have investigated how speakers use Italian and immigrant languages in conversations within particular immigrant communities. These kinds of language practices are more intrusive and difficult to observe and record as they take place in spontaneous conversations among members of a community. They require either a researcher who speaks the languages and is accepted within the community or a member of the community to collect the data. Furthermore, when speakers are aware that they are being observed and recorded, they tend to be more conscious of their language practices—this is the so-called observer's paradox. For these reasons, studies of code-switching in in-group interactions are fewer, but reveal interesting insights on the actual language multilingual practices. The following extract is from a conversation between two Igbo men in Italy, the research assistant (RA), a member of the Igbo community with the task of facilitating the conversation, and a participant (Sp1).[5] The extract reproduces part of a conversation conducted in Nigerian English (italics), Igbo (bold type), Italian (plain typeface), and Nigerian Pidgin English (underlining).

7 Spl: **Na** comune **ebe m bi, enwe ndị**, *that is every five years, chang***ie** *government*, **ọbụlụ ndị** leghista *then* **fa ebido** *problem* … **ebido** *problem, a little problem, so,* **mụ nwa we jee** *one day* **jekwụ** *the mayor* **m sị ya** *look* io sono cittadino, ho giurato fedeltà, ho la fedeltà a questo paese … basta. *I finished everything … so from then up to this day they respect me …*

RA: *Because you respect yourself.*

Spl: *They respect me very well. They're doing everything … How many times* **ka fa sị m ah**, vuoi fare l'assessore? Io non mi interessa perché? Perché voi siete razzisti me, I no dey hide am oo eh, che cosa abbiamo fatto? Cominciare dagli extraco- … eh … extracomunitari, digli che parte d'Europa si dice così? Perché vuoi che siamo discriminati prima … me, I no dey good ooh!

Spl: 'In the local government where I live, there are people, that is every five years, when the government is changed, if it is the Northern League then they start a problem … start a problem, a little problem. So, I myself then went one day went up to the mayor and said to him look I am a citizen, I swore allegiance, I am loyal to this country … that's all. I finished everything … so from then up to this day they respect me …'

RA: 'Because you respect yourself.'

Spl: 'They respect me very well. They're doing everything … How many times have they said to me would you like to be a town councillor? I am not interested. Why? Because you are racist, I don't hide it, what have we done? Let's start from word non-European citizens, tell them in which part of Europe do they say like this? Because you discriminate against us at the beginning, I, I am not good ooh!'

The speakers are talking about brutality and intimidation of immigrants by the Italian law enforcement agents. The example illustrates how speaker B makes use of the four languages in his linguistic repertoire in the same conversation. He speaks in an Igbo-English switched-code and the majority of switches have no conversational function. There are no long pauses between the switches; the informant is simply speaking in a switched code, as it often happens in everyday conversations among Nigerians. The conversation also shows the use of Italian in the new context. See the Italian insertion *comune* 'city council' and *leghista* 'member of the Lega Nord party', both an adjective and a noun. Both these switches represent the enrichment of an already switched speech with lexical items or expressions particularly associated with the Italian context. The following longer switched sentences in Italian function as quotations. It is worth noting that the quotation in Italian, namely, *io sono cittadino, ho giurato fedeltà, ho la fedeltà a questo paese . . . basta* 'I am a citizen, I swore allegiance, I am loyal to this country . . .

that's all' is introduced by the English word *look*, which is used elsewhere by the same speaker to introduce a quotation in English. Sp1 uses Italian to report the reasons why he has not accepted to work as a councillor. On the other hand, the use of Nigerian Pidgin English, the we-code par excellence, in the middle of the Italian quotation reveals the speaker's intention to address a more restricted Nigerian audience. The use of Nigerian Pidgin English elsewhere in the corpus does not have any particular function, but appears simply to be part of the switched way of speaking of Igbo-Nigerians. Contact between Igbo and English is also represented by the switched English verb *change* integrated into the Igbo verbal morphology.

36.5.2 Code-switching in families of migrant origin

In the last decade, with the growing number of family reunions and second-generation children of immigrant origin, focus has started to shift towards the study of multilingualism and code-switching in immigrant families. The second generation's linguistic repertoires are different from those of the first generation. Children of immigrant origin have Italian as their first language or have acquired Italian at an early age if not born in Italy. This new situation provides the opportunity to study code-switching among different generations. There are a small number of studies describing multilingual linguistic practices within immigrant families which reveal useful information on the use of different languages in code-switching practices (e.g., Chini 2003; D'Agostino 2005; Mazzaferro 2017; Lombardo 2021).

Lombardo (2021) investigated Italian-Romanian-Veneto code-switching among Romanians living in the province of Venice. The following extract is from a recorded conversation between father (M47) and son (M10) (Romanian is in capital letters, Italian is in plain typeface). The first lines are entirely in Romanian and the topic of the conversation is a barking dog. The son switches to Italian to mark the request not to cut his tuft. The discourse marker *allora* by the father keeps Italian as the preferred code reinforced by the topic

of the four times table which is linked to schooling in Italian (Lombardo 2021:149).

8 M10: DA' DE CE CÂINELE URLĂ? C. URLĂ?
M47: PENTRU CĂ ÎI URÂT.
M10: CE?
M47: CĂ O LĂSAT-O SINGURĂ ÎN CASĂ. RIDICĂ OLEACĂ CAP(UL) SUS.
M10: Non tagliare il ciuffo!
M47: No.
M47: E (a)lora?
M10: (C)he?
M47: Tabellina con quattro visto che dopo mangiamo, fai la DUȘA e mangiamo
M47: Quatro per due?
M10: Eh:m: (.) quattro per due: (4.4) otto.
M47: Bene.

M10 'Why is the dog barking? C. is barking?'
M47 'Because it's bad.'
M10 'What?'
M47 'They left it alone. Lift your head a bit.'
M10 'Don't cut the tuft!'
M47 'No.'
M47 'So?'
M10 'What?'
M47 'The four times table since we eat later, you take a shower and we eat.'
M47 'Four times two?'
M10 'Eh:m: (.) four times two: (4.4) eight.'
M47 'Well done.'

Both examples (7) and (8) show how speakers may draw on their linguistic resources creatively either to express specific meanings in the conversation or as an act of creativity in communication (Goglia 2006; Matras 2009). Mazzaferro (2017) discusses multilingual language practices among the Filipino community in Turin. Their linguistic repertoire comprises Tagalog, English, local Philippine languages, and Italian. Example (9) shows a brief conversation between a mother, father, and their 3-year-old son at dinner. The family's local Filipino language is Visaya. The example shows how communication between the parents and son takes place in Italian, while the parents use their preferred codes English and Visaya between themselves. After speaking to her son in Italian, the mother switches to Visaya in a comment meant for her husband. He responds with a mixed utterance in English and Visaya and the

Italian word *pasta* as an insertion. In the last turn, the mother addresses her son in English with a rephrase in Italian: in fact, she favours the use of English over Italian with her child (Visaya is in bold, English in italics, Italian in plain typeface).

9 Mother: Ti piace questo?
Son: No mamma.
Mother: **Dahil hindi masarap?**
Father: ***I prepare* jaon ija pasta dakan makakaon sija.**
Mother: *Come and eat* pasta . . . Vieni e mangia la pasta!
Son: Buona mamma.
Mother: 'Do you like this one?'
Son: 'No, I do not, mum.'
Mother: 'Why, is it not good?'
Father: 'I cook pasta so he can eat.'
Mother: 'Come and eat pasta . . . Come and eat pasta!'
Son: 'It is good, mum.'

This example shows how the first and second generations have different linguistic practices. The preferred code of the second generation is Italian, while parents maintain immigrant languages in conversations between themselves and with their children. It is often the case that not all languages in the repertoire of the parents are maintained as we will see in §36.6. Local languages are not easily passed to children, who prefer to use Italian (cf. Chini 2003), while parents also prefer communicating with their children in more widely used languages from their linguistic repertoire or in Italian. In the case of this Filipino family, English is used with the son together with Italian, but Tagalog and Visaya are not.

36.6 L1 maintenance and shift towards Italian

Pauwels (2016:18) has defined languages shift as 'the gradual replacement of one's main language or languages, often labelled L1, by another language, usually referred to as L2, in all spheres of usage'. The term gradual refers to the fact that language shift usually takes place across one or more generations of speakers. Shifting

away from the L1 does not occur simultaneously across all communicative domains. Immigrant languages are usually maintained in intra-ethnic domains such as those involving the family and friends. Research on language maintenance and shift has shown that immigrant communities shift to the language(s) of the host country by the third generation (Pauwels 2016). However, the degree and speed of the shift process will vary from community to community according to several factors including, among others, endogamous/exogamous families, the size and geographical distribution of the community, the idea of a future return to the country of origin, the value assigned to the family language(s), and the link between a language and the identity of a particular group (Pauwels 2016). While studies on language maintenance and shift in immigrant and diasporic communities all around the world are extensive (Canagarajah 2008; Lee 2013; Potowski 2013; Rubino 2014a; Pauwels 2016), the study of language maintenance in immigrant communities in Italy is not fully developed yet.

As we have seen, sociolinguistic research on communities of immigrant origin has focused mostly on the acquisition and use of Italian, or code-switching Italian-immigrant languages, rather than on maintenance of immigrant languages and the shift to Italian. This is firstly due to the timing of Italian mass migration which took place relatively recently (1980s and 1990s), such that it is only in more recent times that we have been able to begin to investigate language maintenance and shift across the second and, in some cases, the third generations. Furthermore, now with the second and third generation we have the active involvement of members of some communities to support the maintenance and teaching of their languages and cultures through cultural associations and courses. This is key for the maintenance of language and culture as, in most cases, the support for immigrant languages comes from within the communities rather than governments. Even in the multicultural United Kingdom, supplementary schools are entirely supported by communities and in rare cases by local authorities. Furthermore, as Chini (2011:60) stressed, initial research on language maintenance and shift in Italy has focused on 'immigrants living in a specific area, but having different origins', hence there are no comprehensive studies on language maintenance and shift in individual communities.

Although not focused on language maintenance and shift, some qualitative studies on individual communities reveal facts about maintenance of immigrant languages and shift towards Italian. Siebetcheu (2020) discussed the use of languages among Cameroonians in Italy and found that Italian and French are the most widely used languages by Cameroonian families, while the Bamiléké languages, spoken in western Cameroon, tend not to be transmitted to children as they are perceived as too local and not useful in Italy. The same incipient shift towards Italian was found in my research on Igbo-Nigerians who tend not to actively teach Igbo to their children and prefer the use of Nigerian English, perceived as more useful for life in Italy (Goglia 2015). It must be noted that both in Cameroon and Nigeria a respective shift towards French and English is already ongoing, and a new life in Italy where Italian is the dominant language simply accelerates the process (cf. Siebetcheu 2020). In their study on language use and language shift of Moroccan teenagers of the 1b generation in small towns in Emilia Romagna,[6] Di Lucca et al. (2008) found a faster shift to Italian due to the lack of a close-knit social network, no intention to return to Morocco, and the desire to integrate with peers.

Quantitative studies on the use of languages have also been carried out based on sociolinguistic surveys distributed either to adult immigrants or students of immigrant origin in schools (Chini 2004; Massariello Merzagora 2004; ISTAT 2014; Goglia and Fincati 2017; Fusco 2017; Favaro 2017; Bagna et al. 2018; Chini and Andorno 2018). These studies offer us a clear picture of multilingualism in a particular city. For example, Chini and Andorno (2018) distributed a survey among primary and secondary school pupils of immigrant origin in several towns in the Pavia province (555 respondents) and in Piedmont (956 respondents) (Chini and Andorno 2018:45). In the Pavia sample, in response to the question about the languages spoken at home, 28 respondents answered 'Italian', 130 answered 'immigrant language', and 264 indicated a mixed use of Italian and immigrant languages. The survey tells us that immigrant languages are maintained either used alone or mixed with Italian, which is starting to penetrate family life. As we have seen in §36.5, in order to know more about the kind of mixing that takes place in the family, we need to rely on qualitative studies. Another important factor to take into account is the use of languages with different interlocutors.

Immigrant languages are used more with parents (40 per cent) and less with siblings (26 per cent), while Italian is mostly used among siblings. Italian appears to be used more among friends (Chini and Andorno 2018). Different communities may display different degrees of L1 maintenance. For example, Moroccans and Chinese tend to use and maintain more their L1s both in the family and with friends. In the case of Moroccans, the maintenance of Arabic is also due to the link between Arabic and Islam, while the Chinese case may be due to the large size of the community and an inward attitude (ISTAT 2014; cf. Chini 2011). Albanians and Romanians, on the other hand, tend to use more Italian both in the family and with friends while still maintaining their L1s (Chini 2011; ISTAT 2014; Bagna et al. 2018).

36.7 Italian and immigrant languages in the linguistic landscape of Italian cities

A more recent and increasingly significant area of research focuses on the linguistic landscape of Italian cities, encompassing both Italian and immigrant languages. The literature on linguistic landscape in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods within Italian cities has shed light on linguistic and extra linguistic factors influencing the presence of Italian and immigrant languages on store names, advertising posters, and various other visible signs in specific areas. Barni and Bagna (2006; 2010) conducted pioneering work examining the linguistic landscape of the Esquilino neighbourhood near Rome's central railway station. Utilizing innovative georeferencing software, this study gathered a substantial amount of quantitative data and enabled the comparison of data over time. The findings from the study of Esquilino unveiled the presence of twenty-four languages, with the most prominent signs being in Chinese, Italian as a local lingua franca, and English as a lingua franca for numerous South Asian immigrants dominating low-level trade in the area. Languages of larger immigrant communities in Esquilino such

as Filipinos, Romanians, and Poles were notably absent from the linguistic landscape. The authors suggested that this absence could be attributed to members of these communities primarily engaging in domestic work and caretaking roles rather than entrepreneurial activities. In a follow-up study conducted in 2010, the same researchers observed a decrease in the visibility of immigrant languages and an increase in bilingual signs, wherein both Italian and immigrant languages appeared on shop signs due to the implementation of a local by-law mandating the use of Italian on all multilingual signs (Barni and Vedovelli 2012).

Minuz and Forconi (2018) explored the linguistic landscape of Bolognina, a multi-ethnic neighbourhood in Bologna, with a twofold aim. First, they mapped the linguistic landscape and identified Chinese as the most visible immigrant language, consistent with the findings of Barni and Vedovelli (2012). Additionally, the study revealed a higher frequency of bilingual signs featuring both immigrant languages and Italian, attributed to the local council's language policy requiring foreign language signs to include an Italian translation. Second, through focus groups and interviews, the researchers investigated how residents, association members, and other stakeholders perceived the neighbourhood and their attitudes towards immigrant languages in the linguistic landscape. While some participants viewed the neighbourhood as a 'China-town' due to the prevalence of Chinese signs and shops, others associated multiculturalism with the presence of immigrants, immigrant-owned shops, colours, smells, and clothing (Minuz and Forconi 2018:269).

In a study on two multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in Milan (Baggio and Giambellino), Uberti-Bona (2016) offered an analysis of shop signs, including Spanish and Arabic, two of the most widely represented immigrant languages in the neighbourhoods, in combination with Italian. This study found that signs are either only in Italian or only in Arabic/Spanish. Contrary to the cases discussed in Barni and Vedovelli (2012) and Minuz and Forconi (2018), Italian translation of the signs in immigrant languages was nearly always absent, despite Milan city council's by-law mandating the provision of an Italian translation. Goglia (2023) has studied the linguistic landscape of the emerging multi-ethnic neighbourhood of Padua railway station area. Goglia's findings showed the prominence of Italian in both monolingual and multilingual signs. The local

language policy, which requires the use of Italian together with any foreign languages, helps to explain this finding. The shops along Corso del Popolo, the main walking and public transport route from the railway station to the historic city centre, display more bilingual signs, clearly targeting a wider clientele, as is the case for the electronics shop in Figure 36.1. The name of the shop is provided in both Chinese and Italian; the Chinese 梦想科技 'dream technology' appears on top between two icons, a PC, and an electron orbit, also indexing the type of shop, while the Italian translation of the shop name, *La Tecnologia dei Sogni* 'The technology of dreams' appears in the centre in a larger print size. Below the name of the shop, a list of the services offered appears in Italian in capital letters but in smaller font: *vendita cellulari, accessori & computer; riparazione cellulari e PC* 'mobile phones, accessories & computers sold here; mobile phone and PC repairs'.



Figure 36.1 Chinese electronics shop. Source: Goglia (2023:109)

This prevalence of signs in Italian is also reflective of the role of Italian as a lingua franca used by immigrants for communication both with Italians and immigrants from different countries. Interestingly, the use of Italian in certain notices (such as the message depicted in Fig. 36.2, namely 'Please don't leave bottles in the car park') demonstrated immigrants' appropriation of the language, albeit not with full mastery (cf. *perfavore* vs It. *per favore* 'please', *botteglie* vs It. *bottiglie* 'bottles', *in* 'in' vs It. *nel* 'in.the', *perchiggio* vs It. *parcheggio* 'car park') to communicate with customers or passers-by.



Figure 36.2 Notice in L2 Italian. Source: Goglia (2023:107)

Despite the legal requirement noted above, immigrant languages are still visible in both monolingual and bilingual signs with a language other than Italian. The quantitative results have shown that, apart from Italian, the most visible languages in the surveyed area are in order of importance Chinese, English, Romanian, Arabic, and Bengali (for a detailed discussion on each of these languages, see Goglia 2023).

36.8 Conclusion

This chapter has extensively reviewed pivotal studies in the domain of sociolinguistics, focusing on migration in Italy and encompassing both Italian and immigrant languages. Since the onset of mass immigration to Italy during the 1980s, a comprehensive exploration of the linguistic consequences of this phenomenon has unfolded. Initially, scholarly emphasis centred on immigrants' acquisition of Italian as a L2, including the identification of distinctive features

within the so-called *italiano degli immigrati* 'Italian of immigrants', and the emergence of ethnolects. Over time research scope expanded to cover various linguistic dimensions, encompassing linguistic repertoires, attitudes, code-switching phenomena, and the growing occurrence of emergent multilingualism involving both Italian and immigrant languages, reflecting the evolution of settlement dynamics.

Maintenance of immigrant languages and the shift towards Italian have also gained attention, albeit in its nascent stages. Additionally, researchers have studied the presence of Italian and immigrant languages in city linguistic landscapes. Collectively, these research trajectories have meticulously documented the unfolding linguistic consequences of immigration in Italy, traversing generational thresholds and capturing the fluid transformation of language use and identity.

As immigrant communities consolidate and reach the third generation, research on Italian and immigrant languages will need more qualitative studies on individual immigrant communities to assess both multilingual language practices and the factors that favour or otherwise language maintenance and shift.

The direction of future research endeavours promises to traverse new horizons and to encompass a spectrum of essential dimensions. These include investigating the impact of immigrant language courses and cultural associations on language maintenance, exploring the role of immigrant languages and code-switching in the construction of the second- and third-generations' identities, assessing the degree of transnational engagement among communities and individuals, examining family language policies, and scrutinizing the online use and maintenance of immigrant languages.

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[1] In this chapter, I use the term 'immigrant languages' (It. *lingue immigrate*) to refer to the native languages of immigrants or home languages of Italians with a migration background. The terminology to refer to languages brought by immigration whether established recently or in the more distant past varies according to countries. For example, 'heritage languages' is used in the United States, 'community languages' is preferred in the United Kingdom, and 'languages of migrants' is used by the European Union. In Italy, the term *lingue immigrate* 'immigrant languages' is widely used by linguists. Chini (2011) suggested using the term *nuove minoranze linguistiche* 'new linguistic minorities', while Bagna et al. (2018) have

used the term *lingue d'origine* 'languages of origin'. The more these languages become an integral part of the Italian linguistic repertoire across generations, the more linguists will have to agree on a term which is no longer linked to the process of immigration but, rather, to a multicultural and multi-ethnic Italy.

[2] Until recently linguists have focused on the acquisition and use of Italian by immigrants, ignoring or simply by-passing the role that Italo-Romance dialects may have in the repertoire. Several studies have touched upon immigrants' awareness, perception, and use of dialects (D'Agostino 2004; Mosca 2006; Amoruso and Scarpello 2010; Pugliese and Villa 2012; Villa 2014; Vitolo and Maturi 2017; Goglia and Fincati 2017; Guerini 2018; Chini and Andorno 2018). More recently, Goglia and Wolny (2022) have focused exclusively on the role of Italo-Romance dialects in the linguistic repertoires of immigrants offering several case studies.

[3] This project is sponsored by Public Research Engagement Exeter and the investigators are Francesco Goglia (University of Exeter), Luisa Revelli (Università della Valle D'Aosta); Asli Haddas and Fabrizio Pesoli are the research assistants.

[4] Codeswitching refers to 'the alternation of languages within a conversation' (Matras 2009:101).

[5] Sp1 arrived in Italy thirty years prior to the recording and is almost fifty. He studied in Italy, works for a financial group presently, and has an Italian wife. The conversation took place in a shop which sells food and general goods imported from African countries in Padua.

[6] The '1b generation' refers to first-generation immigrants who began their linguistic, cultural, and academic development in the country of origin and came to Italy between the ages of 5 and 12 (Di Lucca et al. 2008:54).

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Chapter 37

Popular Italian and its history

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[*] Although the article was conceived and written jointly, for academic purposes only sections 37.1 and 37.2 are attributable to Maurizio Dardano, and paragraphs 37.3 to Emanuele Ventura.

37.1 *Italiano popolare*: history and studies

Tullio De Mauro, writing at the beginning of the 1970s, defined *italiano popolare unitario* ('unitary popular Italian')[1] as 'the mode of expression of an uneducated person who, under pressure to communicate and without training, handles what is optimistically called the 'national' language, Italian' (De Mauro 2014b:66).[2] For Cortelazzo (1972:11) it is the 'type of Italian imperfectly acquired by someone whose mother tongue is dialect'.[3] The latter definition shifts the perspective, emphasizing deviation from the norm, and the Italian of dialect speakers: in brief, *italiano popolare* is considered a diastratically 'lower' form of language (Berruto 1987a; 2012a; Berretta 1988), influenced by dialect. The 'unitary' nature of *italiano popolare* has been understood differently by De Mauro and Cortelazzo: the former associates it with an explicit communicative intentionality while the latter attributes it both to schooling and to a common cultural base which is separate from bourgeois culture yet in the throes of becoming acculturated. An objection to both scholars' assumption of the 'unitary' nature of *italiano popolare*, is the fact that it also contains a component of local influence, which

becomes stronger the further down the diastratic scale one goes. In the early stages of its study, *italiano popolare* was understood as being substantially independent of diatopic factors (dialects and regional varieties). This 'unitary' interpretation of *italiano popolare* owed much to the fact that, in writing, phonetic and prosodic factors were absent, as well as to a general tendency for morphosyntactic simplification (Berruto 1983). This interpretation was subsequently played down (Mioni 1975; Ernst 1981) or admitted only for some morphosyntactic features which reflect linguistic mechanisms that were 'unitary' by virtue of already being very widespread (Mengaldo 1994:109–110)—such as processes of simplification. *Italiano popolare* is different from regional Italian, which is predominantly characteristic of the middle classes. The difference is not just a matter of linguistic factors, but also socio-anthropological and socioeconomic ones (Ruffino 2012a:23).

The increasing use of Italian and the decreasing importance given to normative grammar have caused a 'downward shift' in the language but, contrary to initial impressions, that has not led to the wider promotion of *italiano popolare* within the linguistic repertory. The label *italiano popolare*, which appears to have the advantage of spanning the space between Italian at one extreme and dialect at the other, may seem psychologically and socially legitimate, but the concept clearly also needs a properly linguistic definition which captures the formal characteristics of *italiano popolare*. The adjective *popolare* (cf. *popolo* '(common) people') seems to connote lower social classes, but does not always appear appropriate. Other more general and less specific labels have been suggested, such as *italiano dell'uso medio* 'Italian of average usage' (Sabatini 1985) and *neostandard* (Berruto 1983); both appear more suited to describe the linguistic variety lying between dialect and Italian (cf. also §26.3). None of the labels invented by Italian scholars have a particularly strong theoretical basis: rather, they are working definitions in an attempt to establish a system. It is important to note that in the Italo-Romance linguistic domain, diastratic and diatopic variables are connected: 'The diatopic axis is not only closely intertwined with the diastratic and diatopic axes, but in some cases it seems to absorb them, just as it also seems to absorb, at least partially, the diamesic axis' (D'Achille 2022a:18). It is precisely the polycentric nature of Italian linguistic history that makes it different

from the history of most other European languages. Italian linguistic history is characterized by the mixture of languages (Ruffino 2012a:18). The super-regional dimension of *italiano popolare* was subsequently much played down, the term 'regional popular Italian' being used instead (Poggi Salani 1982:118). Regional Italian was considered to pertain principally to the middle classes and to spoken language, while popular spoken language which also has a written variety, is treated as typical of urban lower classes. These popular spoken and written varieties, however, have covered all the exigencies of different social subjects: habitual, official, technical, educational (as a means of teaching the language: Foresti 2012:158). The belief that dialects are associated with practical and familiar subjects should not be overstated and it should not be forgotten that dialects have often been used by the ruling classes—as is shown for previous centuries by the situation in the Republic of Venice and, more recently, by the situation in Piedmont in the decades preceding the unification of Italy.

Italiano popolare therefore appears as a diastratic variety of regional Italian. A distinction may be made between the regional Italian of the educated classes and that of the popular classes. *Italiano popolare*, a variety of language, should not be confused with colloquial Italian, which is a linguistic register. Both became relevant concepts with the unification of Italy and its consequences for the relationship between language and dialect in the country. The label *italiano popolare* first appears in Romani (1827), while the first to speak of 'regional Italian' is Max Leopold Wagner who refers to the *italiano regionale* of Sardinia (D'Achille 2022a:236).

The internal emigration and settlement in cities of the post-Unification period, due to industrialization, are behind the changes which take place in the use of the language. There was a weakening of dialect in the areas depopulated by emigration which lost their poorest, least educated, more inward-looking dialect-speakers. In the areas where they arrived, the local inhabitants eventually resigned themselves to not using or watering down their own dialect (De Mauro 2014b:69). *Italiano popolare* (one of whose most significant expressions are the first workers' protest songs) absorbs elements of elevated language, from bureaucratic usage and also from the libretti of operas, which in the nineteenth century influenced spoken language much as television did in the 1950s and 1960s. On the

battlefront in the Veneto, the Great War brought together a mass of speakers of rural origin, from all over Italy. They had scant education and were mainly dialect speakers forced by circumstance to adopt an interregional variety of language. The war was a training ground for trying out new forms and new uses of the national language as a means of achieving the kind of interpersonal communication which would have been impossible between speakers of different dialects. This new use of Italian on the battlefront became a source, even for the middle classes, of a good number of colourful expressions which are no longer dialectal or plebeian Tuscanisms (De Mauro 2014b:73): *attaccare un bottone* 'to buttonhole [somebody] (lit. to attach a button)', *fare fesso* 'to pull the wool over someone's eyes (lit. to make stupid)', *avere fifa* 'to be in a funk, have the jitters', *scalcinato* 'shabby, down at heel', *spicciarsela* 'to get oneself out of [a mess, problem]'. We may add other examples: *passare in cavalleria* 'to welch on a promise, fail to deliver', *beccare* 'to get, take', *macello*, *lavoro* 'mess-up', *mollare* 'to give up, give in'. As we shall see, the letters of prisoners of war, analysed in a pioneering study by the Austrian scholar Spitzer (1921) have a particular importance in *italiano popolare* texts. Spitzer's collection (see also Spitzer 1920) bears witness to a kind of peasant humanity which has all but disappeared today. Thereafter interest developed in the study of the language used by Italy's popular classes (e.g., Malvezzi and Pirelli 1952; Revelli 1971). The other great repository of *italiano popolare* is the letters sent home by emigrants abroad,[4] in Europe and beyond, which are rather different in nature, due also to contact with the languages spoken in those countries.

Italiano popolare is also called the *lingua dei semicolti* (roughly the 'language of people with relatively little education'),[5] with explicit reference to the written variety, where *italiano popolare* has principally manifested itself. These two denominations are equivalent and interchangeable. The *semicolti* are those who, while literate, have not sufficiently mastered writing and are therefore still tied to the domain of orality (Bruni 1984), that is, essentially to the use of dialects. Under pressure from Italian, the dialects have gradually become more and more like Italian, from the years of the unification of Italy to the age of television, a powerful force in levelling spoken Italian. The *semicolti* use the language in an aberrant way and display a limited competence in writing, which

attracts social stigmatization. The traditional opposition between spoken and written language is replaced by the view that there is a continuum, on which we find linguistic productions which are intermediate between the written and the spoken. In brief, *italiano popolare* is a variety of Italian used both in speech and writing by speakers who, on the diastratic scale, display a low level of education.[6]

Italiano popolare came into being through contact with primary school education, as a way of avoiding the exclusive use of dialect. It was a variety which could be used not only to write home, leave written testimonies and write to the authorities, but also for spoken communication with those who spoke other dialects. Particularly in the past, *italiano popolare* was a kind of testbed for a spoken language which could be used to communicate beyond the domain in which dialects were used. Spoken Italian is a scale with various degrees between formality and its absence, between carefulness and slovenliness: *italiano popolare* (known to us almost exclusively through writing) has many characteristics in common with spoken Italian. *Italiano popolare* may be taken as one element of that widespread 'Italian of average use' (Sabatini 1985) or 'neo-standard' Italian (Berruto 1983) or 'tendential Italian' (Mioni 1983), which underlies many specific types of usage (the press, advertising, politics, light reading, etc.). Freed from prescriptive norms, *italiano popolare* has characteristics which have converged in a 'neo-standard'.

In recent centuries, literary Italian has been used almost exclusively in writing and has been expressed in a formal, often ultra-refined,[7] register. It has been a noble, high-level language, used by the erudite. A language in which one could, as we have said, describe a sunset or discuss philosophy, but that was ill-suited to talking about everyday matters and referring to material objects. This did not prevent Italians from finding, over the centuries, a way of communicating with each other via an impoverished language which, despite its regional differences, displayed common characteristics necessary for it to be widely understood. Mostly, Italians have communicated with each other in a poor, threadbare Italian (an *italiano pidocchiale*—literally 'lousy, louse-ridden Italian', the expressive term that Enrico Testa takes from Tommaso Landolfi's novel *La pietra lunare* 1939). In this situation, one has to

reflect on a 'notion which is central both in sociolinguistics and in pragmatics, namely the communicative situation with its multiple factors: not just the time and place of the act of communication or various co-present elements (the so-called "context"), but also the roles of the emitter and the receiver, the entirety of the knowledge to which they both refer, the norms and values which guide them and to which they belong' (Testa 2014:5).

By *italiano popolare* we mean almost exclusively written texts (sound-recording of speech is relatively recent), composed over the past hundred years and of various kinds (see below). Writing by *semicolti*, however marginal with respect to the norm, has an important role in the history of the language. It is a socially low-level variety of written Italian, an intermediate stage on the language-dialect continuum, yet at the same time they show how the relationship between written and spoken language has evolved. Observing *italiano popolare* throws light on the processes of acquisition of literacy and Italianization, as well as the story of how Italian has come to be written.

At an event held in 2003 to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of De Mauro's classic *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (De Mauro 1963), Berruto (2005:334) stated that many scholars would be inclined to say that *italiano popolare* no longer exists, either as a real entity in the Italian linguistic panorama or as an interesting object of academic linguistic description. The fact remains that the impetus created by the concept of *italiano popolare* has generated new work in the field of linguistic historiography: the volumes of the *Storia della lingua italiana* edited by Francesco Bruni, beginning with the volume on the sixteenth century, give space to *semicolto* writings. The birth of *italiano popolare* has been associated with the age of codification of the sixteenth-century norm established by Bembo. But according to Trifone (2006:274n176), in the fourteenth century one can already detect an early 'linguistic-literary codification [. . .], which sets a "high" reference variety against a "low" base variety', without needing to hypothesize, as does Testa (2014:vii), the extremely precocious birth, in a limited part of the linguistic community, of an impoverished, rough and varied, common Italian for use in writing and presumably also in speech.[8] In any case, in past centuries *italiano popolare* was used by less educated people:

the lower clergy, artisans, small traders (the latter coming from city areas, the former from the countryside).

The notion of *italiano popolare* should be clearly distinguished from popular literature. The latter belongs to literary Italian, which is distinguished from cultured literature (*letteratura colta*) in three respects: sociologically (it involves works meant for the lower classes), form and manner of transmission (it is a matter of oral production, often in song and therefore pertaining more to poetry than prose). It is also made up principally of occasional texts, linked to everyday practical operations. The contents of popular literature are various, but they are mainly filtered through a simple mindset, based on habits and proverbial truths or on reworking for popular consumption of characters and situations from high literature. Anonymity prevails: compositions are broadcast by itinerant storytellers, who are free to rework them. When printed, these texts circulate in a different way from high literature. Some products of cultured literature are reworked in popular literature: *Guerrin meschino* and *Reali di Francia* by Andrea da Barberino (*c.*1370–*c.*1431). But some masterpieces such as *The Divine Comedy*, *Orlando furioso*, and *Gerusalemme liberata* also circulated among the lower classes.

Italiano popolare has a wide range of sources. A first distinction must be made between spontaneous writing with an intended recipient (letters of prisoners of war, migrants' letters) and writing guided by an external agent (school exercises, wills). For schoolwork, account must be taken of the requirements placed on the writer by the teacher; for wills one often has to assume that a form of words provided by the lawyer is being used. For letters from prisoners of war and from migrants, subject matter and mode of expression differ according to situation: for prisoners of war there is a predominance of reassurances about the writer's health; migrants convey information about how well the writer has settled into the new environment (including loanwords due to contact with the L2) and about their own status,[9] often accompanied by expressions of nostalgia for the home they have left behind. There is also a difference of psychological motivation, leading emigrants to move away from dialect, while prisoners of war use dialect to conceal what they are saying from the censors (Salvatore 2017:51f.). Even address forms are different in the two cases. What they have in common is

the need to claim their own community membership. Administrative texts are influenced by bureaucratic language in two ways: by quoting terms (often in a garbled way) and by reformulations. The attempt to imitate an elevated tone produces stereotypes and constant repetition of terminology. These characteristics increase in communications with authority (and addressing a superior gives rise to some particular modes of expression). The composition of public writing involves graphical elements and questions of *mise en page*, depending on spatial and situational factors. The problems encountered in personal writing (autobiographies, memoirs, diaries) involve both the models for such writing and their degree of sincerity. Among these models are experiences from school, religion (hearing mass), and medium (writing vs speech).

37.2 Linguistic phenomena

The written production of the *semicolti* has been shown to have some elements in common. There are two main factors:[10] the very close relationship to dialect, which intrudes particularly into phonetics and the lexicon, quite often as a form of 'hyperdistantiation' from dialectal forms, and recourse to strategies which minimize linguistic norms and thereby involve simplification based on spoken forms.[11] This is particularly apparent in morphosyntax, often subject to analogical modifications and, on the other hand, hypercorrection. Like the colloquial and informal register, with which the writing of the *semicolti* shares some distinctive characteristics, *italiano popolare* has a strong propensity to use emphatic and redundant elements, classic characteristics of spoken language.

37.2.1 Writing and phonetics

While of limited significance in any general analysis of *italiano popolare*, writing is still emblematic: a great deal of social disapproval has traditionally been directed at spelling, which still

bears the brunt of stigmatization far more than other areas of the language. This is why writing has received the most academic attention.

Even the way in which they are materially presented by the *semicolti* shows features common to many of them. They are not used to the activity of writing, which is usually something they have learned to do in a rather approximate way in their elementary education. Their writing, set out on the page in a disorganized way with little control of spacing, generally appears rough and clumsy, as a direct result of their lack of ability to join written signs together. Moreover some types of text, particularly the writings of prisoners of war, have mainly come down to us on whatever material came to hand at the time: postcards, pages ripped from notebooks, bits of paper originally intended for something else or official documents, odd-shaped scraps of paper, without a single space left blank, all the hallmark of urgency on the part of the writers (cf. Bozzola 2013:26f.).

The revolution brought about by the new means of writing obviously changed the nature of writing radically: typewriters, then the upheaval caused by the use of computers and even more, now, by smartphones. Typewritten texts reveal mistakes due to a certain unfamiliarity with typewriters and more specific things such as writing only in upper or lower case, red ink, lack of apostrophes or using apostrophes instead of accents, e.g., *citta'* for *città* 'city' (cf. D'Achille 1994:67). But the increasingly efficient and pervasive autocorrect function on modern digital devices, especially in spelling, has altered or partially eliminated many of these faults, and act today as a filter on errors in the production of writing.

Among recurrent features arising from a poor grasp of word boundaries in speech and how to represent them in writing is the failure to separate articles, pronouns (especially clitics), and prepositions from the words they precede: for example *lanno*, *ipaesani*, *lamico* for *l'anno*, 'the year', *i paesani* 'the villagers', *l'amico* 'the friend'; *lostesso*, *lamia*, *lultimo* for *lo stesso* 'the same', *la mia* '(the) my', *l'ultimo* 'the last'; *peramore*, *inamerica*, *dellinverno* for *per amore* 'for love', *in America*, *dell'inverno* 'of the winter'; *dime*, *tranoi*, *dilui* for *di me* 'of me', *tra noi* 'among us', *di lui* 'of him'; *asentire*, *difare*, *abere* for *a sentire* 'to hear', *di fare* 'of doing', *a bere* 'to drink'; *lò passato*, *mitiene*, *lanno messo*, *tamo* for *l'ho passato* '(I) have passed it', *mi tiene* '(it) holds me', *l'anno messo*

'(they) have put it', *ti amo* '(I) love you'; *ovoluto*, *ocapito*, *volevadire* for *ho voluto* '(I) have wanted', *ho capito* '(I) have understood', *voleva dire* '(it) wanted to say / meant'; *setu*, *mati prego*, *manoi* for *se tu* 'if you', *ma ti prego* 'but (I) ask you', *ma noi* 'but we'; *sesiete*, *searivo*, *sedovesse* for *se siete* 'if (you) are', *se arrivo* 'if (I) arrive', *se dovesse* 'if (s/he/it) had to'; *cisono*, *nonpiove*, *nofarete* for *ci sono* 'there are', *non piove* '(it's) not raining', *non farete* '(you) will not do'. There is also a significant increase in the marking of *raddoppiamento fonosintattico* (§14.6.2, §15.2.1.2.4), e.g., *accasa*, *addire*, *ammezzanotte*, *chessono*, *eppensa*, *ollavorato* for *a casa* 'at home', *a dire* 'to say', *a mezzanotte* 'at midnight', *che sono* 'which are', *e pensa* 'and (s/he) thinks', *ho lavorato* '(I) have worked'. Correspondingly there are also mis-segmentations, particularly where some element at the beginning of a word is erroneously analysed as a preposition or an article: *a desso*, *a scoltare*, *a sieme*, *con torno*, *da vanti*, *di spetto*, *di stinti*, *in cinta*, *in formazione*, *per sona* for *adesso* 'now', *ascoltare* 'listen', *assieme* 'together', *contorno* 'surround', *davanti* 'in front of', *dispetto* 'spite', *distinti* 'different$_{MPL}$', *incinta* 'pregnant', *informazione* 'information', *persona* 'person', *l'acrime*, *la dorata*, *l'aradio*, *la Merica* for *lacrime* 'tears', *l'adorata* 'the adored$_{FSG}$', *la radio* 'the radio', *l'America* (cf. Restivo 2019). Sometimes mis-segmentation simply reflects failure to observe spelling conventions, as is often the case in compounds (e.g., *ferro via*, *messo giorno*, *mano dopra*, *sotto scritto* for *ferrovia* 'railway', *mezzogiorno* 'midday, south', *manodopera* 'workforce', *sottoscritto* 'undersigned'), where the writer actually reveals their awareness of the internal constituent structure of the word.

Some spelling mistakes reflect the dialectal or regional substrate and therefore may differ according to region. These may involve: voicing (*guasi*, *londano*, *moldo*, *momendo*, *niende*, *sembre* for *quasi* 'almost', *lontano* 'far', *molto* 'very, much', *momento* 'moment', *niente* 'nothing', *sempre* 'always') and devoicing (for example in Rabito 2007 we find *manciare*, *raciuncere*, *piancere* for *mangiare* 'eat', *raggiungere* 'reach', *piangere* 'weep'); hypercorrections (e.g., northern *oci*, *supito*, *pono*, *viacio* for *oggi* 'today', *subito* 'immediately', *buono* 'good', *viaggio* 'journey'); palatalizations of the sequences -[nj]- and -[lj]- (e.g., *aglievo*, *Emiglio*, *Itaglia*, *gnente*, *oglio* for *allievo* 'pupil', *Emilio*, *Italia* 'Italy', *niente* 'nothing', *olio* 'oil'

and hypercorrect *familia* for *famiglia* ‘family’); the appearance of an affricate in /ls/ and /ns/ sequences and corresponding hypercorrections (e.g., *falzo* [faltso], *giunze*, *perzone*, *penziero* for *falso* ‘false’, *giunse* ‘s/he arrived’, *perzone* ‘persons’, *pensiero* ‘thought’; but also *sensa*, *balso*, *scherso* for *senza* ‘without’, *balzo* ‘bounce’, *scherzo* ‘joke’).

However, recent studies on *italiano popolare* have shown comprehensively that such interference of phonetic factors in spelling is recurrent in writing from different historical periods and geographical areas and has little correlation with the type of text (Fresu 2016b:329). The kind of spelling mistakes that are made in certain crucial areas of Italian orthography, and remain to this day socially stigmatized, are therefore found generally. While *h* may be omitted, especially in the forms of the verb *avere* that begin with *h* (*anno visto* for *hanno visto* ‘they have seen’, but also *ance* for *anche* ‘as well’), there is also incorrect spelling of the velar /k/ (and sometimes /g/) as *ch* (and *gh*): this arises because *ch* and *gh*, which standardly represent /k/ and /g/ when immediately followed by a front vowel (e.g., *anche* [anke] ‘also’, *chi* ‘who’, *alghe* [alge] ‘seaweed’, *laghi* [lagi] ‘lakes’), are reinterpreted as general indicators of the velar sound, yielding improper spellings such as *anchora*, *chome*, *chasa*, *chosa*; *bottegha*, *ghuida* for *ancora* ‘still’, *come* ‘like’, *casa* ‘house’, *cosa* ‘thing’, *bottega* ‘shop’, *guida* ‘guide’, but also hypercorrect *bosci*, *sugero* for *boschi* ‘woods’, *sughero* ‘cork tree’. One also finds, for /kw/, incorrect *qu* instead of *cu* before vowels and vice versa (e.g., *perquoteva*, *quore*, *squola* for *percuoteva* ‘struck’, *cuore* ‘heart’, *scuola* ‘school’ but *cueste*, *cuotidiano*, *scuisita* for *queste* ‘these’, *quotidiano* ‘daily’, *squisita* exquisite’) and *cie* where standard spelling requires *ce* (e.g., *ciento*, *diciembre*, *dicie*, *facievi*, *pacie* for *cento* ‘hundred’, *dicembre* ‘December’, *dice* ‘says’, *facevi* ‘you were doing’, *pace* ‘peace’). Digraphic spellings where two or more letters represent one sound are also problematic, especially for the sounds [ʎː] and [ɲː], e.g., *fogla*, *molie/mogle*, *mugniaio*, *spagniolo*, *ongnuno* for *foglia* ‘leaf’, *moglie* ‘wife’, *mugnaio* ‘miller’, *spagnolo* ‘Spanish’, *ognuno* ‘each one’. A frequent source of error at all periods of *italiano popolare* and still easily observable today is the confusion of the letters *n* and *m* before a labial consonant, e.g., *banbino*, *ganba*, *inpossibile*, *tenpo* for *bambino* ‘child’, *gamba* ‘leg’, *impossibile*, *tempo* ‘time’. The rendering of double consonants, also

influenced by the locally underlying varieties, is a further pitfall for writers with an imperfect command of complex rules of spelling. Double consonants may be shortened to single consonants, but single consonants may also be wrongly rendered as double, especially by writers from northern Italy, e.g., *canotiera*, *Giovani*, *quela*, *scrito*, *viagiare*, *zuchero*; *angello*, *avvessero*, *segretto* for *canottiera* 'vest', *Giovanni*, *quella* 'that', *scritto* 'written', *viaggiare* 'to travel', *zucchero* 'sugar'; *angelo* 'angel', *avessero* 'they had$_{\text{IPFV.SBJV}}$', *segreto* 'secret'. More generally, there are tendencies to simplify consonant clusters, which may reflect pronunciation (*atro* for *altro* 'other') or be merely graphical, as occurs in the widespread omission of nasals (e.g., *comiciato*, *quado*, *voletieri*, *traquilo* for *cominciato* 'begun', *quando* 'when', *volentieri* 'willingly', *tranquillo* 'quiet'). Particularly in texts produced by Italian emigrants abroad the relative lack of double consonants (graphic or phonetic) in the languages already spoken in the areas where they have settled may have amplified the effects of the consonant shortening already characteristic of northern Italian dialects (cf. Salvatore 2017:132). A constant factor is the need to avoid complex sequences of sounds, which may be alien to the Italian system, and are adapted in written texts by anaptyxis or epithesis (*difiterite* for *difterite* 'diphtheria', *sepolchero* for *sepolcro* 'tomb', *gasse* for *gas*).

The *semicolti* generally feel written accents to be redundant features, whose function in communicating the message is barely perceived by the writer (cf. Hans-Bianchi 2005:197f.). Misuse of accents and apostrophes is therefore common (e.g., *e'*, *perche'*, *rispondera'* for *è* 'is', *perché* 'because; why', *risponderà* 'will answer'), and they tend to be interchangeable (and are still detectable in modern digital writings, especially where the autocorrect function fails to operate), and may be frequently omitted (*e*, *cosi*, *novita*, *perche*, *piu*, *pero*, *ne* for *è* 'is', *così* 'thus', *novità* 'news', *perché* 'because; why', *più* 'more', *però* 'however', *né* 'nor') or applied when not required by the norm (e.g., *c'èra*, *cèrta*, *Giorgètto* for *c'era* 'there was', *certa* 'certain', *Giorgetto*), even sometimes contradicting the stress pattern of the word (e.g., *iò*, *contentà*, *vistà*, *erò* for *io* 'I', *contenta* 'happy', *vista* 'seen', *ero* 'I was'). These forms are clearly influenced by the large number of Italian nouns in *-tà*, such as *società* 'society', and verb-forms in *-ò* such as *farò* 'I will do'. Capital letters, when not used quite haphazardly, may be overused

'reverentially', in words considered to merit particular respect, although they can even appear in the middle of a word which must purely be a matter of poor knowledge of spelling. On the other hand, we may find lower case letters used for capitals when the latter are required, such as after a full stop or for a person's name or a place name. Punctuation marks generally tend to be lacking, but may also appear in incoherent or redundant ways: incompetent use of punctuation (Cortelazzo 1972:119–123 talks of actual 'punctuational bewilderment') mainly involves commas and full stops, but can extend to question marks and exclamation marks, whose precise function in a text is often a matter of confusion.

37.2.2 Morphology

D'Achille (1994:69) holds that morphology, as well as syntax, is less affected by dialectal interference, but there is a clearer tendency to simplification and analogy, and these contribute to the overall unity of certain features typically described as prototypical of, albeit not exclusive to, *italiano popolare*.

A tendency towards uniformity is mostly visible in the regularization of noun and adjective paradigms. One sees the emergence of systems mainly based on just two inflexional endings in nouns and adjectives, through generalization of the more productive endings *-o* (masculine singular), *-a* (feminine singular), *-i* (masculine plural), *-e* (feminine plural), e.g., masculine singular *analfabeto* 'illiterate' for *analfabeta*, *ferroviero* 'pertaining to railways' for *ferroviere*, *interesso* 'interest' for *interesse*, *grando* 'big' for *grande*; feminine singular *moglia* 'wife' for *moglie*, *pella* 'skin' for *pelle*, *saluta* 'health' for *salute*, *granda* 'big' for *grande*; masculine plural *auti* 'cars' for *auto* (see §9.4.1), *camioni* 'lorries' for *camion*; feminine plural *lenzuole* 'sheets' for *lenzuola*, *uove* 'eggs' for *uova*, *mane* 'hands' for *mani*; *cose inutile* 'useless things' for *cose inutili*.[12] This tendency may owe something to the fact that inflexional gender-marking is often neutralized in dialects by the historical loss of most final unstressed vowels in northern dialects, and by their frequent merger as [ə] in upper southern dialects. A similar tendency to morphological uniformity is seen in the use of

the definite and indefinite articles: the masculine definite articles, singular *il* and plural *i*, tend to replace *lo, l'*, and *gli* (*il svizzero* for *lo svizzero* 'the Swiss (man)', *il zio* for *lo zio* 'the uncle', *il indirizzo* for *l'indirizzo* 'the address', which also reflects dialectal usage in the north; cf. Salvatore 2017:157n349), and masculine plural *i* for *gli* (*i scrutini* for *gli scrutini* 'the scrutinies', *i stranieri* for *gli stranieri* 'the foreigners'; *dei amici* for *degli amici* 'of the friends') and masculine singular indefinite *un* per *uno* (*un sbaglio* 'a mistake', *un spazio* 'a space'); in the south one may also find signs of the exclusive use of masculine singular *lo* for *il* (*lo soldato* 'the soldier', *lo pacchetto* 'the parcel'). Also frequent is the uses of the third-person possessive adjective *suo* (which in the standard language marks a single possessor) instead of *loro* 'their' (one also finds the type *suo di lui* '*suo* of him', 'his', and *suo di loro* '*suo* of them', 'their'; cf. Berruto 1983:47).

One major aspect, well represented both diatopically and diachronically, is 'pronominal redundance', whereby a clitic pronoun doubles a stressed pronoun, contrary to the general rule of standard Italian which excludes such 'redundant' pronominal marking: e.g., *scriverti a te* for *scrivere a te* 'to write to *you*' or *scriverti* 'to write to you', *te ti conosco* for *conosco te* 'I know *you*' or *ti conosco* 'I know you'. Also extensively attested is the use of *ci* as a dative clitic. While in the standard language this word is either a locative clitic (e.g., *ci vado* 'I go there') or a first-person plural object clitic (*ci vede* 'she sees us', *ci scrive* 'she writes to us'), it can also mean 'to him', 'to her', or 'to them' (and even 'to you' when it stands for the polite address pronoun *Lei*): *sua moglie ci diceva* 'his wife was saying to him', *ci ho raccontato* 'I recounted to them', *voi ce li potete dare* 'you can give them to them'. This use of *ci* seems marked as 'northern or southern' (D'Achille 2022a:136). The 'all-purpose' clitic (Berruto 1983:58) *ci* is liable to be used redundantly as a pronoun (*a coloro che ci devo* lit. 'to those that I owe them') or as an actualizing reinforcer in combination with the verb *avere* 'to have' (*ce* [= *ci*] *avrete un compito da fare* for *avrete un compito da fare* 'you will have a task to do'). In some texts, the third-person reflexive clitic pronoun *si* may be used instead of *ci* as a first-person plural object clitic (*si sposeremo* for *ci sposeremo* 'we will marry', *si vedevamo* for *ci vedevamo* 'we saw each other', *si dobbiamo rassegnare* for *ci dobbiamo rassegnare* 'we must resign ourselves'), which is part of a

more general incorrect use of pronouns (*ti mi ai spedito* for *tu mi hai spedito* 'you sent to me'; *fra io e sua figlia* for *fra me e sua figlia* 'between me and his daughter'). The ordering of clitics may sometimes deviate from the standard order: e.g., *non si ci vede* for *non ci si vede* 'we don't see one another'. In central Italy in particular, and as can be heard in modern spoken language, there is generalization of the masculine singular indirect object clitic *gli* instead of feminine *le* (*per paura che non gli arrivasse* 'for fear that it would not get to her'), with occasional hypercorrections in the opposite direction (see further Fresu 2014:213): *ho incontrato tuo zio e le ho ridato i soldi* 'I met your uncle and I gave him all the money'.

Marking of superlatives and comparatives by analytic rather than synthetic structures tends to increase (e.g., *più buono* 'more good' for *migliore*; *più bene* 'more well' for *meglio*), and the new analytic and standard synthetic forms may co-occur (*il più migliore* lit. 'the most better', *il più grandissimo* lit. 'the most biggest', *le più bellissime fidanzate* lit. 'the most prettiest girlfriends') as may reinforced forms of the superlative (*assai fortissimo* lit. 'very strongest/most strong'). Particularly in central and southern areas there is notable adverbial use of adjectives instead of morphological adverbs: *va molto migliore* for *va molto meglio* 'it goes much better', *si vive un po difficile* for *si vive un po' difficilmente* 'we live rather difficultly'. The use of an adjective as an adverb, such as *sono arrivato facile* lit. 'I arrived easy', is an important point of contact with modern informal spoken language.

Poor control of prepositions is common (cf. Berruto 1983:50); they may be confused, improperly inserted, or improperly omitted with infinitives (*costretto di pagare* for *costretto a pagare* 'bound to pay', *fareste meglio di non fare questo* for *fareste meglio a non fare questo* 'you would do better not to do this'; *è impossibile di andare* for *è impossibile andare* 'it is impossible to go'; *Mi manca terminare la successione* for *Mi manca di terminare la successione* 'I still have to end the succession', *Se Olga continua andare bene* for *Se Olga continua a andare bene* 'If Olga continues to go well').

As for the verb, interference from the dialects is behind the widespread confusion of auxiliary verbs *avere* 'have' and *essere* 'be': *avevano stati* for *erano stati* 'they had been', *gli avrebbe piaciuto venire* for *gli sarebbe piaciuto venire* 'he would have liked to come';

ti sono spedito for *ti ho spedito* 'I have sent to you', *sono parlato* for *ho parlato* 'I have spoken'. It is also a factor in the use of auxiliary *avere* 'have' in verbs with clitic reflexive pronouns: e.g., *si ha lavato* for *si è lavato* 'he washed himself'. Particularly noticeable are analogical forms, notably in the subjunctive, such as: *vadi* for *vada* 'go$_{\text{PRS.SBJV.3SG}}$', *facci* for *faccia* 'do$_{\text{PRS.SBJV.3SG}}$', *venghino* for *vengano* 'come$_{\text{PRS.SBJV.3PL}}$', *dasse* for *desse* 'give$_{\text{IPFV.SBJV.3SG}}$', *potiamo* for *possiamo* 'can$_{\text{SBJV.1PL}}$'. Also present indicative *potemo* for *possiamo* 'we can', preterite *misimo* for *mettemmo* 'we put' and past participles such as *faciuto* for *fatto* 'done', *pungiuto* for *punto* 'pricked'.

37.2.3 Syntax and text structure

On the macrosyntactic level, the writing of the *semicolti* tends to be characterized by paratactic structure, probably the result both of limited linguistic abilities and of interference from spoken language. Main clauses are mainly joined by certain basic and constantly repeated connectors,[13] such as *così* 'thus', *allora* 'then', *dunque* 'then', but also *e* 'and' used as a 'generic coordinator' (Palermo 1990:427) which can also act as an adversative or conclusive marker (*L'altro giorno sono stata di nuovo al console Italiano per molti problema che sto passando a riguardo gli inquilini e non mi danno nessun aiuto* 'The other day I went to the Italian consul again for lots of problems that I am going through with respect to the tenants and they don't give me any help'; *Ho passato un fine di anno anch'io con problema prima con un attacche di fegato in base al sistema nervoso che cio e vivo con pastiglie* 'I spent an end of the year too with a problem first with the liver attack on the basis of the nervous system that I've got and I live on pills'). There is also a good deal of juxtaposition of sentences which are largely brief and monorhematic. *Semicolti* writers rarely resort to hypotaxis; when it is used, constructions involving more than one degree of subordination are hard to find. Syntax appears generally disjointed and lacking in 'interphrasal connectives' (Berruto 1987a:193), and tends to follow the pattern of oral discourse. The problems of marshalling reported speech lead to a predilection for direct speech although this is

generally not introduced by appropriate punctuation, such as commas, inverted commas, and hyphens.

There is a general reduction in the range of tense and mood forms used, particularly in the use of the subjunctive, as happens extensively in modern spoken language: *credo che dovete restituire* with indicative for subjunctive *credo che dobbiate restituire* 'I think you have to give back', *che Iddio vi accompagna* for *che Iddio vi accompagni* 'may God go with you'. There is also confusion between imperfect subjunctives and conditionals: *Vi ho voluto scrivere questi pochi righi tanto per darvi notizie se no non avesse scritto* for *Vi ho voluto scrivere questi pochi righi tanto per darvi notizie se no non avrei scritto* 'I wanted to write these few lines to you just to give you some news, otherwise I would not have written', together with a rather patchy use of the passive (cf. D'Achille 1994:72). Hypothetical sentences quite often contain double conditionals (*se saresti tu al posto mio, faresti la stessa cosa* lit. 'if you would be in my position, you'd do the same thing' rather than *se fossi tu . . .* with the imperfect subjunctive) or indicative + conditional (*se quello è di taglio allora parlereste con Don M.* for *se quello fosse di taglio allora parlereste con Don M.* 'if that were the right cut then you would speak to Don M.) and vice versa (*se per caso i nostri animali ci vorrebbero troppo tempo allora vi farete aiutare anche col mulo di G.* lit. 'if by any chance our animals would take too much time then you will get yourselves helped by G's mule too'), but also with a double subjunctive (*mi dispacesse* [= *dispiacesse*]*; se moresse* 'it would upset me if he died', for standard conditional + imperfect subjunctive *mi dispiacerebbe se morisse*), the distribution varying according to local dialectal substrate.

A major feature, found across southern Italy and even in writers who have a moderate command of the language, perhaps relatable to phenomena characteristic of regional Italian (cf. Berretta 1993:96), is represented by constructions in which animate direct objects are introduced by the preposition *a*: *aiutarvi a voi* lit. 'to help to you', *rivedervi a tutti* lit. 'to see you again to all', 'to see you all again', *venire a conoscere a Bruna* lit. 'to get to know to Bruna', *vede piangere a me* lit. 'he sees cry to me', 'he sees me cry'. There are also frequent cases of failure to make the past participle agree in number and gender with the subject where this would be required in the standard language (e.g., *non so se ella è arrivato* with masculine

singular agreement for *non so se ella sia arrivata* 'I don't know whether she arrived' with feminine singular agreement). This is especially the case in those parts of southern Italy where such agreement is obscured in the dialects because of phonological neutralization of the distinction between word-final unstressed vowels.

The well-known hallmark of the writing of the *semicolti* is the almost systematic use of 'polyvalent *che*' in relative clauses (*sono cose che si potrebbero fare a meno* for *sono cose di cui si potrebbero fare a meno* 'they are things that one could do without'; *Quale ci doveva dire io, che nel zaino mio non aveva niente?* 'What was I supposed to say [about the fact] that in my backpack I had nothing'; cf. Volpi 2014:93), in a manner also quite typical of modern speech, involving reduction of the paradigm of relative pronouns to a single element, *che*. More generally, the 'polyvalent *che*' serves as a generic introducer of subordinate clauses, such as temporals (*ma sempre non era come prima, che c'era più miseria* for *ma sempre non era come prima, quando c'era più miseria* 'but still it was not like before, when there was more misery'), consecutives (*se per caso vi mangano i francobolli me lo saprete a dire che ve li rimanderò* for *se per caso vi mancano i francobolli me lo saprete dire e ve li rimanderò* 'if you don't have enough stamps you will be able to tell me *che* and [then] I'll send them back to you'), or causals (*vi prenderete consiglio da qualche mastro muratore che lui sarebbe in grado di dirvi dove sarebbe più conveniente* 'you'll take advice from some master builder *che lui* [lit. 'who he', i.e., *che* 'who'] would be able to tell you where would be most appropriate'). *Che* may sometimes be left out, both in its function as a relative 'who, which' and as a complementizer 'that' (*Ho dovuto andare dall'oculista mi ha dato delle cure* lit. 'I had to go to the optician gave me some medicines'; *Sai bene devo farmi tutto in casa* lit. 'You know well I have to do everything for myself in the house'). The 'polyvalent *che*', more as a connector than a relative pronoun, may be used to marshal longer, cumulative sentences (*cominciamo a vedere qualche barella che portavino ferite a un'auto bulanza—che c'era una strada carrozabile—che queste ferite di queste barelle, li prenteva e li portavino allo spedale verso Vicenza* 'we begin to see a few stretchers that they were carrying wounded people to an ambulance-*che* there was a carriageable road-*che* these wounded people on these stretchers, it took them and they

carried them to the hospital towards Vicenza' (Rabito 2007:48). At the same time one may observe: muddling of analytic and synthetic constructions (*ho ricevuto la lettera che con la quale mi dici che stai bene* lit. 'I got the letter *che* with which you tell me you are well'); the use of relatives *il quale/la quale* not preceded by a preposition (*la tua lettera la quale mi sono rallegrato* 'your letter which I was delighted (about)' for *la tua lettera della quale mi sono rallegrato*) and the reinforcing use of *che* after a subordinating conjunction (*quando che* 'when (that)', *siccome che* 'since (that)', *dove che* 'where (that)'),[14] which is sometimes even adopted as 'generic connector' equivalent to the generic *che* (*capisco la quale stai bene* 'I understand that you are well' for *capisco che stai bene*) or, in some areas, as a connector marking causality/sequentiality, particularly replacing *per cui* (*dandoli 2 schiaffi la quale lo punisco* 'giving him two slaps, as a result of which I am punishing him' for *dandogli due schiaffi per cui lo punisco*); overextension of *dove* as relative adverb (*ti mando la ricetta, dove ti spiega tutte le medicine* 'I am sending you the prescription, where it explains to you all the medicines').

There are numerous examples of *ad sensum* agreement, particularly between a grammatically singular collective subject, such as *la gente* 'people' and plural verb-forms (*molta gente dicono* 'many people say', *la gente che erano in chiesa* 'the people who were in church'), clearly showing how in texts written by the *semicolti* semantics may prevail over syntax (D'Achille 1994:71): the same type of phenomenon may be seen in such things as the anomalous plural agreement of *nessuno* which, literally meaning 'not one', should occur only in the singular (e.g., *nessune idee* 'no$_{\text{FPL.}}$ ideas' for singular *nessuna idea*), or the agreement of forms that should be invariant, such as adverbial *tanto* or the preposition *presso in* (*tanti lontani* 'so$_{\text{MPL.}}$ distant$_{\text{MPL.}}$' *pressi* $_{\text{MPL.}}$ *i soldati* 'by the soldiers'). There is also frequent use of *c'è* 'there is' with plural subjects (*non c'è giornali* lit. 'there is no newspapers').

A typical characteristic, reflecting spoken and informal usage, is left- and right-dislocation, with clitic doubling (see cross-reference . . .) of the dislocated elements (e.g., *Quinte io mi la spetava, questa ponezione* lit. 'So I was expecting it, this punishment'). Equally frequent are leaps of logic, and sentences with hanging themes, where the logical subject, as the thematic nucleus, is put in prime

position at the start of the sentence and then followed by everything that revolves around the subject (*voialtri bisogna aprire bene gli occhi* lit. 'you it is necessary to open (your) eyes well'; *anche noi di pasta ce ne è poca* lit. 'we too of pasta there is little'; also the type: *sono stanco, sono* lit. 'I am tired, I am'; cf. Cortelazzo 1972:139).

Italiano popolare shows textual characteristics which pertain to spoken language: notably writers' difficulties in organizing what they have to say and hierarchically organizing the content (cf. D'Achille 1994:74). A related characteristic is a poor command of punctuation (cf. §37.2.1). Written documents are most redolent of spontaneous conversation where thematic coherence is concerned, as is shown by the frequent cases in which the subject is abandoned only to be picked up again later on. Other features of distinctly oral origin are frequent optative phrases (such as *se Dio vuole* 'God willing', *se Dio mi concede la salute* 'if God grants me health'), rhetorical questions, colloquial expressions, as well as some fillers (*per dire* 'so to say', *non so* 'I don't know', *guarda* 'look', *vedi* 'see') and conclusion markers typical of speech (*e basta* lit. 'and that's enough', *e niente* lit. 'and nothing', *e pazienza* lit. 'and patience'). Division into paragraphs is generally absent. Textual organization is inadequate and approximate: openings and closings of utterances or parts thereof tend to depend on repetitive formulae, which have been persistent diachronically (cf. D'Achille 1994:75). Rudimentary attempts to give structure to the text may be glimpsed in the repeated use of highly stereotypical discourse particles and formulae (*allora* 'then', *ancora* 'still', *così* 'thus', *dunque* 'therefore', *infine* 'in the end', *magari* 'maybe', *per la verità* 'in truth', *a riguardo di* 'with regard to', *per il fatto di* 'by the fact of', *sono contento di/che* 'I am happy about/that').

In general, the language of the *semicolti* ignores the importance of diaphasic variation and *italiano popolare* is one-dimensional (D'Achille 1994:75). Even when the writer seems to be trying to adhere to a medium register, their usage reflects the influence of models perceived as prestigious (first and foremost bureaucratic language) in a clumsy and inappropriate way. Words from the most elevated style rub shoulders with popular terms, or writers resort to bureaucratic formulae and proverbial expressions. Attempts to construct more ambitious sentences lead to a complete syntactic collapse (Berruto 1987a:176).

Ellipses and omissions are frequent, mainly of verbs but also of articles and prepositions. Marked constructions and dislocations may have an essentially thematizing role. Repetitions of key terms serve a similar function, and they can paper over some of the cracks in the writer's linguistic skills by providing a degree of textual cohesion. Yet some writers also try hard to lend a better structure to their text as is indicated by their use of periphrases and synonyms.

The constant references to the context favour abundant use of 'exophoric' deictics, which link the utterance to the situation. Recurrent deictics and demonstratives, reflecting the dominance of allocutionary language, are particularly characteristic of letter-writing, especially in the letters of emigrants and First World War prisoners of war (cf. particularly Bozzola 2013:54–57).

Let us take for example a passage from *Terra Matta* by Rabito (2007). The editor's note to this work, written between 1969 and 1975, states that its close depiction of Sicily makes it a popular work on a par with Lampedusa's *Il Gattopardo*. Separation of words, punctuation, division into chapters and paragraphs, and the addition of some material in italics, reflect the intervention of the editors, but the textual structure can still be analysed on the basis of thematic blocs within the *continuum* of the work. In the following passage, the narrator recounts the laborious process of learning the language.

> Io e mio fratello Ciovanni erimo inafabeto, perché alla scuola non ci avemmo potuto antare, però, con la boca che ci avemmo, nessuno si lo poteva credere che erimo inafabeto. Così, diciammo che solo con una crante querra potevino respetare ai lavoratori. Io e Ciovanni erimo forte socialiste, ma non sapemmo né lleggire, né scrivere, e passava questa mincia, Solo la cente potiemmo sentire parlare e c'imparammo qualche cosa per mezzo della cente.
>
> [. . .]
>
> Così io, quanto vedeva il libro di mia sorella che antava alla scuola, mi veneva la voglia di cominciare a fare 'a, i, u'. Quinte, cercava di ampararеme qualche vocale e li numira. E così, piano piano, quanto una volta ho fatto un nume di ummio compagno di lavoro che si chiamava Vivera, e io quanto sono stato capace affare 'Vivera', mi ha parsso che avesse preso il terno! E così, piano piano, senza esserre prodetto di nessuno, fra poche mese mi sono imparato a capire cosa vol dire la scuola e conoscire i numira. (p. 15)
>
> Standard Italian version: 'Io e mio fratello Giovanni eravamo analfabeti, perché non eravamo potuti andare a scuola, però con la parlantina che avevamo nessuno poteva credere che fossimo analfabeti. Così dicevamo che solo con una grande guerra potevano rispettare i lavoratori. Io e Giovanni eravamo molto socialisti, ma non sapevamo né leggere né scrivere e non serviva una minchia. Potevamo soltanto sentire parlare la gente e imparavamo qualche cosa per mezzo della gente.

> [. . .] Così io quando vedevo il libro di mia sorella che andava a scuola, mi veniva la voglia di cominciare a scrivere “a, i, u”. Quindi cercavo di imparare qualche vocale e i numeri. E così, piano piano, quando una volta ho scritto un nome di un mio compagno di lavoro che si chiamava Vivera, e io quando sono stato capace di scrivere Vivera, mi è sembrato di aver vinto un terno al lotto. E così, piano piano, senza essere protetto da nessuno, in pochi mesi ho imparato a capire che cosa vuol dire la scuola e a conoscere i numeri’.
>
> My brother and I were illiterate, because we weren’t able to go to school, but with the way with words that we had nobody could believe that we were illiterate. So we said that only with a great war could they respect the workers. Giovanni and I were very socialist, but we didn’t know how to read or write and it was no damned use. We could only hear people speaking and we learned a bit through people.
>
> [. . .] So when I saw the book of my sister who went to school, I had the urge to begin to write ‘a, i, u’. So I tried to learn a few vowels and the numerals. And so, gradually, once I wrote a name of a workmate of mine who was called Vivera, and when I was able to write Vivera, it felt as if I’d won the lottery. And so, gradually, without anyone protecting me, in a few months I learned to understand what it means to go to school and learn numbers.

The aim is to give a simple account to everyone of the writer’s own life experiences, leaving out elements considered unimportant, dropping in thoughts, bits of direct speech, sayings and proverbs. All the typical phenomena of speech are there: ellipsis, contrapositions, and *ad sensum* constructions, but without wandering off the subject, indicating that the writer does have control over what they are writing. The written text, segmented into short periods, comprises story and comment, memories and argumentations. Periods, made up of essential elements linked by subordinating conjunctions (*perché* ‘because’), adversatives (*però* ‘however’), and connectors (*così* ‘thus’, *quindi* ‘therefore’), as well as reprises (*E così, piano piano*, ‘And so, gradually’, with an adverbial phrase showing attention to consequentiality).

37.2.4 Lexicon and word formation

The lexicon particularly shows the widespread use of dialectalisms and regionalisms, due either to the fact that the writer does not know the corresponding Italian term or to the lack of a corresponding Italian term. Examples (Rabito 2007) are words such as *scecco* ‘donkey’, *aferarse* ‘come to blows’, *scepare* ‘rip’, *trazzéra* ‘dirt road’, *caruso* ‘boy’, *sperto* ‘sly’, *travagliare* ‘work’, *racìna* ‘grape’, *bordonaro* ‘mulatier’. In the text produced by emigrants there are

numerous cases of interference from local languages: on the basis of Spanish, for example, we have cases of morphological Italianization such as *disprezza* 'insults' (< Sp. *desprecios*), *buscare* 'look for' (< Sp. *buscar*), *invitazione* 'invitation' (< Sp. *invitación*); adaptation of prefixes as in *disfogarsi* 'let off steam' (< Sp. *desfogarse*), *ripentirsi* 'repent' (< *arrepentirse*); blends between an Italian word and its Italian equivalent: *abastande* 'sufficiently' (from *abbastanza* + Sp. *bastante*), *agradire* 'appreciate' (from *gradire* for Sp. *agradar*), *norde* 'north' (from *nord* for Sp. *norte*; cf. Palermo 1990:420). For texts from southern Italy, one may note the widespread use, particularly in the writings of emigrants in the Spanish-speaking world, of the verb *tenere* 'hold' as the lexical verb meaning 'have',[15] as well as that of *stare* 'stand' instead of *essere* 'be'.

Malapropisms are generally considered a unifying phenomenon. They particularly appear in words of foreign origin (*palché* for 'parquet') and technical terms (*affetto* for *effetto* 'effect'; *altrite* for *artrite* 'arthritis'; *ampotestare* for *protestare* 'protest'; *celebre*, literally 'famous', for *celibe* 'ummarried'; *febbrite* 'phlebitis' for *flebite* with contamination from *febbre* 'fever'; *laura* literally 'Laura' for *laurea* 'university degree'; *ottomobile* for *automobile* 'car'). Many malapropisms arise through the misapplication of suffixes (e.g., *ignoranzità* for *ignoranza* 'ignorance') and prefixes (*indifficile* for *difficile* 'difficult'), or by deleting them (*finimento* for *sfinimento* 'exhaustion'; *contentare* for *accontentare* 'to content'). In this field we should also mention the productivity of zero suffixation (*prolungo* for *prolungamento*, 'prolongation', *spiega* for *spiegazione* 'explanation') and the addition of extra morphemes (*tranquillizanti* for *tranquillanti* 'tranquillizers'). Even outside the technical lexicon similar errors can be found in the writing of modern university students faced with uncommon words and derivational morphemes (*alterezza* or *alterità* for *alterigia* 'haughtiness', *analicità* for *analiticità* 'analyticity', *pinguità* for *pinguedine* 'stoutness').[16]

Generic and polysemous words are widespread (*brutto* 'nasty', *bello* 'nice', *cattivo* 'bad', *cosa* 'thing', *roba* 'stuff') as are constructions using the light verbs *dare* 'give' and *fare* 'do'. Complex meanings may be expressed by simpler analytic constructions (Berruto 1983:64): *fare sangue* lit. 'do blood', 'bleed', *fare un'emigrazione* lit. 'do an emigration', 'emigrate'; *prendere una sbornia* lit. 'do a booze-up', 'get drunk'; *ammalato nella testa* lit.

'sick in the head', 'mad'. There are widespread expressive popular forms and meanings *botta* 'slap, bang', *macello* lit. 'slaughterhouse', 'disaster', *lavoro* or *mestiere* lit. 'work' or 'trade' for 'mess, botch-up', *carte* lit. 'papers', 'documents', all attesting to a predilection for words with concrete meaning (cf. Berruto 1983:63); the numerous bureaucratic expressions arising from improper imitation of a model perceived to be particularly prestigious (e.g., *come vi ho detto nella precedente* 'as I told you in the previous [letter]', *prima di fare l'anzi detto* 'before doing the aforementioned'). In some texts, the verbal outbursts of the writers can be downright abusive (*schifosa patria* 'revolting country', *la troia della patria* lit. 'the sow of a country').[17]

37.3 *Italiano popolare* today

As Berruto (2012c:129) points out, *italiano popolare* boils down to three fundamental characteristics: (a) extralinguistic, (b) sociolinguistic (variational), (c) internal. On the basis of the modern-day situation, there is general agreement that *italiano popolare* is a basically historical phenomenon which tends to be considered as no longer surviving today (cf. Cortelazzo 2001): nowadays what one finds is, rather, an *ordinary Italian* which 'has, in a sense, succeeded popular Italian but lost the sub-standard connotations of the latter' (Lepschy 2002:66). Some still acknowledge its existence, at least in the form of a 'spoken diastratically low variety' (Berruto 2005). However that may be, many situations today seem a far cry from those typical of the rise of writing by the *semicolti* a few decades ago. As Fresu (2014:217–223) shows, we have to consider the radical transformation in diastratic contexts: the progressive extension of compulsory education opened up, albeit minimum, education which had long been inaccessible to wide swathes of the population. The once quite natural association between being a *semicolto* and a dialect speaker disappeared: traits typical of the *semicolti* nowadays appear in texts produced by Italian-speaking writers, mainly young people and quite often in possession of a medium to high level of education. Text types have also undergone substantial change, leading to an appreciable broadening of the audience at which they

are aimed: the dialect-speaking, uneducated, old people of yore focused exclusively on writing for private purposes, while today's *semicolti* will write even for the public. Instead of autobiographies, diaries, and letters, we find today mainly electronic and professional correspondence, but also formal texts of various lengths and even university theses (Malagnini 2007; Gualdo 2010), aimed no longer at the domestic and private sphere, but at the world of work, business, and bureaucracy (Telmon 1990), in addition to that of higher education.

The different starting points, both for those generating texts and the texts they produce, have made *italiano popolare* (or what is left of it) a much less well-defined phenomenon than it was in the past. As the dialects are substantially eroded, there is a progressive narrowing of the gap between written and spoken language, whose boundaries seem increasingly fuzzy in the eyes of a considerable number of people writing.[18] The acceptance of many substandard features in writing (notably, the use of the double imperfect in hypothetical constructions, and dislocations, benefits today from an overall relaxation of the mechanisms of linguistic control and censure, which seems increasingly laissez-faire especially in syntax and text-structure).[19] Social stigmatization is more pervasive with regard to spelling. While there are many signs that the *italiano popolare* of yesterday and modern forms of writing are diverging, an important shared element remains writers' lack of mastery of diaphasic variation leading to texts which, today as in the past, mix features which rightly belong to different registers.

Bruni (1984:184) formed the view that it was actually schools which were the main producers of texts in *italiano popolare* in modern times, but it is hard to maintain that writing done at school (allowing for spelling mistakes, poverty of vocabulary, clumsy syntax, and unambitious text structure) are popular texts *stricto sensu*. As D'Achille (1994:78f.) observes, 'if yesterday's illiterates and semiliterates have today become *semicolti*, this is still a step forward whose positive aspects should be considered; the problem is getting beyond this phase', and that can be done precisely thanks to schools. This aspiration is also valid for an age, like the present one, characterized by a return of illiteracy and 'writing's progressive loss of ground to the [visual] image' (D'Achille 1994:79). Today, far more than in the final years of the twentieth century, this loss of ground is

becoming limited to traditional types of writing, rather than the new communication media.

A major split with regard to deviation from the norm, is actually to be seen in digital writing, especially in the modern communication tools of social networks: the language of the *web* is overall a barely policed form of writing, with characteristics closer to those of *italiano popolare* (cf. Stefinlongo 2002).[20] The massive spread of the new media has created new opportunities for writing (in telephone messages, email, postings within blogs and social networks) where previously one would have had to use oral communication. But it has also led to writing losing its elitist mystique (Antonelli 2014), with the consequent emergence of many substandard traits in contexts where there is little or no control. Conversely, today's *semicolto* basically possesses just 'e-taliano':[21] this is the only possibility for some writers, and it has been described as creating a ghetto and being socially inadequate (Lubello and Nobili 2018:58). In any case, it will be well to continue to distinguish between *italiano popolare* and the high-speed, slipshod, modes of digital messaging, especially given that 'thanks to new forms of telematic writing, Italian today is not only spoken but also written daily by the majority of Italians. And this for the first time in its history' (Antonelli, Motolese, and Tomasin 2014:13).

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[1] The Italian term *unitario*, translated here as 'unitary', means in the present context 'pertaining to a politically united Italy'.

[2] 'Il modo di esprimersi di un incolto, che sotto la spinta di comunicare e senza addestramento, maneggia quella che ottimisticamente si chiama la lingua "nazionale", l'italiano'.

[3] 'Il tipo di italiano imperfettamente acquisito da chi ha per madrelingua il dialetto'.

[4] On the language of emigrants, especially second- and third-generation emigrants, see Marzo (2015), whose research led her to doubt the long-standing assumption that *heritage italian* = *italiano popolare*.

[5] *Semicolto* is not easy to render into English and we will continue to use the Italian term in this chapter [editors' note].

[6] Lepschy (1989b:30) observes that in speech it is more difficult to tell what is popular from what is informal and colloquial, whereas writing can be directly compared with the

linguistic norm.

[7] In the original Italian of this chapter *aulico* 'aulic' [editors' note].

[8] According to Testa (2014:281) the invention of printing was decisive for the emergence and diffusion (by artisans' shops, convents, small country schools, Jesuit missions) of a common *italiano pidocchiale*. Trifone (2016:150), however, states that at no stage did a *semicolto* or popular Italian become 'common' to Italy while (Trifone 2018:1087) it is somewhat unlikely that a common language of Italians would have become established against a background of prevalent illiteracy and in the absence of any alternative source of Italianization comparable to schools: so getting by in understanding each other should be seen as something different from using a genuinely common language; indeed Trifone (2016) and Colombo (2014) remind us that in rural northern Italy, even at the beginning of the twentieth century, passive competence in Italian was still a good way off.

[9] The need to know the L2 favours knowledge of Italian itself, because comparisons are made between two languages (L1 and L2) and not between a dialect and L2 (cf. Salvatore 2017:97).

[10] Cf. particularly Fresu (2014:209–210); see also Berruto (1983:39–44; 2012a:127–162), Lepschy (1983), Mengaldo (1994:109f.), and D'Achille (1994:66; 2022a:112). For exemplification of linguistic phenomena particular attention has been paid also to different textual types of *italiano popolare*, such as Palermo (1990), Montanile (2002), Fresu (2005), Hans-Bianchi (2005), Cantoni and Perrella (2005–2006), Matt (2006), Fresu and Vignuzzi (2007), Vanelli (2009), Amenta (2012), Bianco (2013), Bianconi (2013), Bozzola (2013), Testa (2014), Volpi (2014), De Rosa (2017), Salvatore (2017), Binazzi (2019), Romano (2021b), and Scivoletto (2021); besides the work *Terra Matta* by Rabito (2007), already analysed by Amenta (2004) and Ruffino (2012b), in its original typescript form, entitled *Fontanazza*.

[11] On the concept of simplification, see particularly the classic studies by Berruto (1983; 1990b).

[12] But the situation is quite often uncertain: in Rabito (2007), for example, we find numerous cases of *-e* for *-i*, e.g., *solde* for *soldi* 'money'; *chilometre* for *chilometri* 'kilometres'; *amice* for *amici* 'friends'.

[13] However, different interpretations have been expressed by some pioneering studies on the issue. For Spitzer (1976:275) a widespread feature is the inability to structure a narrative in a concise and syntactically acceptable way, without endless repetition. But cf. also De Mauro (2014b:80–82).

[14] The result is the creation of a double complementizer (cf. Salvatore 2017:226–229).

[15] This is indeed a feature which Cortelazzo (1972:33f.) counts as a kind of regionalism capable, via *italiano popolare*, of crossing traditional boundaries, for example in the correspondence of northern Italian soldiers.

[16] Cf. Berretta (1991a). For derivational morphology in Italian one may begin with Dardano (2009).

[17] See also the report *Le parole per ferire*, edited by Tullio De Mauro, at https://www.internazionale.it/opinione/tullio-de-mauro/2016/09/27/razzismo-parole-ferire (last accessed July 2025).

[18] Coletti (2022: 476–482) points out that even today's literary language tends towards orality and informality, as well as the re-emergence of regional linguistic resources and substantial lowering on the diastratic and diaphasic scale.

[19] On the presence of substandardness in the modern linguistic repertory, cf. Fresu (2020). See also the considerations in Dardano and Frenguelli (2008:19–23).

[20] A more recent analysis of semi-educated people in the digital era is offered by Fresu (2016c). For web Italian one may start with Pistolesi (2022) and the references therein.

[21] For this see the various essays in Lubello (2016b), particularly that by Antonelli, to whom we owe the incisive definition of *e-taliano*.

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Chapter 38

Northern regional Italian

Diego Pescarini

38.1 Introduction

Northern regional Italian is the diatopic variant of Italian spoken in the basin of the river Po and surrounding mountain areas. Northern regional Italian differs from standard Italian (see Chapter 26) and from other regional varieties (see Chapters 39–41) in displaying linguistic traits that, in general, are typical of northern Italo-Romance dialects.[1]

Northern dialects (Benincà, Parry, and Pescarini 2016) share linguistic features with other western Romance varieties and, more specifically, with Gallo-Romance languages (whence the confusing term *Gallo-Italic*, referring to the subset of northern Italo-Romance dialects spoken in the areas—corresponding to present-day Piedmont, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, and, to a lesser extent, Liguria—that were colonized by Celtic tribes before the Romanization of northern Italy). In what follows, I will adopt a wide definition of northern (Italian) dialects, including Romance varieties spoken within the Italian territory that, from a classificatory standpoint, either belong to other linguistic areas—e.g., Francoprovençal (Kristol 2016) and Occitan (Oliviéri and Sauzet 2016)—or are claimed to form a sub-branch on their own, e.g., Friulian (Benincà and Vanelli 2016), dolomitic Ladin (Salvi 2016b). Some Tuscan varieties including modern Florentine exhibit traits that are typical of northern dialects *lato sensu*. Indeed, syntactic isoglosses such as that marking the presence/absence of subject clitics extend beyond the La Spezia-Rimini line, which is usually regarded as the southern border of the northern Italo-Romance area.

Northern Italian dialects exhibit a tendency to drop word-final unstressed vowels other than -*a*, e.g., Mil. [neˈut]~[neˈuda] ‘nephew’~‘niece’. The Gallo-Italic area and the dialects spoken along the Alpine ridge are more prone to losing final vowels and, to varying degrees, word-internal unstressed vowels, e.g., Bol. [ˈdmangɐ] < DOMĬNĬCAM ‘Sunday’. In southern Veneto and Liguria, by contrast, apocope is more constrained: certain vowels, usually -*e* and -*o*, are lost, but exclusively after single sonorants, e.g., Ver. [mel] < *[ˈmɛːle] ‘honey’ ~ [ˈmeze] < MĒNSEM ‘month’. Within the northern area above the La Spezia-Rimini line, long consonants are phonetically shortened. Degeminated voiceless obstruents remain stable (e.g., Tur. [maˈtiŋ] < MAT(U)TĪNA ‘morning’), while other obstruents are voiced (e.g., Tur. [kaˈdɛnɐ] < CATĒNAM ‘chain’), spirantize, or disappear in intervocalic position (Vnt. [kaˈena] ‘chain’). In terms of grammatical features, northern dialects are characterized by the presence of clitic subject pronouns with variable degrees of obligatoriness, e.g., Pad. **(el) parte* ‘SCL.MSG leave.3SG (= he leaves)’ *~ Mario (el) parte* ‘Mario (SCL.MSG) leave.3SG (= Mario leaves)’ ~ *(*el) parte Mario* ‘(SCL.MSG) leave.3SG Mario (= Mario leaves)’. Negation is expressed by various types of negative markers, including adverbs and particles that occur after the inflected verb, e.g., Mil. *capìsi no* ‘understand.1SG NEG’ ~ It. *non capisco* ‘NEG understand.1SG (= I do not understand)’. In the nominal domain, many northern dialects exhibit a dual series of prenominal and postnominal possessives, e.g., Ver. *el to libro* ‘the your book’ *~ el libro tùo* ‘the book your (= your book)’. Demonstratives, especially when used pronominally, are followed by deictic particles corresponding to HERE and THERE, e.g., Bol. [ʃta ˈdɔnɐ kwɛ] lit. ‘this woman (here)’. In the verbal domain, northern dialects have lost the *passato remoto*, i.e., the synthetic forms of the preterite encoding past punctual events and situations.

Some of these northern features are, in turn, blended with those of the Tuscan-based literary variety, namely ‘standard Italian’ (Chapter 26; see also §38.2), to yield northern regional Italian. Northern features are today found in various registers of northern regional Italian (see Chapters 28–29), including formal and, to a lesser extent, written usage. For instance, northern regional Italian differs from standard Italian in not employing the synthetic preterite

paradigm (the so-called *passato remoto*); interestingly, the absence of the preterite is a clear northern feature that results from contact between Italian and the dialectal adstratum/substratum. Nonetheless, the absence of the preterite is neither stigmatized, nor are northern speakers required to use the preterite in, for example, writing. Analogously, in phonology northern regional Italian lacks *rafforzamento sintattico* (namely, consonant gemination in external sandhi, e.g., *vado a* [rː]*oma* 'I go to Rome' vs NRIt. *vado a* [r]*oma* (cf. §14.6.2, §15.2.1.2.4). *Rafforzamento* is very sporadic also in univerbated forms, e.g., *da**cc**apo* 'from.head (= from the start)', *fa**bb**isogno* 'makes.need (= requirement)', *qua**ss**ù* 'here.up (= up here)', *caffe**ll**atte* 'coffee.milk (= coffee with milk)'; the predominant variants in northern regional Italian are in fact [daˈkapo], [faˈbizɔŋo], [kwaˈsu], and [kafeˈlatte]. This feature, just like the absence of the *passato remoto*, is found in every communicative domain and accepted as a possible pronunciation variant of standard Italian. Other features, which will be illustrated in the following sections, are perceived as more dialectal and therefore confined to informal registers.

The features introduced so far can be traced back directly to the dialects of northern Italy. A minority of northern regional Italian features, however, belong neither to the (local) dialect nor to standard Italian. For instance, the tonic /e/ in open syllables is tense in the northern regional Italian of central Veneto, whereas it is lax in the rural dialects and in standard Italian, e.g., Ven. NRIt. *miele* [ˈmjele] 'honey' vs It. [ˈmjɛle], rural Ven. [ˈmjɛl, ˈmjɛ.e]. These autonomous features of northern regional Italian may result from hypercorrection or, more plausibly, from contact with non-local, supra-regional varieties (or *koinai*, see below). The generalization of tense /e/ in open syllables, for instance, is attested in other areas of the northern dialectal continuum (in Lombardy, for instance; see §38.3.2), from where the feature might have spread into the urban dialects spoken in other northern areas.

Research on northern regional Italian is two-pronged. Synchronically, sociolinguistic approaches have played a primary role in shaping the definition of regional Italian(s). The scholarly literature on the topic has flourished since the early 1970s, when new ideas (such as those of Labov, Ferguson, and Gumperz) merged with the already established tradition of Italian dialectological studies.

The sociolinguistic approach analyses linguistic variation in the context of broader societal changes, and this stream of research has several ramifications and practical implications: from the role of regional Italians in education programmes, the definition of a reference standard for the mass media, to the relationship between the regional variety and the endangered dialects.

Diachronically, the status of northern regional Italian is intertwined with the history of the emergence of Italian as a national language, the so-called *questione della lingua* (see §§1.2–3 and Chapters 4–5). It is a widely held view that regional Italians including northern regional Italian are contact languages resulting from the reception of the Tuscan model by northern speakers. However, northern regional Italian and other regional Italians do not result exclusively from the 'imperfect' acquisition of Italian by dialect native speakers in the post-unitary period. Rather, northern regional Italian ought to be regarded as the result of a prolonged contact situation (see Chapter 35), whereby the Tuscan model co-existed alongside northern supra-regional varieties, which in turn emerged from the spreading and mixing of linguistic features across literate elites since their earliest written attestations (Sanga 1995:91–93; Videsott 2008). Any direct comparison between medieval *koinai* and present-day northern regional Italian would be far-fetched. Nonetheless, the circulation of pan-northern models *ab origine* sheds a different light on the (re)elaboration of the Tuscan model by northern writers and grammarians and, consequently, on the genesis of northern regional Italian. The existence of the *koiné* shows that the basin of the river Po had been a well-connected cultural and, therefore, linguistic space before its political unification. This historical perspective will not be explored in the present study, which concentrates instead on the illustration of some linguistic features of present-day northern regional Italian.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: §38.2 elaborates on the definition of northern regional Italian vis-à-vis other registers/layers forming the Italian linguistic repertoire; §38.3, §38.4, and §38.5 provide respective overviews of the main phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical features of northern regional Italian. §§38.6–7 focus on two syntactic domains (complementation and negation) that deserve particular attention since the phenomena at

play are particularly complex and deeply connected with pragmatic and semantic factors. §38.8 concludes.

38.2 Conceptualizing northern regional Italian

Northern regional Italian is a layer of the linguistic continuum that ranges from an idealized and elusive national *standard* (Chapter 26) to a myriad of local vernaculars (more on this in §38.2). The boundaries between layers are unclear for two reasons. First, alongside the vertical stratification of the repertoire, registers change according to the medium (written, oral; see Chapter 28) and according to the context of interaction (formal, informal; Chapter 29). Second, the stratification of the linguistic repertoire is a social construct that varies across space, time, and scientific persuasions.

Current research in the field of sociolinguistics aims to define registers and varieties through qualitative and, more recently, quantitative methods (on Italian, see Cerruti and Vietti 2022). Classifications rely on objective features such as the voicing of intervocalic /s/ or the occurrence of subjunctive clauses selected by verbs of thinking. By studying the domains and contexts where features occur, scholars can organize linguistic variables into a spatial model of the repertoire; a cluster of phenomena occurring in a specific region of the model forms a *variety* (other terms that will be used interchangeably throughout the paper are *layer* and, to refer to finer subdivisions, *register*).

Since Pellegrini (1975) it has been widely assumed that the repertoire of (average) Italian speakers is made up of at least four main varieties. It is customary to visualize the repertoire as a layered cake, with standard Italian on top, local dialects (viz. *dialetti*) at the bottom, and two intermediate varieties: regional Italian and urban dialects. The former is a contact variety that has Italian as its lexifier (i.e., the language that provides most of the lexicon), whereas urban dialects are supra-local dialects stripped of the features that are perceived as more rustic.

Significantly, this four-layered model rests upon a dichotomy, which, in turn, reflects the fundamental genealogical distinction illustrated in Figure 38.1. Italian dialects are not varieties *of* Italian, in the sense of being varieties that derive from Italian via a progressive drift away, but, rather, are *primary dialects* in the sense of Coseriu (1980:114) in that they are sister languages of Italian (see §1.4). Regional Italian(s) and urban dialects, on the other hand, are *secondary dialects* which developed from primary dialects (including Italian) through contact between local dialects and, in more recent times, through contact between dialects and the Tuscan-based model.

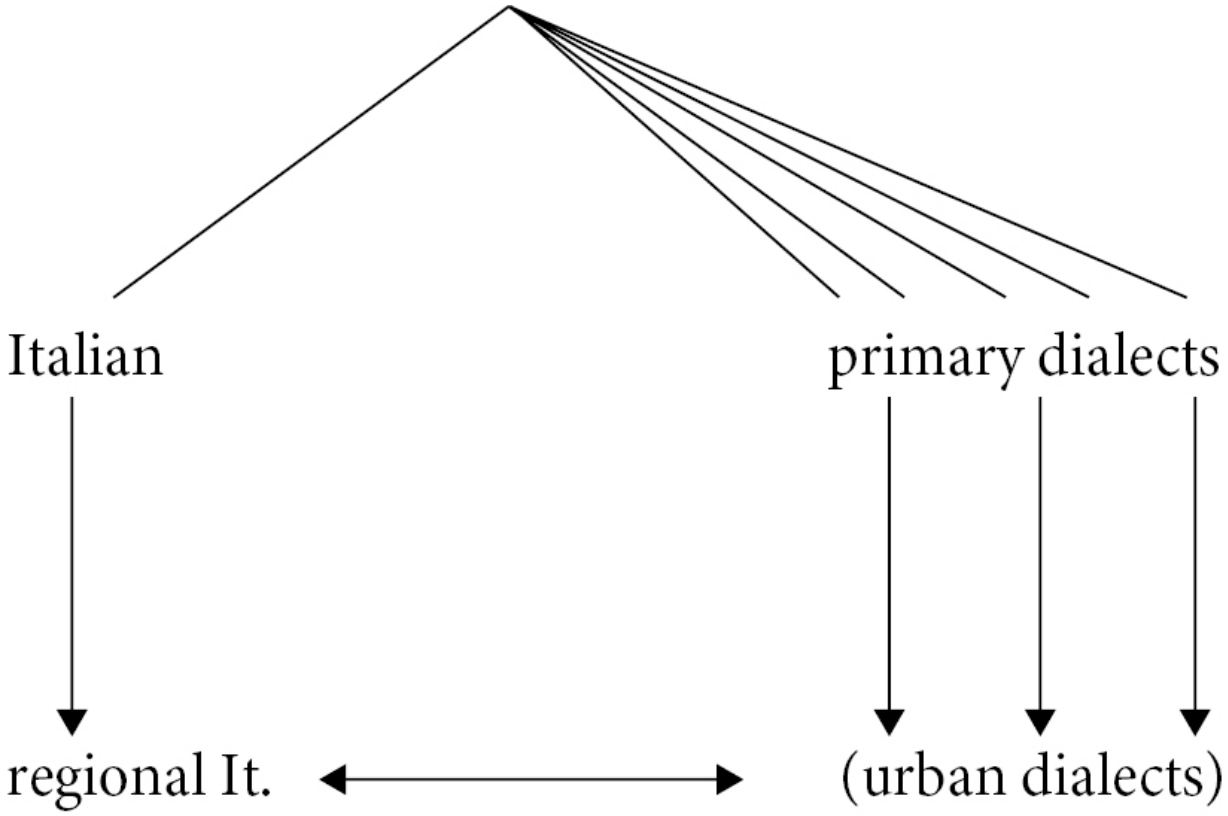


Figure 38.1 The linguistic repertoire of Italians.

While the model in Figure 38.1 is widely accepted, the terminology referring to linguistic varieties is not. Some remarks are in order.

First, the term *standard Italian* is ambiguous (see §26.2.2) as it can mean either 'standardized Italian' (what Antonelli 2011 dubs *italiano scolastico* 'scholastic Italian') or 'reference Italian' (cf.

Sabatini's 1985 *italiano dell'uso medio* 'Italian of average usage'). According to the latter definition, standard Italian is a model, open to innovations and shaped by professional writers such as novelists (in the past) and journalists (today). Standard Italian *qua* standardized Italian, by contrast, entails a rigid and closed set of explicit prescriptions. The features that belong to the standard and, consequently, characterize what is *non-*, *sub-*, or *neo-standard* (Berruto 1987a; see Chapter 26) depend on which definition of standard we assume. Subject pronouns are a case in point (see also §26.3). In spoken Italian, third-person non-clitic pronouns are reflexes of oblique pronouns such as *lui* 'he/him', *lei* 'she/her', and *loro* 'they/them'. The loss of strong nominative form resulted from a change that, by the end of the Middle Ages, turned nominative pronouns into subject clitics in Florentine as well as in northern dialects. Since then, etymologically nominative forms such as *egli* 'he' and *ella* 'she' have been confined to formal written registers. Normative grammarians, however, stuck to the medieval model of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio until the early twentieth century, despite the loss of strong nominative pronouns being accepted by cultivated elites (in the north as well as in Florence) and the norm being ignored by influential writers such as Manzoni. Consequently, if we adopt a norm-based definition of the standard, subject forms such as *lui* and *lei* might be considered 'neo'-standard; if, conversely, we adopt a definition of standard qua 'reference Italian', the same forms can simply be considered standard. In what follows, I will adopt the latter view.

Another ambiguous notion that often complements that of standard Italian is *italiano popolare* 'popular Italian' (De Mauro 1963; Cortelazzo 1972; see Chapter 37) or *italiano dei semicolti* (roughly the 'language of people with relatively little education'; Bruni 1984). These terms refer to the variety of Italian that is *imperfectly* (Cortelazzo) acquired by dialect monolinguals. Empirically, *italiano popolare* largely overlaps with regional Italian(s), but they differ conceptually and historically. In the current literature (see Chapter 37), the term popular refers almost exclusively to the language written occasionally by semi-illiterate Italians in the first half of the twentieth century. Regional Italian, on the other hand, is the contact language resulting from the reception of the Italian norm by literates through contact between Italian and

prestigious, supra-regional dialectal varieties. The debate on the status of *italiano popolare* revolves around De Mauro's hypothesis that certain popular features are common to speakers from different areas, who converge towards a simplified variety, a sort of pidgin. However, most popular features are in fact dialectal features that are widespread across Italo-Romance areas. Some of these features occur in both southern and northern Italo-Romance such as the lack of a dedicated form of the third-person dative clitic (It. *gli/le*) and its substitution with a locative clitic (It. *ci* 'there'), the extension of the third-person singular possessive form *suo*, *sua* 'his, her, its' to the third-person plural (instead of It. *loro* 'their'), the lack of relative pronouns (see §38.6). Other features are typical of southern varieties and, in fact, they are seldom displayed by northern regional Italian, e.g., a different distribution of the perfective auxiliaries HAVE and BE from the Italian model, the adverbial use of adjectives, and the absence of embedded subjunctives under verbs of thinking or in *if*-clauses (cf. Chapter 40). The spatial distribution of popular features, which largely reflect the conditions found in the dialectal sub/ad-stratum, shows that convergence towards a single *italiano popolare* is epiphenomenal.

Urban dialects also require further elaboration. The terminology adopted in scholarly works varies and the choice of terms such as *koinai* (Pellegrini 1975; Sanga 1995) or *weakened dialects* (Bruni 1984) reflect the degree of prestige these varieties have been attributed across regions and across different periods. As pointed out by Trumper (1977), the status of secondary dialects is uneven across northern regions. In certain areas such as the Veneto, urban dialects are robustly spoken in relatively formal contexts along with northern regional Italian. Other areas, by contrast, lack such a supra-regional layer in their repertoire—this is why urban dialects are placed between parentheses in Figure 38.1. In the latter areas, no secondary dialect mediates between northern regional Italian and the fragmented local dialects, which tend to fade away more rapidly than in areas with a robust diglottic repertoire. This is the situation found in certain areas of Emilia-Romagna and in big cities such as Milan or Turin.

The last aspect that deserves clarification regards the asymmetry between the oral and the written medium. It goes without saying that regionalisms and dialectisms infiltrate the spoken rather than the

written language, but it is also true that they penetrate more readily in those cases lacking an unambiguous written model. Mioni (1983), among others, pointed out that all phonological features of northern regional Italian (§38.3) involve phenomena that are not codified by the orthographic system of Italian. The voicing of intervocalic sibilants, the loss of the etymological distinction between tense and lax stressed mid vowels, and the lack of inherent and in-sandhi gemination are phonological features that are not represented in the Italian spelling system. This suggests that the spreading of the national model took place predominantly or exclusively through the written medium and before the diffusion of a national broadcasting system. Hence, although the features illustrated in the following sections pertain exclusively to the spoken language, it is likely that writing models contributed to constraining northern regional Italian. The mass media, on the other hand, have played a marginal role in the diffusion of a unitary spoken standard, despite initial efforts of the state-owned broadcaster (EIAR, then RAI). Regional Italian(s) and, to a lesser extent, Italianized dialects have featured prominently in Italian films of various genres (from comedies to the masterpieces of neo-realism) and acquired a greater presence and visibility in broadcasting media, especially after the emergence of private broadcasters, which, interestingly, were created by merging regional companies.

38.3 Overview of phonetic and phonological features of northern regional Italian

38.3.1 Consonants

One of the hallmarks of northern dialects is degemination. However, most double consonants in northern regional Italian are as long as the geminates of other regional varieties of Italian (Mairano and De

Iacovo 2020). What sets northern regional Italian apart from other regional variants is the length of consonants that in Italian are intrinsically long, namely [ʎ ʃ ɲ ts dz] (cf. §15.2.1.2.3). These consonants are pronounced as short segments in northern regional Italian, e.g., *aglio* It. [ˈaʎːo] vs NRIt. [ˈaʎo] 'garlic'. The occasional gemination of [ts] and [dz] is probably driven by the orthography (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005), e.g., *pazzo* It/%NRIt. [ˈpatsːo] 'mad', It/%NRIt. *mezzo* [ˈmɛdzːo] 'middle' vs NRIt. *azione* [aˈtsjone] 'action', *azienda* [aˈdzjenda] 'enterprise', a contrast that in standard Italian is neutralized, cf. [aˈtsːjone], [aˈdzːjenda].

Analogously, northern regional Italian does not display consonant gemination in external sandhi. Central and southern Italian, on the other hand, exhibit *rafforzamento fonosintattico* 'phonosyntactic strengthening', yielding long word-initial consonants after stressed syllables or a closed class of function words which, etymologically, ended in a consonant such as *a* 'to' (< AD), e.g., It. *a* [rː]*oma* vs NRIt. *a* [r]*oma* 'to Rome'.

In lower registers of northern regional Italian, simple affricates tend to spirantize, e.g., *azzurro* NRIt. %[aˈzurːo] vs It. [aˈdzːurːo] 'light blue' (Telmon 1993:114).[2] In the areas where palatal affricates are missing in the dialectal adstratum/substratum, northern regional Italian exhibits palatal fricatives, e.g., *cinquecento* %[ciŋkweˈcento] vs It. [ʧiŋkweˈʧɛnto] 'five hundred'. Other palatal obstruents often split, forming an alveolar + *j* cluster: *foglia* NRIt. %[ˈfɔːlja] vs It. [ˈfɔʎːa] 'leaf', *sogno* NRIt. %[ˈsɔːnjo] vs It. [ˈsɔɲːo] 'dream', *sciocco* NRIt. %[ˈsjɔko] vs It. [ˈʃːɔkːo] 'stupid'. The glide [j] seldom occurs in words that contain an unpronounced <i> in the written form, e.g., *cielo* NRIt. %[ˈʧjɛːlo] vs It. [ˈʧɛːlo] 'sky', *scienza* NRIt. %[ˈʃjɛntsa] vs It. [ˈʃːɛntsa] 'science', *coscienza* NRIt. %[koˈʃjɛntsa] vs It. [koʃˈʃɛntsa] 'conscience, consciousness'.

Northern regional Italian never exhibits single voiceless sibilants in intervocalic contexts: *casa* NRIt. [ˈkaːza] 'house, home', not [ˈkaːsa]. Before vowels, [s] is found word-initially or after a transparent morphological boundary, e.g., *anti*-[s]*ociale* 'antisocial'. Elsewhere, /s/ assimilates for voice to the following consonant: [zbar ˈkaːre] 'to disembark', [azˈburʤiko] 'Habsburg' vs *stanco* [ˈstaŋko] 'tired', [ˈasta] 'pole'. /s/ is systematically voiced after nasals in the

provinces of Trento and Trieste: [iŋˈzjɛme] vs It. [inˈsjɛme] ‘together’.

The alveolar affricate /ts/ never occurs word-initially, where it is always realized as /dz/: *zio* NRIt. [ˈdzio] vs It. %[ˈtsːio] ‘uncle’, *zucchero* NRIt. [ˈdzukːero] vs It. %[ˈtsːukːero] ‘sugar’. Note that the corresponding consonant is always voiceless in northern dialects, e.g., *zucca* dialectal [ˈtsuka] or [ˈsuka] vs NRIt. [ˈdzukka] ‘pumpkin’. The latter is one of the few phonological features that northern regional Italian has not inherited from the dialectal ad/sub-stratum.

In coda position, nasals tend to exhibit a velar articulation regardless of the following consonant, whereas in Italian nasals assimilate for place to following consonants. In the lower registers of the repertoire, regressive nasalization may also target the preceding vowel: *ponte* NRIt. [ˈpoŋte] or %[ˈpõŋte] vs It. [ˈponte] ‘bridge’.

38.3.2 Vowels

The loss or reduction of unstressed vowels that characterizes northern dialects has no consequences for northern regional Italian. Stressed vowels, on the other hand, exhibit a higher degree of variability. In north-western regions, for instance, /a/ in stressed syllables or in final position tends to be palatalized (Canepari 1979:205f.), e.g., *casa* ‘house, home’ NRIt. [ˈkɑːzɑ] vs It. [ˈkaːsa], but it is the distribution of tense and lax mid vowels in northern regional Italian that differs mostly, both from standard Italian and across northern areas. In general, northern regional Italian departs from the etymology-driven distribution of tonic mid vowels that still characterizes standard Italian and central/upper southern regional varieties.[3] Instead, NRI mid vowels are distributed according to syllable weight and other phonetic parameters. The remainder of the section will not provide a thorough overview of mid vowels in different varieties of northern regional Italian, but it will focus on the comparison between two slightly different sub-systems.

In Lombard northern regional Italian (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005), the distribution of tonic /e ɛ/ is context-driven, while the distribution of tonic /o ɔ/ tends to reflect etymology. /e/ occurs in

non-final open syllables (e.g., *cielo* NRIt. [ˈʧeːlo] ‘heaven’ vs It. [ˈʧɛːlo]; *bene* NRIt. [ˈbeːne] ‘well’ vs It. [ˈbɛːne]) and in certain closed syllables such as those ending in a nasal (e.g., *penso* Lmb. NRIt. [ˈpenso] ‘I think’ vs It. [ˈpɛnso]) or with [g] as in Lmb. NRIt. *leggo* [ˈlegːo] ‘I read’. Elsewhere, Lombard northern regional Italian exhibits [ɛ] as in *bicicletta* [biʧiˈklɛtːa] ‘bicycle’, *verde* [ˈvɛrde] ‘green’, *tè* [ˈtɛ] ‘you (SG)’.

Other varieties of northern regional Italian exhibit a different distribution of tense and lax mid vowels, which does not correspond to that found in standard Italian or Lombard northern regional Italian. In the northern regional Italian of (central) Veneto, for instance, the distribution of [e] is generalized in open syllables, as in Lombard northern regional Italian, whereas the distribution in the rural dialects still reflects etymology (Cecchinato 2017), e.g., *pietra* It. [ˈpjɛtra] ‘stone’, rural dialect [ˈpjeːra], but Ven. NRIt. [ˈpjetra]. In this respect, Lmb. and Ven. northern regional Italian converge, both differ from Italian, and, additionally, Venetan northern regional Italian departs from the dialectal sub/ad-stratum.

In closed syllables, Venetan northern regional Italian generalizes [e], cf. *freddo* ‘cold’: Ven. NRIt. [ˈfredːo], It. [ˈfredːo] vs Lmb. NRIt. [ˈfrɛdːo]; but *penso* ‘I think’: Ven. NRIt. [ˈpeŋso], Lmb. NRIt. [ˈpenso] vs It. [ˈpɛnso]. In this respect, Venetan northern regional Italian differs from Italian and, to a lesser extent, from Lombard northern regional Italian. Further differences may result from additional phonological rules: for instance, in certain areas of the Veneto [ɛ] is found systematically in open and closed syllables when /e/ is adjacent to /r/, e.g., *sera* Ven. NRIt. %[ˈsɛra] ‘evening’, *verde* % [ˈvɛrde] ‘green’.

This brief comparison between northern areas shows that northern regional Italian tonic mid vowels do not follow a single phonological pattern. However, the variable loss of the original etymological conditions can be seen as a common denominator of northern regional Italian.

38.3.3 Morphophonology

The distribution of the allomorphs of the masculine singular definite article sometimes diverges from that of Italian. In Italian, *l'* occurs before vowels,[4] *lo* before intrinsic geminates, glides (except when [w] is followed by a back vowel), sC, and some other complex onsets (e.g., [ps], [ks]); *il* is found elsewhere. The inventory of forms in northern dialects is reduced as the form *lo* has been lost and, consequently, the type *il* (*el*, *al*, etc.) occurs before all types of consonants and consonant clusters, e.g., Ver. *el psicologo* 'the psychologist' vs It. *lo psicologo*. Analogously, northern regional Italian exhibits sporadic extensions of the definite and indefinite forms *il* 'the' and *un* 'a' instead of the allomorphs *lo* and *uno*, e.g., *passami l(%o) zucchero!* 'pass me the sugar!', *un(%o) yogurt* 'a yoghurt', *un(%o) psicologo* 'a psychologist'.

Before vowels, the incidence of elision is lower than in other regional varieties of Italian. Elision of third-person plural accusative proclitics is impossible in northern regional Italian, while it is possible, albeit rare, for central speakers (Garrapa 2010), e.g., NRIt. *li/**l' ho visti* lit. 'them.M= have.1SG seen.MPL (=I saw them)'. Unlike other regional varieties, northern regional Italian does not allow the elision of other clitic pronouns ending in *-i* (unless they are followed by a word beginning with *i-*); sequences such as *m'hanno* [ˈmanno] 'they have (to) me' or *c'avevano* [ʧaˈvevano] 'they have (to) us' are barred in northern regional Italian. It is worth noting that the corresponding formatives in northern dialects—more precisely, in the northern dialects that still display unstressed final vowels—are systematically elided, e.g., Veronese *I **m'a** dito* lit. 'SCL.3PL **me=** have.3 told (= they told me)'. The marginality of elision in northern regional Italian could be a case of hypercorrection.

38.4 Overview of morphological and syntactic features of northern regional Italian

38.4.1 Verbs

The morphological hallmark of northern regional Italian is the absence of the synthetic preterite (*passato remoto*). The paradigm is regularly taught at school, but the extension of the compound past (so-called aoristic drift) is never stigmatized, neither in speaking nor in writing.

The distribution of the subjunctive is wider and more productive in northern regional Italian than in southern and central regional varieties. As in standard Italian, present and imperfective subjunctive forms regularly occur under verbs of thinking as in (1a) and in the protasis of unreal and counterfactual conditionals as in (1b). The relatively high incidence of the subjunctive reflects the behaviour of the underlying dialects. Similar considerations hold for the passive, which in northern regional Italian is not marginal as shown in (1c).

1 a Penso che sia la città più bella del mondo. (NRIt.)
think.1SG that be.SBJV.3SG the city more beautiful of.the world
'I think it is the most beautiful city in the world.' (KIParla corpus, Mauri et al. 2019, TOD 2010)

b Se lo conoscessi sarebbe divertente. (NRIt.)
If him= know.PST.SBJV.2SG be.COND.3SG amusing
'If you knew him, it would be fun.' (KIParla corpus, Mauri et al. 2019, BOA 3021)

c Qui è stato fatto un errore. (NRIt.)
here be.3SG be.PTCP do.PTCP an error
'Here a mistake has been made.' (KIParla corpus, Mauri et al. 2019, BOD 1005)

Particle verbs are widespread across northern dialects, from where they have spread into northern regional Italian and, in turn, standard (or neo-standard) Italian (Iacobini 2009; Poletto 2009; Cordin 2011; see also §1.5.2.5). Their diffusion may vary across regions (see §31.4.2) and between urban centres and rural areas. One may distinguish at least four types of predicates: (a) those with a transparent directional meaning, where the particle combines with a verb already expressing motion or state, e.g., *andare avanti/fuori/giù* 'go ahead/out/down', *entrare dentro* 'enter inside', *scendere giù* 'descend down'; (b) particle verbs where the particle adds a telic flavour to a change of state or change of location verb as

with most particle verbs featuring the particle *via* 'away, off', e.g., *andare/volare/scappare via* 'go/fly/run away'; (c) change of state/location predicates that have gradually acquired a lexicalized—i.e., non-compositional—meaning such as *saltar fuori* lit. 'to jump outside', meaning 'turn out, prove to be'; (d) particle verbs that do not denote a change of state/location. Type (d) predicates are those that sound more regional as shown by the following examples from Venetan northern regional Italian: *dire su* lit. 'say up' meaning 'scold', *buttarsi via* lit. 'throw oneself away' meaning 'despair', *far su* 'make up, arrange', *mangiare fuori* lit. 'eat out' meaning 'squander', *chiudersi su* (cf. Ven. *seràrse su*) lit. 'close oneself up' meaning 'lock up, tighten up (e.g., a screw)', metaphorically 'shelter from the cold', *prendere su* (cf. Ven. *ciapar su*) lit. 'take/catch up' meaning 'collect'. The latter verbs, where the northern regional Italian root differs from the dialectal one, seldom occur in higher registers of northern regional Italian. Conversely, verbs of type (d) that share the same lexical root as Italian even tend to occur in monitored high-register usage because northern speakers are not always aware of the dialectal flavour of the construction, which morphologically resembles particle verbs of type (a)–(b) that are legitimate in Italian.

38.4.2 The noun phrase

The demonstrative system of northern regional Italian is binary. Demonstratives may co-occur with deictic particles (e.g., *qua* 'here', *lì* 'there') that follow the nominal head, e.g., Ven. NRIt. *sto libro (qua)* 'this book (here)', *quel libro (lì)* 'that book (there)'.

In certain dialects, the deictic particle is obligatory, especially in the areas exhibiting a single demonstrative, usually the distal one, which carries no deictic value (Ledgeway 2020a:456). The same pattern is found in the corresponding northern regional Italian, e.g., *quel libro qua* lit. 'that book here' meaning 'this book' vs *quel libro là* lit. 'that book there' meaning 'that book'. In other areas, the deictic particle becomes obligatory when demonstratives are used pronominally (i.e., when the noun head is gapped), e.g., Ver. *tol su sto **(qua)!*, lit. 'take up this here' meaning 'take this!'. Analogously, deictic particles may occur in northern regional Italian in the same

context, but note that in northern regional Italian deictic particles combine with the Italian bisyllabic form of the demonstrative, e.g., NRIt. *questo qui* vs dialectal *sto qui* 'this'.

Demonstratives in (many/most?) northern dialects cannot refer to events, only to individuals, unless they are followed by a generic restrictor,[5] e.g., *sta roba (qua)* 'this thing here'. Restrictors occur sporadically in northern regional Italian, as shown in (2a). Northern regional Italian lacks a pronominal form corresponding to It. *ciò* 'thing', see (2b); headless relatives are usually introduced by a demonstrative element as shown in (2c).

2 a Questa cosa qui è inaccettabile. (NRIt.)
this thing here be.3SG unacceptable
'This is unacceptable.'

b **Ciò è inaccettabile. (NRIt.)
this.thing be.3SG unacceptable
'This is unacceptable.'

c Ottengo quello/**ciò che voglio. (NRIt.)
get.1SG that that want.1SG
'I get what I want.'

The distribution of definite articles differs slightly from that of standard Italian. In particular, they are allowed[6] before feminine first names (e.g., *la Giulia*, *la Linda*) and, in certain subareas (mainly in Trentino, Lombardy, and Liguria), before masculine names (e.g., %*il Carlo*). Articles are mandatory with feminine and masculine hypocoristics, e.g., *il Toni* (< Antonio), *la Ele* (< Elena).

As in standard Italian, mass nouns and indefinite plurals are introduced by either a definite article (with indefinite interpretation) or by the so-called partitive article, e.g., *non c'è il/del pane* lit. 'NEG there be.3SG the/of.the bread (= there is no bread)'; alternatively, they can occur without the article, e.g., *non c'è pane* 'NEG there be.3SG bread'. The choice between these three options depends on syntactic and semantic factors and, at present, it is unclear whether the same factors are at play in both Italian and northern regional Italian and to what extent northern regional Italian reflects the conditions found in the dialectal ad-/sub-stratum (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018). Further research is needed on this point.

With kinship nouns, northern regional Italian differs from the Tuscan-based model of standard Italian. First of all, we ought to

distinguish familial terms (e.g., DAD) from less familiar ones (e.g., FATHER). In standard Italian, the definite article co-occurs with possessives introducing familial nouns as in *la mia mamma* '(lit. the) my mum', *il mio babbo* '(lit. the) my dad', whereas less familial nouns are introduced by the possessive alone as in *(**il) mio padre* '(lit. the) my father'. When kinship terms are plural or are modified (by an adjective or by an evaluative suffix), the article is obligatory with all kinship terms as in ***(i) miei due padri* '(lit. the) my two fathers' or ***(la) mia mammina* '(lit. the) my dear mummy'. In northern regional Italian the article never occurs before familial kinship terms that are introduced by a possessive, e.g., *mia mamma* 'my mum' vs It. *la mia mamma* '(lit. the) my mum', but nowadays the northern regional Italian variant is hardly perceived as regional/northern.

38.4.3 Pronouns

The inventory of Italian strong pronouns is generally richer than the paradigms of northern dialects. Most of the latter do not distinguish nominative from non-nominative forms and reflexive from non-reflexive forms, see Table 38.1 (the differences between Italian and northern regional Italian are in bold).[7]

Table 38.1 Strong pronouns: Italian vs northern dialects

		Italian	Northern It.	northern dialects
1SG	subject non-subject	*io* *me*	= It.	*me*
2SG	subject non-subject	*tu* *te*	*tu* / ***%te*** *te*	*te*
3	non-reflexive reflexive	*lui, lei, loro* *sé, se stesso*	*lui, lei, loro* = It. / ***%lui, lei, loro***	*lui, ela, loro*

		Italian	Northern It.	northern dialects
1PL		*noi*	= It.	*noialtri*
2PL		*voi*	= It.	*voialtri*

Northern dialects and, more rarely, northern regional Italian do not distinguish between nominative and non-nominative forms in the second-person singular, e.g., NRIt. *vacci te!* vs It. *vacci tu!* 'you go there!'. The status of the first-person singular pronoun is different since *me* never occurs in northern regional Italian as a subject (e.g., *vado io/**me* 'I'll go'). In this respect, northern regional Italian differs from northern dialects and follows modern Florentine, which still retains the form *io* in the first-person singular, but allows *te* in the second person.

As mentioned in §38.2, the etymologically oblique forms *lui* 'he', *lei* 'she', and *loro* 'they' are commonly used as subjects in both standard Italian and northern regional Italian. Nominative forms such as *egli* 'he' and *ella* 'she' are confined to written registers. The loss of nominative forms is often regarded as a northern feature, but note that strong pronouns of the type *ela* 'she' are attested across northern dialects, although they never occur in northern regional Italian. Again, northern regional Italian follows the Tuscan model more than the local one.

First- and second-person plural pronouns in northern regional Italian are sometimes followed by the formative *altri* 'others', e.g., *noialtri*, *voialtri* 'we/us, you' as in the corresponding northern dialects, where the formative *altri* is mandatory regardless of the inclusive/exclusive interpretation of the pronoun. In standard Italian, conversely, *altri* forms are very transparent and have an exclusive reading, i.e., It. *noi altri/-e* 'we or us (M/F), by contrast'; It. *voi altri/-e* 'you (M/F), by contrast'. To the best of my knowledge, the *altri/-e* forms never occur in the northern regional Italian corpora with a neutral (viz. non-exclusive) interpretation.

Northern dialects lack tonic reflexives. They normally resort to clitic reflexives or, in prepositional phrases where clitics are barred,

to non-reflexive strong pronouns. The pattern is seldom attested in northern regional Italian:

3	Ha	preso	un	libro	con	%lui/sé. (Cerruti and Vietti 2022)
	have.3SG	taken	a	book	with	him/himself
	'He took a book with him.'					

Syntactically, northern dialects and northern regional Italian differ with respect to the syntax of strong object pronouns.[8] In the dialects, but not in northern regional Italian, first- and second-person pronouns are clitic doubled when occurring in object position:

4	a	(**mi)	hanno	chiamato	me. (It./NRIt.)
	b	**(mi)	an	klamàt	me. (Frl.)
		me=	have.3PL	call.PTCP	me
	'They called me.'				

In the dialects dislocated, first- and second-person object pronouns are preceded by the preposition/differential object marker *a* 'to' and resumed by a clitic form, see (5c). Differential object marking of dislocated first- and second-person pronouns is attested in northern regional Italian (Benincà et al. 2001; Berretta 1991b):[9]

5	a	Me, non	mi	prendono. (It.)				
		me NEG	me=	catch.3PL				
	b	%(A)	me,	non	mi	prendono. (NRIt.)		
		to	me	NEG	me=	catch.3PL		
	c	**(A) mi,	no	i	me	ciapa	(mia).	(Ven.)
		to me	NEG	SCL.MPL=	me=	catch.3PL	NEG	
	'Me, they won't catch me.'							

Third-person direct objects are neither clitic doubled nor differentially marked. Pronominal and non-pronominal indirect objects, on the contrary, are often doubled, especially in Venetan and Friulian dialects. Doubling remains marginal in northern regional Italian:

6	Da	?(=cce)	=lo	a	noi! (NRIt.)
	give.IMP.2SG	=1PL.DAT	=3ACC.MSG	to	us
	'Give it to us!'				

Dislocated third-person pronouns are resumed by a clitic, as in Italian, but clitics occur more readily in northern regional Italian than in (other regional varieties of) Italian when they resume an object that follows a focal subject, as in (7) (see Cruschina 2010 for a similar phenomenon in other Romance varieties). This impressionistic remark, however, awaits empirical confirmation.

7	??(L')	ha	comprato	MARIA,	il	giornale. (NRIt.)
	it=	have.3SG	buy.PTCP	Maria	the	newspaper
	'It is Maria that bought the newspaper.'					

Besides object clitics, northern dialects have nominative clitic pronouns. To the best of my knowledge, northern regional Italian displays no contact effect due to the presence of subject clitics in northern dialects. northern regional Italian usually does not accept expletive-like clitics in impersonal or cleft clauses (e.g., *(e)gli è che* . . . lit. 'it is that'), which are relatively frequent in the regional Italian of Tuscany and are attested in written documents until the nineteenth century.

The inventory of object clitics in northern regional Italian is similar to that of Italian, with minor contact effects. The replacement of the dative clitic pronouns *gli/le* 'to him/her' with the locative *ci* 'there' is quite common in northern regional Italian, as well as in other regional varieties of Italian, e.g., NRIt. *dacci un bacio!* vs It. *dagli un bacio!* 'give him a kiss!'. This reflects the generalized lack of a dedicated form for the third-person dative pronoun in the Italo-Romance dialectal continuum, including northern Italy. Standard/literary Italian emerged in one of the few areas where the locative clitic is not syncretic with the third-person dative; instead the former is syncretic with the first-person plural clitic. Northern dialects display a different pattern of syncretism in which the first-person plural reflexive is syncretic with the third-person reflexive, whereas the non-reflexive pronoun has a dedicated exponent (Table 38.2). To the best of my knowledge, this pattern has no contact effect on northern regional Italian.

Table 38.2 Patterns of syncretism in the paradigm of object clitics: Italian vs northern regional Italian vs northern dialects

	Italian	northern regional Italian	northern dialects
3 dative	*gli* (FSG le)	*gli/ci*	*ghe*
Locative	*ci*	*ci*	

	Italian	northern regional Italian	northern dialects
1PL			*ne*
1PL reflexive			*se* (= 3 reflexive)

The distribution of clitic pronouns in northern regional Italian is similar to that of Italian. Clitic climbing is optional in northern regional Italian, although climbing is (was) barred in northern dialects (see for instance the *AIS* map 1345). This is rather surprising as we would expect to find a preference for the local variant in the regional variety.

38.5 A note on geosynonyms and geohomonyms

According to previous classifications (Rüegg 1956; De Felice 1977:110f.; Sobrero 1988:733; Telmon 1993:132–136), geosynonyms fall in to at least three main types:

- 'Italian' geosynonyms, i.e., synonyms that occur in all discourse domains, including formal registers. Such synonyms are interchangeable, although less educated speakers may believe that their own variant is the standard/current one or ignore that other possible variants are allowed in Italian.
- Local geosynonyms, i.e., synonyms that have a local geographical distribution (supra-regional, regional, or sub-regional) and are marginal in formal/written registers of Italian. Speakers are not always aware of the local character of such synonyms. Either they do not know the Italian counterpart—usually of Tuscan origin—or they believe that the local and the national variants are equal in terms of linguistic prestige.

- Dialectal geosynonyms: these items pertain to the dialectal spectrum of the linguistic continuum (see §38.2). Dialectal geosynonyms seldom leak into regional and informal registers of Italian as their occurrence in formal/written domains is strongly stigmatized.

Other parameters can enrich the above typology such as the degree of structural similarity with respect to the morphology of Italian or the rate of diffusion in recent history, compared to, for instance, Tuscan forms. These aspects will not be touched upon in the present work. Analogously, given the focus of the present work on northern regional Italian, dialectal geosynonyms will not be addressed here. Linguistic atlases and subsequent dialectometric analyses provide a fine-grained picture of lexical variation in the dialect continuum, whereas the documentation of Italian and (supra-)regional geosynonyms is less systematic. Research projects relying on crowdsourcing techniques are still in progress,[10] but an exhaustive georeferenced inventory of Italian geosynonyms is still awaited. The lists of examples in the remainder of the present subsection are therefore far from exhaustive.

Examples of Italian geosynonyms (i.e., words that are equivalent in terms of prestige) are (NR)It. *lavorare* along with Pdm. and Sic. *travagliare* and SRIt. *faticare*, 'to work', NRIt. *asino* instead of *somaro* 'donkey', *calzetto* along with *calzino* and instead of *pedalino* 'sock', *anguria* instead of *cocomero* or SRIt. *mel(l)one d'acqua* 'watermelon', *appendino* (and the local/archaic *ometto*) instead of *gruccia* or SRIt. *stampella* 'clothes hanger', *salvietta* along with *asciugamano* 'towel', *lacci* instead of *legacci* or *stringhe* 'shoelaces', *sberla* instead of *schiaffo* 'slap', *branzino* instead of *spigola* or Tsc. *ragno* 'seabass'.

Temperino is a northern regional Italian synonym of *temperamatite* (or Tsc. *temperalapis*) 'pencil sharpener'. *Temperino* is attested in other areas (including in standard Italian), but with the meaning 'penknife' (a case therefore of geohomonymy). Penknife in northern regional Italian is usually called a *coltellino*, a diminutive of *coltello* 'knife' (*cortello/cortellino* are popular variants). Another geosynonym/geohomonym is *balcone*, which in certain northern areas may mean 'window shutter' (instead of 'balcony'); other synonyms of 'window shutter' attested in northern regional Italian

are *scuro* (*scuretto*) or *persiana* (instead of It. *imposte*). The former refers, more specifically, to panel shutters (*imposte*), the latter to louvre shutters and, in northern regional Italian, to roller shutters (elsewhere, they are called *tapparelle*; *avvolgibile* is a technical term). The word *stampella* in northern regional Italian only means 'crutch', whereas in (southern regional) Italian it may also mean 'coat hanger' (see above). *Gruccia*, which in Italian may mean either 'crutch' or 'coat hanger' is unattested in northern regional Italian.

Certain terms do not have a proper northern regional Italian translation: for instance, the adjective meaning 'without salt/tasteless/insipid' is *insipido* (vs other geosynonyms that are unattested in northern regional Italian such as *scipito*, *sciap(id)o*, *insulso*, Tsc. *sciocco*). However, *insipido* does not sound very regional, probably because in the dialectal substratum the same concept is conveyed by the prepositional phrase 'without salt' or because the preferred negative prefix in northern Italo-Romance is *de-* rather than *in-*, e.g., Ven. *desalìo* 'unsalted'.

The above geosynonyms have a supra-regional distribution. However, more local terms are seldom allowed, also in monitored formal registers, when the Italian lexicon has no corresponding translation. This usually happens in two domains, the traditional lexicon (e.g., clothes, toys, or dishes such as carnival fried pastries, which in northern regional Italian are variously called *bugie*, *crostoli*, *gale*, *galani*, *intrigoni*) and in slang. The periphrasis meaning 'to not attend school without parental permission', for instance, is well known for having a plethora of local variants that are in constant evolution. None of these variants is widespread throughout Italy and every region (or even smaller communities) exhibits a different expression/metaphor, e.g., *bigiare* (Lmb.), *bruciare* (Lmb., Ven.), *bucare* or *tagliare* (Pdm.), and a multitude of periphrases of the type *fare* + N such as *fare berna* (Ver.), *fare fughino* (Emilia-Romagna), *fare sega*.

Other geosynonyms, besides having a local distribution, are confined to informal registers. They are local geosynonyms according to the terminology adopted here, e.g., *moroso/-a* instead of *fidanzato/-a* 'fiancé(e), boy-/girlfriend', *grembiale* (or Ven. *traversa*) instead of *grembiule* 'apron', *rumenta* (Pdm., Lmb.) instead of *immondizia* 'rubbish', Ven. *secchiaio* instead of *lavandino* 'sink', *beccare* (Lmb., Ven.) instead of *pizzicare/piccare* 'be

pungent/spicy' and *pungere/mordere* 'sting/bite', *spreparare* instead of *sparecchiare* 'clear the table'. The boundary between local geosynonyms and dialectisms is, however, rather subtle.

38.6 Case study I: finite complementation

Complementation is a grammatical domain that has attracted the attention of Italian sociolinguists. The descriptive issue is often subsumed under the label '*che polivalente*' ('multifunctional *that*'; see §26.3). '*Che polivalente*' is an umbrella term referring to structurally diverse clause types, including relatives, pseudo-relatives, interrogatives, exclamatives, and adverbial clauses. What follows focuses mostly on relative and interrogative clauses.

To put some order in the data, a preliminary distinction has to be drawn between *complementizers* (traditionally referred to as subordinators or subordinating conjunctions) and wh-elements. This distinction, perhaps a little artificial, will help us to clarify some descriptive issues. Wh-elements and complementizers normally occur at the beginning of the clause, but wh- elements may occur *in situ*, namely, in the same position as the element they pronominalize. *In situ* wh-elements are attested in northern dialects (8a), whereas in Italian they occur exclusively in echo/surprise questions such as (8b) (# indicates that the sentence is acceptable under specific pragmatic conditions).

8	a	Me	mange	chi? (Borgonato, eastern Lombard; *ASIt*)
	b	#Io	mangio	cosa? (It.)
		I	eat.1SG	what
		'What do I eat?'		

Unlike wh-elements, the subordinator *che* never occurs clause-internally.[11] Additionally, *che* and a wh-element can co-occur in certain northern varieties (see below), whereas multiple wh-fronting is always ungrammatical. This confirms the idea that *che* and wh-elements fall into different grammatical categories.

Che is a default complementizer that occurs whenever semantically richer forms are excluded. In this respect, northern Italian dialects and northern regional Italian do not differ from Italian. The crucial differences between Italian and northern dialects (and, consequently, between Italian and northern regional Italian) involve the syntax of wh-elements. Since in northern Italo-Romance wh-elements have a narrower distribution than their Italian counterparts, the distribution of *che* seems wider in the dialects than in standard Italian. In other words, variation stems from the syntax of wh-elements, whereas variation in the distribution of *che* is epiphenomenal.

Relative clauses will be considered first. In Italian, relative wh-pronouns are always in complementary distribution with *che* 'that'; the choice between pronouns (e.g., *il quale* lit. 'the which (= who(m))', *cui* 'to whom') and *che* depends on structural conditions. Northern dialects, conversely, have no subject, object, or oblique wh-relative pronoun; consequently, clauses that in Italian can or must be introduced by a wh-pronoun such as the relative *cui* 'to whom' in (9a) will be introduced by the default complementizer *che* in the dialects (9b), and, occasionally, in northern regional Italian too (9c). The difference between Italian and northern regional Italian relatives goes unnoticed when the relativized element is the subject or the object, as *che* is the preferred option in Italian as well. However, in the dialects *che* is the only possible solution.

With obliques, the relativized constituent is resumed by a dative clitic pronoun such as *ghe* in (9b) or *gli* in (9c).

9 a	una	vecchietta	**cui**	ho	pulito	il	vetro (It.)	
	an	old.lady	to.whom	have.1SG	clean.PTCP	the	glass	
b	na	vecèta	**che**	**ghe**	go	pulìo	el	vèro (Ven.)
	an	old.lady	that	3.DAT=have.1SG	clean.PTCP	the	screen	
c	una	vecchietta	**che**	**gli**	ho	pulito	il	vetro (NRIt.)
	an	old.lady	that	3.DAT=	have.1SG	clean.PTCP	the	glass

'an old lady whose window I cleaned' (KIParla corpus, Mauri et al. 2019, BOD2014)

The same phenomena are found in locative and temporal relatives. Locative relatives in northern regional Italian are sporadically introduced by *che* 'that', while the relativized PP is pronominalized by the locative clitic *ci* (10b). Alternatively, the relative clause is introduced by the wh-element 'where' (as in standard Italian) that in

some dialects must be followed by the complementizer *che* 'that' as in (10c). The co-occurrence of wh-elements and *che* in (10c) will be discussed in the remainder of the section.

10 a la piazza *in cui* / *dove* abbiamo pranzato. (It.)
the square in which / where have.1PL lunch.PTCP

b %la piazza *che* *ci* abbiamo pranzato. (NRIt.)
the square that there= have.1PL lunch.PTCP

c %la piazza *dove* *che* abbiamo pranzato. (NRIt./dialect)
the square where that have.1PL lunch.PTCP
'the square where we had lunch'

The pattern in (10c) is found in relative clauses and, predominantly, in embedded interrogatives such as the dialectal Romagnol example in (11).

11 An so *indù* *che* li epa cumprà la mama. (Rmg.)
NEG know.1SG where that them=have.SBJV.3SG buy.PTCP the mum
'I do not know where mum bought them.' (Poletto and Vanelli 1995)

Poletto and Sanfelici (2019) note that '[t]hese structures are so stable that they can occasionally leak into the regional Italian of native Veneto speakers'. More specifically, in northern regional Italian wh-element + *che* is found more readily in subjunctive clauses such as (12a), otherwise it proves quite marginal (12b).

12 a%Non so dove che sia andata. (NRIt.)
NEG know.1SG where that be.SBJV.3SG go.PTCP
'I don't know where she has been.'

b Mi hanno chiesto dove (??che) era andata. (NRIt.)
me=have.3PL ask.PTCP where that be.PST.IPFV.3SG go.PTCP
'They asked me where she had been.'

All the above sentences are characterized by a division of labour between the complementizer that introduces the subordinate clause and the pronoun that fills the gap in the core of the clause. In the interrogatives in (12), the gap is filled by a wh-element, while in the relatives in (9b–c) and (10b) the gap is filled by a clitic pronoun. The same division of labour is found in appositive relatives where the gap is filled by a demonstrative pronoun (Poletto and Sanfelici 2019):

13 Maria, quella che conosci anche tu, è partita per Roma. (NRIt.)
Maria that.FSG that know.2SG also you be.3SG leave.PTCP for Rome
'Maria, whom you also know, left for Rome.'

In north-western dialects, wh-element + *che* spread to main interrogatives (cf. 14a), but the phenomenon is unattested in northern regional Italian. Such structures involving wh-element + *che* are not to be confused with clefting in (14b), which in northern dialects and northern regional Italian is more frequent than in standard Italian. In some northern dialects, clefting is mandatory, especially if the interrogated constituent is the subject. This makes subject cleft interrogatives such as (14b) very common in northern regional Italian, although, once again, reliable statistical comparisons between Italian and NRI are very much a desideratum for future research.

14 a Chi che vee (Lecco; *ASIt*)
who that come.3SG

b Chi è che viene? (It./NRIt.)
who be.3SG that come.3SG
'Who is coming?'

Furthermore, the qualitative/pragmatic value associated with clefting varies between Italian and regional and dialectal varieties. In Italian, interrogative clefts convey a special pragmatics (cf. §23.3.4): they either convey a meaning of surprise/disapproval or they presuppose prior knowledge of the answer. However, in the dialects and, consequently, in northern regional Italian clefts represent canonical questions without any special pragmatic value.

The data introduced so far show that the apparent overgeneralization of *che* in northern regional Italian is a side-effect due to the syntax of wh-elements, which in northern dialects and, consequently, in northern regional Italian are missing, have a more restricted distribution, or can co-occur with the complementizer.

Finally, certain function words such as WHERE and WHEN have a hybrid status, since they can act as either *wh*-pronouns or adverbial complementizers. Thanks to the dual nature of these elements, we can explain why WHERE and WHEN co-occur with *che* in adverbial clauses such as (15), which, consequently, display a double complementizer.

15 Quando che siamo arrivati … (NRIt.)
when that be.1PL arrive.PTCP
'When we got there …'

Other complementizers are doubled by *che*, e.g., *siccome che* 'since that', *mentre che* 'while that', but the phenomenon of double

complementizers probably has its origins in the reanalysis of wh-element + *che* in embedded clauses and its successive extension to adjunct clauses.

38.7 Case study II: negation

In Italian the negative adverb *mica* can occur in negative clauses, especially when negating a previous utterance as in ($16B_1$) uttered in response to (16A). As pointed out by Cinque (1976a), *mica* denies a previous assumption that is either explicit in the discourse or presupposed. Sentences such as ($16B_1$) are attested in medieval Italian (namely, in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Florentine) and are not perceived as marginal in any register of present-day Italian (Cerruti, Crocco, and Marzo 2017; Cerruti 2020). Likewise, the variant in ($16B_2$), where *mica* is focus-fronted, is widely accepted in spoken Italian, especially to introduce corrective information (Magistro 2022). This second pattern is not attested in early Italian, where pre-verbal *mica* must be preceded by the negative particle *né*, yielding the sequence *né mica* (Hansen and Visconti 2009; Garzonio 2020) and proves quite marginal in present-day written Italian. In the regional Italian of southern speakers *mica* is often fronted even if it carries no contrastive value. The placement of *mica* in these regional varieties follows a syntactic pattern that is common in southern dialects, where aspectual adverbs corresponding to English *already* or *yet* often occur at the beginning of the clause (Ledgeway 2020b).

The variant in ($16B_3$), where the pre-verbal negative marker is omitted, differs from the others as it is perceived by central and southern speakers as ungrammatical or infelicitous in an Italian-speaking environment. ($16B_3$), unlike ($16B_1$) and ($16B_2$), instantiates a northern regional Italian variant.

16 A: Laura è arrivata.
Laura be.3SG arrive.PTCP
'Laura has arrived.'

B_1: Non è mica arrivata, Laura.
NEG be.3SG *mica* arrive.PTCP Laura

B_2: Mica è arrivata, Laura.
Mica be.3SG arrive.PTCP Laura

B_3: %È mica arrivata, Laura.
be.3SG *mica* arrive.PTCP Laura
'Laura has not arrived.'

(16B_3) reflects the syntax of (most) northern dialects spoken in Piedmont, Lombardy, and Emilia that lack a pre-verbal negative marker. In these dialects, *mica* (or similar adverbial negators) can negate a sentence by itself without being doubled by a pre-verbal clausal negation marker, as shown in (17a). The same property characterizes other negative words, which in most northern Italo-Romance dialects are in complementary distribution with adverbial negators like *mica*, as shown in (17b).[12]

17 a Mario el vegnarà mia (Lonato, Brescia; *ASIt*)
Mario SCL.3MSG= come.FUT.3SG *mica*.ADV
'Mario will not come.'

b gh è (**mia) nisu che.
there= be.3SG *mica* no-/anybody here
'There is nobody here.'

Sentences like (17b) are sporadically found in northern regional Italian, also in relatively formal contexts as the example (18), from a famous public speech by Pope John XXIII (born in the province of Bergamo). However, in present-day northern regional Italian *mica* normally co-occurs with other negative items as in (19).

18 La mia persona conta niente. (NRIt.)
The my person be.worth.3SG nothing
'I am worth nothing.'

19 Non c' è mica niente di male (NRIt.)
NEG there= be.3SG *mica* nothing of bad
'There is nothing wrong.' (KIParla corpus, Mauri et al. 2019, BOD1003)

Hence, *mica* per se is not a northern feature. In fact, the real northern feature is the lack of the pre-verbal negative marker *non* in examples such as ($16B_3$) and (18). This pattern, however, is quite rare in present-day northern regional Italian. This amounts to saying that, with respect to negation, the ideal boundary between Italian and the dialects is less penetrable than usually thought. Even if the same lexical element (*mica* or some morphological variant thereof) occurs in Italian and in the dialects, the syntax of the two varieties diverges. Interestingly, northern regional Italian follows the Italian model more than the dialectal one.

Another context where Italian *mica* and its dialectal variant differ is in interrogative clauses. The distinction is blurred in yes/no questions such as (20), where negative words, including *mica*, can occur without *non* in Italian and in its regional varieties (including northern regional Italian).[13] Although sentences like (20) are allowed in regional varieties of Italian, the interpretation of sentences like (20a) may vary across regions. In northern regional Italian, (20a) can be interpreted as an information-seeking question, while for central/southern speakers (20a) is pragmatically marked (Alessandra Lombardi, p.c.).

20 a L' hai mica letto?
it= have.2SG *mica* read.PTCP
'Haven't you read it?'

b Hai letto niente su questa storia?
have.2SG read.PTCP any-/nothing on this subject
'Have you read anything about this?'

c L' hai mai letto?
It/she= have.2SG never read.PTCP
'Have you ever read it?'

In wh-interrogatives, however, Italian and northern regional Italian diverge more significantly (Cinque 1976a). In Italian, *mica* in wh-interrogatives such as (21) is judged as marginal by a sample of Venetan speakers, whereas the same speakers judged the presence of *mi(c)a* acceptable, albeit optional, in the corresponding dialectal translations in (22).[14]

21 ** Chi non può mica venire?
who NEG can.3SG *mica* come.INF
'Who cannot come?'

22 a Ci è=lo che no pol (mia) vegner? (Villafranca)
b Ci l'è che no pol (mia) vegner? (Palazzina, Sommacampagna)
c Ci ghè che no pol (miga) vegner? (S. Martino)
d Ci (è=l che) (no) pol (mia) vegner? (Illasi)
e Ci no pol mia vegner? (Ca' degli Oppi)
who be.3SG=it that NEG can.3SG *mica* come.INF
'Who cannot come?'

The data presented so far show that, despite centuries of contact, the Italian and dialectal layers of the repertoire are still separated. Even if they share some lexical material—as in the case of *mica*—the syntactic distributions of the same element in the two layers are not isomorphic.

Given such a high degree of segregation, one may wonder why certain bona fide dialectal features manage to spread into northern regional Italian. In the remainder of the section, I will entertain the hypothesis that regionalisms occur more readily in clausal environments that are not *canonical*, namely, in clauses that depart from the syntactic *mould* of declarative clauses under specific pragmatic/discourse conditions. A case in point is *emphatic polarity*, namely, a type of polarity marking that cancels out the opposite polarity of previous assertions. Northern regional Italian displays various ways to express emphatic polarity, whether positive or negative. Poletto (2010b) notes that in Venetan northern regional Italian the polarity particles *sì* 'yes' and *no* [nɔ] 'no' (not to be confused with the clausal negation marker [no] 'not') can convey emphatic polarity when they occur sentence-finally as in (23).

23 a% Non ci vado NO!
NEG there= go.1SG NO
'Of course I will not go there!'

b% Ci vado SI!
there= go.1SG YES
'I will indeed go there!'

Under the same interpretation, polarity particles can precede the main body of the clause, which is introduced by the complementizer *che* 'that' as in (24):

24 a% NO che non ci vado!
no that NEG there= go.1SG
'Of course I will not go there!'

b% SI che ci vado!
YES that there=go.1SG
'I will indeed go there!'

Those in (24) resemble analogous emphatic constructions such as those in (25), which, to the best of my knowledge, are perceived as less regional than (24). In (25), emphatic positive polarity is conveyed by the fronted adjective *certo* 'sure', followed by the complementizer *che* (see §38.6) that introduces either a finite clause as in (25a) or a polarity particle as in (25b). The sociolinguistic status of the variants in (23)–(25) is unclear: some seem more regional than others, but, in absence of explicit prescriptive rules, such constructions tend to occur in any register.

25 a Certo che ci vado!
sure that there= go.1SG
'I will indeed go there!'

b Certo che sì/no!
sure that yes/no
'Yes/no indeed!'

Another clausal environment that deserves investigation is negative imperatives. In Italian the imperative form in (26a) cannot be negated. Instead of the imperative form, an infinitival form occurs, as in (26b), which is interpreted as a prohibition:

26 a Mangia!
eat.IMP.2SG
'Eat!'

b Non **mangia / mangiare!
NEG eat.IMP.2SG eat.INF
'Don't eat!'

However, northern Italian dialects differ from standard Italian: they either exhibit transparent negative imperatives (the negative form is identical to the positive one, especially in those dialects lacking a pre-verbal negative marker) or they form the negative imperative with a support verb (STAY) followed by the infinitive.

These two constructions may occur in northern regional Italian, as shown in (27a) and (27b), respectively. Their geographical distribution reflects the distribution of the corresponding dialectal structures.

27 a% Mangia mica eh!
eat.IMP.2SG *mica* PTC

b% Non sta (mica) mangiare!
NEG stay.IMP *mica* eat.INF
'Don't eat!'

Prohibitions such as (27), replies such as (23)–(24), special questions (i.e., those that convey surprise or disapproval), fragment answers, exclamatives, etc. are the typical clausal environments where dialectal features leak into the regional layer of the repertoire. Contact is favoured in types of utterances that are typical of face-to-face conversation and, as such, are less codified by written models. Otherwise, fully fledged syntactic borrowing is relatively rare, even if Italian and the dialectal substratum exhibit similar morphological material (cf. *mica*).

38.8 Conclusion: northern regional Italian from a contact language perspective

Northern regional Italian has been often seen as an imperfect Italian, in which the literary-based norm is partially blended with dialectal features. The status of northern regional Italian vis-à-vis standard Italian has changed over time along with the progressive expansion of Italian across the social classes, especially after the political unification of the country. Today, northern regional Italian is the language of primary socialization in most households. Dialects are no longer the dominant language in family interactions and, in certain areas, they are endangered or almost extinct.

The conceptual boundary between standard Italian and northern regional Italian is now particularly blurred not only because

northern dialects are fading, but also because several features of northern regional Italian have progressively shifted towards the upper registers of Italian. The reference standard language (not the normative standard) is increasingly *lingua toscana in bocca ambrosiana* (literally 'Tuscan language in [a] Milanese mouth', Galli de Paratesi 1984). Inventories of the features of northern regional Italian have evolved accordingly. Previous linguistic descriptions of regional Italian(s) such as Telmon (1993) list many features that nowadays sound either standard or blatantly dialectal, more than regional.

From a contact perspective, we ought to study the contact-induced changes that are involved in the emergence of northern regional Italian on a par with potential changes that did not happen. The latter problem is under-studied. The sociolinguistic literature has dwelt on actual contact phenomena between the dialectal sub-/ad-stratum and the expanding national language, whereas far less attention has been paid to phenomena that *did not* penetrate the regional layer of the repertoire, even if they had the potential to do so. Clitic climbing is a case in point. In standard/literary Italian climbing to finite functional verbs and enclisis to infinitives are in free variation in so-called restructuring environments (e.g., ***lo*** *voglio mangiare* 'it= want.1SG eat.INF' vs *voglio mangiar****lo*** 'want.1SG eat.INF=it'). When two variants co-occur in free distribution, they tend to specialize over time, either pragmatically or geographically. In this condition, one would expect northern speakers to overgeneralize enclisis over proclisis since the latter is (was) marginal or unattested in northern dialects. In fact, present northern regional Italian exhibits both enclisis to the infinitive and proclisis to the inflected functional verb, which means that the observed free distribution has not been affected by contact with the dialectal substratum. Another hallmark of northern dialects such as subject clitics appears to have left no trace on northern regional Italian: to the best of my knowledge, no overextension of subject pronouns has ever been noted in northern regional Italian. Analogously, no sign of subject-verb inversion is ever found in northern regional Italian main interrogatives. On the contrary, inversion is often lost in the dialects; the loss of enclitic subjects can be regarded as either an endogenous change or a contact-induced phenomenon due to the influence of Italian.

The general question raised by these phenomena is: why do certain phenomena trigger contact effects more readily than others? Why are certain phenomena transferred from one variety to the other, and not vice versa? For phonological features, a tentative explanation was mentioned in §38.2: northern features in northern regional Italian target segments or clusters of segments that are ambiguously codified in the written medium: for instance, degemination is marginal in northern regional Italian, but inherent and word-initial geminates are always pronounced as single segments in northern regional Italian. Crucially, the latter are never doubled in writing. Intonation is another crucial—but under-studied—factor that defines regional varieties of Italian and that is not codified in the written medium.

As for grammatical features, we could pursue an explanation along the same lines by saying that northern regional Italian departs mostly from Italian in the discourse domains that are less subject to grammatical norms such as non-canonical questions (namely, questions that are not information seeking), prohibitions, fragment answers, focalizations, etc. These clausal environments, which are typical of the spoken medium, are more open to innovations coming from the dialectal substratum than, for example, declarative clauses where the written model provides a rigid mould to conform to. In this respect, however, the pressure of the written medium is not the sole factor at play. Studies on bilingualism (Sorace 2011 among others) have shown that structures involving an interface between syntax and discourse are less likely to be acquired completely by bilinguals. Mutatis mutandis, we may hypothesize that certain northern regional Italian features derive from the same mechanism, hindering the acquisition of unified national norms in the grammatical domains where the interface with pragmatics is stronger. This point remains open to further research.

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[1] This chapter is dedicated to the memory of Federico Damonte, linguist and Italian dialectologist.

[2] The sign % indicates variation across speakers or across northern regions.

[3] In these varieties /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ continue Latin short Ĕ and O˘, whereas /e/ and /o/ continue short Ĭ/long Ē and short Ŭ/long Ō, respectively.

[4] And as a post-vocalic allomorph of *il* in allegro speech.

[5] This remark holds true for a certain number of varieties, but I cannot confirm the geographic extension of the phenomenon.

[6] The article is obligatory in the dialectal sub-/ad-stratum.

[7] The dialectal forms in Table 38.1 are not actual pronouns, but idealized prototypes.

[8] We lack a thorough survey on this issue.

[9] In some Ligurian varieties, strong pronouns are optionally introduced by the preposition/differential object marker *a* 'to' (Parry 2003).

[10] See https://www.atlante-aliquot.de/index.php.

[11] The subordinator *che* should not be confused with the homophonous wh-element meaning 'what', a complication that I will ignore for the ease of exposition.

[12] The mutual exclusion pattern in (19) is typical of dialects in which *mica* is a bona fide clausal negation marker. In other dialects, however, *mica* is optional and its syntax resembles that of Italian *mica*. In Venetan dialects, for instance, *mica* can co-occur with negative items under the appropriate discourse conditions:

(i)	No	gh'	è	mia	ninte	de	mal. (Ver.)
	NEG	there=	be.3SG	*mica*	nothing	of	bad
	'There is nothing wrong.'						

[13] Notice in passim that for northern speakers the negative quantifier in (20b) reads as a polarity item with positive interpretation. It seems to me that the area of Italy where negative indefinites receive an existential reading in yes/no-clauses extends beyond the northern area *stricto sensu*, but further data are needed to clarify this issue.

[14] Note that the interrogatives in (22) are clefts (cf. §38.7). Although the presence of *mica* may be favoured by clefting, clefting is optional in (22d) and absent in (22e). Moreover, other clausal environments exhibit an analogous asymmetry between Italian and the dialects.

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Chapter 39

Central regional Italian

Tania Paciaroni

39.1 Introduction

Central regional Italian is the variant of Italian spoken in an area delimited by two major borders. In the north, this is the bundle of isoglosses between Massa Carrara and Senigallia, which runs relatively straight from west to east. The southern border begins west of Gaeta and runs roughly in a north-eastern direction ending along the river Tronto in the Marche.[1] Administratively, central regional Italian extends across (parts of) five regions, coinciding with Umbria, most of Tuscany and Lazio, the central part of the Marche, and western Abruzzo. Linguistically, it is in contact with four different dialect (sub-)areas:

- Tuscan dialects, spoken in Tuscany (except a narrow area in the south), Elba, and Corsica (cf. Ledgeway 2016a and references therein; Savoia 2023);[2]
- Romanesco, the dialect of Rome (Trifone 1992; 2008);
- the *area mediana* ('central area'), in Lazio south-east of Rome, in Umbria in the south-eastern half, in the Marche in the Macerata-Fermo area, and in western Abruzzo (L'Aquila and Avezzano) with the Rome-Ancona line as its north-western border;
- the *area perimediana*, encompassing the south-eastern Grosseto area, north-western Lazio, north-western Umbria, and the province of Ancona up to Senigallia (Loporcaro and Paciaroni 2016).

Typologically, central Italy is exceptional within Italo-Romance. In the domains of segmental phonology and morphology, Tuscan, Romanesco, and *area perimediana* dialects show more similarities to standard Italian than dialects of other parts of Italy; as witness the system of four final atonic vowels (/i e a o/), and the absence of metaphony, a major source of root allomorphy.[3] Dialects of the *area mediana*, however, have a more conservative system with five final vowels (/i e a o u/) and metaphony, with important systematic effects on inflexional morphology (e.g., different grades of phonological assimilation in verb paradigms: ˈsposo 'I marry' vs ˈspusi 'you.2SG marry'; ˈkɔtʃo 'I cook' vs ˈkutʃi 'you.2SG cook'; Maiden 2021:xxiii–xxv). In morphosyntax several typologically relevant features are encoded differently both within the area and with respect to Italian, and are not coherently aligned either with northern or with southern Romance types (see La Fauci 1988; 1989; 1991; Zamboni 2000:86f., 103–105; Ledgeway 2012a:312–352; 2020b). Northern Tuscan dialects—unlike Italian—have subject clitic pronouns co-occurring with the finite verb (e.g., Flo. *Lei la lo cerca* lit. 'she SCL.FSG= him= searches (= she looks for him)', with tonic and optional *lei* 'she' and obligatory subject clitic *la*; Savoia 2023:71–85), a property of northern Romance that is absent elsewhere in the area. An optional partitive article, today peculiar to northern Romance (e.g., Flo. *(Voi) un vu leggete mai dei libri* lit. '(You.PL) NEG SCL.2PL read.2PL never of.the books (= You never read books)' (*ASit* 2. 77), co-exists with (incipient) differential object marking (DOM; Tsc. *A te ti sistemo io* lit. 'DOM you.SG you.SG= arrange.1SG I (= I will sort you out', Elbano *Chiama a Mario* '(S)he calls DOM Mario (= (S)he calls Mario)', cited in (Giannelli 2000:93n317; Ledgeway 2016a:226f.), a property of southern Romance, absent in standard Italian, but present in the whole area. In most varieties we see the continuation of an original HABERE/ESSE alternation of perfective auxiliation (Ledgeway 2016a:226f.), together with the retention of both synthetic and analytic past perfective forms (Ledgeway 2016a:224), correlated with the northern vs southern type, respectively. The result is a lack of uniformity and considerable diatopic microvariation both in the dialects (Loporcaro 2013:133f., 137–145) and regional Italian (Telmon 2016). Even at higher diastratic and diaphasic levels, at least two major spoken regional standards must be distinguished: Tuscan regional Italian and Rome regional Italian,

along with two minor varieties, mostly corresponding to the *area mediana* and the *area perimediana*.[4]

Diachronically, the area is also exceptional. First, Tuscan, in particular Florentine, is the basis of standard Italian (for discussion and exemplification, see §§1.3–4). Second, Rome played a crucial role in Italianization, first in the Papal States, where it promoted a kind of secondary Tuscanization, and then from 1861 onwards in the united Italy (De Mauro 1970a:24–27; De Mauro and Lorenzetti 1991; D'Achille 2002; Trifone 1992; 2008; Renzi 2012:79–84, 87). The dialect of Rome was Florentinized from the fifteenth century, anticipating by several centuries the push for linguistic Italianization that in the rest of Italy would only begin in the post-Unification decades. Changes affected first the written, formal production of middle-high social strata, but in the sixteenth century began to impact the entire linguistic repertoire and led to the replacement of the original upper southern dialect with a new de-southernized variety. The more basilectal features (e.g., metaphonetic diphthongization: *cuorpo* 'body', *viecchio* 'old', cf. It. *corpo*, *vecchio*) were abandoned, whereas other features belonging to the mesolectal variety and common to the *area mediana* were preserved (e.g., protonic E (*de* 'of', cf. It. *di*), reduction of -RJ- to *r*, assimilations of -ND-, -MB- to *-nn-*, *-mm-*) and innovative non-Tuscan features developed (e.g., lenition of the palatal lateral [ʎ] to [j]; Trifone 2008:35–59). For the transition from the 'first phase' to the 'second phase' demographic developments were crucial, in particular the sack of Rome (1527) and mass immigration predominantly from Tuscany and central-northern Italy (De Mauro 1970a:24, 86; Trifone 2015c:261–273).

From the perspective of ordinary speakers, including those of the *area mediana*, there is a strong feeling of a *continuum* with the standard language, as intelligibility is normally straightforward (see Paciaroni 2015 for Macerata). An effect is the presence of a broad 'grey area' due to the mutual exchange between Italian and dialects, resulting in an Italian variety spoken by a very high percentage of Italians (ISTAT 2026), but with local features (for Tuscany see Agostiniani and Giannelli 1990; Calamai 2017:215–218; for Rome, e.g., Stefinlongo 1985; Vignuzzi 1994; Trifone 2008:96–114). The attitude of speakers towards their local speech differs dramatically in the area: on the one hand, there is Florentine, perceived as

maximally prestigious (De Mauro 1970a:165; Calamai 2011; Biliotti and Calamai 2012), on the other hand, there are *area mediana* dialects, not perceived as prestigious (Parrino 1996). Rome Italian has yielded to Milan Italian as the most prestigious, but enjoys 'covert prestige' (i.e., prestige within the subgroup, associated with non-standard speech; see Labov 1966; Trudgill 1972. For the perception of Rome Italian as variety of highest prestige, see Serianni 2002b:96–102). This facilitates the surfacing of vernacular features (see reference to 'italiano *de* Roma' by Vignuzzi 1994:31). Different attitudes are reflected in behaviour during interviews: Tuscan speakers rarely hesitate about their answers, Macerata speakers are often insecure and inclined to select the form closest to either the traditional standard or Rome Italian (Vignuzzi 1994:32).

39.2 Central regional Italian from an urban perspective

We begin with variation between usages in different cities in this area, for three reasons. First, two cities, Florence and Rome, were crucial for the linguistic history of Italy (see Frosini 2015 and Trifone 2015c and references therein). Second, cities are the main centres of gravitation for Italian polycentrism, so an urban perspective is indispensable to the understanding of the (linguistic) identity of Italian speakers (Trifone 2015b). Third, we have comparable data collected between 2000 and 2013 for the project *La lingua delle Città (LinCi): italiano regionale e varietà dialettale* (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a), which offers an insight into the varieties, especially those intermediate between the standard and dialects, spoken in fourteen cities in central Italy (out of a total of thirty-one): nine in Tuscany (Arezzo, Florence, Grosseto, Livorno, Lucca, Pisa, Pistoia, Prato, Siena), four in Lazio (Latina, Rieti, Rome, Viterbo), one in Abruzzo (L'Aquila).[5] The database was complemented by the author with first-hand fieldwork in two cities in the Marche (Ancona, Macerata). The questionnaire mainly targeted the everyday lexicon, but also phonetics and grammar, and was completed by twelve

speakers in each city, who also provided relevant sociolinguistic information, yielding a 'fluid form of a language that is clearly identified and yet far from monolithic' (Bruni 2013b:9).

39.3 Phonetics and phonology

39.3.1 Introduction

Central regional Italian presents to a large extent the same phoneme inventory as the standard language; exceptions are the absence of the phonemes /ʎ/ and /z/ in some sub-varieties; above all, central regional Italian differs in terms of the distribution of single phonemes and its phonetic processes, in that it displays the influence of substrate features (Canepari 1983; 1999; Bruni 1994; Maiden 1995a; Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005; De Blasi 2014; Telmon 2016; Calamai 2017; Crocco 2017; Heinz and Schmid 2021). Vowel and prosodic features are more local and less prone to spread compared with consonant features and processes, which are liable to spread in accordance with speakers' perception and attitudes (see, e.g., Calamai 2017). See also §1.4.2.1 and §1.4.3.1.

39.3.2 Consonants

The phonemic inventory of consonants in central regional Italian includes /p b t d k g/, /f v s ʃ/ (plus, marginally, /ʒ/ in loanwords such as [gaˈraʒ] 'garage', and /z/ in Tuscan and Rome),[6] /ts dz tʃ dʒ/, /m n ɲ/, /l/, and in some varieties /ʎ/, /r/, and /j w/. Central regional Italian shows phonetically long consonants intervocalically or before glides, and a subset of obstruents also before laterals and trills, which are parsed into two successive syllables: [ˈɛk.ːo] '(t)here is', [ap.ˈːrɛtːso] 'I appreciate'. Degemination of long consonants before stress, where present in the dialect substratum, is not systematic and tends to disappear in regional Italian, probably also

due to the influence of orthography (e.g., *ga*[lː]*ina* instead of *ga*[l]*ina* ‘chicken’, *ca*[tː]*ivo* instead of *ca*[t]*ivo* ‘bad’; for eastern Tuscany, see Calamai 2017:230; for Ancona, Tordini 2020:271f.). In Rome and in many areas of the centre (e.g., Ancona, Macerata, Fermo, Veroli), the original long vibrant /rː/ can be shortened, as in the underlying dialects, especially if pretonic, e.g., [ariveˈðertʃi] vs It. [arːiveˈdertʃi] ‘goodbye’, [ˈkorere] vs It. [ˈkorːere] ‘to run’ (Bernhard 1998:86f.; 123–126; Balducci 2002:219). Word-initial geminates, whenever present in the substrate dialect, occur at the basilectal regional Italian level as well, either through aphaeresis of a Latin or Romance initial vowel, e.g., Rom. [ˈmːɛrda] ‘shit’,[7] [ˈkːjɛːsa] ‘church’ (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005:134), Perugia [ˈrːabːjaːto] ‘angry’ (Bonucci 2011:17),[8] or by gemination of initial originally single consonant, e.g., Rom. [ˈsːɛːdja] ‘chair’.

Italian consonants which are intrinsically long in intervocalic position /ʎ ʃ ɲ ts dz/ (cf. §15.2.1.2.3) are pronounced as long. In Florence [ʎː], an allomorph of the masculine plural definite article, is optionally realized as [ʎ]. In non-acrolectal Rome regional Italian (emerging also in the acrolect) [ʎː] is often realized as [jː] or sometimes as [ʎ]: [ˈfɔjːo] (/ [ˈfɔʎo]) vs It. [ˈfɔʎːo] ‘sheet (of paper)’ (D’Achille and Giovanardi 2001b:17, 20). In the rest of Lazio, Umbria, Marche, from Ancona southwards, and in the Abruzzese of L’Aquila the realization as the approximant [jː] or fricative [ʝː] is common, even in highly educated speakers: [ˈfiʝːo] vs It. [ˈfiʎːo] ‘son’. Hypercorrect forms such as *migliaglia* instead of *migliaia* ‘thousands’ (Canepari 1999:487; Regnicoli 2020:39n17, 78f.) are also revealing. The affricate [ts] is generally geminate word-internally: [ˈgratːsje] ‘thanks’, [la ˈtsamb̥a] ‘the paw’ (Regnicoli 2020:78).

A feature of many dialects and regional varieties spoken south of the Massa Carrara-Senigallia line (as well as of Sardinian) is the laxing and voicing of post-vocalic or intervocalic consonants, both word-internally and across words, an allophonic phenomenon displaying considerable variation in terms of distribution, diffusion, acoustic properties, and sociolinguistic constraints, and therefore different from northern voicing (§38.3.1). The targets are primarily the voiceless plosives /p t k/ realized as lenited [p̬ t̬ k̬], relaxed fricatives [β̞ ð̞ ɣ̞], or fully voiced variants [b̥ d̥ g̥]. The phenomenon is particularly pervasive, especially in Rome, e.g., in the suffix of the

perfective participle: [aɻ gaˈβiːd̥o] vs It. [aɻ kaˈpiːto] ‘did you understand?’ (Canepari 1983; for Rome, see Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005:135f., 147; Bernhard 1998:91–94; D’Achille and Stefinlongo 2008:188f.; for the Marche, Balducci 2002:217; Nocchi and Paciaroni 2006; Regnicoli 2020). Intervocalically, fricatives may also be (partially or fully) voiced: e.g., Rom. [riˈβ̬ɔːz̬ad̥i] ‘take a rest’ (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005:136). Weakening does not occur in post-pausal or post-consonantal positions.

The spirantization of stops (so-called *gorgia toscana* ‘Tuscan throat’; see also §1.4.3.1), which is the most prominent feature of Tuscan Italian and is present also in educated pronunciation, can be interpreted as part of these wider voicing processes (the literature on the topic is vast; see Calamai 2017:219–221, and references therein). It is a variable and very widespread phenomenon, documented since the sixteenth century. It occurs with the greatest intensity in Florence, where it is fairly systematic for /k/ → [x], [h], and (in low registers and fast speech) zero ([ˈpɔːxo] vs It. *poco* ‘little’; [la ˈhaːsa] vs It. [la ˈkaːsa] ‘the house’), less so for /p/ → [ɸ] ([ˈpiːɸa] vs It. [ˈpiːpa] ‘pipe’), and /t/ → [θ] ([ˈviːθa] vs It. [ˈviːta] ‘life’). A similar, but less consistent, lenition process affects intersonantic non-geminated voiced stops /b d ɡ/, which are also variably realized as [β ð ɣ], e.g., *li*[β]*ro* ‘book’, *da*[ð]*o* ‘dice; cube’, *ma*[ɣ]*ro* ‘thin’. *Gorgia toscana* has subsequently expanded beyond its original area, first to the western varieties, where it targets only /k/: [aˈmiːo] ‘friend’, but not /p/ and /t/, and now to the southern (*grossetano-amiatino*) and eastern (*aretino-chianaiolo*) areas of Tuscany. In the majority of peripheral areas multiple rules compete, establishing at least three different outcomes: plosive (high prestige variant coinciding with Italian), fricative (local and expanding prestige variant), and lenited segments (local regressing variant), with spirantization perceived as a prestige feature at the regional level, therefore more frequent in the acrolect.

Alveolar affricates are spirantized in the same contexts: Florence, Siena, Rome, Ancona, and part of the province of Macerata display deaffrication of intervocalic /tʃ/: e.g., [ˈdiːʃe] vs It. [ˈdiːtʃe] ‘(s)he says’ (Calamai 2017:219; D’Achille 2012c:52; Balducci 2002:218). In Tuscan and in many varieties of the *area* (*peri*)*mediana*, the same process also affects the voiced affricate /dʒ/, which in Rome, by

contrast, geminates: e.g., Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 37) Arezzo, Macerata [buʒarˈdiːno] vs Rom. [budːʒarˈdiːno] vs It. [budʒarˈdiːno] ‘medicine information leaflet’. In most of central Italy, including Rome and southern Tuscany, /b/ also geminates, both intervocalically or between a vowel and a glide or liquid: [ˈsubːiṭo] vs It. [ˈsuːbito] ‘immediately’, [ˈlibːro] vs It. [ˈliːbro] ‘book’. The productivity of the process changes within the area: for instance, it is systematic in Rome (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005:135), but is documented only for isolated lexemes in Macerata.

Due to the growing influence of northern regional Italian, intervocalic /s/ is affected by a lexically conditioned change (§26.3). In Tuscany, [z] is in expansion, so that the contrast in Italian minimal pairs such as [ˈkjɛːse] ‘asked.PST.PFV.3SG’ vs [ˈkjɛːze] ‘churches’, still recorded in descriptions of normative pronunciation, is neutralized to [ˈkjɛːze], especially among younger speakers (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005:145f.). A recent sociophonetic experimental analysis of intervocalic /s/ in Livorno shows that the realization as [z̰] or [z] is gender-conditioned, being more often produced by female speakers because of the prestige of these sounds (Nocchi and Filipponio 2012). In Ancona, /s/ has changed systematically to voiced [z]: e.g., [baˈziːliko] ‘basil’ (Tordini 2020:262, 272). In Rome and the *area mediana*, especially for middle-aged and older speakers, intervocalic /s/ is mainly voiceless and the only available form for both ‘asked.PST.PFV.3SG’ and ‘churches’ is *chie*[s]*e* (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005:133). Word-internally and word-initially, the contrast /ts/ vs /dz/ tends to be neutralized in favour of [dz], even if the dialectal substratum has voiceless [ts], e.g., Macerata regional Italian [ˈdzukːero] vs Macerata dialect [ˈtsukːero] ‘sugar’ (Regnicoli 2020:78).

A widespread and now expanding feature in central (and southern) Italy is an epenthesis of [t] in the transition between the sonorants /r l n/ and /s/ (both word-internal and sandhi positions): e.g., [ˈsaltsa] vs It. [ˈsalsa] ‘sauce’, [il ˈtsuːgo] vs It. [il ˈsuːgo] ‘the sauce’ (D’Achille 2012c:52).[9] The phenomenon is today also documented in young and middle-aged speakers in Florence itself, although originally unknown to Florence, e.g., [inˈtsjɛːme] vs It. [inˈsjɛːme] ‘together’ (Turchi and Gili Fivela 2004). In the *area mediana*, post-nasal lenition reaches different degrees of variability from area to area and can go as far as

almost undergoing voicing: [ˈpɛndzo] ‘(I) think’. Nevertheless, epenthesis of a dental is not systematic; e.g., in Ancona, possibly because of stigmatization, it is significantly less present in female speakers (Tordini 2020:272–275).

The palatalization of /s/ before stops and fricatives in Rome occurs only in emphatic pronunciations, e.g., [ˌke ʃˈkifo:zo] ‘how disgusting’ (Trifone 1992:84), [ˈʃtuːpiðo] ‘stupid’, [ˈʃpinta] ‘push’ (Bernhard 1998:95), whereas in other areas of Lazio and central Italy it is present in the basilectal variety independent of emphasis, e.g., Macerata [diʃˈkortso] ‘discourse’. (See Lorenzetti 2018 for its occurrence, especially of /s/ plus voiceless stops, in the underlying dialects). In Rome the assimilation of /st/ as [sː], also in the cluster /str/, both in initial and internal position is now expanding both in the basilect and mesolect (e.g., [ˈsːaːre] vs It. [ˈstaːre] ‘to stay’, [ˈkwesːo] vs It. [ˈkwesto] ‘this’, [ˈsːraːno] vs It. [ˈstraːno] ‘strange’, [ˈnosːro] vs It. [ˈnosːro] ‘our’; Bernhard 1998:95f., 137–140; D’Achille and Giovanardi 2001b:26).

As in Italian, nasals assimilate for place to following consonants, both word-internally and in sandhi. Word-final nasals may fully assimilate to word-initial sonorants, e.g., [i ˈmːente] *in mente* ‘in mind’, [u ˈlːaːgo] *un lago* ‘a lake’ (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005:135).

Other features appear to be stable but limited to a particular area. For instance, in the Italian variety of Livorno, one hears the velar lateral, [ˈbɛɬːo] ‘beautiful’ (Marotta and Nocchi 2001), and in western Tuscan the /kw/-cluster preceded by a vowel-final word becomes [v], e.g., [ˈvesto] vs It. [ˈkwesto] ‘this’ following the deletion of intervocalic /k/ and strengthening of [w] (Nocchi 2003).

39.3.3 Vowels

In stressed syllables, as in Italian, all central regional Italian varieties have seven monophthongal vowel phonemes: /i e ɛ a ɔ o u/. Nevertheless, they exhibit marked phonetic variation, as made evident by the acoustic analysis of Tuscan (Calamai 2004) and Roman vowels (Sorianello and Calamai 2005). Western Tuscan

Italian shows a velarization of /a/ to [ɑ] and a general lowering of mid-low vowels /ɛ/ (realized as [æ]) and /ɔ/, which according to Calamai (2004:441–458) is a local expanding feature from the variety of Livorno; neither of these characteristics appears in central Tuscan, a confirmation of Tuscan polycentrism. Rome's system approximates that of Florence; its most noticeable features are a slight velarization of /a/ and centralization of /ɛ/ (Sorianello and Calamai 2005:43f., 50).

Independently of sociolinguistic variables, the distribution of stressed higher vs lower mid vowels, both front and back, displays some divergences within the area, that are neither systematic nor numerous, but appear in highly frequent words, e.g., Flo. *sc*[e]*lta* 'choice' vs Lucca *sc*[ɛ]lta, Flo. *sp*[ɛ]*nge* 'extinguish.3SG' vs Siena *sp*[e]*nge*; Rom. *d*[e]*vo* '(I) must', *col*[ɔ]*nna* 'column', *sar*[e]*bbe* 'be.COND.3SG' vs It./Flo. *d*[ɛ]*vo*, *col*[o]*nna*, *sar*[ɛ]*bbe* (see Migliorini 1945). Other varieties diverge from Florence and Rome. For instance, except for the youngest speakers, in the *area mediana* L'Aquila has predominantly *fr*[ɛ]*tta* vs It., Flo., and Rom. *fr*[e]*tta* 'hurry' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 159), *sett*[e]*mbre* / *nov*[e]*mbre* / *dic*[e]*mbre* vs It., Rom. *sett*[ɛ]*mbre* / *nov*[ɛ]*mbre* / *dic*[ɛ]*mbre* 'September' / 'November' / 'December' (Avolio 2008:157). In the *area perimediana*, Ancona has *fruttiv*[ɛ]*ndolo* vs It., Flo., and Rom. *fruttiv*[e]*ndolo* 'greengrocer' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 42).

There are considerable differences in the pronunciation of the mid-vowel of the front diphthong: the vowel is open in Tuscan and generally in the *area perimediana*, closed in the *area mediana*, alternating in Latina (with prevalence of the closed variant) and showing a more complex sociolinguistic variation in Rome (Biasci 2012). For example, Nesi and Poggi Salani (2013a) documents for 'feet' (question 174) Tsc., Viterbo [ˈpjɛːdi], Rom. 9 [ˈpjɛːdi] vs 2 [ˈpjeːdi],[10] L'Aquila, Rieti (and Macerata) [ˈpjeːdi]; for 'salad bowl' (question 70) Tsc. [insalaˈtjɛːra], Ancona [intsalaˈtjɛːra] / [insalaˈtjeːra], L'Aquila 4 [intsalaˈtjeːra] vs 4 [intsalaˈtjɛːra], Latina 10 [intsalaˈtjeːra] / [insalaˈtjeːra], Rom. 9 [insalaˈd̪jɛːra] / [intsalaˈd̪jɛːra] vs 2 [insalaˈd̪jeːra]/ [intsalaˈd̪jeːra]; for 'ask.PRS.SBJV.2SG' / 'ask.PRS.IND.2SG' (question 197) Tsc. [ˈkjeːda/-i], Latina 8 [ˈkjeːda/-i] vs 3 [ˈkjɛːda] (vs 1 [ˈkeːdi]), Rom. 10 [ˈkjɛːda/-i] vs 1 [ˈkjeːda] (cf.

D'Achille 2013:221f. and references therein). There are no similar divergences in the back diphthong.

Monophthongization of the back diphthong [wɔ] to [ɔ] is a local regressing feature, which occurs in allegro-style and informal speech, but is avoided in more formal registers (see Calamai 2017:228 for central Tuscan, D'Achille 2012c:51; Sorianello and Calamai 2005:32 for Rome Italian).

Central regional Italian has five phonemes in unstressed syllables, /i e a o u/, four in word-final position: /i e a o/. The retention of the original contrast -/o/ vs -/u/, which defines the *area mediana* dialects, does not occur in the regional variety; the final -/o/ in this area is higher than in the standard language (Balducci 2002:217). Typical of central regional Italian except Tuscan is the conservation of etymological -/e/ in the preposition DE and personal pronouns ME, TE, SE, e.g., *de Roma* 'of Rome' vs It. *di Roma*, *me lavo* '(I) wash myself' vs It. *mi lavo*, *te vedo* '(I) see you' vs It. *ti vedo*, *se sveglia* '(s)he wakes up' vs It. *si sveglia* (D'Achille and Giovanardi 2001b:20).

39.3.4 Prosody

Intonation shows marked diatopic variability in central Italy (as elsewhere); see Canepari (1983:49–67, 171f.); Endo and Bertinetto (1997). Gili Fivela et al. (2015) analyse a comparable sample of speech from thirteen Italian cities, among which five represent central Italy: Florence, Lucca, Pisa, Siena, and Rome.[11] The area is highly non-homogeneous (see especially yes/no questions), although for some functions there are more stereotypical patterns shared by many varieties. The patterns recorded are not necessarily limited to a specific speech style (either read or spontaneous) and the variation is even greater in less controlled speech.

In tonic vowels Florence and Rome are similar to each other in terms of vowel duration. In western Tuscany (Pisa, Livorno) stressed vowels are perceived as [+long] in comparison with the corresponding Florentine vowels, since they have more movement in the fundamental frequency (Gili Fivela 2008).

Deletion of unstressed vowels across word boundaries operates in nominal and verbal inflexion. Tuscan Italian and varieties of the *area perimediana* are characterized by a remarkable incidence of aphaeresis and elision, even in non-allegro style, possibly caused by pressure from northern varieties; see Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 3: Flo. *ièr l altro* 'the day before yesterday'; question 5: Viterbo *'l prossim' anno* 'the next year'; ex. (7b) below; cf. Agostiniani 1989; Bonucci 1994; Giarrapa 2011; Calamai 2017:226f.). In Rome and the *area mediana* elision is preferred, even in the written variety, but is not obligatory, e.g., *buttar fuori*, but also *buttare fuori* 'to throw out'. In Tuscany, truncation of the infinitive is peculiar both to western varieties (Lucca, Pisa, Livorno) and to the Siena and Grosseto varieties. In Florence and Arezzo it is a variable feature, mostly depending on the position of the verb: it can occur within a sentence (*c'ho d'andà a comprà la carne* 'I have to go to buy some meat'), but it is almost impossible at the end of a sentence (*c'ho d'andare* 'I have to go') (see Calamai 2017:222). In Rome and in the rest of central Italy, the truncation of the final syllable is also frequent in more controlled speech: *mangià* [bː]*ene* 'to eat well', see examples (4)–(5) below. The same process is attested also with the form [ˈso] ← [ˈsoːno] 'be.1SG/3PL'; see example (3b); Nesi and Poggi Salani (2013a, question 160: *so' venute* lit. 'be.3PL come.PTCP (= they have come)'. Vocative truncation of both proper names and common nouns remains at the basilectal level (see Loporcaro and Faraoni 2021 for an account of the conditions under which it occurs). Truncation of third-person plural final -/o/ persists, although not obligatorily, and represents the preferred option in Tuscan Italian, in non-oxytonic third-person plural verb forms: e.g., Florence, Prato, Livorno *v*[ɛ]*ngan*(*o*) *via* '(they) come.SBJV/IND away',[12] *v*[ɛ]*ngon*(*o*) via '(they) come.IND away'. In Tuscan and in other varieties of central regional Italian, as in standard Italian, there is a tendency to label as 'correct' a pronunciation without deletion which leads to a decrease in *elision* (Agostiniani and Giannelli 1990:234).

One of the most prominent features of this area (and also of standard and southern regional Italian) is so-called *raddoppiamento fonosintattico* (see also §14.6.2, §15.2.1.2.4), a sandhi gemination of word-initial consonants after (a) words ending in a stressed vowel such as [ˈtɛ] 'tea', [ˈtre] 'three', [saˈra] 'be.FUT.3SG' (the phonological type), and (b) a small set of lexical items (monosyllables and

paroxytones) without final stress, e.g., [a] ‘to’, [ˈkoˑme] ‘like, as; how’ (lexical type) (Loporcaro 1997a). Tuscan (Florence, Prato, Pistoia), Tuscanized Corsican and Rome present both types of RF, although with some lexical divergences, e.g., after *da* ‘from’ (Flo. [da ˈkːaːsa] vs Rom. [da ˈkaːsa] ‘from home’) and the interrogative *c*[o]*me* ‘how’ (Flo. [ˈkoˑme fːai̯]? ‘How do you do (it)?’ vs Rom. [ˈkoˑme fai̯]?).[13] *Raddoppiamento fonosintattico* is stable in Florence, where it does not have any sociolinguistic variation, but not in Rome, where a diachronic survey shows that the extent of omission of RF has been expanded, in particular because a number of triggering words have become sensitive to prosodic context (e.g., comparative [ˈkoˑme] ‘as’; for a detailed account see Faraoni and Loporcaro 2021; 2023). Data in Calamai (2012) from the district of Arezzo, where spirantization and RF are not in complementary distribution, present variable RF of the lexical type, also in the same speaker (e.g., all the following outcomes are virtually possible: *a* [kː]*asa*, *a* [k]*asa*, *a* [g]*asa*, *a* [h]*asa* ‘at home’), possibly further evidence of the supra-regional tendency to leave out phonetic features not represented orthographically. Most central varieties only possess RF of type (b), with differences from area to area in the set of RF-triggers that is much more restricted; for instance, the varieties of the *area mediana* do not have RF either after adversative *ma*, which systematically triggers RF in Rome, or after the textual conjunction *ma*, which is losing its effectiveness as a trigger: Macerata [non ˈmaɲːa ma ˈbeːve ˈsoːlo] vs Rom. [nʊn ˈbeːve ma ˈmːaɲːa] ‘(s)he does not eat, but only drinks’ (Faraoni and Loporcaro 2021:99).

In conclusion, the varieties of central regional Italian, although typologically very similar to the standard, present local features not found in the standard. These features are not systematically present either in the whole area or in the whole community of a given sub-area, or at all levels of formality and can also co-exist in one area variously ranked in terms of relative prestige. Both the regional degree and the diffusion of each of them are sensitive to several factors such as register, speaker’s gender and age, cultural level, individual style and, most importantly, speaker’s attitude towards any given feature.

39.4 Morphology

39.4.1 Introduction

Dialectal inflexional features without an equivalent in Italian are normally not found in regional Italian (Maiden 1995a:257). This is for instance the case with the distinction of the final unstressed vowels -/u/ vs -/o/ and the metaphonic raising that characterize the *area mediana* dialects, but are absent in regional Italian, leading to the absence of a neuter gender for mass nouns (Loporcaro 2018:132–140) and further inflexional distinctions associated with it (Maiden 1991; 2018a).

39.4.2 Nominal morphology

Central regional Italian shows persistence of the stable inflexional classes in singular *-o* vs plural *-i* and singular *-a* vs plural *-e* to an even greater degree than the standard. This is illustrated (D'Achille 2012c:54) by basilectal Rome regional Italian plurals such as *auti* 'cars', *euri* 'euros' (for the standard invariant plurals *auto, euro*: cf. §9.4.2), and by the attraction of invariant adjectives into the inflexional class *-a/-e/-o/-i*, e.g., *le pagine pare* vs It. *le pagine pari* 'the even-numbered pages' (where *pari* 'even-numbered' is in Italian an invariant adjective).

39.4.3 Personal pronouns

The inflexional paradigms of tonic personal pronouns show variation within this area both in terms of the importance of the feature 'case' and the correlation with semantic features (see further Cappellaro 2016). As in standard Italian, first- and second-person pronouns in the *area mediana* predominantly show symmetrical structure and

preservation of different case forms for the subject vs non-subject function in the singular, but one form only for all functions in the plural (Table 39.1). In the second-person singular few speakers, especially younger females, accept the originally accusative form also in subject function in line with the neo-standard Italian tendency towards case-loss in this part of the paradigm (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 180). This tendency is stronger in Rome, where nominative *te* is a local feature (D'Achille 2013:244f., and n127).

Table 39.1 Area mediana

PERSON	CASE	SINGULAR		PLURAL
1	NOM	*io*		*noi*
	NON-NOM	*me*		
2	NOM	*tu* / %*te*		*voi*
	NON-NOM	*te*		

In Tuscan and in the *area perimediana* (Table 39.2) a two-way distinction is found in the first-person singular only, whereas the second-person singular shows no case distinction and the only form available is *te* (Pacini 2013:162 for Siena; Balducci 2002:221 for Ancona).

Table 39.2 Tuscan and area perimediana

person	case	singular		plural
1	NOM	*io*		*noi*
	NON-NOM	*me*		

person	case	singular	plural
2	NOM	*te* (%*tu*)[a]	*voi*
	NON-NOM	*te*	

[a] In Tuscan (cf. Ledgeway 2016a:216), *tu* behaves as a subject clitic.

The paradigm of third-person pronouns is one of the most significant features of the regional Italian of the *area mediana*. As Table 39.3 illustrates, the *area mediana* type shares with Italian the presence of overabundance and suppletion, but differs from it in using *esso*, *essa*, *essi*, *esse* in all syntactic functions and both with non-human (1a) and human (1b) reference (see Telmon 2016:312 for Spoleto; cf. also §9.3.2). These forms are in the underlying dialects (Loporcaro and Paciaroni 2016:235) and are favoured by speakers because of their morphological transparency. Besides them, *lui*, *lei*, *loro* are used (also with non-human reference) (1c), whereas *egli*, *ella* occur exclusively in formal speech of middle-aged and older educated speakers; younger speakers use these forms only in scholastic contexts, sometimes hypercorrecting, even in a non-nominative function, both as direct object and as complement of a preposition, e.g., *ho visto egli/ella* 'I have seen him / her'; *ad egli* 'to him' for standard Italian *ho visto lui/lei*; *a lui* (Diego Sbacchi, p.c.; see Iacobini and Thornton 2016:203 for similar examples of *egli* with non-nominative function in Italian).

Table 39.3 Macerata third-person pronouns

	Macerata regional Italian		Macerata dialect	
GENDER	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL
M	*esso/lui* *esso*	*essi/loro*	*issu*	*issi/loro*

	Macerata regional Italian			Macerata dialect	
GENDER	SINGULAR		PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL
F	*essa/lei*		*esse/loro*	*essa*	*esse/loro*
	essa				
N	—		—	*esso*	—

1 a Bisogna saper cogliere tutti gli aspetti di essa. (Macerata)
need.3SG be.able.INF grasp.INF all the aspects of 3SG.F
'One must be able to grasp all aspects of her.' [antecedent 'person']

b deceduto anch' esso (Macerata)
decease.PTCP.MSG also 3SG.M
'also deceased' [antecedent 'man']

c buono anche lui (Macerata)
good also 3SG.M
'This one is good too [lit. good, it too]' [antecedent 'dish']

In the varieties of the *area perimediana* (exemplified in Table 39.4 with data from Ancona) paradigms display the monomorphemic and non-segmentable forms *lui*, *lei*, *loro*, again corresponding to the dialect paradigms, and also coinciding with the unmarked ones in neo-standard Italian, with gender syncretism in the plural (§26.3). The forms *esso*, *essa*, *essi*, *esse* are very rare and alien to most speakers. See also Nesi and Poggi Salani (2013a, question 182).

Table 39.4 ***Area perimediana*** **third-person pronouns**

	Ancona regional Italian		Ancona dialect	
GENDER	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL
M	*lui*	*loro* / %*essi*	*lu*	*lora*

	Ancona regional Italian		Ancona dialect	
F	*lei* / %*essa*	*loro* / %*esse*	*lia*	

As for the second-person plural polite forms, in my survey and the LinCi project surveys (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 18) almost all speakers in most of the cities investigated stated that they use *lei*, while *voi* has nearly disappeared, even among the oldest speakers (Nesi 2013b:147f.), but survives in Viterbo, where it is used not only to address older family members, but also as a pronoun of formal address. Generalized *tu* has been confirmed in some speakers who participated in the progressive movement of the late 1960s, as well as in middle-aged and younger speakers.

39.4.4 Demonstratives

Within this area demonstratives fall into two systems: a three-term vs a two-term system (Ledgeway 2004; 2015:63–75, 82; cf. also §1.4.3.3). The first type includes Tuscan Italian (2) and matches the grammatical feature of person, contrasting *questo* located in the deictic sphere of the speaker vs *cotesto* (/*codesto*) located in the deictic sphere of the addressee vs *quello* outside of the deictic sphere of both discourse participants, optional reinforced by the spatio-personal adverbs *qui/qua* 'here' (speaker-oriented) vs *costì* 'there' (addressee-oriented) vs *lì/là* 'there' (non-discourse participants).

2 Cotesto (costì), mica lo porterai? (ETsc.)
DEM.ADDR.MSG here.ADDR NEG it= take.FUT.2SG
'You're not going to wear this?'

The second system is attested in the rest of central regional Italian, which contrasts a [+discourse participants] (hence first- and second-person) deictic *questo* with a [–discourse participants] deictic *quello*, optionally reinforced by *qui/qua* and *lì/là*, even where the substratum dialects show a ternary distinction with a second-person form (*quesso* or *testo*). In the spoken language, in both ternary and

binary systems, demonstratives in adnominal use take the non-reinforced forms *'sto* and *testo* (Elba, Corsica *sso*).

39.4.5 Verbs

The opposition between synthetic (*passato remoto*) and analytic (*passato prossimo*) forms of the past perfective is maintained, with the aspectual functions of aorist and perfect (absence/presence of present relevance), respectively. However, the area is not homogeneous. Bertinetto and Squartini (1996) comparing the distribution of the two tenses in Pisa, Rome and Macerata regional Italian, note that Tuscan speakers have a particular sensitivity to highlighting instances of (subjective) present relevance (3a) vs (3b). Rome speakers seem to flatten these differences and let temporal distance prevail. Macerata stands out for a greater frequency of the analytical perfect.

3 a Quando vidi il Nicchio che passò primo,
when see.PST.PFV.1SG the Nicchio REL pass.PST.PFV.3SG first
io m' alzai e cascai sotto.
I me= get.up.PST.PFV.1SG and fall.PST.PFV.1SG under
Questo è il ricordo del '69. (Siena)
this be.3SG the memory of.the '69

'When I saw the Nicchio cross first, I got up and fell down. This is my memory of '69.'

b … nell' 81, nell' 84 e nell' 88 … ancora non ero
in.the '81 in.the '84 and in.the '88 yet NEG be.PST.IPFV.1SG
babbo, per cui me li so' goduti benissimo (Siena)
dad for REL me= them=be.1SG enjoy.PTCP very.good

'in '81, '84 and '88 I wasn't yet a dad, so I enjoyed them very much' (*Capitano mio Capitano—Marco Bruni, nobile contrada del Nicchio*, RadioSienaTv, 21 June 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q06e7OG6K-E, accessed 13 January 25)

Observation of usage in *area perimediana* and *mediana* confirms that the analytic form is increasingly used instead of the synthetic form, a case of aoristic drift, by the vast majority of speakers, especially younger speakers. The synthetic form, by contrast, is confined to the formal, most controlled written styles (and even there it is at risk of disappearing), and in spoken Italian it occurs only with the most frequent verbs. This extension was observed in

the underlying dialects from the beginning of the twentieth century (Camilli 1929:228; Rohlfs 2021b:312).

The periphrasis *stare* 'stand' *a* 'to' + (truncated) infinitive is common in colloquial central regional Italian except for Tuscan. It can express both continuous and progressive aspects and it therefore competes with the present indicative and the rival periphrasis *stare* 'stand' + gerund, respectively (e.g., Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 200: Rom. *sto a lavorà* vs Flo., Prato, Arezzo *sto lavorando* 'I am working' vs L'Aquila with six answers *sto a lavorà*, and seven with *sto lavorando*; Bertinetto 2001:137f.; Troncon and Canepari 1989:103; Squartini 1998:127–133). Both periphrases, *stare* + gerund and *stare a* + infinitive, are part of the repertoire of educated speakers and can alternate depending on diaphasic differences in cases such as (4) with a focalized progressive situation. Both utterances are realized by the Roman film director and actor Nanni Moretti in the film *Ecce bombo*, the second utterance with more irritation and consequently lower register (Picchiorri 2007:112); see D'Achille and Giovanardi (2001a:46–54) for the use of *stare a* + infinitive in the contemporary Roman variety and Pesini (2023:102–117) for its diachronic evolution from the thirteenth century.

4	ma	che	stai	dicendo?	ma	che	stai	a	dì? (Rom.)
	but	what	stay.2SG	say.GER	but	what	stay.2SG	to	say.INF

'But what are you saying? But what are you saying?' (Nanni Moretti, *Ecce bombo*, 1978)

The intention to avoid the locally marked truncation of the infinitive may explain the speaker's self-correction and the substitution with the present indicative in (5a). Nevertheless, *stare a* + infinitive is frequent in both meso- and basilect, especially to amplify the intensity of an action (5b). Differently from standard and Tuscan Italian, it can take an imminential value and is compatible with an achievement (5c).

5 a. Non te sto a dì, non ti/te dico quanto
NEG you= stay.1SG to say.INF NEG you= say.1SG how.much
m(i) è costata. (Servigliano)
me= be.3SG cost.PTCP
'I'm not going to tell you how much it cost me.'

b. Te p(u)ò sta a sentì per ore. (Servigliano)
you= can.3SG stay.INF to hear.INF for hours
'(S)he can listen to you for hours.'

c. Stanno a a(r)rivà le cavallette. (Veroli)
stay.3PL to come.INF the locusts
'Locusts are coming.'

39.5 Syntax

39.5.1 The noun phrase

A significant difference with respect to standard Italian concerns the distribution of definite articles and possessives. An important parameter here is alienable vs inalienable possession. In the alienable (default) system in conjunction with common nouns, we find prenominal definite articles and post-nominal possessives (6a), except in Tuscan and western Umbrian where articles and weak possessives are prenominal (6b):[14]

6 a Io le faccio tutte, le ricette tue. (Spoleto)

b Io le fo tutte, le tu(e) ricette. (Orvieto)
I them= do.1SG all the recipes your(=) recipes
'I make all of your recipes.'

In the case of inalienable possession, with singular kinship terms (see Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, questions 164–165), the predominant pattern is 'possessive-noun' without article (7a for Rome, 7c for Ancona), though not in Tuscan and northwestern Umbrian (see 7b for Florence; Pacini 2013:162 for Siena), where an overt article is obligatorily inserted before the weak possessive.

7 a non vorei mai essere tua sposa (Rom.)

b non vorre(i) ma(i) essere la tu(a) sposa (Flo.)
NEG will.COND.1SG never be.INF the your(=) bride

'I would never want to be your bride' (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005:146f.)

c ma (n)do vai ch(e) ariva tu(a) sorella? (Ancona)
but where go.2SG that arrive.3 your(=) sister
'Where are you going when your sister arrives?'

With plural kinship terms the prevailing pattern in Tuscany is 'article-possessive-noun' (8a); in *area mediana* and *perimediana* the tendency is towards the pattern 'article-noun-possessive' (8b); for a recent study on possessives with kinship terms in Italian and Italo-romance dialects see Volpato and Lebani (2024).

8 a mi fai conoscere i tuoi genitori? (Flo.)
me= do.2SG know.INF the yours parents

'would you introduce me to your parents?' (Collodi 1883:185)

b i genitori vostri (Ancona, Macerata, Fermo)
the parents yours.PL

'your parents' (Balducci 2002:222)

The article is ungrammatical with male proper names (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 162): (***il*) *Giovanni*). With female proper names (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 161) there is remarkable variation. In Tuscany, the article is mandatory in Florence and prevalent in Arezzo, but absent in Siena and Livorno. In Rome and the *area mediana* it is also ungrammatical: (***la*) *Maria*). In the *area perimediana* the situation is varied, as can be seen from data from Viterbo (D'Achille 2013:243f.).

There is variation within this area (as elsewhere in Italo-Romance) in the distribution, preference, and meaning of indefinite determiners with 'mass nouns' and plural 'count nouns' (see, among others, Maiden and Robustelli 2007:76–78; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018; 2020; Baldi and Savoia 2021; §38.4.2). The so-called partitive article consisting of the preposition *di* + definite article, the 'zero article' (i.e., a bare noun), and the definite article with indefinite interpretation are all attested in the area, although not freely interchangeable and with microdiatopic variation corresponding to the distinctions in the underlying dialects (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018; 2020). Examples in (9)–(10) illustrate the different use of indefinite determiners with *fiori* 'flowers' in positive episodic

sentences in the past. Wide (9) vs narrow (10) scope interpretations of the object are illustrated for western Tuscan (Liana Tronci, p.c.) and Ancona (Giuliana Giusti, p.c.) spoken Italian:

9 a Abbiamo comprato i fiori / de(i) fiori / #fiori (WTsc.)

b Abbiamo comprato i fiori / de(i) fiori, #fiori (Ancona)
have.1PL buy.PTCP the flowers of.the flowers flowers
perché erano belli.
because be.PST.IPFV.3PL beautiful
'We bought flowers, because they were beautiful.'

10 a Abbiamo comprato i fiori / de(i) fiori / #fiori (WTsc.)

b Abbiamo comprato i fiori / (**de(i)) fiori, #fiori (Ancona)
have.1PL buy.PTCP the flowers of.the flowers flowers
non una pianta
NEG a plant
'We bought flowers, not a plant'

In both contexts and varieties the definite article represents the preferred option, whereas bare nouns are accepted only in formal, written (con)texts. In (9), with a wide interpretation, *dei* is possible (but marginal in Ancona); in (10), with a narrow interpretation, only the definite article is possible in Ancona.

39.5.2 Phrasal verb constructions

Phrasal verb constructions, i.e., complex predicates formed by a verbal base (especially one of motion) and a locative or direction marking particle, of the 'transparent' type where the particle maintains its lexical meaning and syntactic autonomy (Poletto 2009) are pervasive, as illustrated in (11) with an example from *Scottature* by Dolores Prato, a tale with features typical of spoken language.

11 lo zio [...] mi chiamava [...] per darmi via subito
the uncle me= call.PST.IPFV.3SG to give.INF=me away immediately
a quel giovanotto
to that young.man
'Uncle called me to give myself away to that young man right away' (Prato 1965:18)

The analysis of *LIP* texts (approx. 500,000 *tokens*) conducted by Iacobini (2008) shows their homogeneous distribution in the three

survey points of Florence, Rome, Milan, and a lower one in Naples (also see §26.3); an inspection of *AIS* data (Iacobini and Masini 2009) reveals their moderate presence in the dialectal substrata. Iacobini (2008:116) concludes that phrasal verb constructions seem to constitute 'a resource of contemporary Italian available to speakers which is largely independent of the dialectal substrata' (cf. also §1.5.2.5). A survey of Dante's corpus (Masini 2006) and of the OVI corpus (Iacobini 2007) confirms their presence in Tuscan Italian for centuries. Phrasal verb constructions, in which the particle is part of the verb complex and the meaning is non-transparent, are typical of northern regional Italian (e.g., *mangiar fuori* (lit. 'eat out') 'squander'; §38.4.1), but missing in this area.

39.5.3 *Che*-particles

A feature of the informal (spoken and written) register of several central (and southern) varieties is the occurrence of discourse particles in the initial position of most polar questions to contribute additional semantic and pragmatic meanings (for the dialects, see Rohlfs 2021c:157–159; Cruschina and Bianchi 2022; 2025, and references therein). In central Italian, these particles are optional and homophonous with the interrogative pronoun *che*, equivalent to English *what* (henceforth *che*-particles). Moreover, they show diatopic microvariation in their distribution even within the same region. Examples in (12) from Lucignano (Arezzo) feature the particle *che* at the beginning of special polar questions, i.e., where no answer is required or expected, as when in (12a) the speaker expresses surprise or disapproval towards an observed state of affairs, or in a rhetorical question asked to point out the obviousness of the answer (12b).[15]

12 a (Ma) che sei ancora qui? (Lucignano)
but PTC be.2SG still here
'Are you still here?'

b (Ma) che mi prendi in giro? (Lucignano)
but PTC me= take.2SG in tour
'Are you kidding me?'

In questions, where an answer is required or expected, two types are found even in the same sub-area. In one type, occurring in Lucignano (13), Siena, Orvieto, and Macerata, *che*-particles activate a biased-question reading, and the canonical interpretation is only available if the particle is absent.

13 (Che) c' è ancora la mamma? (Lucignano)
PTC LOC= be.3SG still the mum
'Is mum still there?'

In the second type illustrated by Florence (14a), Perugia, Bastia Umbra (Perugia), Latina (14b), and Rome (15), even polar questions requesting new information can be introduced by *che*-particles:

14 a O che t' hai parlato co Elisa? (Flo.)
b Che hai parlato con Elisa? (Bastia Umbra, Latina)
oh PTC SCL.2SG= have.2SG speak.PTCP with Elisa
'Have you spoken to Elisa?'

15 Che ce l' avresti un biglietto da prestarmi? (Rom.)
PTC LOC it= have.COND.2SG INDF ticket to lend=me
'Would you have a ticket to lend me?' (D'Achille 2012c:54)

Cruschina and Bianchi (2022) interpret this difference as a matter of compatibility with the 'speaker-ignorance assumption', which is supposed to be irrelevant in the second type, but must have a negative value in the first.

39.5.4 Syntactic case study 1: differential object marking

All central regional Italian varieties show differential object marking, for which, given two subsets of direct object, one is analytically marked by an overt preposition (mainly *a* 'to', but also *da/ta* 'from', for example, in Perugia) also employed to mark indirect objects, and the other shows zero marking. The parameters for assignment to each of the two subsets differ from variety to variety, but are universally linked to animacy/definiteness and topicality hierarchies (Bossong 1998; Aissen 2003; Iemmolo 2010; Seržant and Witzlack-Makarevich 2018). See Ledgeway (2023a) for both a detailed descriptive overview (with updated references) and a typology of

known microvariation across Italo-Romance according to syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic factors; see Gerards (2023) for an overview from a pan-Romance perspective.

In colloquial Tuscan Italian, differential object marking is 'incipient' (Ledgeway 2023a:273), occurring only with dislocated, topicalized tonic first- and second-person pronouns, preferably in the singular rather than the plural (16a–c vs 16d–e), and obligatorily if the subject pronoun is overtly realized (16a, 16c vs 16b) and always resumed by a clitic form (Benincà et al. 2001:149, 169f.).

16 a Te a me mi conosci però. (TscIt.)
you DOM me me= know.2SG however
'You know me, however.'

b (A) me, non mi ci mettere! (TscIt.)
DOM me NEG me= LOC= put.INF
'As for me, don't put me there!'

c Io a te, non ti ci metto. (TscIt.)
I DOM you.SG NEG you.SG= LOC= put.1SG
'As for you, I will not put you there.'

d ?A noi, non ci mettere in fondo! (TscIt.)
DOM us NEG us= put.INF at bottom
'As for us, don't put us at the bottom!'

e ?A voi, non vi conosco. (TscIt.)
DOM you.PL NEG you.PL= know.1SG
'As for you, I don't know you.'

A variation of this type is found in varieties such as Orvieto (Terni), where differential object marking is also normal with first- and second-person plural pronouns (17a–b), but excluded with third-person pronouns (17c).

17 a A noi mica ce conosci. (Orvieto)
DOM us NEG us= know.2SG
'As for us, you don't know us.'

b A voi, non ve capisco. (Orvieto)
DOM you.PL NEG you.PL= understand.1SG
'As for you, I don't understand you.'

c (**A) lui, non lo vedo mai. (Orvieto)
DOM him NEG him= see.1SG never
'As for him, I never see him.'

Less restrictive conditions are found in varieties such as Lucignano (Arezzo; Luca Pesini, p.c.), where differential object marking shows optional extension to human third-person pronouns and is preferred whenever in focus and under negative polarity (18a), but does not occur with focused objects in post-verbal position (18b).

18 a A me / a lui / a lei, non mi / lo / la freghi,
DOM me / DOM him / DOM her NEG me= him= her= cheat.2SG
stai sicuro! (Lucignano)
stay.IMPV.2SG sure
'As for me/him/her, you won't fool me/him/her, make no mistake!'

b Ha chiamato (**a) me, non (**a) te / (**a) lui (Lucignano)
have.3SG call.PTCP DOM me NEG DOM you.2SG DOM him
'(S)he called me, not you/him/her'

Differential object marking falls under even less restrictive conditions in varieties such as the spoken Italian of Arezzo where it shows obligatory extension to topicalized third-person pronouns (19a) and optional extension to proper names (Nocentini 1985). The LinCi data (19b), with differential object marking occurring under positive polarity only in two responses out of twelve, seem to indicate the relevance of polarity as a condition on such marking.

19 a (Io) a lui, non lo vedo mai. (Arezzo)
I DOM him NEG him= see.1SG never
'As for him, I never see him.' (Nocentini 1985:308)

b %(A) lui, l' ho visto. (Arezzo)
DOM him him= have.1SG see.PTCP
'As for him, I saw him' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 163)

Other central regional Italian varieties have extended marking further along the animacy and referentiality scales. For example, in Ancona differential object marking includes kinship terms (20a) and proper names (20b), both denoting highly individuated human referents. In most informal speech differential marking is optionally extended to objects in the canonical post-verbal position (20c). The question mark in (20c) and the asterisks in (20d) show that the grammaticality of such marking with common nouns, although acceptable in the dialects, is at best marginal and subject to variation (Balducci 2002:221).

20 a A papà, non lo sento. (Ancona)
DOM dad NEG him= hear.1SG
'As for dad, I can't hear him.'

b A Luca, ??al dottore, non l' ha visto nessuno. (Ancona)
DOM Luca DOM.the doctor NEG him= have.3SG see.PTCP nobody
'As for Luca / the doctor, nobody has seen him.'

c Ho visto (a) tuo padre / (a) Giovanni /
have.1SG see.PTCP DOM your father DOM Giovanni
??a- -l professore (tuo). (Ancona)
DOM the professor your
'I have seen your father / Giovanni / your professor.'

d Ho visto (**a) quel fijolo che dicevi te. (Ancona)
have.1SG see.PTCP DOM that child REL say.PST.IPFV.2SG you
'I saw that child you mentioned.'

In Rome, differential object marking is on the rise (D'Achille 2003a:36f.; 2009:14f.; 2022b:186),[16] especially if the object is pronominal and dislocated (21a), and with verbs like *sentire* 'hear, listen to' (21b) or *menare* 'beat up' (21c). However, its presence is conditioned by a high degree of both diastratic and diaphasic variation, which also explains why it is largely absent in the LinCi surveys.

21 a Guardami un po', a me! (Rom.)
see.IMP.2SG=me a little DOM me
'Just look at me!'

b Senti a me! (Rom.)
listen.IMP.2SG DOM me
'Listen to me!' (D'Achille 2003a:37)

c Ha menato a Giuseppe / a uno / a un altro. (Rom.)
have.3SG beat.PTCP DOM Giuseppe DOM one DOM INDF other
'S/he beat up Giuseppe/someone/someone.' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 154)

In Poggio Mirteto (Rieti), animacy and specificity are the relevant conditioning factors. Here the distribution of differential object marking is extended to include the human interrogative pronouns 'who, which one' (22a) and the human quantified-pronoun 'all' (22b), whose reference is specific. In post-verbal positions differential object marking is limited to pronouns and kinship terms (22c), but does not occur with proper names (22d).

22 a (a) chi cerchi? (Poggio Mirteto)
DOM who search.2SG
'Who are you looking for?'

b Salutame a tutti! (Poggio Mirteto)
greet.IMP.2SG=me DOM all
'Say hello to everyone for me!'

c Salutame a tua mamma! (Poggio Mirteto)
greet.IMP.2SG=me DOM your mum
'Say hello to your mum from me!'

d Ho visto (**a) Luca stamattina. (Poggio Mirteto)
have.1SG seen DOM Luca this.morning
'I saw Luca this morning.'

In Poggio Mirteto, it is excluded with the human quantifier pronouns NOBODY and SOMEONE (23).

23 Non ho visto (**a) nessuno/ (**a) un' anima viva. (Poggio Mirteto)
NEG have.1SG see.PTCP DOM nobody DOM INDF soul alive
'I did not see anybody / a living soul.'

A further extension of differential object marking is illustrated by Italian varieties from the *area mediana* such as Macerata (24) (see also Parrino 1996:111) and Veroli (Frosinone), where, in both topicalized and post-verbal positions, it is optionally extended to pronouns of all types both under positive (24a) and negative polarity (24b), to proper and kinship names (24c), and, to various degrees, to common nouns as well, whether (in)definite or (non-)specifc (24d–f). (24e) illustrates that the degree of individuation is also at work, since differential object marking is optional with nominal expressions introduced by the singular demonstrative, but marginal with nominals introduced by the plural demonstrative:

24 a Senti (a) tutti / (a) qualcuno! (Macerata)
hear.IMP.2SG DOM all DOM someone
'Listen to everyone / someone.'

b Non ho visto (a) nessuno / (a) un' anima viva. (Macerata)
NEG have.1SG see.PTCP DOM nobody DOM INDF soul live
'I did not see anybody / a living soul.'

c Aspettiamo a babbo. (Macerata)
wait.IMP.1PL DOM dad
'Let's wait for dad!'

d %Saluto (al) / il professore. (Macerata)
greet.1SG DOM.the the professor
'I greet the professor'.

e Ho visto (a) quel ragazzo / ??a quei ragazzi
have.1SG see.PTCP DOM that child DOM those children
che dicevi tu. (Macerata)
REL say.PST.IPFV.2SG you
'I saw that child / those children you mentioned.'

f Conosco (a) un professore rumeno. (Macerata)
know.1SG DOM INDF professor Romanian
'I know a Romanian professor.'

In writing, differential object marking appears only in *italiano popolare* as in (25):

25 Ringraziamo hai [sic] nostri cari politici. (Macerata)
thank.PRS.1PL DOM.the our dear politicians
'We thank our dear politicians.' (*Cronache maceratesi*, 28 August 2024)

Differential object marking is incompatible with the [–animate] feature, as illustrated by (26):

26 Saluto il / (**al) mare. (Macerata)
greet.1SG the DOM.the sea
'I say hello to the sea.'

The considerable microvariation and optionality in the distribution of differential object marking in central regional Italian confirms the relevance of specific properties, first animacy, second specificity, and also the significance of morphosyntactic (number, person), syntactic (e.g., word order), semantic (lexical selection, polarity), and pragmatic (focus) factors. Typologically, central regional Italian varieties fall into a coherent group that fits with an analysis of Italian varieties as a north-south *continuum* (§39.1).

39.5.5 Case study 2: Agreement

This section presents some instances of non-canonical agreement (Corbett 2006) from central regional Italian. This involves (i) the *controller*, the element which determines the agreement; (ii) the *target*, the element whose form is determined by agreement; (iii) the *domain*, the syntactic environment in which agreement operates; (iv) *features* and *values*, the morphosyntactic properties that are expressed; and (v) *conditions*.

For controllers, in central regional Italian, as in standard Italian (see Salvi 2001c:227), conjoined noun phrases normally trigger plural agreement. Nonetheless, singular agreement occurs if the subjects are abstract nouns perceived as forming a semantic unit (Serianni 2006:148). This kind of agreement seems to occur more often in the *area mediana* varieties as well as in any Romance variety with traces of the neuter (see Paciaroni 2012). In (27), the conjoined noun phrases *l'arte* 'art' and *la creatività* 'creativity' are recategorized as a single unit controlling default singular agreement on the verb form *è* 'is'.

27 [l'arte e la creatività espressa in varie forme] [. . .] è divertimento, sfogo, piacere di fantasia (Macerata)

'[art and creativity expressed in various forms] [. . .] is fun, an outlet, a pleasure of the imagination.' (Lucio Del Gobbo, *La rucola* 312, May 2024)

Area mediana varieties also provide examples of 'pancake-sentences', which were first described for Scandinavian (see Corbett 2022:191f., 206–208) and which are again favoured by the presence of a neuter gender for mass nouns in the underlying dialects (see Loporcaro (2018:23f.) on Latin; Loporcaro (2018:77) on Sursilvan; Loporcaro (2018:169f., 192) on Asturian; and Loporcaro (2018:169) on northern Castilian). In (28), the subject is the feminine singular nominal 'a woman minister', but the target *bello* 'beautiful' takes the default value masculine singular.

28 [un-a ministr-a] sarebbe bell-o
INDF-FSG minister(F)-SG be.COND.3SG beautiful-MSG

'A woman minister would be nice' (i.e., 'To have a woman minister would be nice')

Here agreement does not follow the controller's features, but information extraneous to it.

As pointed out by Corbett (2022:207), 'we recognize the construction by the agreement, since there is no morphological marker on the controller'.

Concerning targets, a salient feature of central regional Italian, and underlying dialects on the Adriatic side (see Balducci 2002:213f., 221; Loporcaro and Paciaroni 2016:237, 243) is the strong tendency for number syncretism in the third person in all tenses and moods:

29 Le scuole / La scuola inizia martedì.
the.PL schools the.SG school start.3 Tuesday
'Schools start / School starts on Tuesday.'

Agreement with degree adverbs, which was reported by Telmon (2016:312), is retreating. The use of the default masculine singular form of the adjective instead of adverbs derived with *-mente* is common (30; see Hummel 2017 and Ledgeway 2017c for a description from a Romance perspective and a theoretical account):

30 I nomi dei due allestimenti proposti parlano chiaro:
the names of.the two installations proposed speak clear.MSG
Esprit Alpine e Atelier Alpine.
Esprit Alpine and Atelier Alpine
'The names of the two proposed installations speak for themselves: Esprit Alpine and Atelier Alpine.' (*Corriere dell'Umbria*, 17 May 2024)

As for features and values, a salient property of *area mediana* (and upper south) dialects is the occurrence of gender systems with four values on account of the reinterpretation and split of the Latin neuter into two values, the so-called 'mass neuter' and the 'alternating' or 'non-autonomous neuter'. The former contains only non-countable nouns and nominalizations, is productive, and has distinct agreement forms, e.g., *lo pa* 'the.NSG bread' vs *lu ka* 'the.MSG dog' vs *la ma* 'the.FSG hand'. The latter represents a closed class of very frequent nouns parallel to standard Italian nouns such as *braccio/braccia* 'arm/-s', which represent an *inquorate gender value* (Thornton 2013). These are not productive and are syncretic with the masculine in the singular and with the feminine in the plural, e.g., [lu ˈvrat:ʃu](M)/[le ˈvrat:ʃe](F). In central regional Italian these two neuters are not present as lexical gender values, but leave a trace in the acceptability of agreement patterns which are refused or marginal in other varieties of Italian. The examples (27)–(28) above illustrate retention of a mass neuter assignment rule. Nouns such as *braccio* seem to be more strongly anchored in the *area mediana*

regional system, as illustrated in (31) by non-local agreement between the controller *uova* and the distributive pronoun *uno*, which takes either the feminine form *una*, as in standard Italian, or the masculine form *uno*, which is preferred and can only be explained in the light of the 'masculine singular, feminine plural' agreement pattern of the non-autonomous neuter. See Acquaviva (2008) for other examples documenting speakers' intuitions regarding the syntactic behaviour of non-autonomous neuter in Italian, and Paciaroni et al. (2013:115–117) for comparable examples from central-southern dialects.

31 [le uova] costano quindici centesimi l' un-o/un-a.
the egg(non-autonomous neuter).PL cost.3PL fifteen cents the one-MSG/FSG
'The eggs cost fifteen cents each.'

Nocentini (1999) provides data from spoken Tuscan Italian which illustrate three different factors in the realization of subject-verb agreement: (i) grammatical realization; (ii) word order; (iii) information structure. In spoken Tuscan Italian the subject (regardless of animacy) controls agreement on the verb only if it precedes the verb and is topical (32a); see Salvi 2001c:231). If the subject precedes the verb, but is in focus (32b) or if it is post-verbal and in focus (32c) the verb takes the default third singular form. See also Corbett (2006:186–188); Cruschina et al. (2019:27–29); and §1.4.3.3 and §10.3.3.

32 a I bollini mancano ancora (TscIt.)
the coupons lack.3PL still
'The coupons are still missing.'

b Quanti bollini ti manca per arrivare a venti? (TscIt.)
how.many coupons you= lack.3SG to arrive.INF to twenty
'How many coupons do you need to get to twenty?'

c Mi manca [cinque bollini] per arrivare a venti. (TscIt.)
me= lack.3SG five coupons to arrive.INF to twenty
'I need five coupons to get to twenty.'

39.6 Lexicon

Lexical evidence does not allow the identification of a homogeneous central variety, nor do speakers have a repertoire in which a unifying form coexists with one or more local forms. Again, Florence and Rome differ in items of basic vocabulary. In other cases, a convergence of the *area mediana* and *perimediana* varieties, including Rome, can be observed, and these remain distinct from Tuscan (see also §1.4.3.4, §1.5.2.5). Generally, an alternative categorical selection is only documented for a few items, more often the difference is expressed in terms of different degrees of preference.

To express the concept NOW (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 1) all the three main adverbs attested in the peninsula, *ora*, *adesso*, and *mo,* are documented, even in one and the same city, as in Rome, Latina, Viterbo, Rieti, L'Aquila, and Macerata. In Tuscany, the prevailing form is *ora*, originating from Florence, beside which *adesso* is marginal, almost never the only form and used especially by highly educated speakers (Nesi 2013b:147; Pacini 2013:156f.). In Rome and Lazio, the prevalent form is *adesso*, while *ora* is often also used, but remains less prevalent, and *mo*, although perceived as dialectal, is widespread, even among educated speakers (it also frequently appears in *da mo* 'for a long time since', 'since that day'). Throughout the rest of the area, *adesso* is used either exclusively or beside *mo*, which in some subvarieties appears to be retreating in younger speakers with a higher education and in formal contexts, but in other varieties only with regard to the latter, whereas *ora* is marginal.

With names of trades, geosynonymy is very strong. Whenever possible, the comparison of the LinCi data with Rüegg's (1956) survey (see De Mauro 1970a:162–170) reveals a tendency towards neutral forms over regional forms. For instance, *fruttivendolo* 'greengrocer' was perceived as 'neutral' already by Rüegg's informants (47 of 101). In the LinCi data it is confirmed to be the most widespread type, combined with different local types (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 42; Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013b:32–37). In Rome the dominant type is the local *fruttarolo*; moreover, one often sees *frutteria* on shop signs, a regionalism that speakers do not perceive as such. In Latina, Rieti, and L'Aquila both types occur in an inverted relationship. In Viterbo the dominant *fruttivendolo* occurs alongside *fruttarolo*, *ortolano*, and *verduraio*. In Tuscan we

have *ortolano*, *erbaiolo*, *verduraio*, in Macerata also *frutta e verdura* lit. 'fruit and vegetables'. Answers to the question *salumiere* 'grocer' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 43) show a rich diversity of forms everywhere. In Tuscany, *salumiere*, *alimentari*, *droghieri*, *pizzicàgnoli* co-exist (Pacini 2013:158). In L'Aquila *salumiere* is not very common, and *alimentari* (in reference to the shop), *salumaio*, *caciaro*, *droghiere*, *pizzicarolo*, *pizzicagnolo*, *negoziante*, *alimentarista*, among others, are preferred. *Tabaccaio* 'tobacconist' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 44) prevails over *tabacchino* (Rome, Viterbo, Latina, Ancona) and over the isolated *tabaccaro* (Rieti), *tabaccheria* (Rieti) and *tabacchi* (Rieti, Macerata). *Imbianchino* 'painter' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 45) and *imbiancare* 'to whiten/paint a wall' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 102) are almost the only forms in Tuscany, where there is just one isolated example of *spiaccicaragni* (lit. 'spider-squasher') and *imbrattino* each; in the rest of central Italy *imbianchino* is accompanied by the traditional central-southern items *pittore* and for the corresponding verb *pittare*, *ripittare*, *dare una pittata*, and in L'Aquila also by *ridipingere*, *rimbiancare*, *ripulire*.

In the domestic domain, one of the most typical geosynonyms is the object for hanging clothes in the wardrobe ('coat hanger' in English) (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 71). In Lazio and in the *area mediana* (L'Aquila, Macerata) *stampella* (in Italian and upper southern regional Italian also 'crutch', in northern regional Italian only 'crutch') widely prevails, but we also find, among others, *gruccia/cruccia* (in Italian also 'crutch' and absent in the north), and *appendia(b)biti*. *Attaccapanni* and *omo morto* (lit. 'dead man') may mean either 'coat hanger' or 'coatstand' in Lazio, but only the latter in the Marche. In Tuscan *gruccia* (in Livorno *gruccetta/cruccetta*) prevails over the isolated *stampella*, *appendino*, *appendiabiti*. Other lexemes of the standard have won out over local terms, e.g., *persiane* 'shutters' over *scuri* (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 92), which was recorded in the Italian of L'Aquila from a young speaker.

A full convergence of the central varieties apart from Tuscan is, for instance, observed in *le tredici* '13.00 (o'clock)' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 6), which is *l'una* 'one (o'clock)' in the whole area except Tuscan, which has *il tocco*, or for 'hurry, haste' (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a, question 159), which is *fretta*, but Tsc.-It. *furia*.

As for evaluative suffixes, diminutives (cf. §18.2.1.2) are formed with *-ino*, but also with *-ello* and *-uccio* in Tuscany, only or mostly with *-ino* in the *area perimediana*, with *-etto*, *-ello*, and *-uccio* in Rome and the *area mediana* (e.g., see D'Achille 2022a:222f.).

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[1] I would not have been able to write this chapter without the information generously provided by speakers from Ancona, Bastia Umbra, Casette d'Ete, Fermo, Florence, Latina, Livorno, Lucca, Lucignano, Macerata, Matelica, Orentano, Orvieto, Perugia, Poggio Mirteto, Rome, Servigliano, Veroli, and elsewhere. For space and other reasons I cannot list their names here.

[2] For the difficult and controversial classification of Corsican dialects, see the overviews in Nesi (1988:801f.); Dalbera-Stefanaggi (1991:310–322); and Castellani (2000:266–275). Corsican is considered originally Sardinian by Lausberg (1969:55) and Tuscan by Cortelazzo (1988) and Ledgeway (2016a:208). It is regarded as belonging to the non-metaphonetic *area mediana* by Castellani (2000a:266f.). In any case, all Corsican dialects show evidence of continuous exposure to Tuscan, particularly Pisan, since very early times and culminating in the Middle Ages.

[3] In the controversy about the proportion of the population capable of speaking Italian in 1861, i.e., at the time of the political unification of the country, Castellani (1982b) counts as native Italian speakers the speakers of Tuscany, Rome and the *area perimediana* and the educated speakers of the *area mediana*.

[4] In his classification, De Mauro (1970a:159) distinguishes two major varieties, one of Tuscany, one of Rome, and a minor one, Umbro-Marchigiano.

[5] For the results of the project, see also the papers in Nesi (2013a).

[6] In Florence, as in Italian, /z/ occurs intervocalically, but only word-internally: [ˈfuːso] 'spindle' vs [ˈfuːzo] 'fused'. Only /s/ occurs morpheme- and word-initially before vowels and there is voicing assimilation to immediately following consonants (Bertinetto and Loporcaro 2005:133).

[7] According to Salvioni (1907), the initial geminate in Sicilian *mmerda* goes back to the denominative verb *'mmerdari*, with prefix IN-.

[8] Aphaeresis also yielded initial clusters with nasal + C(C): e.g., Perugia *nfatti* vs It. *infatti* 'indeed', *mpressione* vs It. *impressione* 'impression' (Bonucci 2011).

[9] In the non-acrolectal Italian of Rome (D'Achille and Giovanardi 2001b:20f.), Macerata, and Fermo a further process [lʦ] → [rʣ] is documented, e.g., Macerata *una sarza* instead of It. *una salsa* 'a sauce' (Nebbia 1786:40, cited in Balducci 2002:218).

[10] The numbers indicate the number of responses received from speakers for each question in the LinCi questionnaire (Nesi and Poggi Salani 2013a).

[11] Recorded speakers are young university students, who were asked to read aloud a set of sentences and then spontaneously repeat what they had read.

[12] Local varieties have extended *-ano* from the first inflexional class to all the others (Rohlfs 2021a:255 for Florence and Liana Tronci, p.c., for Orentano (Pisa); De Mauro 1970a:160, 390); see also §1.4.3.2.

[13] Stevens (2012) shows that in Sienese RF the distinction between the two types of RF is not robust, and none of them always occurs where predicted.

[14] See Ledgeway (2012a:284–311) and Ricca (2021:11–17) for a discussion of possession marking and other morphosyntactic phenomena such as DOM, auxiliaries, and complementizers as instances of the tendency toward head-marking, moving away from Latin, the prototype of a dependent-marking language (Vincent 1997:164).

[15] As illustrated in these examples, another type of sentence-initial particle can also co-occur for emphasis: *ma* (cf. *ma* 'but') in Rome, several varieties in Tuscany and the *area* (*peri*)*mediana*, and *o* in Florence (see Damonte and Garzonio 2009).

[16] This is not a recent development due to contact with varieties in which differential object marking is present. In fact, in Rome it has been well attested at least since the seventeenth century. For example, it occurs in the *Misogallo romano* (late eighteenth century), e.g., *Vienghino pure e troveranno a me* 'Let them come and they will find me!' (Lorenzetti 1999:155), and with a topicalized nominal expression in a text from the Roman area from 1674: *alla madre vicaria la trattò molto male* 'he treated the mother vicaress very badly' (D'Achille 1990:123).

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Chapter 40

Southern regional Italian

Francesco Avolio

40.1 General considerations

Within southern regional Italian there are so many differences that it is objectively problematic to bring together the different variants found there under a common label. According to Radtke (1997:106f.) one could not speak of a single regional Italian, but only of varieties of local Italian in relation to the different basic or primary dialects. It is possible in principle to distinguish an upper-southern type from that of the far south (Sicily, much of Calabria, and also Salento; cf. Avolio 2009:72–74), as one can for the dialects proper. However, we must note that the eastern side, Apulo-Lucanian, but also Abruzzese-Molisan, present rather prominent phonetic characteristics, which ultimately go back to the underlying dialects, while a significant series of phenomena links, as we shall see, southern Italy as a whole to adjacent central Italy.

Generally speaking, some phenomena of regional Italian are still considered acceptable by all speakers, regardless of their level of education. However, as Amenta (2011) has observed, while the less educated use regional Italian almost only in formal contexts and with more pronounced dialectal interference (so-called 'low regional' or 'popular' Italian; cf. Berruto 1987a:21), those with a higher level of education may also know little or no dialect, so that regional linguistic features are not, as a rule, due to direct interference from the dialects (so-called 'high' or 'middle educated' regional Italian; cf. Berruto 1987a:21; Poggi Salani 2010). D'Achille (2003b:191) appropriately speaks, in these cases, of a 'prior' influence of dialect. That is to say that the greater preservation of dialect favours, almost

inevitably, stronger interference of dialect with Italian, as much in the working-class neighbourhoods of large towns as in smaller, but still in socio-culturally compact, localities.

40.2 Linguistic features common throughout southern Italy and Sicily

Features that are now found over wide (though not necessarily all) areas of southern Italy, including the far south and Sicily (cf. Amenta 2011; De Blasi 2011; Fanciullo and Librandi 2002) include, in the area of phonetics:

- the fricative pronunciation of the intervocalic affricate [ʧ] (*dice* [ˈdiʃe] 'he/she says'), which is increasingly common, and only a few older speakers in some more remote areas now resist it;
- the lengthening of the consonants [b] and [ʤ] ([bˈbɛllo] *bello* 'beautiful', [ˈabbile] *abile* 'able'; [ˈdʤɛnte] *gente* 'people', [ˈadʤile] *agile* 'agile'), which has long been general.
- the weakening to [jj] of the lateral palatal [ʎʎ] in words such as [ˈfijjo] *figlio* 'son', [ˈpajja] *paglia* 'straw' (cf. Maturi 2006:101), also increasingly frequent, and now only rejected by the older generations, especially on the western side of the peninsula (sometimes, especially in young speakers, a reinforcement to [ɟɟ] may occur in Campania, as in [ˈluɟɟo] *luglio* 'July', [ˈpiɟɟano] *pigliano* 'they take', as has happened in some dialectal areas).

These characteristics are also well attested in central Italy and Rome itself (where the latter is still confined to lower diastratic and diaphasic variants, as well as to dialect).

In morphosyntax, there is the so-called 'prepositional accusative', namely, differential object marking with the preposition *a* 'to', which is regular or almost regular when the object is animate: more or less everywhere one hears, for example, *Ho visto a tua madre* 'I saw your mother', *Portami a tua sorella!* 'Bring me your sister!'. Moreover,

the use of the preposition *a* 'to' is more extensive than in the standard, for instance in motion-to-place complements (in Abruzzo, Puglia, and Salento *Andiamo al nonno* 'Let's go to grandad's' where the standard would have *Andiamo dal nonno* with the preposition *da* 'at, by (the house of)'; cf. Tempesta 2018), in friendship and kinship relations (in Naples and Campania *È amico/fratello a Pasquale* 'He is (a) friend of (lit. to) Pasquale'; cf. It. *di Pasquale* 'of Pasquale'), or in the exclamation *Beato a lui!* 'Lucky (lit. to) him!' (cf. De Blasi 2011).

Also of note are:

- the truncation of names and adjectives in vocative function: *Giovà*! 'Hey Giovanni!' (< *Giovanni*), *Dottó* 'Doc!' (< *dottore* 'doctor');
- the use of the negative imperative formed with *senza* 'without' + infinitive, e.g., *Senza correre!* 'Don't run!';
- the frequent reduplications of nouns and verbs to indicate a large quantity of objects, e.g., *La corda è tutta nodi nodi* 'The rope is all knots (lit. knots knots)', or when there is an iterated motion from place to place, e.g., *Va camminando casa casa* 'He's keeps on walking around from house to house', or to confer a value analogous to that of free relatives which in standard Italian display forms in *-unque* (cf. Eng. '-ever'), e.g., *Chi viene viene, io ci vado* 'Whoever comes (lit. who comes comes) I am going there' (cf. It. *Chiunque venga, io ci vado*), *Come li fai fai, sono sempre troppo dolci* 'However you make them (lit. how you do you do them) they are still too sweet' (cf. It. *Comunque tu li faccia sono sempre troppo dolci*; see Amenta 2011);
- an intensifying construction with reduplication of the adjective, e.g., *bello bello* 'very beautiful' (lit. 'beautiful beautiful');
- the pleonastic addition of *che* 'that; what' in direct interrogatives, e.g., *Che ti va di andare al cinema? '*(lit. that/what) would you like to go to the cinema?';
- the substitution of *perché* 'why' with the construction *che* what' + verb + *a fare* 'to do.INF', e.g., *Che mi hai chiamato a fare?* 'What did you call me for?' (cf. It. *Perché mi hai chiamato?*);

- the clear preference for reflexive verbs (the so-called antipassive), e.g., *Mi sono visto un film* 'I saw (lit. (for) myself) a film' (cf. It. *Ho visto un film*); *Ti sei mangiato una pizza?* 'Did you eat (lit. (for) yourself) a pizza? (cf. It. *hai mangiato una pizza?*);
- the use of *è capace* '(it) is capable' to express a hypothesis or a doubt (cf. Cruschina 2011; 2015b), e.g., *È capace che te lo dice* 'Maybe he'll tell you' (cf. It. *Forse te lo dirà*).

Phenomena that lie at the interface between syntax and semantics include the transitive uses of unaccusative verbs such as *restare/rimanere* 'to remain' (It. *lasciare* 'to leave'), *entrare* 'to enter' (cf. It. *portare dentro* 'to carry/bring in'), *salire* 'to go up' (cf. It. *portare su* 'to carry up'), and *scendere* 'to come down' (cf. It. *portare giù* 'to bring down'), e.g., in Naples *scendimi le chiavi!* 'bring me down the keys!', in Sicily *Entra la macchina in garage!* 'Put the car in the garage!'.

In the lexicon, common to the whole of southern Italy, especially in the lower levels of regional Italian, we find geosynonyms such as *impapocchiare* 'to bamboozle' (cf. It. *sconcertare*), *introppicato/intruppicato* 'tripped, stumbled' (cf. It. *inciampato*), *mappina* 'tea towel' (cf. It. *strofinaccio*), and geohomonyms such as *tovaglia* 'towel' (It. = 'table cloth'), *cercare* 'to ask for' (It. = 'to look for'), *femmina* 'woman' (It. = 'female'); metaplasms such as masculine *scatolo* instead of feminine *scatola* 'box'; regionalisms of a semantic nature such as *giardino* (It. = 'garden') 'citrus grove' (also used by Pirandello), *spiare* (It. = 'to spy') 'to ask, to inquire' (cf. Moretti 2019); phraseological regionalisms including *letto grande* (cf. It. *letto matrimoniale*) 'double bed (lit. big bed)' and *pezza da piedi* 'person of little consideration or value (lit. foot mop)'; expressions such as *calare la pasta* (cf. It. *buttare giù la pasta* lit. 'to throw down the pasta') 'to place the pasta into boiling water (lit. to lower the pasta)', *essere di matrimonio* 'to be invited to a wedding (lit. to be of wedding)', *fare la cucina* (cf. It. *lavare i piatti*, *pulire la cucina*) 'to wash the dishes, tidy up the kitchen (lit. to do the kitchen)', *scotol(i)are la tovaglia* 'to shake (the crumbs from) the tablecloth'.

40.3 Regional Italian in upper southern Italy

40.3.1 Features shared with most of central Italy

There are other traits that are less widespread, and which allow us to distinguish the regional Italian of upper southern Italy from that of Sicily (and of a large part of Calabria and Salento). The features that the upper-southern area shares with almost all of central Italy include:

- the near-complete transition of the consonants [p, t, k] to the corresponding sonorant consonants [b, d, g] after a nasal ('postnasal lenition'): *cambo* 'field' (It. *campo*), *tando* 'so much' (It. *tanto*), *anghe* 'also' (It. *anche*);
- the change, again following a nasal, of /s/ to /ʦ/ (affrication, which can then become /ʣ/), e.g., *penso* realized as [ˈpɛnʦo] 'I think', *insomma* realized as [inˈʦomːa] 'in sum';
- the palatalization of sibilants before a velar or labial ([ˈʃkusa] 'sorry', [ˈʃpesa] 'shopping'), but, in Naples, not before a dental ([ˈstupido] 'stupid', as in standard Italian), while in Abruzzo it is just before this consonant that the phenomenon is most often audible ([ˈʃtelːa] 'star'). It also occurs when the consonant following /s/ is a sonorant, in which case the outcome is a voiced palatal ([lo ˈʒmalto] 'nail varnish');
- interference from dialectal phonetics which can sometimes lead to a hypercorrect outcome as in *guadambiare* 'to gain' (cf. It. *guadagnare*) and *sparambiare* 'to save' (cf. It. *risparmiare*), as a reaction to the dialectal *guaragnà* and *sparagnà* (similarly to the relationship between *cagnà* and *cambiare* 'to change'), or, in Neapolitan, in *cambomilla*/*campomilla* 'chamomile' (cf. It. *camomilla*), from a *cammomilla* in which the doubling of the

nasal is misinterpreted as the result of the progressive assimilation /mb/ > /mm/ (a trait which has been perceived as distinctly 'low' since medieval texts);

- the postposition of the possessive adjective: *il compagno mio* 'my companion', *la scuola vostra* 'your school' for It. *il mio compagno, la vostra scuola*;
- the frequent use of *mo* [mo, mɔ] instead of It. *adesso* 'now';
- the use of *starci* and *tenere* instead of *esserci* '(there) to be' and *avere* 'to have' (the lexical verb rather than the auxiliary): *ci sta il capotreno e io il biglietto non lo tengo* 'the conductor is here and I don't have a ticket' (cf. It. *c'è il capotreno e non ho il biglietto*). In central Italy and in Abruzzo *tenere* (in Italian 'to hold') is more frequent at dialect level for 'have', while in Italian, following the model of Rome, *avere* reinforced by the locative *ci* prevails: *Quanti figli c'hai?* 'How many children do you have?' (cf. It. *Quanti figli hai?*).

40.3.2 Features typical of upper southern Italy

Turning now to the more typical features of upper southern Italy, starting with those of the Neapolitan and Campanian areas, but very often with extensions into vast areas of neighbouring regions (Molise, Basilicata and neighbouring areas of Calabria, the Apennines in Puglia, lower Lazio, and Abruzzo) on the basis of the most in-depth studies (De Blasi 2011; Maturi 2023:127–141; Tempesta 2018), we may mention here:

- the open pronunciation of tonic [e] (> [ɛ]) in words such as *bigli*[ɛ]*tto* 'ticket', *v*[ɛ]*ro* 'true' (cf. It. [biˈʎːetːo], [ˈvero]) and in the adverbial ending *-mente* '-ly' (*chiaram*[ɛ]*nte* 'clearly', *veram*[ɛ]*nte* 'really'), to which is related that of a non-standard open [ɔ], both where it appears in dialect (*n*[ɔ]*me* 'name', *l*[ɔ]*ro* 'they', *p*[ɔ]*nte* 'bridge'), and where the dialect shows a diphthong [wo] caused by

metaphony (*gi*[ɔ]*rno* ‘day’, *s*[ɔ]*nno* ‘sleep’, dialectal [ˈjwornə], [ˈswonnə]);

- the particular pronunciation of Italian diphthongs reflecting the pronunciations of metaphonic diphthongs in the dialect, with a strongly closed vowel element and slight retraction of the accent: *vìeni* ‘come’, *lùoghi* ‘places’, and also, after a voiceless palatal affricate: *cìelo* ‘sky’, *sufficìente* ‘sufficient, enough’;
- at lower diastratic levels one can observe in speech as well as in writing a certain difficulty in producing the correct standard atonic final and even internal atonic vowels of words as a consequence of vowel centralization (> [ə]) that affects most of the dialects of the group and that often results in words having a different inflexion class from the standard, e.g., *la moglia*, It. *la moglie* ‘the wife’, *il ponto*, It. *il ponte* ‘the bridge’;
- the pronunciation /dz/ + /i/ from Lat. -TI- ([naˈʣjone] ‘nation’, [valutaˈdzjoni] ‘evaluations’), which can also weaken to /z/ ([naˈzjone], [valutaˈzjoni]), often found in Puglia and Abruzzo, where it is indeed more common, at higher social levels than in Naples and on the Tyrrhenian coast, and which is still opposed to that deriving from the -CTI- nexus ([aˈʦ:jone] ‘action’).
- the use of the adjective instead of the adverb: *pare brutto*, lit. ‘it seems bad (= it is not appropriate)’; *guida buono* lit. ‘he drives good (= drives well)’, *la carne l’hanno preparata buona* lit. ‘the.FSG meat.FSG they prepared it good.FSG (= they prepared the meat well)’.
- the use of *stesso* ‘self’ preposed to the personal pronoun: *portalo stesso tu!* (cf. It. *tu stesso*) ‘bring it yourself!’, *ce lo ha detto stesso lui* (cf. It. *lui stesso*) ‘he told us so himself’;
- fronting of the demonstrative *quello* ‘that one’, with the function of a theme in a segmented sentence: *quello, Antonio, mica mi ha telefonato* ‘Antonio didn’t phone me’ (cf. Ledgeway 2010b);
- the clear preference for singular use of grammatically plural *voi* ‘you’ as a polite form of address (§11.1.6), even if in Abruzzo (as in Lazio) the Latin usage of polite singular *tu* ‘you’ persists generally to the present day contrasting with plural *voi* (increasingly

alongside polite singular *lei*). Mixing of these forms sometimes leads to chaotic alternations such as *Professore, come stai? Vuole/volete un caffè?* 'Hi, professor, how are you(.2SG)? Do you want(.2SG/2PL) a coffee?';

- particular non-standard uses of the spatial adverbs *giù* 'down', *sopra* 'above', *dentro* 'inside', *fuori* 'outside', in relation to urban space or the lie of the land, from the perspective of the speaker: *sopra il Vomero* o *sopra al Vomero*, lit. 'up (at) the Vomero (district)' (said by those who live in the centre of Naples, that is, in the city centre; cf. dialectal *ngòpp'o Vòmmərə*), *giù al Lacco* lit. 'down at.the Lacco (district)' (from the perspective of those who live higher up), and then *dentro al ponte*, 'inside by (lit. to.the) the bridge', *fuori la Marina* 'outside the Marina'; *sopra* 'above' is also in the sense of 'near' or 'in': *sopra il Comune* 'in/at the municipal offices'.
- at a lower level of language, the construction with *volere* 'want' followed by the passive infinitive is found: *volete essere fatto una ricevuta?* lit. 'do you want to be made a receipt?' (cf. It. *vuole che le faccia . . .* lit. 'do you want that I prepare for you a receipt?'; De Caprio and Milella 2008:267).

In the lexicon, terms such as *pizza* (cf. D'Achille 2017), *scugnizzo* 'street boy' (cf. De Blasi 2017), or *camorra* 'Neapolitan organized crime' (cf. Montuori 2008) were able to pass into Italian at different times in the twentieth century because they were evocative of well-defined local realities and had a strong expressive charge (cf. Avolio 1994:593). We return to them in §40.5.

As for the names of everyday objects, nouns, verbs, and adverbs in common use, lexemes not always included in other parts of Italy are frequent, even in high cultural circles, but sometimes with geographically differentiated areas of diffusion (cf. De Blasi 2011; Maturi 2023:138–143). Examples include: *assai* 'too much' (instead of 'very', 'extremely' as in the standard), always placed after the modified element (*hai pagato assai* 'you have paid a lot/too much'), also with the function of a superlative (*è ricco assai* 'he is very rich', where the standard might have *è ricchissimo*), *boccaccio/barattolo di vetro* 'glass jar for preserving food' (here and below the second term of the pair in italics represents the standard Italian term),

ceneriera/portacenere ‘ashtray’, *cacciare/estrarre* ‘to take out, to extract’ (*Caccia i documenti!* ‘Show your documents!’), *cercare/chiedere* ‘to ask for’, *colazioni/panini imbottiti* ‘filled sandwiches’, *coppino/mestolo* ‘ladle’, *fragaglia* ‘mixture of small fish for frying’, *guantiera/vassoio* ‘tray’, *mannaggia* lit. ‘I hope he may suffer harm’ (imprecation), *mezzo/motorino* ‘moped’, *pittare/imbiancare* ‘to paint’, *punessa/puntina da disegno* ‘drawing pin’, *quartino/appartamentino* ‘flat, apartment’; more widely understood in other areas of Italy is *scostumato/maleducato* ‘rude’.

There is also an expressive use of dialectal words such as *chiattone/ciccione* ‘fat’, *corto/basso* ‘short’, *inguacchio/pasticcio* ‘mess’, or words used in a figurative or hyperbolic sense such as *chiavica/fogna* ‘very bad person’ (lit. ‘sewer’) and *chiattillo/fichetto* ‘vain boy from a good family’ (lit. ‘louse’). A real semantic calque on the dialect is *giovane* (lit. ‘young’) in the sense of ‘apprentice, helper’ (from dialectal *uagliónə* ‘boy’, referring in this case also to adults).

Finally, common to all levels of regional usage, including the highest ones, are expressions such as *A che sta?/A che punto è?*, ‘What is the status? How far along is it?’, *farsi attaccare per pazzo/dare in escandescenze* ‘get very angry, blow one’s top’, *nessuno ci corre appresso/nessuno ci mette fretta* ‘nobody rushes us’, *non mi giova/non mi è utile* ‘not useful to me’, *passare un guaio/trovarsi in difficoltà-avere una disavventura* ‘to be in difficulty’, *(finire a) schifio/concludere qualcosa in malo modo* ‘to finish something badly’, *tirare la seccia/portare sfortuna* ‘to attract bad luck’ (lit. ‘to pull the cuttlefish’, It. *seppia*—because it squirts black liquid).

40.3.3 Other areas of upper southern Italy

In the rest of southern Italy, on the eastern side, and in particular in Puglia, in the adjacent region of Basilicata (Matera and Melfi areas), Molise (lower Molise), and also in coastal Abruzzo as far as Pescara and surroundings (with more or less extensive distributions inland) the phenomenon of stressed syllable isochrony or vowel differentiation by position that characterizes the dialects is variously apparent in regional Italian, especially in the Apulo-Lucanian area

(cf. Carosella 2005): vowels are always closed in open syllables and open in closed syllables. A typical example is the pronunciation *un p*[o]*co di p*[ɔ]*llo* per *un p*[ɔ]*co di p*[o]*llo* 'a little bit of chicken' in the standard as well as Neapolitan Italian (as well as *Franc*[ɛ]*sco, dove s*[e]*i?* for *Franc*[e]*sco, dove s*[ɛ]*i?* 'Francesco, where are you?'). The Abruzzese of Teramo, by contrast, has generalized the open pronunciation of /e/ and /o/ > /ɛ/, /ɔ/ (*bbu*[ɔ]*na s*[ɛ]*ra* ≠ It. *bu*[ɔ]*na s*[e]*ra* 'good evening', *un calz*[ɔ]*ne* ≠ It. *un calz*[o]*ne* 'a calzone pizza').

In the consonant system, some developments found in the dialects are not found in the local regional varieties of Italian such as the dialectal outcomes of the long lateral -/lː/- which in many primary dialects of Puglia and Basilicata, as well as southern and eastern Campania give rise to such realizations as -/dː/- or -/ɖː/- (cf. Valente 1975:49, map 4; Lüdtke 1979:54, map 8), but which in regional Italian is always -/lː/-, hence *cavallo* [kaˈvalːo] 'horse' and *quelli* [ˈkwelːi] 'those'. On the other hand, in line with the local underlying dialects in Basilicata one can still detect, for example, the ancient pronunciation /-ŋg-/ of the original Latin consonantal cluster -GN-, which in Italian has become a palatal sibilant /-ɲɲ-/, e.g., *sengo* (cf. It. *segno*) 'sign'.

Turning to morphosyntax, in a wider area, including Puglia, Molise, and Abruzzo, a different type of construction for the negative imperative is found, with *ancora* 'still' instead of negation + infinitive, e.g., *Ancora cadi*/*Non cadere!* 'still fall.2SG/NEG fall.INF (= do not fall!)' (cf. also §40.2).

Finally, as far as the lexicon is concerned, typical of the Puglia and contiguous Basilicata area are words such as *cozzalone*, equivalent to Neapolitan *tamarro* 'uncouth person' (cf. §40.7), and *tremone* 'stupid, incapable, not very bright person', probably of obscene origin; typical of Basilicata are the types *fagliare* 'to err' (which we find in Sicily, but with the meaning 'to play truant') and *tattaranno* (cf. It. *nonno*) 'grandfather' (especially in the plural form, also a surname, with some phonetic variants; cf. De Blasi 2014:109, 110).

40.4 The regional Italian of the far south

The Italian of the far south (Sicily, Calabria, Salento) also shows major phonetic and grammatical features typical of the underlying dialects (see Tropea 1976; Leone 1982; Amenta 2011; Tempesta 2015). For phonetics, we may note:

- the absence of the mid-high vowels /e/ and /o/, which are systematically replaced with the mid-low vowels /ɛ/ and /ɔ/: *la* [ɽːɛ]*te* 'the network' (cf. dialectal [ɽːi]*ti*), *il* s[ɔ]le 'the sun' (cf. dialectal *u suli* in Sicily and lower Cilento, *(l)u sule* in many areas of Calabria and Salento)
- vowel epenthesis in learnèd and/or foreign consonantal clusters (so-called anaptyxis), e.g., *attomosfera* 'atmosphere' (cf. It. *atmosfera*), *pisicologgico* 'psychologist' (cf. It. *psicologico*)
- the devoicing of /ʤ/ to /ʧ/, both in intervocalic position, e.g., *tra*[ʧɛ]*dia* 'tragedy' (cf. It. *tragedia*), which can become *tra*[ʧɛ]*dia*, and post-consonantally, e.g., *man*[ʧ]*are* 'to eat' (cf. It. *mangiare*)
- the presence of retroflex sounds such as the aforementioned vibrating alveolar /ɽ/, e.g., *la* [ɽː]*adio* 'the radio', which in combination with /t/ sounds almost like a palatal voiceless affricate /ʧ/ (actually [ʈʈɽ]), e.g., *il cèno* 'the train'(cf. It. *il treno*), which is long in intervocalic position (e.g., *questo* [ʈʈɽ]*reno* 'this train'): this habit is observable in almost all Sicilian speakers, including educated ones, and is also conspicuous in southern Calabria and the province of Lecce
- in a large part of Calabria and Salento, and not only in dialect registers, aspiration of the intervocalic long voiceless dental, or weak post-consonantal, which gives rise to a voiceless interdental fricative [θ]: *pi*[θ]*ore* 'painter', *por*[θ]*o* 'harbour' (cf. Fanciullo and Librandi 2002:804; Tempesta 2015:48), and, more rarely, with the bilabial /p/ and the velar /k/, e.g., *campo* [ˈkampʰo] 'field', *tocca* [ˈtɔkkʰa] 'it's necessary'

- voicing of the intervocalic sibilant [s] > [z] (*ca*[s]*a* > *ca*[z]*a* 'house'), unexpected for southern Italy in the speech of the Sicilian youth; this can be interpreted as a reactive tendency against the voiceless pronunciation of the elderly, also frequently stigmatized because it is perceived as a non-prestigious southernism (cf. Amenta 2011)

In morphosyntax we may mention:

- the preference for the preterite (*passato remoto*) over the analytic perfect (*passato prossimo*) even with reference to the immediate past, e.g., *Stamattina te lo dissi ≠ te l'ho detto* 'I told you this morning', *mi bagnai tutto* lit. 'me= wet.PST.PFV.1SG (= I'm completely soaked through)', widespread also in southern Calabria and parts of lower Salento;
- the imperfect subjunctive used as an imperative or a courtesy form, again in accordance with many other southern areas: *mi spicciasse* 'me= deal.PST.SBJV.3SG (= will you please finally serve me?)' (cf. It. *si decida a servirmi* 'self= decide.SBJV.3SG to serve.INF=me'), *s'accomodasse* 'self= arrange.PST.SBJV.3SG (= please take a seat!)' (cf. It. *si accomodi* 'self= arrange.SBJV.3SG');
- the placing of the verb at the end of a sentence, typical of the whole area: *Francesco sono* 'I am Francesco', *il preside parla* '(it's) the headmaster (who) is speaking' (for an analysis of the apparent clause-final position of the verb in terms of focus fronting, see Cruschina 2006; 2010; 2012b);
- the preference for finite subordination even under coreference, a consequence of the restricted use of the infinitive in Salentino and southern Calabrian dialects (as well as in the nearby province of Messina), itself a calque on the local Greek of both regions (cf. Rohlfs 1972b:325–332), e.g., *Ero contento che andavo* lit. 'I was happy that I was going' (cf. It. *Ero contento di andare* 'I was happy to go'), *Ti ringrazio che mi hai salvato* lit. 'I thank you that you saved me' (cf. It. *Ti ringrazio di avermi salvato* 'I thank you for having saved me');
- in Salento the durative construction with a reduced form of *stare* 'stand' + finite form is also widespread: *sta mancia* 'stand eat.3SG

(= he is eating)' for It. *sta mangiando*.

Sicilian lexical peculiarities are *curàtolo* 'farm overseer' and *cristiano* (cf. Sic. *cristianu*) 'of good quality' (said of edible fish), showing a striking semantic development from the southern term *(buono) cristiano* 'good person, with polite manners, reliable'.

There are also so-called 'atypical regionalisms', i.e., regional terms, some of which are widely used, but which have no counterpart in the local dialects. This is the case, in Sicily, with *carpetta* 'folder, binder for documents' or *stranizzarsi* 'to wonder'. To the same group may be included expressions for 'playing truant' (cf. It. *marinare la scuola*), which often have a micro-areal distribution: while in upper southern Italy *fare filone* prevails (Naples, Campobasso, Pescara, Cosenza), in Salento we have *'nnargiare*, in Palermo *buttarsela* (lit. 'to throw it to oneself'), in the province of Trapani *fare Sicilia* (lit. 'make Sicily'), in the province of Agrigento *fagliare*, in the central Nisseno-Ennese area *fare l'una* (lit. 'make the one'), in the eastern area *caliarsela*.

Finally, there are Sicilian expressions that are also acceptable to speakers of high social status, mainly because they coincide with standard Italian lexemes, though bearing a different meaning. Examples are *Avvicina da me che ti devo parlare* 'Come and visit me (lit. 'approach by me') because I must speak to you' (cf. It. *Vienimi a trovare . . .* 'Come and visit me . . .'), and *I miei figli si levano tre anni* 'My children have (lit. 'take off') a three-year age difference' (cf. It. *I miei figli hanno una differenza d'età di tre anni* 'My children have . . .'; Amenta 2011).

40.5 Regional Italian and dialect words

One of the most visible signs of linguistic regionalism is the entry of dialect words into everyday Italian in various ways, and at different times, from the various dialects of the peninsula. Presumably, they initially characterized the Italian used in the region before becoming

more widespread throughout Italy. Sometimes they lose all regional or local connotations, sometimes they retain a more or less overt association with the area, culture, and dialect of origin and, therefore, are part of regional uses of Italian. They represent, in short, an example of 'dialectalization' of the language that is the mirror image of 'Italianization' of the dialects (cf. Avolio, 1994:561–567; cf. also Zolli 1986), but often maintain a sort of 'dual citizenship', being both examples of common and regional Italian.

Original regional terms which have since passed into the use of all Italians, and hence no longer perceived as regional by ordinary speakers, include *ciambella* 'doughnut' (Abruzzo), *bancarella* 'stall, kiosk', *demanio* 'state-owned land' (< Fr. *demaine*, in turn < Lat. DOMINIUM 'dominion, ownership'), *dispiaciuto* 'sorry', *malavita* 'criminal underworld', *malocchio* 'evil eye', *sfizio* 'whim', *sommozzatore* 'diver', *spaparanzato* 'comfortably lying down' (Naples), *abbuffarsi* 'to binge' (da *buffa* 'toad', cfr. *AIS* 455), *omertà* 'conspiracy of silence' *rimpatriata* 'meeting of old friends', *sciabica* 'type of trawl net', *scuocersi* 'to overcook', *zagara* 'orange blossom' (Sicily, but the last was also used by the Neapolitan writer Matilde Serao and the Abruzzese author Gabriele D'Annunzio). Among the words that have maintained a close relationship with their area of origin we find two large groups: the first is made up of words linked to forms of delinquency and criminality, such as the Neapolitan *camorra* (and *camorrista*), whose etymology has long been debated (Francesco Montuori suggests a probable alteration of *camerarius* > *camorrario*, the name of the violent, sometimes ruthless tax collectors of the Angevin kingdom; cf. Montuori 2008), *guappo* (of Spanish origin) 'braggart, bully', *scippo* 'theft with skill' (with *scippare* 'to steal with skill' and *scippatore* 'thief'; in dialect meaning 'to snatch' or even 'to scratch'), and the Sicilian *mafia* and *mafioso* (still of unknown origin, but widespread since the Middle Ages throughout Italy in the forms *mafia* (north) and *maffia* (centre-south), with the meaning of 'ostentatious elegance, arrogance, pride', which can be traced back to Sicily from a possible northern base with weakened /f/; cf. Varvaro 2016), *picciotto* 'young mafia affiliate' (but the primary dialectal meaning is 'little boy'), *pizzo* (in the expression *pagare il pizzo* lit. 'to pay for the place', form of protection racket payment imposed mainly on shopkeepers), *pizzino* (which is not the diminutive of *pizzo*, but a small note with secret or encrypted

messages that the Mafia bosses send to their accomplices; the term became popular after the arrest of Mafia boss Totò Riina in Palermo in 1993), with which the Calabrian terms *'ndràngheta* (from the Greek *andragathìa*; cf. Martino 1988) and *'ndrìna* 'cell of affiliates of the *'ndràngheta*'.

The second group includes terms concerning gastronomic and food specialities, in reference to which the southern regions (Campania, Sicily, but also the others) obviously occupy a prominent place: from Naples came *babà* 'leavened sweet soaked in rum, mushroom-shaped or elliptical and wavy' (from the Polish *baba*, a name that still indicates a similar sweet, but without the rum bath, and passed down via the French), *calzone* 'rolled and stuffed pizza dough sheet', *mozzarella*, today very common even outside Italy, *pastiera* 'Easter cake made with wheat, ricotta and short pastry', *provola* and *provolone* 'pear-shaped cheeses, fresh (*provola*) or mature (*provolone*)', *sfogliatelle* 'pastries filled with ricotta, semolina and candied fruit', produced in various versions, *vermicelli* 'big spaghetti'; from Sicily *arancine* (Palermo) or *arancini* (Catania) 'large fried, breadcrumbed stuffed rice balls', *cannoli* 'tubular pastries stuffed with ricotta cream', *caponata* 'side dish made with aubergines, tomatoes, olives, celery, onions and more', *cassata* 'sponge cake filled with ricotta and covered with icing and candied fruit', *neonata* or *neonato* 'little white fish that have just been born'. From Apulia came cheese names such as *burrata* 'cheese with a soft filling', *caciocavallo*, cheese similar to *provolone*, and *stracciatella*, similar to *burrata*, but served in irregular pieces; from Calabria, the now well-known *nduja* 'soft salami with chilli pepper' (< Fr. *andouille*); from Abruzzo, *scamorza*, similar to *provola* and *caciocavallo*, and *genziana* 'bitter gentian liqueur'.

However, other well-known words also retain a strong local connotation, such as the southern *iettatore* and *iettatura* 'he who brings bad luck' and 'the act of bringing bad luck' (from the dialectal *jettà* 'to cast') and *scugnizzo* 'brat, street kid', a very popular Neapolitan term not attested until 1888, and of almost certain slang origin (this arose in the post-Unification period and mimics, according to De Blasi, the Pdm. *gugnìn*, Lmb. *gognìn*, a word used by northern carabinieri and policemen to apostrophize petty thieves in the centre of Naples, and which has approximately the same meanings as *scugnizzo*; cf. De Blasi 2017:133–167), not to mention

pizza, perhaps (together with *ciao*, of Venetian origin), the best-known Italian word in the world, whose etymology, however, remained uncertain for a long time. Paolo D'Achille has recently reproposed Francesco Sabatini's thesis about an origin from the Greek word *pi(t)ta*, widespread in much of the Mediterranean and the Near East (and in Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria; cf. *AIS* 1007), with the meaning of 'flatbread', and then transformed into *pizza*, reflecting the regular change in Langobardic from /tt/ to /tʦ/, in the Longobard areas of central-southern Italy (cf. D'Achille 2017:31f.).

Alongside words, there are also expressions and idioms of dialectal origin, such as *cornuto e mazziato* lit. 'cheated on by wife and beaten', that means 'made a fool of twice' (in the north, for instance, it is *becco e bastonato*), *cose da pazzi* 'absurd things' (Naples and southern Italy, elsewhere *roba da matti*). There are also numerous idiomatic phrases, often not understood everywhere. In the south, for example, one says *è una parola!* (lit. 'it's a word') to mean 'you can say that again!': if used in the north it would be interpreted literally. Similarly, the Neapolitan [nun ɛ kˈkɔsə], lit. 'it is not thing', SRIt. *non è cosa*, which means 'it is not appropriate/necessary', a direct continuation of the Lat. *non est causa* 'there is no reason' (cf. Avolio 2009:21), completely loses that meaning in standard Italian.

40.6 Southern regional Italian over time

40.6.1 The earliest documents

It is perhaps necessary, at this point, to dispel a misunderstanding. Even in southern Italy regional Italian is not to be considered a novelty of the post-war period or a consequence of nineteenth-century national unification, i.e., the result of an increasing circulation and diffusion of various forms of spoken Italian. It also existed before, albeit in different and more restricted socio-cultural spheres (cf. Avolio 2009:62); indeed, from the sixteenth century

onwards, 'for a non-personal and non-familiar intended readership, even texts that today are not modelled on the literary norm were considered adequate', while departure from the literary norm 'was not seen by their author as a limitation or was not perceived at all from a perspective that perhaps gave greater importance to the fact that certain types of content were being consigned permanently to writing' (De Blasi 2014:137).

A concrete example comes from a Neapolitan chronicle, which tells of riots in the city in 1585, in which several local features can be seen:

> Adj 9 de maggio 1585 fo jovedì. A 14 hore Joan Vincenzo Starace Eletto de questa città de Napole essendo a santa Maria della Nova, venne lo popolo plebbeo in uno numero grandissimo con arme et con ire et superbie grandissime, dicendono al detto Eletto che venesse a santo Augustino dove è la piacza del popolo, et dove era stato creato Electo pigliandolo con la segetta dove steva, attento era pelagruso, et se lo portorno con grandissime gride. Et como fo alla Sellaria li fo dato uno mautone in testa et poi lo portorno dentro la cappella de santo Augustino et lo buctorno vivo dentro una sepoltura. (Bianchi, De Blasi, and Librandi 1994:651f.)
>
> Modern Italian translation: 'Addì 9 maggio 1585, fu giovedì. A quattordici ore, Giovan Vincenzo Starace, Eletto di questa città di Napoli, trovandosi a Santa Maria della Nova, venne una gran folla del popolo basso, armata e molto arrabbiata, dicendo all'Eletto di venire a Sant'Agostino, dove si trova la piazza del Popolo, e dove lui stesso era stato nominato Eletto, prendendolo con la portantina lì dov'era, stando attenti perché era podagroso, e se lo portarono con grandissime grida. E come fu [arrivato] alla Selleria gli fu lanciato un mattone in testa e poi lo portarono nella cappella di santo Agostino e lo buttarono vivo dentro una sepoltura.'
>
> English Translation: '9 May 1585, it was a Thursday. At fourteen hours, Giovan Vincenzo Starace, Magistrate of this city of Naples, finding himself at Santa Maria della Nova, was approached by a large crowd of commoners, armed and very angry, who ordered the Magistrate to go to Saint Augustine's, where the Piazza del Popolo is, and where he himself had been appointed Magistrate; they took him there by sedan chair, taking care as he had gout, amongst loud cries. And once he arrived at the Selleria a brick was thrown at his head and was then taken to the chapel of Saint Augustine where they threw him alive into a burial ground.'

While local elements are certainly numerous, dialectalisms, Latinisms, bureaucratic forms, and features of Tuscan origin by now in the process of becoming 'Italian' co-exist side by side and are integrated into a linguistic mixture evidently deemed acceptable for texts that were primarily informative in nature.

Dialectal traits include *jovedì* 'Thursday' (with original *j*-, still found in Campania and southern Italy; cf. It. *giovedì* with initial [ʤ]-), *Napole* 'Naples' (where we see the final vowel -[ə] transcribed as -*e*; cf. It. *Napoli*), *plebbeo* (with long intervocalic /b/, as in *robba*

'stuff'; cf. §40.2), *venesse* 'came.PST.SBJV.3SG' (cf. It. *venisse*), *segetta* 'sedan-chair' (lit. 'small chair', Nap. [ˈsɛddʒə]; cf. It. *sedia* 'chair'), *steva* 'stood, was' (cf. It. *stava*), *pelagruso* 'gout sufferer' (with metaphonic [u]); cf. It. *podagroso*),[1] *mautone* 'brick' (today also a rather common surname; cf. It. *mattone*). Also common in old Neapolitan is the inflected gerund *dicendono* with a third-person plural inflexional ending (< *dicendo* 'saying' + *-no* '3PL') marking *ad sensum* agreement with the grammatical singular subject *lo popolo plebbeo* 'the plebian people'. On the other hand, preterite third-person plural forms in *-orno* (cf. It. *-arono*) are typical of sixteenth-century Tuscan and also of Romanesco until the twentieth century.

Finally, the anacoluthon in the opening part of the piece leaves the sentence with Joan Vincenzo Starace as subject and which, after Santa Maria della Nova, turns the plebeian people into the new subject.

'Perhaps', De Blasi observes, 'the label of "regional Italian" for texts of this kind may seem far-fetched; on the other hand, it is also true that we would not hesitate to speak of regional Italian if we encountered features similar to those just noted in a narrative today'. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that 'as a whole, writings such as these, although not "pure" and punctuated by local features [. . .], would not have been incomprehensible outside the area in which they were made', guaranteeing 'the possibility of mutual comprehension through writing between people from different areas' (De Blasi 2014:138).

40.6.2 Southern regional Italian in literature between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: some examples

The vicissitudes of southern regional Italian are of course also well documented in literary history, and in particular in those authors who particularly addressed both the problem of language and the aim of providing a realistic portrait of the popular classes as protagonists of their works (with all their cultural and linguistic baggage).

One of the most interesting experiments of the second half of the nineteenth century, with lasting consequences for the national literary language, is certainly that conducted by Giovanni Verga (1840–1922), born in Catania (Sicily), who managed to bring off the extremely difficult gamble of credibly portraying on the page the settings and characters of the Sicily of the most common people without resorting, except in rare cases, to actual dialect, thus guaranteeing full comprehension of his novels to readers all over Italy (but precisely for this reason many critics of the time accused him of 'writing badly'). Obviously Verga never talked of 'regional Italian', either in general, or in the terms in which we talk of it today, but expressions which are still in use on the island can certainly be traced back to this variety, such as *fare il diavolo* lit. 'do the devil' (cf. It. *essere agitato* 'to be agitated'), *hanno la rabbia* lit. 'they have the anger' (cf. It. *sono vogliose* 'they are eager'), *pagare col violino* lit. 'to pay with.the violin' (cf. It. *pagare a rate* 'to pay by instalments'), *pigliarsela in criminale* 'lit. 'to take it for oneself in criminal' (cf. It. *prendersela a male* 'to take it badly').

A very similar function is also served by dialect words such as *ammarrata* (said of boats, in It. *ormeggiata*, *tirata in secca* 'pulled ashore, moored'), a word of French origin criticized by Italian dictionaries of the time, *gli antichi* 'the previous generations', custodians of tradition, as well as idioms such as *comandare le feste e le quarant'ore* lit. 'to command the feasts and the forty hours', i.e., 'to decide everything for everyone', even for the other members of the family, which has its roots in the devotional practice, still alive in southern Italy, of remembering, at the end of Holy Week, the hours spent by Jesus in the tomb (cf. Marazzini 2004:196). Their popular nature (defined as 'intentional ethnification'; cf. Alfieri 2011) is further emphasized by the wholesale use of proverbs (called *motti*) and nicknames (called *nomignoli*), both of which are fundamental elements of the oral culture of all times and countries, and of whose importance and nature Verga shows himself to be perfectly aware. This does not mean, of course, that there is not, especially in his early writings as well as in the minor writers of the *verismo* movement, an unconscious dialectality, due to the automatic interference of dialect in the author's language.

Another case in which literary language reveals, intentionally or unintentionally, the influence of regional forms is that of the

Abruzzese Ignazio Silone (1900–1978), who also left testimony of the linguistic customs of his region, and in particular of the peasants of Marsica (the area of the province of L'Aquila around the Fucino plain where he was born): '[t]here were certain simple ways, common to all, of indicating essential things. In place of the many expressions that have always been used elsewhere to declare the feeling of love, throughout the Abruzzi people used to say simply "ti voglio bene", and to say that two people loved each other, they used to say "si parlano" "they talk to each other". This was before cinema became widespread. Of course, even among those who now speak the Italian of films and radio, typical dialect forms survive. "What is your father doing?", I asked a young mechanic of my acquaintance. "È a spasso" he replied, meaning not that he was walking around (as it would in standard Italian), but unemployed. There are still those who use the term "cristiano" "Christian" as a synonym for person ("Hitler voleva distruggere gli ebrei? Ma non sono anch'essi cristiani?" [Hitler wanted to destroy the Jews? Aren't they people [lit. Christians] too?])' (Silone 1975, s. n.).

Not only are many of these usages still common today (*ti voglio bene* for 'I love you', *è a spasso* for 'he is unemployed', *cristiano* for 'person', etc.), but, as can be seen, Silone defines as 'dialectal' forms that are also words and expressions of local Italian, certainly because he grasps their nature as calques on the dialect; in short, it is what we would call now 'regional Italian', although the examples cited remain visible even among higher social classes.

Of the greatest interest is the linguistic mixture present in the plays of Eduardo De Filippo (1900–1984), a Neapolitan poet, actor, and playwright of great depth, who was always very attentive to the verisimilitude of his dialogues. Wrongly considered a 'dialectal' author (obviously in a limiting sense), the various versions of his successful early comedy *Natale in casa Cupiello* ('Christmas at Cupiello's House', composed in 1931) already show a gradual transition from dialect to regional Italian. The dialect, almost intact in the original manuscript and still prevalent in the 1959 edition, is in fact in later editions diluted into a local Italian that reflects the change in the social context of the play (and also, more broadly, the historical-cultural context of Naples and the country): from the authentically popular environment of the period of its writing to the petit-bourgeois one of more recent performances. Thus, in the

phrases of some characters one observes an 'imperfectly controlled Italian, with relapses towards dialect and towards improper forms typical of popular Italian', so much so as to give rise to amusing *strafalcioni* ('howlers'), such as *alfabetico* 'illiterate' (lit. 'alphabetic' and technically a malapropism for It. *analfabeta*), *guadambio* (It. *guadagno*) 'gain', *permettuto/permesso* 'allowed', *forse l'avete liggiuta la licrama/forse l'avete letta la pubblicità* 'perhaps you have read the advertisement', a dialectal phrase phonetically Italianized, as well as the Gallicism *réclame* (cf. De Blasi 2006:103). These are, as De Blasi himself points out, forms that provoke laughter, but which were and to some extent still are common among some speakers from the lower classes.

However, the different social levels of the characters are not the only element influencing Eduardo's linguistic choices: urban geography is equally important. In *Napoli milionaria!* 'Naples a millionaire!' for example, a comedy written in 1945, immediately after the end of the war, and set in a *basso* in the city's historic centre,[2] dialect obviously has ample space, while in *Le bugie con le gambe lunghe* 'Long-legged lies' (1947), whose story takes place in a building in the new twentieth-century neighbourhoods (the protagonist's flat is full of 'well-kept books displayed all over the place'), the various levels of Italian are certainly more frequent than dialect. And again, in *Questi fantasmi!* 'Oh, these ghosts!' (1945), which Eduardo imagines in an old apartment building, characterized —as was often the case—by the co-existence of several social classes, staggered at various heights on the different floors, we pass from the Neapolitan dialect used by the porter to the regional Italian of the protagonist, Pasquale Lojacono, who uses it especially when addressing the professor who lives opposite him.

The verse and prose of Rocco Scotellaro (1923–1953), a Lucanian poet, writer, intellectual, and politician (for several years as a very young socialist mayor of his town, Tricarico, Matera), who died in his thirties, are still to be studied in depth from a linguistic point of view. In fact, he represents, even more than the other authors mentioned so far, an emblematic example of a 'borderline' figure, suspended between the peasant culture to which he still feels he belongs (what anthropologists call 'observed culture'; cf. Cirese 1973:7f., 109) and that expressed by the literature and politics of his time (the 'observing' culture), with which he was able to weave intense

dialogues, coming into close contact with leading figures such as Carlo Levi and the economist and southern Italy expert Manlio Rossi-Doria.

It is above all for these reasons that in his language, both in verse and prose, one can recognize features of dialectal origin, as well as elements of highly elevated language and narrative constructs of a traditional kind, even if '[t]he spontaneity and popularity of Scotellaro would seem [. . .] not a point of departure, but a consciously pursued point of arrival. In reaching [. . .] this goal the author brings into play all his experience of the communicative modes of oral and popular reality' (De Blasi 2013:96). In the case of Scotellaro's language, therefore, as with Verga and Silone, it is not always easy to distinguish between intentional and unintentional 'low' elements, and this must be done, when possible, on a case-by-case basis. Among the 'regional' lexical types, we find, in prose, examples such as *chiatto* (cf. It. *grasso*) 'fat' and *cacciava il discorso* lit. 'he chased out the speech' for It. *iniziava a parlare di un certo argomento* 'he started talking about a certain topic', while in the verses we read forms that are still common in the Apulo-Lucanian area and throughout upper southern Italy, such as *fatigate* for *lavorate* 'you work' (cf. It. *fatigare* 'to have difficulty'), *scarparo* for *calzolaio* 'shoemaker' (cf. It. *scarpa* 'show' + agentive suffix *-aro*), *scostumato* (lit. 'unmannered') for *maleducato* 'rude' (cf. §40.3.3), *abbiamo scasato* 'we have moved (lit. dishoused)' (cf. It. *ci siamo trasferiti*), *morì sparato* 'he died from a bullet wound (lit. shot)' (cf. It. *è morto colpito da un proiettile* 'he died after being hit by a bullet'), *non si è ritirata* 'she did not return home (lit. she did not withdraw)' (cf. It. *non è rientrata a casa*), *stai di casa* 'you live (lit. stay of house) (cf. It. *abiti* 'you inhabit').

A more recent, certainly very peculiar (and at times controversial), case is that of the writer, scriptwriter, and detective novelist from Agrigento (Porto Empedocle) Andrea Camilleri (1925–2019), the author of the successful series of novels the protagonist of which is Inspector Montalbano, whose highly personal multilingualism was certainly one of the factors behind Camilleri's unexpected and exceptional success. One can clearly see in his numerous novels 'a dense and continuous code-mixing, in which there seem to be no pre-established boundaries between Italian and dialect, codes characterized by a symmetrical interchange, having as their only

common denominator the register of informality' (Castiglione 2014:66), to the point of configuring a sort of 'hybridization' process (Castiglione 2014:63), but the lexicon certainly shows 'a strong dialectal imprint, but, at the same time, it remains similar to Italian or derived from Italian [. . .], or otherwise very recursive and therefore easily recognisable' (Sottile 2019). More precisely, Roberto Sottile has convincingly subdivided Camilleri's lexicon into three groups: (1) autochthonisms: Sicilian words with different bases from their Italian counterparts, e.g., *naca* < Gr. *nake* vs It. *culla* 'cradle'; *taliar-e/-i* vs It. *guardare* 'to look at'; *trasiri* vs *entrare* 'to enter', etc., but repeated often, so as to become familiar to the reader; (2) dialectal words with bases shared with Italian, e.g., *chiazza* 'square', *cchiù* 'more', *firmari* 'to stop', *turnari* 'to go back', which are the 'same' as (cf. It. *piazza*, *più*, *fermare*, *tornare*), the first two displaying the change PL- to /kj/- typical of southern dialects, the others with the dialectal ending in -/i/ instead of -/e/; and (3) pseudo-dialectal words, namely, dialectalized/Sicilianized Italian words such as *friscura* from It. *frescura* 'coolness', *dovivano* from It. *dovevano* 'they had to', *sirata* from It. *serata* 'evening' (cf. Sottile 2019).

It is above all the pseudo-dialectal words that show us 'regional' Italian, and because they are almost never inventions, but rather extrapolations from the conversation of Sicilian speakers who tend to be dialect speakers (and not infrequently from generations not far from that of the author). What is 'personal' in Camilleri's writing is, if anything, the original combination of the voices of these three groups, which give life to a sort of 'idiolect' in which, in any case, the autochthonisms never exceed 20 per cent of the lexemes in any of the works, thus forming a significant, but not particularly obtrusive, component of the author's lexicon.

40.7 Regional Italian and the language of the youth

Relations between regional Italians and the language of the youth have always been very close, especially in recent decades, when in the local varieties the younger generations—which in the meantime have become, for the most part, Italian-speaking—have sought and almost always found the linguistic material they needed to satisfy their expressive needs and communicative requirements, material that the common language—especially the somewhat flat and banal form learned at school—did not seem able to provide adequately.

One of the most detailed studies, although dated, is that by Pietro Trifone on the language of the youth in Pescara (Trifone 1996), from which there emerges a rich cluster of vocabulary that, on closer inspection, cannot only be explained by invoking the persistent influence of the typically local or 'regional' linguistic background, but also turn out to be true Neapolitanisms (and more or less faithful ones from a phonetic and semantic point of view), a legacy of the fact that the city and the area defined as 'Middle Adriatic' belong to a historically and linguistically southern sphere (as do the primary dialects), of which we are perhaps less aware today. They lend themselves well, therefore, individually and as a whole, to representing juvenile and non-juvenile usages of a large part of the upper south of Italy: consider, for example, words such as *chiachillo* 'worthless individual' (Nap. *chiachiéllo*), *ricchione* 'male homosexual', *smerdato* 'covered in ignominy', *tamarro* 'uncouth, boorish individual' (in nineteenth-century Neapolitan it meant 'lizard'), *ingarrarsi* 'to carry out an approach; to have sexual relations with someone' (Neapolitan reg. It. *ingarrare* 'to guess, to find'), *ricredersela* 'to give oneself airs, to strut, to boast' (It. Nap. *credersela*). Other terms widespread in the language of the southern youth (and not only there) are also *cazzuto* 'gritty, very determined', *coppino* 'slap on the back of the head', *una frega* 'a lot', *mazzate* 'slaps and punches', *pelle* 'sexual intercourse', *seccia* 'drunk' (in the expression *ubriaco come una seccia*, lit. 'drunk as a cuttlefish', cf. dialectal *seccia* < SEPIA for standard *seppia*) (cf. also §40.3.3), *abbottare* 'to fill, swell', *andare in cascetta* 'to get angry, become irritable for trivial reasons', related to Nap. *fərnì c"a capa int"a cascèttə* lit. 'to finish with one's head in the box', namely, 'to end up in a trap, be without a way out', situations that obviously provoke anger, *cacciare* 'to drive out' (cf. §40.3.3), *intommare* 'to fill up, swell up (with blows)', *stare fuori di coccia* 'to be out of one's mind,

show signs of imbalance' etc. (the last two are used in Naples and Campania in the variants *attommare* and *stare fuori di capa*).

The current socio-economic situation of the Pescara conurbation and more generally of the Abruzzo-Molise area, where contacts with different regions of Italy are more frequent than they used to be for various reasons, has then caused this majority lexical stratum to be overlain by a certain number of forms from Romanesco and even a handful of northernisms, again mentioned by Trifone. Among the former are *allucinante* 'unbelievable, tremendous', *cozza* 'ugly girl', *mito* 'person or thing of great quality' (with the derivative *mitico*), *osceno* 'in very bad taste', *paraculo* 'lucky bastard, jammy git', *sgallettata* 'girl of easy virtue', *sfigato* 'unfortunate', *svolta* 'positive change, success', *ammorbare* 'to bore, annoy', *cazzeggiare* 'to waste time doing silly or futile things', *sgamare* 'to discover, to catch in the act', *suolare* 'to cheat, break a promise'; among northernisms, *balengo* 'cretin', *menata* 'nonsense', *pirla* 'fool', *squinzia* 'fatuous/unattractive girl', *intortare* 'to cleverly convince someone (especially in the sphere of love)', *limonare* 'to make love' (cf. Trifone 1996:252f.).

In the far south of Italy there are of course also numerous items in the juvenile Italian lexicon linked to the dialect background: among them, for Sicily, *scanto* 'fright', *spacchioso* 'nice', *sperto* 'astute', *afferrarsi* 'to quarrel', *babbiare* 'to joke', *chiantarsi* 'to split up (of a couple)', *impuparsi* 'to dress up', *priarsi* 'to rejoice' (cf. Ruffino 2001).

In the regional Italian of Abruzzo (and of a large part of Molise), *ancora* 'yet', in preverbal position, without negation (in place of the standard *non ancora* or *ancora non*), and together with the present indicative, instead of the past perfect preferred by the standard, means 'not yet': *ancora viene* 'he has not yet come' (cf. It. *non è ancora venuto*). As Picchiorri (2016) points out, it widely used, even though speakers often perceive it as deviating considerably from the standard. However, phrases such as *la giornata ancora finisce* 'the day is not yet over' (cf. It. *la giornata non è ancora finita*) or *Io mi sposo il 20 maggio ma ancora comincio a fare nulla* 'I'm getting married on the 20th of May but haven't started doing anything yet' (cf. It. . . . *non ho ancora cominciato a fare nulla*), are not at all uncommon, for example on social media. This construction is flanked by two others, which can be defined as 'intermediate': one,

which is by far the most widespread today, at all diastratic and diaphasic levels (also in the local press), and which is already no longer perceived as a deviation from the norm, is the type *non ancora viene*, as in: *non ancora capisco* 'I still don't understand' (cf. It. *non ho ancora capito*) or *ad oggi non ancora torna l'acqua* 'the water is not yet back' (cf. It. *l'acqua non è ancora tornata*). The other is the type *non ancora è venuto*, in which the use of the present tense is also dropped, but which keeps the order of the constituents unchanged: *non ancora abbiamo fatto nulla* 'we haven't done anything yet' (cf. It. *non abbiamo ancora fatto nulla*); *i soldi non ancora sono arrivati* 'the money has not yet arrived' (cf. It. *i soldi non sono ancora arrivati*). The area of diffusion of these syntactic types is the provinces of Pescara and Chieti, plus a large part of that of Campobasso, from which they radiate northwards towards Teramo (up to about a line joining Giulianova, Teramo, and Torricella Sicura), and southwards as far as the province of Foggia (and in particular the Gargano); Picchiorri shows that it is documented in writings of various kinds as early as the post-Unification period (after 1861).

A striking case of semantic change, starting from a traditional dialectal word which is still in use, is represented by *pariare* (with the dialectal variant *parià*), a verb that in Neapolitan and other southern dialects, until recently, meant exclusively 'to digest' (cf. for Foggia Valente 1975:53). The origin is in the medieval *paidare/paidire*, perhaps with pre-Latin roots (cf. Giuliani 2016:114 and n25), which, for example, gave Romanesco *pajata* 'a traditional pasta sauce made from small lamb or veal guts', but which in the youth language of modern Naples and neighbouring areas means 'to have fun', alongside 'to relax', 'to do nothing at all' (but also 'to get high', for example in reference to drug use), senses completely unknown to Neapolitan emigrants and often still not shared by the older generations that live in the region. It may be that the phonetic proximity and partial overlap with *sbarià/variare* 'to amuse oneself, have fun', and with *paparià/papariare* 'to move here and there like a duck (called *pàpara*; cf. It. *papera*), 'doing little things with pleasure' (e.g., at home), also very present in the dialect), may have contributed to this singular semantic development.

The verb-form *suca*, investigated by Sottile (2021), has a truly singular history. In the dialect of Palermo, as in other Sicilian and

southern dialects, it means ‘sucks’—with a value that, originally linked to the sphere of sex, was often coarse, but which then took on figurative meanings (as in *suca* or *m’a poi sucàri* ‘you do not impress me’), but left its area of origin and entered the regional Italian of Sicily and even of other areas, for example to deny something or express opposition to an inadmissible request (*suca!* ‘forget it! fuck you!’; evidence of this was also found in Turin).

40.8 Conclusions

The primary dialects, still alive in many areas of southern Italy, continue to provide material for terms (verbs, constructs, but also nouns and adjectives) that are then passed on, more or less transformed, to the regional variants of Italian, but also that there is still a very close relationship between dialects, regional Italian, and the language of young people, making it impossible to predict any future yielding in the direction of an Italian closer to the standard. At present, in the large portion of Italy that stretches roughly from the river Tronto to Sicily, the linguistic repertoire of most speakers continues to include varieties ranging from dialect, even ‘broad’ dialect, to a more or less high and ‘diluted’ regional Italian, a situation that does not prevent changes of various kinds (phonetic, grammatical, semantic, even pragmatic), which can sometimes be quite conspicuous, as well as frequent passages in both directions (from dialect to Italian and vice versa) of individual features from one variety to another.

[1] For metaphony in the dialects, see Ledgeway (2016:250).

[2] A *basso* is a one-room flat on the ground floor of a building, often without windows and with an entrance directly from the street or alley, where entire families would live.

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Chapter 41

Regional Italian of Sardinia

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41.1 State of the art

'Regional Italian' refers to a form of Italian that varies according to geographical area; the adjective 'regional' refers not to administrative regions but to linguistic areas (see Poggi Salani 2010).[1] Moreover, according to some linguists (see Lavinio 2019:410f.), it may be reductive to consider regional Italian as an intermediate variety in the language-dialect (or Italian language-other local variety) continuum, since not all regional forms are related to local speech. In fact, in addition to regionalisms, one should recognize that the polymorphism of Italian offers alternative, equivalent, forms of which it may be that only one is selected according to dialectal area. In this regard, Lavinio (2019:410f.) mentions in the regional Italian of Sardinia a preference for the present continuous periphrasis (e.g., *sto studiando* lit. 'stand.1SG studying') rather than the synthetic *studio* 'study.1SG', and the frequent use of Italian *cosa* (lit. 'thing') or *che cosa* (lit. 'what thing') 'what', rather than *che* 'what' in interrogative sentences (e.g., *Che cosa fai*? 'What are you doing?').

According to Dettori (2001), it was during the twentieth century (mainly in the 1960s and 1970s) that Italian began to impose itself, triggering the Italianization of Sardinian. The spread of Italian started in urban centres and gradually extended to more remote areas. This process began after World War II because of factors such as increased migration and mobility of people even within the island due to urbanization and industrial development. Internal population

shifts allowed contact among speakers from different dialectal areas who chose Italian rather than Sardinian dialect in interregional communication.

An additional key factor in the emergence of Italian, in Sardinia as in other regions, is schooling and the spread of mass media. The use of Italian in interactions between speakers from different dialectal areas facilitated the integration of dialectal features into the Italian variety spoken in Sardinia. Nevertheless, Sardinians have a certain metalinguistic awareness of their linguistic otherness (see Calaresu and Pisano 2017:213). In this regard, Calaresu and Pisano (2017:214) state that Sardinians have always been conscious of a deep distinction between Sardinian and Italian and, for this reason, they have always been concerned to keep Sardinian distinct from Italian. In fact, a peculiar kind of communication among asymmetrical bilinguals was widespread until recently (see also Rindler Schjerve 2011): in this type of conversation, one person (L1 Italian but with strong passive competence in Sardinian) spoke only Italian whereas the other (a native Sardinian speaker who could understand Italian quite well) spoke exclusively Sardinian.

According to Loi Corvetto (1983; 2011), Sardinian regional Italian is used in every milieu and is not socially stigmatized, unlike some other regional varieties of Italian which are more influenced by dialect and diastratically more marked. Thus in Sardinia there is a clear distinction between the Italian used throughout the island and accepted by all speakers, including non-dialect speakers, and the production in Italian of features arising from strong dialect interference which are negatively marked from a social point of view. Loi Corvetto (1995:112f.; 1998:11, 14) described the latter as 'italiano interferito'.[2]

Hence it would be possible to distinguish, along the diastratic axis, forms or constructions typical of 'standard' regional Italian, such as progressive periphrases with the gerund (1a), whose frequency in Sardinian regional Italian is in accordance with the Italian norm, and forms characterized by greater interference from Sardinian (1b). Indeed, in this case the choice of the auxiliary *essere* 'be' over *stare* 'stand' reflects a typically Sardinian structure; for example, in Buddusò *sɔ ɛndzéndɛ* 'be.1SG coming (= I am coming)', is an impossible structure in Italian (see Lavinio 1982:323; 2019:405; 410f.):

1 a Sto arrivando *for* Arrivo
stand.1SG arrive.GER arrive.1SG
'I am arriving' 'I arrive'

b Sono arrivando *for* Sto arrivando
be.1SG arrive.GER stand.1SG arrive.GER
'I am arriving' 'I am arriving'

At the bottom, one finds so-called *italianu porcheddinu* (or *proceddinu* in southern Sardinian varieties,[3] see Calaresu and Pisano 2017:211–213), which may still be strongly stigmatized even by predominantly Sardinian-speakers themselves (Loi Corvetto 1998:11,18f.). This low variety is typical of speakers who do not have a perfect command of Italian, but it has acquired its own visibility in literary production (since the last century there has been a notable production by writers who set their stories on the island and make them sound linguistically Sardinian as well) and in recent decades it has been given new life by the younger generations, especially in social networks and urban centres (see Gargiulo 2018:238–241).[4] Furthermore, the use of this variety sometimes appears in film production (Lavinio 2015:1635–1651; Mereu 2015:267–290) and comics (Dettori 2019:341–354).[5]

Lőrinczi (1999) and Bolognesi and Heeringa (2005), on the other hand, adopt a more nuanced point of view. According to Bolognesi and Heeringa (2005:30–32, 45), the co-existence of Sardinian with Italian has led to interference between the two languages, and Sardinian grammatical structures have strongly influenced Sardinian regional Italian. Thus, a continuum characterized by varying degrees of mixing has arisen between the two languages, such that it is difficult for the ordinary speaker clearly to determine which structures belong to which language.

According to Lőrinczi (1999), even the Italian variety spoken by speakers such as schoolteachers, who consider themselves immune to the influence of Sardinian, is an Italian with many regionalisms. For Lőrinczi (1999), this means that not only are regionalisms in Sardinian regional Italian a much more widespread phenomenon along the diastratic axis, but also that interference operates not only between Sardinian and Italian, but also between regional Italian and learnèd or standard Italian.

Studies and surveys on Sardinian regional Italian have shown particular trends of change (Mura 2013) and the persistence of

various linguistic features.[6] Indeed, as we shall see, several phenomena that are present in today's regional Italian (e.g., consonant lengthening, differential object marking, generalized use of the progressive periphrasis) had already been pointed out in the late nineteenth century (Romani 1886; Fadda 2012). This research also pointed out that Sardinian regional Italian shows diatopic variation. Loi Corvetto's (1983) seminal study had already identified variations among the linguistic macro-areas of Sardinia as regards some regional Italian features: Campidanese (in the south), Logudorese and Nuorese (in the central-northern part of the island), Sassarese, the Catalan of Alghero, Gallurese (in the north).

41.2 Phonetic and phonological features

41.2.1 Introduction

Sardinian regional Italian shares some phonetic and phonological features with Sardinian (see Bolognesi and Heeringa 2005).[7] In the vowel system, we may mention metaphony, vowel harmony, hiatus and, in the consonant system, lengthening. While these features appear rather uniform along the diastratic axis, they show variations diatopically.

41.2.2 Consonant lengthening

For consonants, the hallmark of the pronunciation of Sardinian regional Italian is the lengthening of consonants (voiceless stops first and foremost) in intervocalic and initial positions (Loi Corvetto 1983; Contini 1987; Lőrinczi 1996; Mura and Virdis 2015:73f.).[8] This lengthening is especially noticeable if such consonants follow a stressed open syllable (the head of the foot) (see Contini 1987:59;

Bolognesi 1998:161; Lőrinczi 1996; Lai 2015).[9] The examples in (2) illustrate the phenomenon:

2	a	[d:]a[t:]o	vs	It. *dato* 'given'
	b	[s:]a[p:]u[t:]o	vs	It. *saputo* 'known
	c	[p:]o[k:]o	vs	It. *poco* 'little'
	d	a[s:]immetria	vs	It. *asimmetria* 'asymmetry'
	e	[s:]a[b:]a[t:]o	vs	It. *sabato* 'Saturday'

This feature is an interference from the Sardinian phonological system, in which the absence of the consonant-lengthening correlation, except for /n/, /r/, and also /l/ in Campidanese, leads to a generalized, non-contrastive lengthening of consonants (see Contini 1987; Virdis 1988:904; Bolognesi 1998:158–165; Lőrinczi 1996; Lai 2015:46–48; 2022).

As in Sardinian, and unlike standard Italian (see Contini 1987:56–60; Mura and Virdis 2015:74), in Sardinian regional Italian there are no true geminate consonants. Rather, it is a partial lengthening that, in intervocalic position, is distributed over both syllables and constitutes the coda of the first syllable and the onset of the second (see Loi Corvetto 1983; Canepari 1999:471f.; Lőrinczi 1996; Mura and Virdis 2015).[10]

It would seem that in Sardinian regional Italian, as well as in Sardinian dialects, consonant-lengthening replaces vowel lengthening, which, in standard Italian, automatically signals the weight of the strong, stressed syllable (cf. Srd. reg. It. da[t:]o vs It. da[:]to 'given').

By contrast, the sonorants /r/ and /l/ are lengthened word-initially, but not word-internally: thus, we have [l:]*una* 'moon' and *la* [l:]*una* 'the moon', but *pa*[l]a 'shovel'. Similarly, /r/ is lengthened in [r:]*etta* 'straight line' and in *la* [r:]*etta* 'the straight line', but not in *ca*[r]*a* 'dear.FSG' (see Loi Corvetto 1983:100f.; 2011).

41.2.3 Minor consonant features

The affricates, which in Sardinian varieties are usually voiceless word-initially, are realized as voiced in Sardinian regional Italian: thus we find [ʤ]*ucchero* 'sugar', [ʤ]*io* 'uncle' with voiced affricate,

although the corresponding forms in dialect varieties are [ˈʦukːuru], [ˈʦiu] (Loi Corvetto 2011). Piredda (2017:498) points out two other typical features of regional Italian. The first is the reduction of the voiceless coronal fricative [ʃ] and palatal nasal [ɲ], which are long in Italian: [ˈpɛʃɛ] vs It. [ˈpeʃːe] 'fish' and [ˈbaɲɔ] vs It. [ˈbaɲːo] 'bath'. The second concerns consonantal lenition in intervocalic position where, for example, the voiceless alveolar affricate [ʦ] is realized as the fricative [θ]: [aθienˈdina] vs It. [attsienˈdina] 'small company'.

41.2.4 Metaphony

In all Sardinian varieties metaphony is a long-distance word-level vocalic process in which the stressed low-mid vowels /ɛ, ɔ/ are raised to the high-mid vowel [e, o] when followed by a final high vowel /i/ or /u/, as shown in (3) (Contini 1987:439–441; Frigeni 2002; Lai 2022):

3	a	/ˈnɔu/	→ [ˈnou]	'new.MSG'
	b	/ˈbɛlːu/	→ [ˈbelːu]	'beautiful.MSG'

If the final vowel is /a ɛ ɔ/, the stressed vowel is unaffected, hence:

4	a	/ˈnɔa/	→ [ˈnɔa]	'new.FSG'
	b	/ˈbɛlːa/	→ [ˈbɛlːa]	'beautiful.FSG'
	c	/ˈmɔntɛ/	[ˈmɔntɛ]	'mountain'
	d	/ˈmɛlɛ/	[ˈmɛlɛ]	'honey'
	e	/ˈdɔmɔ/	[ˈdɔmɔ]	'house'
	f	/ˈsɛrɔ/	[ˈsɛrɔ]	'evening'

In Sardinian regional Italian metaphony is widespread even in areas where it is not present at the dialect level, namely in Gallurese, Sassarese, and the Catalan of Alghero (Loi Corvetto 1983:60, 63f.; Rieger 2013; Mura and Virdis 2015). Therefore, the Italian words in (5) and (7) display vowel alternations in Sardinian regional Italian according to number (6) and/or gender (8), due to the metaphonic action of the final vowel (Loi Corvetto 1983:49f., 64; 2011):[11]

5 Italian words

a	l[e]gge	'law'
b	p[e]sce	'fish'
c	c[o]rso	'course'
d	t[o]rre	'tower'

6 Sardinian regional Italian vocalic alternation

	Singular [ɛ] / [ɔ]			Plural [e] / [o]	
a	l[ɛ]gge	'law'	e	l[e]ggi	'laws'
b	p[ɛ]sce	'fish'	f	p[e]sci	'fishes'
c	c[ɔ]rso	'course'	g	c[o]rsi	'courses'
d	t[ɔ]rre	'tower'	h	t[o]rri	'towers'

7 Italian words

	Masculine plural		Feminine plural
a	sign[o]ri 'gentlemen'	e	sign[o]re 'ladies'
b	gr[ɔ]ssi	f	gr[ɔ]sse 'big'
c	n[e]ri	g	n[e]re 'black'
d	b[ɛ]lli	h	b[ɛ]lle 'beautiful'

8 Sardinian regional Italian vocalic alternation

	Masculine plural		Feminine plural
a	sign[o]ri 'gentlemen'	e	sign[ɔ]re 'ladies'
b	gr[o]ssi	f	gr[ɔ]sse 'big'
c	n[e]ri	g	n[ɛ]re 'black'
d	b[e]lli	h	b[ɛ]lle 'beautiful'

Thus, the alternation between stressed low-mid and high-mid vowels is a purely allophonic process in Sardinian regional Italian, where, unlike standard Italian, the minimal pairs in (9) are absent (see Canepari 1995:212):

9

a	p[e]sca	'fishing'	vs	p[ɛ]sca	'peach'
b	b[o]tte	'barrel'	vs	b[ɔ]tte	'blows'
c	c[o]rso	'course'	vs	c[ɔ]rso	'Corsican'

In Sardinian regional Italian these pairs are always pronounced as in (10):

10 a p[ɛ]sca ‘fishing / peach’

b b[ɔ]tte ‘barrel / blows’

c c[ɔ]rso ‘course / Corsican’

Metaphony is absent in the regional Italian pronunciation of Tabarchino speakers (Mura and Virdis 2015:55n21).[12] In Gallurese, by contrast, metaphony is blocked by the presence of a nasal consonant. In fact, mid vowels are produced as low-mid vowels when followed by a nasal consonant, as shown in (11). Otherwise, vowels are high-mid (Loi Corvetto 1983:56f., 63; Canepari 1999:473; Piredda 2017:497):[13]

11 a c[ɔ]nti ‘bills, sums’

b es[ɛ]mpi ‘examples’

c s[ɔ]gni ‘dreams’

d s[ɛ]gni ‘signs’

e n[ɔ]mi ‘names’

f r[ɛ]mi ‘oars’

However, according to Riccardo Mura (p.c.), the rule blocking metaphony is no longer active in the grammar of Sardinian regional Italian of the new generation of Gallurese speakers. Hence, in the forms in (11) the vowels are high-mid, viz. *c*[o]*nti*, *es*[e]*mpi*, *s*[o]*gni*, etc.

41.2.5 Vowel harmony and hiatus

Akin to metaphony is vowel harmony. The forms in (6) and (8) show that metaphony is triggered by the high vowels adjacent to the stressed syllable in accordance with a right-to-left direction. Those in (12) show that this process not only targets the stressed syllable, but, as in Sardinian,[14] can produce vowel harmony of all mid vowels within a word:

12 a [lːɛˈpːrɔtːɔ] / [lːeˈpːrotːi] vs It. [leˈprɔtːo] / [leˈprɔtːi]
leveret.MSG leveret.MPL leveret.MSG leveret.MPL
'leveret' 'leverets' 'leveret' 'leverets'

b [ɛleˈmɛntɔ] / [eleˈmenti] vs It. [eleˈmento] / [eleˈmenti]
component.MSG component.MPL component.MSG component.MPL
'component' 'components' 'component' 'components'

c [eleˈmozina] vs It. [eleˈmɔzina]
alms.FSG alms.FSG
'alms' 'alms'

In Sardinian regional Italian we also observe the tendency to hiatus.[15] The glides [j]/[w] become high vowels ([i]/[u]) thus changing the structure and number of syllables: standard Italian words may thereby acquire an extra syllable (13):

13 Hiatus in Sardinian regional Italian
a p[i]eno vs It. p[j]eno 'full.MSG'

b f[i]ume vs It. [f[j]ume 'river'

c b[u]ono vs It. b[w]ono 'good.MSG'

According to Loi Corvetto (2011), this tendency occurs throughout the Sardinian area (except for Gallurese), although it is stronger in the Campidanese area and especially in Cagliari.

41.2.6 Morphophonology: vocative truncation

As pointed out by Lavinio (2017:207), when used in vocative function proper nouns, surnames, nicknames, kinship terms, and titles often undergo truncation such that all material immediately following the stressed vowel is deleted. This truncation process is shared with central and southern Italy, and reflects a feature of Sardinian morphophonology (see Floricic 2002; Floricic and Molinu 2018). Thus, in Sardinian regional Italian we find *(o) ma'!* (< *mamma* 'mother, mum') and *(o) ba'!* (< *babbo* 'father, dad') in addressing one's parents.[16] The examples in (14k–n) show that truncation also applies to the second half of compounds and modified proper names or titles:

14	a	(o) dott['ɔ]	for *dottore*	'doctor.MSG'
	b	(o) professor['ɛ]	for *professoressa*	'teacher.FSG'
	c	(o) sign['ɔ]	for *signora*	'madam'
	d	(o) sign['ɔ]	for *signore*	'ladies'
	e	(o) sign['ɔ]	for *signore*	'sir'
	f	(o) sign['o]	for *signori*	'gentlemen'
	g	(o) Giov['a]	for *Giovanni / Giovanna*	'Giovanni / Giovanna'
	h	(o) Dom['e]	for *Domenico / Domenica*	'Domenico / Domenica'
	i	(o) Franc['ɛ]	for *Francesco / Francesca*	'Francesco / Francesca'
	j	(o) Ant['o]	for *Antonio / Antonia*	'Antonio / Antonia'
	k	(o) Maria Ant['o]	for *Maria Antonia*	'Maria Antonia'
	l	(o) Annagr['a]	for *Annagrazia*	'Annagrazia'
	m	(o) Signora P['o]	for *Signora Porcu*	'Ms Porcu'
	n	(o) Signora ma['ɛ]	for *Signora maestra*	'Madam Teacher'

In truncated forms such as *Dom*[ˈe] (14h) or *Ant*[ˈo] (14j), the final stressed mid-high vowel is the result of metaphony (cf. §41.2.4) where the final high vowels [i], [u] of the base trigger raising of the preceding mid-low vowel. Such examples nicely illustrate the fact that phonological processes are ordered: metaphony occurs first, and truncation applies to the output of such an operation.

Even though the phonology of Sardinian and of Sardinian regional Italian excludes mid-high final vowels, these are perfectly well formed in vocatives where they can mark the contrast between singular and plural (cf. 14e–f), or masculine and feminine (cf. 14f vs 14d), but the contrast between mid-high and mid-low vowels, limited to these marginal sub-domains, does not entail recognition of their phonemic distinctiveness. Rather, the case of *(o) Giov*[ˈa] for 'Giovanni / Giovanna' in (14g) and *(o) Dom*[ˈe] for 'Domenico / Domenica' in (14h) show that truncation may lead to neutralization of gender oppositions.

41.2.7 Intonation

The intonation of Sardinian regional Italian is also affected by Sardinian (Contini 1976; 1984; 1995; Lai 2002). Research by Mura and Virdis (2015:125) demonstrates that, in comparison to the affirmative intonation of neutral/standard Italian, a rather high onset and very low end stand out in Sardinian regional Italian. These results substantially agree with those of Canepari (1999:94–97, 474).

41.3 Morphosyntax

41.3.1 Introduction

As far as morphology is concerned, there are no major interference phenomena due to contact between Italian and Sardinian. However, in relation to the selection of prefixes and suffixes, Loi Corvetto (1983:169–173) discusses some examples of possible interference in which some prefixes and suffixes are apparently promoted or avoided in Sardinian regional Italian due to the influence of the underlying Sardinian varieties. According to Loi Corvetto (1983:170), for example, in Sardinian regional Italian there is a clear tendency to prefer the negative suffix s- over other negative suffixes of standard Italian, especially with verbs and nouns, but not with adjectives, e.g., Srd. reg. It. / It. *sfiducia* 'mistrust', *sradicare* 'to eradicate', but It. *deformare* or *sformare* 'to deform' vs Srd. reg. It. *sformare*. Loi Corvetto also argues that Sardinian regional Italian prefers the structure non 'NEG' + be + adjective to express the opposite meaning of an adjective, e.g., It. *scontento* 'unhappy' (cf. *contento* 'happy') but Srd. reg. It. *non è contento* '(he) is not happy'.[17] According to Loi Corvetto (1983:170), this specific feature is due to the influence of the underlying Sardinian varieties.

On the other hand, suffixes used for the creation of deadjectival nouns such as -*ezz*(*a*) and -*aggin*(*e*) are preferred to -*ur*(*a*) and -*eri*(*a*) in Sardinian regional Italian because the former are not attested in Sardinian. Consequently, according to Loi Corvetto (1983:172), in Sardinian regional Italian *bruttezza* 'ugliness' is the only term used, even though *bruttura* 'ugly thing, eyesore' is also

possible in standard Italian. Similarly, only *fantasticaggine* 'fantasticness' is possible in Sardinian regional Italian, even though *fantasticheria* 'daydreaming' is the form used in standard Italian (cf. Loi Corvetto 1983:172).

41.3.2 Word order: focus fronting

According to Cruschina and Remberger (2009:119), in Sardinian and Sicilian varieties, fronting involves movement of the information focus of the sentence to a dedicated position in the left periphery of the sentence. Sardinian varieties display an extensive use of focus fronting to 'the left periphery of the sentence of any syntactic category' (Cruschina and Remberger 2009:120). This fronting involves not only arguments and adjuncts of all types, but also verbal predicates such as past participles, infinitives, and gerunds. The same feature can be found in Sardinian regional Italian as is shown in (15):

15 a Finire la devi! Capito hai?
end.INF it= must.2SG understand.PTCP.MSG have.2SG
'Cut it out! Have you understood?' (Nuoro)

b Ma finendo lo stai quel lavoro?
but end.GER it= stay.2SG that work
'Are you going to finish that job?' (Nuoro)

In terms of the interpretation of the fronted focus, Sardinian shows all the different interpretations described in the relevant literature (cf. Jones 1993; 2013; Cruschina 2021b; 2022), and the same holds true for Sardinian regional Italian. Indeed, Cruschina (2021:7) highlights that Sardinian (on a par with Sicilian) associates focus fronting with three distinct types of focus which our data show to hold also for Sardinian regional Italian, namely, corrective focus (16a), mirative focus (16b), and informative focus (16c):

16 a A Francesco ho chiamato (non a Paolo).
DOM Francesco have.1SG call.PTCP not DOM Paolo
'I called Francesco (not Paolo).' (Nuoro)

b Te lo immagini? Un altro cane
you= it= immagine.2SG an other dog
si ha preso![18]
REFL= have.3SG take.PTCP
'Can you believe it? He's got another dog!' (Pozzomaggiore)

c A chi lo hai detto per mamma?[19]
to who it= have.2SG tell.PTCP for mummy
A Tonino l' ho detto!
to Tonino it= have.1SG tell.PTCP
'Who did you ask on account of mum? I asked Tonino!' (Nuoro)

[18][19]

Focus fronting proves very common in Sardinian regional Italian and does not display any particular diastratic value (cf. Lavinio 2019: 221).

41.3.3 Transitive uses of intransitive verbs

As is the case with some southern varieties of regional Italian, a transitive use of what in standard Italian are intransitive verbs proves widespread in Sardinian regional Italian, but is typical of low registers:

17 a Lo scendi tu il cane stasera?
it= descend.IMP.2SG you DEF.MSG dog tonight
'Are you taking the dog down tonight?' (Pula)

b Esci la macchina ché dobbiamo uscire.
exit.IMP.2SG DET.FSG car.FSG because must.1PL get out.INF
'Take the car out [of the garage], as we need to go out.' (Nuoro)

41.3.4 Grammatical gender

As Lavinio (2019:205) points out, gender differences with respect to standard Italian occasionally occur. In (18) this gender shift is particularly marked diastratically, a case of *italianu porcheddinu*:

18 Sto morendo dal fame!
stay.1SG die.GER by=DEF.MSG hunger.MSG
'I'm starving!' (Pula)

In central and southern dialects, the word for 'hunger' is always masculine (*DES*:341), but the word *fame* 'hunger' is feminine in standard Italian. When we have two possibilities in standard Italian, e.g., It. *materasso* (M) or *materassa* (F) 'mattress'; *puzzo* (M) or *puzza* (F) 'stench', in Sardinian regional Italian, as is the case in other regional varieties of Italian, we usually find just one option (Lavinio 2019:206), e.g., Srd. reg. It. *materasso* 'mattress', *puzza* 'stench'.[20]

41.3.5 Omission of the definite article

Loi Corvetto (1983:122f.) points out that, as in Sardinian dialects, the definite article is usually omitted with kinship nouns preceded by the possessive. Lavinio (2019:208) highlights that this feature can be found in the spoken Italian of other areas of Italy, but it appears more diastratically marked when it occurs in plural forms (18c) because educated Sardinian people do not usually accept it with plural kinship terms. The absence of the definite article is also attested with titles preceding a proper noun and surnames (19d, 19e, 19f).

19 a Mio nonno ha fatto la guerra.
my.MSG grandfather have.3SG do.PTCP DEF.FSG war.FSG
'My grandfather fought in the war.' (Nuoro, Pula)

b Mia mamma non la posso combattere.
my.FSG mother.FSG NEG her= can.1SG fight.INF
'I can't get on with my mother.' (Pula)

c Sorelle mie non volevano.
sister.FSG my.FPL NEG want.PST.IPFV.3PL
'My sisters didn't want it.' (Pula)

d C' è signor Rosas che ti cerca
there= be.3SG mister.MSG Rosas REL you=search.3SG
'Mr Rosas is looking for you.' (Pula)

e Dillo a signora Francesca!
say.IMP.2SG=it to madam.FSG Francesca
'Tell Mrs Francesca!' (Pozzomaggiore)

f Ho salutato il nipote di ingegner Pala.
have.1SG greet.PTCP DEF.MSG nephew.MSG of engineer.MSG Pala
'I greeted engineer Pala's nephew.' (Nuoro)

41.3.6 Differential object marking

Differential object marking, which replicates almost the same distribution found in the underlying Sardinian dialects, is widely used in Sardinian regional Italian. Sardinian differential object marking shares several characteristics with other Romance varieties (Ledgeway 2022c; 2023a; 2023b; Andriani 2023; Giancarli 2023; Guardiano 2023), but it also presents peculiar features which are not attested in Italo-Romance or other Romance dialects (see Floricic 2003b; Jones 1993; Putzu 2005; Boeddu 2017). It is not feasible here to draw up a comprehensive list of all potential instances of the phenomenon in Sardinian regional Italian (which may be subject to significant diastratic and diatopic fluctuations). The examples in (20) show that the distribution of differential object is favoured by a set of semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic features such as referentiality, animacy, and topicality:

20 a Devo chiamare a Mario.
must.1SG call.INF DOM Mario
'I have to call Mario.' (Domus De Maria)

b Sto aspettando a babbo.
stand.1SG wait.GER DOM dad
'I'm waiting for dad.' (Pula)

c Saluta a Signor Paolo!
greet.IMP.2SG DOM Mr Paolo
'Say hello to Mr Paolo!' (Dorgali)

d Francesco ha preso a Laika.
Francesco have.3SG take.PTCP DOM Laika
'Francesco took Laika [= a dog]!' (Nuoro)

e Mo mi guardo a 'C'è posta per te!'
now me= watch.1SG DOM 'You've got mail!'
'Now I'm going to watch the television programme "C'è posta per te!"' (Uta)

f Al figlio di Giulio l' hanno preso in polizia.
DOM=DEF son of Giulio him= have.3PL take.PTCP in police
'Giulio's son has been hired by the police force.' (Orune)

g A quello lì non lo voglio più vedere!
DOM that.M.SG there NEG him= want.1SG anymore see.INF
'I don't want to see him anymore!' (Nuoro)

As has been shown for other Romance varieties and Italo-Romance dialects (cf. Ledgeway 2022c; 2023a; 2023b) the presence of differential object marking can lead to a type of reanalysis whereby verbs which usually take an indirect object in Italian are interpreted as transitive in Sardinian and in Sardinian regional Italian, especially since the indirect object is frequently characterized by the features [+human] and [+specific]:

21 a E telefonalo a babbo mischinetto
and phone.IMP.2SG=him DOM dad poor.DIMINUTIVE.MSG
'Why don't you call poor daddy?' (Pula)

b Se la parli o la scrivi falla tornare
if her= talk.2SG or her= write.2SG make.IMP.2SG=her return.INF
'If you talk to her or write to her make her come back!'

41.3.7 Use of non-agreeing *tutto*

As Lavinio (2019:214) highlights, in the regional Italian spoken in southern, central, and northern Sardinia the indeclinable quantifier *tutto* 'all', in association with interrogative forms, is often used to identify all the elements of a given group, the difference in the meaning of the same sentences with and without the quantifier *tutto* is shown in (22):

22 a Chi tutto c' è?
who all there= be.3SG
'How many people are there?' (Nuoro, Pula, Dorgali, Orgosolo, Pozzomaggiore)

b Non so cosa tutto mi dovevano chiedere.
NEG know.1SG what all me= must.PST.IPFV.3PL ask.INF
'I don't know how many things they wanted to ask me.' (Oristano)

c Chi c' è?
who there= be.3SG
'who is there?'

d Non so cosa mi dovevano chiedere!
NEG know.1SG what me= must.PST.IPFV.3PL ask.INF
'I don't know what they wanted to ask me!'

Loi Corvetto (1983:119f.) argues that the Italian spoken in Sassari and Gallura does not display this feature because this particular use of the Sardinian quantifier *tóttu* 'all' is not found in Sassarese and Gallurese dialects.

41.3.8 The modal (assertive) use of *già*

In Sardinian regional Italian and in Sardinian the use of adverb *già* as a 'pro-sentential confirmative marker' (Calaresu 2015:119) is common (23). Calaresu (2015:119) highlights that the modal-assertive use is strictly pre-verbal as opposed to the typical aspectual use of the post-verbal *già* 'already' of standard Italian.

23 a Già lo vedi come sono stanco!
already it= see.2SG how be.1SG tired.M.SG
'You can clearly see how tired I am!' (Nuoro)

b Già non ti fa niente, mamma!
already NEG you= do.3SG nothing mum
'Mum is not going to beat you at all!' (Pula)

Calaresu (2015:122) notes that modal-assertive *già* shows a confirmatory-assertive value especially in marked constructions with a fronted non-finite verb. In such contexts *già* opens the focal part of the sentence in which the speaker personally assures the addressee how things stand (cf. Benincà et al. 2001:191–194 and Calaresu 2018:512f.):

24 Arrettando già sto arrettando
get.hard.GER already stand.1SG get.hard.GER
'As for getting hard, I can assure you I still get hard!' (Pozzomaggiore)

41.3.9 Use of the gerund

Another typical morphosyntactic feature of Sardinian regional Italian is the widespread extension of the progressive periphrasis *stare* 'stand' + gerund which in low registers typically shows the auxiliary *essere* 'be' as in all Sardinian and Sardinian-Corsican varieties. In contrast to other Romance varieties, in Sardinian and in Sardinian regional Italian the progressive reading (25a) can be connected to a perfective interpretation (see Jones 1993:141). As Lavinio (2019:217) highlights, periphrases with the gerund in Sardinian regional Italian also avoid the restrictions which in standard Italian preclude their use with stative verbs (23b; see Bertinetto 2001:132). Furthermore, the periphrasis *stare* + gerund can have a prospective value such that *sto tornando* means 'I'll be right back!' (cf. also example 1a). Finally, Wagner (1997:377) noted that in Sardinian after verbs expressing seeing and hearing the verbal object is regularly expressed by means of the gerund and Sardinian regional Italian shows the same feature as the Sardinian varieties (23c).[21] Surveys carried out in Sardinian schools (Lavinio 2019:217) show how sentences such as *l'ho visto correndo* 'I saw him running' are mostly understood as 'I saw him while he was running' unlike in standard Italian where the same

sentence only allows the interpretation ‘I saw him while I was running’.

25 a Sono stato tutto il giorno andando e tornando!
be.1SG be.PTCP all DET day go.GER and return.GER
‘I’ve been going back and forth all day long!’ (Oristano)

b Il mese scorso non stavo capendo
DET month.MSG pass.PTCP NEG stay.PST.IPFV.1SG understand.GER
nulla di latino
nothing of Latin
‘Last month I didn’t understand anything in the Latin course.’ (Nuoro)

c Al maresciallo l’ ho visto facendo
DOM=DET marshal.MSG him= have.1SG see.PTCP do.GER
verbali
penalty.ticket.MPL
‘I saw the marshal writing penalty tickets.’ (Pula)

41.3.10 Auxiliary selection

In central and northern Sardinian regional Italian auxiliary selection displays the same pattern as central-northern Sardinian varieties. Loporcaro (2001:465) shows that in the variety of Bonorva (northern Sardinia) transitive indirect reflexive verbs select auxiliary HAVE on a par with transitive and unergative verbs (whereas other reflexive verbs and unaccusatives select auxiliary BE as in standard Italian).[22] The Sardinian regional Italian of central and northern Sardinia displays the same pattern (26):

26 a Il caffè preso te l’ hai?
DEF coffee take.PTCP you= it= have.2SG
‘Did you have coffee?’ (Pozzomaggiore)

b Si ha comprato una bette macchina
self= have.3SG buy.PTCP a big pole car.FSG
‘He bought himself a big car.’ (Nuoro)

41.3.11 Particular uses of *a* as complementizer

As in all Sardinian dialects, Sardinian regional Italian displays a wider use of non-finite complementation together with the non-finite complementizer *a* (< AD 'to') (27a), where Italian employs finite subjunctive complementation (27a'). However, in the case of subject co-reference Sardinian regional Italian displays the bare infinitive on a par with standard Italian (27b):

27 a Mamma vuole a andare tu *ammarolla*!
Mum want.3SG to go.INF you necessarily
'You really have to go!' (Pula)

a' Mamma vuole che tu vada a tutti i costi. (It.)
mum want.3SG that you.SG go.SBJV.SG at all the costs
'Mum wants you to go at all costs.'

b Mamma vuole andare a tutti i costi. (Srd. reg. It. / It.)
mum want.3SG go.INF at all the costs
'Mum wants to go at all costs.'

The non-finite complementizer *a* also frequently introduces infinitivals in subject function (28a, b), where Italian typically employs the bare infinitive (28a', b'), including in constructions with characteristic Sardinian light verb *fare* 'make':

28 a Fa a tuffarsi? (Srd. reg. It., Pula)
do.3SG to dive.INF=REFL

a' È possibile tuffarsi? (It.)
be.3sg possible dive. INF=REFL
'Is it possible to dive?'

b Tocca a farlo il più presto possibile. (Srd. reg. It., Pula)
touch.3SG to do.INF=it DET.MSG more soon possible

b' Bisogna farlo il più presto possibile. (It.)
be.necessary.3SG do.INF=it DET.MSG more soon possible
'We have to do it as soon as possible.'

The same complementizer *a* is also found in the periphrastic construction with the verb *tornare* 'return' to express iterative aspect (29a, c) where, on a par with Sardinian dialects, the verb displays 'auxiliary-like properties when it has the iterative reading' (Jones 1993:151).

29 a Se lo torni a dire ti do uno schiaffo!
if it=return.2SG to say.INF you= give.1SG INDEF slap
'If you say that again I'll slap you!' (Srd. reg. It., Nuoro)

b Torno a dirglielo domani!
return.1SG to say.INF=3.DAT =it tomorrow
'I'm going back to tell him/her tomorrow!' (Srd. reg. It., Pula, Nuoro / It.)

c A babbo gli hanno tornato a fare la tac.
to dad him.DAT= have.3PL return.PTCP a do.INF DET.F CT scan
'Dad had a CT scan again.' (Nuoro)

d Sono tornati a farla alla Sisa la spesa!
be.3PL return.PTCP to make.INF=it to=DET Sisa DET shopping
'They came back to the Sisa supermarket to do their shopping' (Srd. reg. It., Nuoro / It.)

As noted by Jones (1993:152), 'there is a strict correlation between choice of auxiliary and the position of clitic[s]'. In particular, under the iterative reading the periphrastic construction *tornare a* + infinitive (29a, c) allows clitic climbing and displays the same transparency to perfective auxiliary choice as modal auxiliaries, as shown by the selection of auxiliary HAVE whenever the following infinitive is not an unaccusative. Under the literal movement interpretation in (29b, d), by contrast, *tornare a* does not allow clitic climbing and obligatorily selects auxiliary BE as its perfective auxiliary.

41.3.12 Extensive use of *a* as preposition

The preposition *a* shows a much wider use than in standard Italian, as witness the following illustrative examples:

30 a Io vengo a jeans e maglietta! (Srd. reg. It., Nuoro)
I come.1SG with jeans and t-shirt.FSG

a' Vengo con jeans e maglietta! (It.)
come.1SG with jeans and t-shirt

'I'll come dressed in jeans and a t-shirt!'

b Sono sempre a urli quando c' è lui!
be.1SG always with scream.MPL when there= be.3SG he (Srd. reg. It., Pozzomaggiore)

b' Sto sempre urlando quando c' è lui! (It.)
stay.1SG always shout.GERUND when there= be.3SG he

'I'm always shouting when he's around!'

c Mi ha trattato a tipo burricca!
me= have.3SG treat.PTCP at type donkey.FSG (Srd. reg. It., Pula)

c' Mi ha trattato come una puttana (It.)
me= have.3SG treat.PTCP like a whore.FSG

'He treated me like a whore!'

We usually find *a* 'to' with verbs of motion instead of standard Italian *in* 'in' or *per* 'for' (31):

31 Ha detto che partiva a continente.
have.3SG say.PTPCP that leave.PST.IPFV.3SG to continent

'He said he was leaving for Italy.' (Pula)

41.3.13 Interrogative marker *a*

In Sardinian regional Italian the Sardinian interrogative marker *a* < AUT 'or' (cf. *DES*:69 and Pittau 1972:37, 163) used to introduce a question is also attested in Sardinian regional Italian:

32 A ci vieni a *cortes?*
INT there= come.2SG to Cortes

'Are you coming [with us] to *Cortes*?' (Nuoro)

This feature is only used by uneducated speakers, for expressive or jocular purposes.

41.3.14 Constructions with deontic value

On a par with southern Italo-Romance dialects and regional southern Italian, Sardinian regional Italian displays a periphrasis with the modal verb *volere* 'want' + past participle to express deontic necessity. Lavinio (2019:219) highlights that this phenomenon is not susceptible to diastratic variation, and can even be heard among educated speakers:

33 a Si voleva sempre pregato.
REFL= want.PST.IPFV.3SG always pray.PTCP
'He always wanted to be asked.' (Pozzomaggiore)

b L' intonaco vuole fatto prima dell' inverno
DEF plaster.MSG must.3SG do.PTCP before of.DEF winter.MSG
'The plaster must be replaced before winter.' (Nuoro)

41.3.15 Light nouns used as quantifiers or intensifiers

In Sardinian regional Italian the use of light nouns as intensifiers is also widespread.[23] These nouns are often borrowed from Sardinian dialects (Lavinio 2019:211). In the Sardinian regional Italian of Nuoro, for example, the intensifier *bette* is widespread, especially in the language of the younger generations:[24]

34 Bette bravi i bambini olianesi!
big.pole.MSG clever.MPL DEF.PL child.MPL olianese.MPL
'How clever children from Oliena are!' (Nuoro)

As seen in (26b), *bette* can only occur in a prenominal position both in Sardinian and in Sardinian regional Italian. Other similar forms are also attested locally (Lavinio 2019:211). From Sassari the intensifier *umbè* is spreading in spoken Italian throughout the north of the island. This item probably reflects an agglutination of the phrase *unu betze* 'a lot'.

These nouns typically occur in [$noun_1$ preposition $noun_2$] patterns and can provide quantitative information about $noun_2$ (cf. Simone and Masini 2014:58):

35 a A Baia Chia c' era sempre una
in Baia Chia there= be.PST.IPFV.3SG always one.FSG
surra di gente.[25]
number of beatings.FSG of people
'There were always a lot of people in Baia Chia (a disco bar).' (Pula)

[25]

b Piccolino il tronco di udda!
little.DIM DEF.MSG trunk.MSG of vagina
'What a gorgeous girl!' (Pula)

c A un certo punto c' era un
at a certain.MSG point.MSG there= be.PST.IPFV.3SG a
bè di panico.
big amount.MSG of panic.MSG
'At one time there was a great panic.' (Pozzomaggiore)

This is in line with the analysis developed in Pisano et al. (2023:195) who consider Sardinian *unu*/*una* noun *de* a light noun construction.

41.4 Pragmatics

It is not possible to give here an exhaustive account of the phenomena relevant to pragmatics. One phenomenon very frequent in both Sardinian and Sardinian regional Italian is the use of antiphrasis to denote a superlative or comparative value (37). Indeed, in southern Sardinian regional Italian the adjective *piccolo/a* 'little' or *piccolino/a* 'little.DIM' is often used to express the contrary without any ironic value (see Lavinio 1982:323; 2019:213).[26] Lavinio (2019:213) however notes that an ironic value is also possible: in such cases, it may depend on other pragmatic features as intonation or textual contexts. Antiphrastic expressions are also widespread in association with other pragmatic strategies (e.g., inversion of the unmarked word order; cleft sentences; fronting):

36 Mi! A piedi è venuto!
look.IMP.2SG.SARD at foot.MPL be.3SG come.PTCP
'Look! He came on foot!' (said of someone who is actually driving a big car) (Nuoro)

Finally, antiphrastic exclamative constructions in association with the assertive marker *già* are also widespread (37):

37 a Già sei poco bono!
already be.2SG little.MSG gorgeous.MSG
'How handsome you are!' (Oristano)

b Già è poco strolico tuo padre!
already be.3SG little.MSG grumpy.MSG your.MSG father.MSG
'How grumpy your father is!' (Pula)

c Già ne aveva poca voglia!
already of.it= have.PST.IPFV.3SG little.MSG desire.FSG
'S/he did want [it]!' (Pula)

41.5 Lexis

As Loi Corvetto (1983:174) states, the effects of the Italian language on dialectal lexis have been highlighted in studies devoted to the Italianization of Italy's dialects. By contrast, studies on the influence of dialects and minority languages on the Italian lexis are generally far less common. It is not easy to establish how Sardinian varieties have affected the lexis of Sardinian regional Italian and the lack of extensive data resources available to the scientific community does not allow us to make any quantitative claims. Although previous studies are useful, it is very difficult to assess the actual frequency of both loans and calques from the Sardinian varieties in Sardinian regional Italian. It would certainly be helpful to adopt a preliminary division within Sardinian regional Italian between high and low registers. In low registers inflexional morphology is fully Italian, but lexical options are mostly Sardinian. As we saw above, for this low variety we can employ the label *italianu porcheddinu* which identifies a variety available to speakers who do not entirely control the standard language or those who use this low variety of language intentionally for various expressive purposes. Since the end of the nineteenth century, this variety has been relatively well documented. Ottone Bacaredda (1849–1921), a former mayor of Cagliari, provided one of the oldest examples of *italianu porcheddinu* (see Calaresu and

Pisano 2017:211). If we consider the following example from Bacaredda (38) from a lexical perspective, we see that some of the lexical stems are clearly Sardinian, e.g., Pula *pi^{t}ʧókku* 'boy' vs It. *ragazzo*; *préssi* 'hurry' vs It. *fretta*; *dɔnái* 'to give' vs It. *dare*; *púḍḍa* 'chicken' vs It. *gallina*.

38	Adorato	picciocco	ti	scrivo	in	tutta	presse	
	beloved.MSG	boy.MSG	you=	write.1SG	in	every.FSG	hurry.FSG	
	onde	devo	andare	a	donare	a	maggiare	
	because	must.1SG	go.INF	to	give.INF	to	eat.INF	
	a	le	pudde.					
	to	the.FPL	chicken.FSG					

'My beloved boy I'm writing to you in hurry because I have to go and feed the chickens.'

Even though Baccaredda's parodic work highlighted the problematic switching from spoken Sardinian to the strongly influenced written Italian of the illiterate, the same features can often be found even in the spoken low register of contemporary Sardinian regional Italian. Let us consider the examples in (39):

39 a	Mi	pare	che	neanche	ci	capiamo	[nell'ascensore]!
	me=	seem.3SG	that	not.even	there=	fit.1PL	in.the lift

'In my opinion we can't all fit [in this lift]!' (Nuoro)

b	Queste	arance	non	fa	a	mangiarle	ché
	these	oranges	NEG	do.3SG	to	eat.INF=them	because
	sono	burde!					
	be.3PL	wild					

'You can't eat these oranges because they are inedible!' (Pula)

As we can see in (39a) the sentence cannot clearly be understood if one is not aware of the meaning of Sardinian Nuoro *káp^{p}ɛrɛ*; Pozzomaggiore *káβɛrɛ*; Pula *káp^{p}i*(*ri*) 'to fit in' (Lat. CAPĔRE. *DES*:195) and one should also consider the influence of Srd. *párrɛrɛ* 'to seem' which may have determined the choice of the lexical stem *par-* (also present in the verb paradigm *párrɛrɛ*/*párri*(*ri*) of Sardinian dialects) instead of the forms of the Italian verb *sembrare* 'seem'. Indeed, it must be noted that, in standard Italian, the sentence in (39a) only allows the interpretation 'it seems to me we don't understand each other' because the meaning of It. *capire* is 'to understand'. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that *parere* exists in Italian with the same meaning as *sembrare* but is just less common.

In (39b) the influence of the underlying Sardinian variety is even clearer: the use of the analytic structure *fa* 'do.3SG' *a* + infinitive meaning 'to be possible' is entirely absent in standard Italian but is typical of Sardinian. Finally, the lexeme *burd-* is only Sardinian even if its morphology is clearly Italian (cf. Srd. *burd-as*). So, the vocabulary of the underlying Sardinian variety has a substantial influence on this variety of Italian which is strongly marked both from a diatopic and a diastratic perspective.

We now come to the 'high' variety of Sardinian regional Italian which does not show diastratic differentiation and is used by Sardinians of all socioeconomic strata and educational statuses. At a lexical level, some items have a distinctive local diffusion. For example, the word *postalino* 'city bus' is only general in Nuoro (and in the villages around the provincial capital of Barbagia) and is due to contact with Sardinian. The Sardinian term *pɔstálɛ* means an 'intercity bus' which was originally used to carry mail as well. The word *pɔstalínu* is formed by the lexeme *postal-* followed by the morpheme *-in-* which usually expresses a diminutive value. The use of this evaluative suffix is strictly linked to the size of the Nuoro city buses, which are smaller than the suburban ones.

Some items do not appear to be the result of contact with Sardinian varieties. The term *canadese* 'track suit' which is widespread in southern, central, and in some areas of northern Sardinia is not due to the contact with Sardinian, but to peculiar historical events. People from Cagliari used to say that the track suits were first worn by a group of Canadian soldiers stationed in Cagliari after World War II. The extensive diffusion of words from northern or even central and southern Italian used by the younger generations can explain items such as *togo* 'nice, trendy' or *pivello/a* 'boy-/girlfriend', *loffio/a* 'unpleasant' (widespread, especially in the last twenty years, throughout Sardinia; cf. Colella and Blasco Ferrer 2017:518).

Loi Corvetto (1983:178, 181–187; 1995:115; 1998:17) points out that the interaction between standard Italian and Sardinian can affect the selection of many lexical types in Sardinian regional Italian.[27] When a term found in standard Italian is also attested in Sardinian and is therefore favoured, the interference is of a positive kind. Interference phenomena however can occur in a negative sense as well, when a lexical type from standard Italian also attested in

Sardinian is avoided in favour of another one which is not found in Sardinian. As seen in (39a), for example, *parere* 'seem' is favoured by the phonetic resemblance to Srd. *párrɛrɛ* / *párri*(*ri*) and is more used than the Italian synonym *sembrare*. On the other hand, *anguria* 'watermelon' (also widespread in northern Italy) is used instead of *cocomero* because the latter item is phonetically closer to Nuoro *kukúmɛnɛ* or Pula *kuɣúmini* both meaning 'cucumber.MSG' (Loi Corvetto 1983:185).[28] In this regard, it is noteworthy that It. *pascere* 'to graze' (which may be associated with a high register in standard Italian) is frequently avoided because of the phonetic resemblance to Nuoro (and northern Sardinian) *páskɛrɛ* / Pula (and southern Sardinian) *páʃʃi*(*ri*), the synonym *pascolare* being preferred.

The formal resemblance between Sardinian and Italian lexemes can occasionally promote semantic broadening or narrowing of the Italian term: as we see in (40) It. *invitare* 'invite' (Loi Corvetto 1983:191) takes on the meaning 'offer something to eat or drink' because of the formal similarity with Nuoro (and northern Sardinian) *kumbiðárɛ* / Pula (and Southern Sardinian) *kumbiðái* 'offer something to eat or drink':

40 a	Allora	che	cosa	vi	invito?
	so	what	thing.FSG	you.PL=	offer.1SG
	'What can I offer to you to drink or eat?' (Nuoro)				
b	Questo	te	lo	invito	io.
	this.M.SG	you=	it=	offer.1SG	I
	'This [ice-cream] is on me!' (Pozzomaggiore)				

The Sardinian regional Italian expression *brutta voglia* (Piredda 2017:501) only has the specialized meaning 'queasiness' (but in standard Italian means 'bad desire') on account of the Sardinian form *gána mála* 'queasiness' (found in Nuoro, Pula, and northern and southern Sardinian).

In Sardinian regional Italian (cf. Loi Corvetto 1983:198) *meschino/a* (often the Sardinian lexical stem *mischin-* is preferred) mostly has the meaning 'struck by misfortune', while in standard Italian the term has a typically negative meaning, namely, 'mean' or 'insidious'. For semantic broadening, consider (41):

41 a Lo vedi quel ragazzo lì che è a voci?
him= see.2SG that.MSG boy there REL be.3SG at screams
'Can't you see the boy screaming over there?' (Nuoro)

b Mi stai stressando tutta l' ora!
me= stay.2SG stress.GER all.FSG the time.FSG
'You are stressing me all the time!' (Pula)[29]

[29]

The item *voci* 'screams' (41a) can be considered a semantic calque from the central Sardinian *bɔ́kɛ* 'voice' but also 'scream'. In standard Italian the item *voce* means 'voice', but not 'scream'. The term *ora* in Sardinian regional Italian has also the meaning of 'time period' as in Sardinian *ɔ́ra* which means 'hour' and 'time period'.

Finally, there are dialectalisms which are often related to the technical terminology of cooking and baking or to local customs: *se(b)ada* 'sweet ravioli filled with fresh cheese and lemon zest, deep-fried and drizzled with honey'; *casadina*—but the calque *formaggella* can be heard as well—'dessert made with fresh cheese and dried sultanas' or 'savoury flatbread with fresh cheese and mint';[30] *pardula* 'dessert made with fresh ricotta and saffron'; *spianata* 'semolina flatbread'; *leppa* 'switchblade knife'; *barracello* 'armed Sardinian rural guard'. The Sardinian items are mostly integrated into the morphological system of Italian in this case too.

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[1] This chapter is the result of a joint effort. However, Molinu is responsible for §§41.1–2, Pisano for §§41.3–5.

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If not otherwise specified, the data discussed have been collected (since the 1980s) using the participant observation method. For the transcription of Sardinian diatopic varieties, the authors use a simplified phonetic notation.

[2] Roughly, 'interference-affected Italian'. This is typically used by people who are not fluent in Italian and usually speak Sardinian in every informal situation. The label *italiano interferito* may be closely related to the concept of *italiano popolare* 'popular Italian' (see De Mauro 1970b; Cortelazzo 1972) which has long been considered quite 'unitary' from a linguistic point of view, especially since the studies dealing with this linguistic variety were based on written sources. In recent decades scholars have pointed out how strong the

interference of dialects in these local varieties of Italian can be, and for this reason the perception *of italiano popolare* as a unitary linguistic variety has significantly decreased (see Berruto 1983; 1987a; Telmon 1993; 1994; Krefeld 2016:267). See also Chapter 37.

[3] The item *porcheddinu/proceddinu* lit. 'pigletish' is used in the phrase *italianu porcheddinu/proceddinu* for the 'incorrect Italian of people who usually speak Sardinian'. See Calaresu and Pisano (2017:211–213) and Ingrassia and Blasco Ferrer (2009:158).

[4] For the situation of written Italian in Sardinia see Loi Corvetto (1998) and Calaresu and Pisano (2017:208–214).

[5] For an overall description of orality and literacy in Sardinia in the last three centuries see Calaresu and Pisano (2017:212).

[6] See also Lavinio (2017:203n9 and n10), which offers an extensive and up-to-date bibliography on the subject and the surveys by Cappai Cadeddu (2002); Oppo (2007); or Lavinio and Lanero (2008).

[7] The occurrence of some phenomena in non-Sardinian language areas (Sassarese, Gallurese, Catalan) should probably be explained, according to Loi Corvetto (1983), by the dominance of the Sardinian regional Italian spoken in the rest of the island.

[8] As Lavinio (1975) points out, one can also find, in writing, hypercorrect forms with degemination of long consonants.

[9] Contini (1987:59) states that, in general, Sardinians do not distinguish, when speaking Italian, between geminate and non-geminate consonants especially for voiceless intervocalic consonants. The latter are always realized as long and consequently there is a neutralization between *papa* 'pope' and *pappa* 'porridge', *bruto* 'brute' and *brutto* 'ugly', etc. Loi Corvetto (1983:83) observes that consonant-lengthening is absent in the Italian spoken in the Gallurese area. She also holds that in Sassarese Italian the rule of consonant-lengthening applies to stops, but is inactive when consonants are [+continuant] (Loi Corvetto 1983:88).

[10] For this reason, Mura and Virdis (2015:74) prefer to transcribe the forms phonetically as follows:

[aᵖᵖliᵏˈᵏaːɾɛ] /applikare/ *applicare* 'to apply',

[aᵗᵗaᵏˈᵏaˑttɔ] /attakˈkato/ *attaccato* 'attached'.

[11] Mura and Virdis (2015:55) report that palatal consonants /ʎ, ɲ, ʧ, ʤ, ʃ/ also cause raising of the low-mid vowels /ɛ, ɔ/.

[12] Tabarchino is a Ligurian variety spoken in the towns of Carloforte and Calasetta, in the south-west of the island.

[13] Examples are taken from Canepari (1999:473).

[14] Here we provide some examples of vowel harmony in Sardinian (see Contini 1987:440; Mura and Virdis 2015:55; Molinu 2017):

i.	[lepːeˈreɖːu] < /lɛpɛˈrɛɖːu/	vs	[lɛpːɛˈrɛɖːɔzɔ] < /lɛpɛˈrɛɖːɔs/
	leveret.MSG		leveret.MPL
	'leveret'		'leverets'
ii.	[minoˈreɖːu] < /minɔˈrɛɖːu/	vs	[minɔˈrɛɖːa] < /minɔˈrɛɖːa/
	very little.MSG		very little.FSG
	'very little'		'very little'

[15] Vowel harmony and hiatus are not present in the Gallurese area (Loi Corvetto 2011).

[16] Vocatives are often preceded by the particle *o*, as in Sardinian.

[17] All the examples discussed in this paragraph are taken from Loi Corvetto (1983:170).

[18] For a discussion of auxiliary selection, see §41.3.10.

[19] As observed in Jones (2013) and Cruschina (2021b), in the context of answers to *wh*-questions as in (16c) 'the focus merely conveys new information and no focal alternatives are active' (Cruschina 2021b:11).

[20] As a matter of fact, Sardinian displays a large degree of diatopic variation with regard to terms indicating 'mattress' and 'stench', e.g., Nuoro puðiɔ́rɛ 'stench.MSG'; puðéssiɔ́rɛ 'stench.MSG', but Nuoro abbɛntáða 'stench.FSG' and Pula puðɛʃʃɔ́ri 'stench.MSG'; Nuoro, Pula mantaláffu 'mattress.MSG', but Fonni banítta 'mattress.FSG'; Buddusò tramátta 'mattress.FSG'. Cf. *DES*:513, 755 and Berria 2023:662).

[21] As Lavinio (2019:217) states, this can also occur with verbs such as *pensare* 'to think' and *immaginare* 'to imagine'.

[22] This feature is also attested in Gramsci's letters (see Carlucci 2013:26):

(i)	mi	ho	fatto	prender	la	misura
	me=	have.1SG	make.PTCP	take.INF	DEF.FSG	measure.FSG

'I was measured' [for an overcoat by a tailor]'

[23] Light nouns are nominal elements which have undergone a reduction of referential force and acquired a functional value (cf. Simone and Masini 2014:57).

[24] Probably from *bɛ́ttɛ* 'big weight-moving pole.MSG' in other central Sardinian varieties (*DES*:164 and Berria 2023:162).

[25] The item *surra* is probably a loan from Catalan or Spanish (see *DES*:722) and originally means 'amount of beatings'. Lavinio (2019:211) states that Srd. *surra* is frequently replaced by Srd. reg. It. *sussa* (see *DES*:733) with the same meaning in the area of Sulcis (Carbonia and Iglesias) and in Cagliari.

[26] This structure is a calque of southern Srd. *pitticcu/a* + definite article + noun (Pula *pittíkka ssa bbáska* 'it is very hot' but lit. 'little the heat!').

[27] For a summary of lexical features of Sardinian regional Italian see also Casula (1995:116).

[28] For the spread of Sardinian forms, see (*DES*: 201) and Berria (2023:134).

[29] For the use of the progressive constructions see examples in (26).

[30] Srd. reg. It. *formaggella* can be considered a case of pattern replication (cf. Srd. *casu* 'cheese.MSG' + *-ina* DIM.FSG → *casadina* and Srd. reg. It. *formaggio* 'cheese.MSG' + *-ella* DIM.FSG → *formaggella*$_{N}$).

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AIS Jaberg and Jud (1928–1940)

ASIt *Atlante Sintattico d'Italia* < https://asit.maldura.unipd.it/>

CFI *Cuadernos de filología italiana*

CFIM *Contributi di filologia dell'Italia mediana*

DECat Coromines, J. (1980–1991)

DES Wagner (2008)

GGIC Renzi, Salvi, and Cardinaletti (1988–1995)

GLI Schwarze (2009)

GRADIT De Mauro (2007c)

ID *L'Italia dialettale*

IJL *Italian Journal of Linguistics*

IJM *International Journal of Multilingualism*

IJSL *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*

ILD *Italiano LinguaDue*

JHP *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*

JIPA *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*

JP *Journal of Pragmatics*

JL *Journal of Linguistics*

JS *Journal of Semantics*

LEI Pfister (1979–)

LEI Germ. Morlicchio (2015–2018)

LEI Or. Schweickard (2023)

LF *Linguistica e filologia*

LIP De Mauro et al. (1993)

LI *Linguistic Inquiry*

LL *Lingue e linguaggio*

LN *Lingua nostra*

LR *The Linguistic Review*

LS *Lingua e stile*

MR *Medioevo romanzo*

NLLT *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*

NLS *Natural Language Semantics*

OVI *Opera del vocabolario italiano* < http://www.ovi.cnr.it>

QLASI *Quaderni di lavoro Atlante sintattico dell'Italia*

RF *Romanische Forschungen*

RGG *Rivista di grammatica generativa*

RID *Rivista italiana di dialettologia*

RP *Romance Philology*

RR *Revue romane*

RRL *Revue roumaine de linguistique*

SFI *Studi di filologia italiana*

SGI *Studi di grammatica italiana*

SILTA *Studi italiani di linguistica teorica e applicata*

SIL *Studies in Language*

SL *Studia Linguistica*

SLI *Studi linguistici italiani*

SPE Chomsky and Halle (1968)

TLIO *Tesoro della lingua italiana delle origini*

TPS *Transactions of the Philological Society*

VR *Vox Romanica*

WS *Word Structure*

ZRP *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*

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Index

abbreviations 296

Abels, K. 573

Abney, S. 415

aboutness 228, 475–477, 521, 537–539, 543

Acarisio, A. 125

Accademia dei Georgofili 88

Accademia della Crusca 66*f.*, 72, 76, 84*f.*, 89, 106, 110, 126, 142, 299, 604, 654

Accademia Fiorentina 105*f.*, 125

accents (written) 284*f.*

-accio 33, 406*f.*

accusative and infinitive 272

Achillini, G. F. 103, 125

Acquaviva, P. 47, 202, 353, 387, 487, 495*f.*, 554, 567, 570, 851

active-stative alignment 221*f.*, 224, 445*f.*, 449*f.*

Adams, J. 154, 160, 194

address forms 204, 237–263, 276, 635, 698, 760, 764, 793, 797, 839, 856,

- polite address forms 116, 194, 204, 237–240, 247, 249, 252*f.*, 260, 262*f.*, 296, 483, 698, 760, 764, 797, 839, 856

adjective positions 234*f.*

adstratum 578, 541, 807

adverb positions 464, 473

adverbial clauses 490, 495*f.*, 820

adverbial suffixation *see* *-mente*

adversative 55, 798

affricates, affrication 24, 28*f.*, 163–168, 184, 286*f.*, 289, 302, 304*f.*, 309, 331*f.*, 334, 339*f.*, 694, 795, 811, 833, 855, 872*f.*

Afribo, A. 81

Agius, D. 717

Agostiniani, L. 836

agreement

past participles 21, 38, 205, 224–230, 444*f.*, 450*f.*, 493, 496, 799

verb with subject 38, 228–231, 473, 528, 851

Aguilar-Guevera, A. 550

Aikhenvald, A. 366, 368

-aio 10*f.*, 22, 76, 384, 386

Albanian 612, 661, 713

Albanians 772, 774, 786

Albano Leoni, F. 664, 667

Alberti, L. B. 64, 95, 98, 124

Albonico, S. 146

Alessandrini, S. 779

Alexopoulou, T. 418

Alfabetin 748*f.*

Alfieri, G. 717, 759, 864

Alfonzetti, G. 659

Alghero 743, 871, 873

Alinei, M. 252

Alisova, T. 130, 274

Alkire, T. 361

allegro speech 835*f.*, 632–634, 648

Allières, J. 355, 363
Allodoli, E. 128
allomorphy 180–189, 199–201
allophones, allophony 341*f.*
alphabet 282–293
altri 428, 816
altrui 357, 428*f.*
Alunno, F. 125
Álvares, M. 127
Amaseo, R. 96
Amenta, L. 75, 565, 602, 660, 794, 853, 859
Ammon, U. 595*f.*, 613, 687, 699
Amoruso, C. 662, 780
analogy 46, 153, 173*f.*, 181–183, 186, 189, 191, 193*f.*, 200, 202, 269, 316, 339, 353, 358, 364, 361*f.*, 368, 397, 796
anaphonesis 12, 14, 20, 22, 157*f.*
anaptyxis 796, 858
Anastaseni, A. 302
andare 188, 269*f.*, 371, 766
AnderBois, S. 574
Andersen, H. 723
Anderson, S. 204, 424
Andorno, C. 548, 771, 785*f.*
Andreoni, G. 729
Andriani, L. 21
Anglicisms 76, 116, 277, 581, 584, 586, 603, 605, 610, 693, 726, 759–761

animacy 194, 845–847, 849, 851, 880
Annotazione (or *Declaratoria*) *pistoiese* 11, 61
anthroponyms 233, 394, 748
Antinucci, F. 130
antipassive 223, 854
antiphrasis 887
Antonelli, G. 598, 637*f.*, 645, 647*f.*, 653, 805, 809
Antonini, A. 138, 147
Antonini, F. 694
Antonio da Tempo 63
anzi 514–517
aoristic drift 45, 566*f.*, 600, 813, 840
Aosta 6, 613, 624*f.*, 627, 758
aphaeresis 161, 317*f.*, 832, 836
apostrophe 293–295, 794, 796
Appendix Probi 154, 160*f.*, 170*f.*
approximants *see* glides
approximation 404, 406, 411, 413*f.*
Aprea, F. 65, 269
Aprile, M. 581, 748
Arabic 582–585, 628, 661, 709, 715*f.*, 735*f.*, 749–751, 773*f.*, 786*f.*
Aragonese, Aragon 64, 643
Aramaic 749
Arbëresh 624
Arcamone, G. 745
Arcangeli, M. 88
archaisms 102–104, 108*f.*, 126, 278

Archivio glottologico italiano 74, 114
Arcodia, G. 372, 628
Ardinghelli, M. A. 146
area mediana, *area perimediana* 829–842, 848–852
Aresi, P. 68
Arezzo 836, 841, 842, 846
Arezzo, C. M. 103
Ariosto, L. 65*f.*, 99*f.*, 107, 137, 717
Arnauld, A. 127
-aro 22, 76, 384, 726, 865
articles
definite 14, 26, 29, 36, 95, 232*f.*, 255, 260, 293, 333, 346, 355–357, 424–429, 440–442, 547–552, 554, 661, 707, 730, 768, 812, 832, 842*f.*, 879*f.*
distribution of 416–421
indefinite 231*f.*, 293, 333, 547*f.*, 553, 661, 695, 815
partitive 26*f.*, 205, 551*f.*, 815, 830
Artusi, P. 144
Ascoli, G. I. 112–114
Aski, J. 193
Aslanov, C. 714
Asor Rosa, A. 82
aspect 179, 359, 366, 457, 472, 557, 563–565, 884
aspiration 727, 730, 859
Assenza, E. 742
assertive patterns 324–327
assimilation 24, 29, 170–171, 175*f.*, 190, 316, 318, 331, 336, 339, 364, 369, 727, 763, 830, 834, 855

asterisk 298
Atlante lessicale toscano 76
attenuation 243, 403*f.*, 407*f.*, 410, 411, 413
attrition 722–725, 727–729
Audring, J. 404
Auer, P. 596, 610*f.*
augmentation 404–406
Ausbau 616, 755
Austin, J. 502
Australia, Italian in Australia 720*f.*, 725, 729*f.*, 759
autosegmental phonology 34*f.*, 347
Aux-to-Comp 209, 494, 500
auxiliaries 179, 204*f.*, 247, 270*f.*, 363, 370*f.*, 444, 455, 464, 467, 472–474, 480*f.*, 484, 525, 557, 579, 591, 870, 882,
    auxiliary selection 21, 51, 221–224, 446–451, 492*f.*, 661, 727, 798, 810, 830, 883–885
Avalle, d'A. 736
Avesani, C. 328, 543, 545
Avolio, F. 835, 853, 857, 860, 862
Baccaredda, O. 888
Baccini, I. 140, 144
Bach, S. 129
backformation 397
Backus, A. 756
Badin, P. 301, 305
Bafile, L. 301, 330, 340
Baglioni, D. 708, 711*f.*, 714*f.*, 750
Bagna, C. 731, 771, 786

Balboni, L. A. 712
Baldelli, I. 63, 760, 765
Baldi, B. 407, 552, 843
Baldinger, K 576
Baldo, G. 772, 776*f.*, 779
Ballarè, S. 567, 655, 657*f.*, 660
Bandello, M. 65, 103
Banfi, E. 712, 715*f.*, 771, 774
Bangladeshi community 771
bankers, banking 13, 61*f.*, 85
Barbapiccola, G. E. 146
Barbarisi, G. 70
Barbato, M. 61, 154, 158, 709, 743*f.*, 750
Baretti, G. 68*f.*, 139
Barni, M. 758, 771, 786*f.*
Barone, M. 141
Baroni, M. 340, 373, 381, 421
Bartoli, D. 67
Bartoli, M. 118
Basaldella, D. 717
basic lexicon 591
Basilicata 90, 856, 858, 861
Bassetti, P. 721
Battaglia, S. 128
Battiferri Ammannati, L. 146
Battisti, C. 365, 369
Bauer, L. 400

Bauer, R. 613

Bazzanella, C. 509–516, 643*f.*, 673, 676

Beccaria, C. 69

Beccaria, G. 87*f.*, 92, 277, 669, 744, 762

Beck-Busse, G. 139

Belardinelli, G. 277

Belletti, A. 43, 444*f.*, 454, 466, 472, 478, 550

Belli, G. 71, 111*f.*

Belloni, G. 708

Bembo, P. 16, 63, 65*f.*, 82–85, 98–109, 124–127, 135*f.*, 596, 636, 753*f.*, 792

Bencirechi, Abbé 138*f.*

Bendidio, N. 100

Benedetti, M. 35*f.*

Benešová, E. 521

Beni, P. 107

Bentley, D. 21, 227, 449, 525, 527, 529, 531, 534

Benvenuto da Imola 63

Beolco, A. 103

Berengo, M. 89

Bernini, G. 517, 523, 527, 567, 601, 720, 771, 774

Berra, C. 98, 101

Berretta, M. 523, 528–532, 557, 562, 642

Berruto, G. 75, 115*f.*, 123, 150, 273*f.*, 277*f.*, 282, 300, 330, 528*f.*, 544, 595–598, 601*f.*, 604, 606, 614, 616*f.*, 622, 627, 630–632, 636–638, 645, 650–653, 657, 660, 679, 681, 684, 686, 690–694, 723, 768*f.*, 780, 789–792, 797–799, 801, 803*f.*, 809, 817, 853

Bertinetto, P. M. 158, 302, 319, 322*f.*, 330, 343, 346, 350, 510, 557, 561*f.*, 564–567, 600–602, 657, 766, 811*f.*, 832–835, 840*f.*, 882

Bertini Malgarini, P. 144

Bertini, F. 150

Bertuccelli Papi, M. 205, 496

Bettoni, C. 722–724, 729*f.*

Bianchi, P. 862

Bianchi, V. 527*f.*, 537–541, 543, 545*f.*, 844*f.*

Bianconi, S. 17, 628*f.*, 681, 684, 694

Biblioteca Oltremontana 88

bidialectalism 617, 620*f.*, 626, 628

bilingualism 579, 614*f.*, 619*f.*, 723*f.*, 729, 737, 745–747, 754, 758–760, 786–788, 828, 870

Biliottti, F. 659, 831

Binazzi, N. 660, 665

Biondelli, B. 112*f.*

Bisetto, A. 372–374, 395, 765

Blackwood, R. 718

Blakemore, D. 510

bleaching 270, 512, 514

blending 397, 766

Blommaert, J. 777

Boario, A. 662

Boccaccio, G. 16, 63, 65–67, 81–83, 96, 98–100, 102, 104–106, 108, 111, 124, 126, 135–137, 596, 636, 748, 753, 809

Boccardo, G. 92

Bocci, G. 522, 533*f.*, 537, 539–546

Boeddu, D. 880

Boggione, V. 669*f.*
Bolinger, D. 429
Bolognesi, R. 871*f.*
Bombi, R. 603, 720*f.*, 726, 732, 762, 766
Bonan, C. 542, 767
Bondi de Iosef 710, 742
Bonfante, G. 362
Bonghi, M. 139
Bonomi, I. 68, 86, 120, 780
Bonorva 883
Borgese, G. A. 251*f.*
Borrelli, D. 176, 338
Borsieri, P. 71
Bosch, A. 344
Bošković, Ž. 231
Bossong, G. 45, 845
Bottai, G. 128
Bouhours, D. 68, 86
Bourhis, R. Y. 732
Bozzola, S. 67, 795, 801
Brambilla Ageno, F. 205, 737
Branca, V. 79–82
Brancati, G. 100
Brandi, L. 37*f.*
Bravo, A. 144*f.*
Brazil 721, 731
Breitbarth, A. 571

Brentano, F. C. 520, 528
Breschi, G. 96
Breve di Montieri 12
Brianti, G. 766
Brincat, J. 716*f.*
Broglio, E. 72*f.*, 74, 76, 113*f.*
Brown, J. 596, 714
Brown, P. 502*f.*
Brucale, L. 404
Brugè, L. 422*f.*
Brugnolo, F. 738
Brunet, J. 764
Brunetti, L. 522, 543
Bruni, F. 653, 706, 711, 713, 732, 791*f.*, 804, 809*f.*, 831
Bruni, L. 737
Bruto, G. M. 137
Bühler, K. 237
Buommatttei (*or* Buonmattei), B. 67, 122, 126
bureaucratic language 34, 115, 248, 298, 429, 603, 711, 717, 790, 793, 801, 803, 862
Burgio, E. 740
Burkinabé 776*f.*, 779
Buroni, E. 68, 86
Burzio, L. 164, 447, 449, 474, 476, 492, 500
bushes 503–505
Butler, J. 403
Byzantine Empire 707, 747

Byzantine Greek 582, 747*f.*

Caffi, C. 501, 503–508, 518

Cagliari 876, 888*f.*

Calabrese, A. 546

Calabrò, L. 301

Calamai, S. 20, 157*f.*, 314, 601, 658*f.*, 831–836

Calaresu, E. 870, 882, 888

Calmeta (Vincenzo Colli) 65, 101

calques 91, 276, 372, 374, 377, 387, 409, 584*f.*, 699*f.*, 712, 714, 722, 726, 736, 756, 763, 765*f.*, 857, 859, 864, 888, 890

Camboni, M. C. 96, 99

Camilleri, A. 117, 866

Camilli, A. 300, 316, 841

Campania 7*f.*, 854, 856, 858, 861, 867

Campidanese 624, 871*f.*, 876

Campisi, E. 668

Canada 720*f.*, 725, 728*f.*, 759

Canagarajah, S. 785

Canalis, S. 158, 170, 343–345

Cancellier, A. 731

Canepari, L. 300, 302, 305, 318, 330, 601, 657, 812, 832*f.*, 835, 841, 872, 874*f.*, 877

Canobbio, S. 635

Capatti, A. 144

capital letters 295*f.*

Cappai, B. 134, 143, 149

Cappellaro, C. 194, 837

Capponi, G. 73, 75, 114
Cappuccini, G. 128
Capretto, P. 97
Caracausi, G. 750
Cardinaletti, A. 16, 37, 47, 50, 194, 205*f.*, 421, 427, 429, 438, 478, 525, 541, 550, 552, 602, 606, 759
Cardona, G. 87
Carella, G. 511, 543
Carena, G. 72, 576
Caria, M. 144
Carli. G. 87
Carlier, A. 551*f.*
Carlino, M. 125
Carlson, G. 549
Carlucci, A. 277, 759, 763, 765
Carolingian Empire 744
Carosella, M. 858
Cârstea-Romaşcanu, M. 503
cartographic approach 472, 520, 522, 533, 535, 543, 546
Caruana, S. 717
Casadei, F. 592, 670*f.*
Casalegno, G. 669
Casapullo, R. 78–80
Casati Law 139
case 194*f.*, 199*f.*, 446*f.*, 490, 492, 609, 837*f.*
Cassuto, U. 749
Castellani Pollidori, O. 125

Castellani, A. 12*f.*, 22, 63*f.*, 74, 116, 132, 157, 170, 276*f.*, 575, 636, 709, 738*f.*, 745, 747, 764

Castelvetro, L. 65, 101

Castenetto, G. 604

Castiglione, B. 64, 99, 101*f.*, 105, 107–109, 866

Castiglione, M. 75, 602

Castilian 743*f.*, 757, 850

Catalan 6, 49, 271, 583, 710, 737, 743*f.*, 757, 871, 873

categorical judgements 520

Catelli Papi, G. 142

Catholic Church, Catholic culture 67, 108, 621

Cattaneo, C. 74

causatives, causative structures 52, 381*f.*, 391–393, 396, 490*f.*

Cavalcanti, B. 108

Cavalcanti, G. 62

Cavazzutti, S. 141*f.*

Cavirani, E. 161

Cavour, C. 758

Cecchinato, A. 812

Cella, R. 60, 79, 120, 739, 758

Cennamo, M. 523,

Cerruti, M. 276, 300, 598*f.*, 602*f.*, 606, 614, 616, 622, 650, 655, 657*f.*, 696, 769, 808, 823

Cesano, G. 105

Cesari, A. 70*f.*, 142

Cesarotti, M. 68*f.*, 110*f.*, 114, 116

Chafe, W. 520*f.*, 539

Chambers, J. 604, 617

Chapallaz, M. 300, 326
Charlemagne Sprachbund 42
Charrière, E. 711
Chaucer, G. 82, 266*f.*
che polivalente 2, 599, 644, 646, 799*f.*, 820
Cherubini, F. 71, 111
Chiabrera, G. 68
Chiamenti, M. 738
Chierchia, G. 164, 176, 338, 417, 547, 549–552, 556, 570*f.*
Chiesa, M. 117
Chieti 867
Chinese (language, community) 417, 430, 585, 661, 771*f.*, 774, 786*f.*
Chini, M. 628, 661, 771, 776, 780, 783–785
Chios 707*f.*, 711, 713
Chomsky, N. 123, 130*f.*, 334, 475*f.*, 487
ci 14, 192*f.*, 266, 293*f.*, 529, 600*f.*, 797, 818, 821
ciao 76, 263, 586, 635
Cicchetti, A. 79*f.*
Ciconte, F. 21, 227, 525, 529
Cignetti, L. 244, 317, 689
Cigni, F. 740
Cimmino, D. 642
Cini, M. 602
Cinonio 67, 126*f.*
Cinque, G. 118, 206, 235, 415, 423, 429*f.*, 431, 434, 444, 456, 460, 462, 464–467, 473, 498, 500, 517, 524, 529, 533*f.*, 542, 544, 569, 823, 878

Cirese, A. M. 865

Clackson, J. 154, 172

clause 204, 209, 214, 216, 238, 254, 327, 350, 415, 444, 452, 458, 464, 471–500, 526, 533*f.*, 541, 562*f.*, 820

Clédat, L. 358, 362, 364, 369

clefts, clefting 506, 528, 530–533, 599, 605, 640, 646, 767*f.*, 817, 822, 887

Clements, G. 336

climbing 205, 492, 818, 828, 884*f.*,

- clitic left or right dislocation 43, 210, 217, 523*f.*, 534*f.*, 537, 543*f.*, 800
- enclisis, enclitics 14, 21, 175, 204*f.*, 211*f.*, 349, 365, 482*f.*, 828
- forms 51, 297, 437*f.*, 474, 482*f.*, 599, 797, 813
- mesoclisis 370
- object pronouns 36, 38, 224*f.*, 247, 293, 451, 453, 490, 648, 764
- position 205, 211*f.*, 493, 797
- proclisis, proclitics 30, 204, 211–213, 225, 473, 483, 493, 828
- resumption 43, 209, 524, 535, 817, 845
- subject pronouns 38, 72, 249, 806, 809, 817, 828, 830

clipping 177, 394, 587

clitic, clitics 30*f.*, 47*f.*, 192–194, 491, 601, 659

Clivio, G. 728

clusters (of consonants) 174*f.*, 177*f.*, 314*f.*, 347, 660, 765, 796, 858

Cocchi, G. 21

cocoliche 723, 725, 731, 757

code-switching 282, 705, 714*f.*, 748, 771*f.*, 779–785, 788

codesto 34*f.*, 421–423, 839

Colasanti, V. 668

Cole, J. 335

Coletti, V. 62*f.*, 71, 82*f.*, 86, 93, 265, 390

collective meaning 47, 202, 354, 386, 407

Colombo, A. 131

Colucci, M. 720

Coluccia, R. 62, 68, 744

Cominetti, F. 507*f.*

comment 328, 521*f.*, 526*f.*, 536, 546

commerce 18, 79, 84, 87, 92, 268, 707, 713, 718, 742, 751

Compagna Perrone Capano 743

Comparative Philology, comparative method 112, 128

comparatives 45, 573, 887

complementizers, complementation 8, 221, 273, 415, 482*f.*, 486*f.*, 494, 496, 498, 533*f.*, 599, 659, 800, 820–823, 826, 883*f.*, 808

complex clauses 483–499

compounding, compounds 321, 372–380, 387, 397, 590, 761–763, 765*f.*

Comrie, B. 445, 717

conditional 49, 205, 271, 363, 483, 488, 496, 502, 504, 659–661, 742, 799,

  morphology 26, 48*f.*, 161*f.*, 179, 279, 363*f.*, 359, 488, 563, 730, 742

Condoravdi, C. 566

conjugation class 31*f.*, 173*f.*, 184, 188–192, 367*f.*, 383, 728, 761

connectives, connectors 316, 512, 642, 798–800

Consales, L. 205

conservatism 665, 700

consonants 162–171,

  length, lengthening 24, 154, 169, 176, 181*f.*, 184, 292, 338*f.*, 358, 365, 379, 602, 727, 853, 871*f.*

spelling 286–293, 301*f.*, 304–313, 331–340
contact 41*f.*, 260, 272, 275–277, 423, 577*f.*, 582, 585, 587, 620*f.*, 625, 661, 682, 700, 707–710, 712, 714, 717, 718, 722–728, 731, 735–770, 775, 791, 807–810, 817*f.*, 825, 827*f.*, 877, 889
Conte, M.-E. 507
contempt 406*f.*
Contini, G. 749
Contini, M. 872, 873, 877
continuation patterns 326*f.*
Conto navale pisano 10*f.*, 61, 77
contoids 304, 316
control 467, 489*f.*, 492*f.*, 495–497
conversational styles 672–676
conversion 357, 381, 388, 392*f.*, 394–396, 589,
adjectival 395
adverbial 396
nominal 394*f.*
verbal 395*f.*
coordination 37, 45, 192, 420, 438, 484*f.*, 635, 768*f.*
Coppino, R., Coppino Law 139
Corbett, G. 849–851
Cordin, P. 37*f.*, 56, 424, 814
Corfu 716
Corgialegno, S. 140
Corner, P. 78
Coronedi Berti, C. 141
corpora 538, 576, 590, 592, 650–654, 657, 659–661, 667
Corsica 61, 717*f.*, 829

Corso, R. 125, 136
Cortelazzo, M.
Cortesi, P. 98
Corticelli, S. 69, 127, 129
Coseriu, E. 632, 653, 808
Cosi, P. 667
Costabile, N. 130
Costantini, F. 732
count nouns 26, 231, 416–419, 552*f.*, 842
counterfactuals 49, 496, 507, 573*f.*, 813
Coupland, N. 597
courtly language 99, 101*f.*, 104
courtly theory *see* *teoria cortigiana*
Coutsougera, P. 169
Cox, V. 136, 145
Creissels, D. 360, 369, 525
Cremona, J. 18, 712
creoles, creolization 627, 714, 723, 776
Cresti, A. 39
Cresti, E. 328, 521*f.*, 642, 654, 656
Crete 707, 710, 714
Crisma, P. 417, 440, 554
Croatia 628*f.*, 679
Croatian 629, 713*f.*, 773
Crocco Galèas, G. 372, 391
Crocco, C. 528, 543, 598, 601, 604, 650, 657, 823, 832
Croce, B. 75, 117*f.*, 119, 128

Crusades 707*f.*, 714, 717, 741, 749

Cruschina, S. 21, 521*f.*, 525, 527–529, 537, 540–543, 545*f.*, 817, 844*f.*, 851, 859, 878

Crystal, D. 755, 757

Cser, A. 163, 172

cumulative exponence 351, 357

Cúneo, P. 411

Cuomo, L. 749

Cyprus 707, 714

D'Achille, P. 61, 67, 75*f.*, 92, 165*f.*, 168, 177, 195, 201, 259, 281, 293, 351*f.*, 376*f.*, 387, 391, 397, 530, 532*f.*, 578, 586, 598, 605, 660, 790, 794, 796*f.*, 799–801, 804, 830, 832–835, 837, 841*f.*, 847, 852*f.*, 857, 861

D'Addio, W. 507

D'Alberti di Villanova, F. 69

D'Alessio, G. B. 709

D'Angelo, V. 361

D'Anna, L. 715

D'Annunzio, G. 860

D'Onghia, L. 742

D'Ovidio, F. 24, 132, 358, 362

Da Barberino, A. 793

Da Ponte, L. 68, 85*f.*

Da Venafro, S. 103

Dąbkowski, M. 574

Dahl, Ö. 41*f.*, 566

Dal Negro, S. 613, 617, 621, 624*f.*, 627

Dalla Vecchia, A. 145

Dante 10, 15*f.*, 62*f.*, 65*f.*, 78*f.*, 81–83, 95*f.*, 98–106, 109–111, 124–126, 135–137, 203, 227, 256, 265–270, 276–278, 596, 636, 738*f.*, 741, 748, 753, 809

Dante Alighieri Society 732

Dardano, M. 74, 79, 132*f.*, 203, 205*f.*, 210, 216, 218*f.*, 221*f.*, 230, 267, 372, 388, 632*f.*, 737, 758, 765, 769

Dasher, R. 514

Dashi, B. 713

Datini, F. di Marco 78, 710, 743,
archive 79, 743

dattival accusatives 603

Davanzati, B. 62, 79, 84*f.*

Davis, S. 164

De Amicis, E. 75

De Blasi, N. 76, 586, 635, 832, 854–858, 861–865

De Cesare, A.-M. 507, 528–530, 603, 606, 640–642, 689, 697

De Cia, S. 227

De Filippo, E. 864

De Iacovo, V. 327, 811

De Mauro, T. 61, 63, 67, 75, 89*f.*, 114–118, 123, 139, 149*f.*, 265–267, 276, 281, 575, 579, 588, 581, 586, 591*f.*, 597, 621, 635*f.*, 653, 655–657, 660, 666, 669, 671*f.*, 722, 726, 761–765, 789, 792, 809*f.*, 830*f.*, 852

De Meo, A. 673

De Palo, M. 118

De Pascale, S. 602, 609, 651, 658

De Swart, H. 567, 570

De Vogelaer, G. 653

De vulgari eloquentia 10, 62, 66, 82, 95, 102, 104, 110, 125

de-Tuscanization 22, 39
de' Rossi, B. 84, 107
de' Rossi, N. 739
deadjectival
adjectives 376, 392, 403
nouns 387*f.*, 877
verbs 381*f.*, 393, 396
Decime di Arlotto 12, 61, 77
declarative clauses 211, 220, 471–480, 488, 543*f.*, 546, 825, 828
Degano, C. 766
degemination 338, 601, 811, 828, 832
Del Prete, F. 573*f.*
Delfitto, D. 552, 571–574
Dell'Aquila, V. 612*f.*, 615*f.*, 618, 622–625, 627–630
Della Casa, G. 108*f.*
Demartini, S. 317
demonstratives 34*f.*, 255, 421–423, 600, 814
denominal
adjectives 390*f.*
nouns 383–386
Deo, A. 566
deontic constructions 270, 371, 886
depalatalization 17
Dessì Schmid, S. 76, 270, 277
Dettori, A. 869, 871
deuterolectia 618–620, 627*f.*
deverbal
adjectives 391*f.*

nouns 388–390
Devoto, G. 19*f.*, 28, 63, 117, 128, 130, 765
Di Donato, J. 413
Di Falco, B. 103
Di Giovine, P. 713
Di Luzio, A. 615
Di Salvo, M. 711, 721, 724
diacroclectia 614, 616, 619*f.*, 624–629
dialectology 112*f.*
dialects 4–6
dialephe 317
diamesic variation 45, 631–649
diaphasic variation 615–617, 619*f.*
diastratic variation 650–663
diatopic variation 45, 75, 339*f.*, 623, 694, 790
differential object marking 21, 76, 606, 723, 799, 817, 830, 845–849, 854, 880*f.*
Digesto, S. 600, 656*f.*
digital writing 796, 804
diglossia 281, 614–626
dilalia 115, 282, 616*f.*, 619, 622–627
diminution, diminutives 400–404, 407, 410, 503*f.*, 852
Dionisotti, C. 64, 136
diphthongs 158–160, 303, 342–344
diplomacy 711*f.*
discourse markers 366, 485, 643, 673–676, 724

dislocation 43, 54, 72, 210, 453, 505, 623–525, 537*f.*, 541, 599, 605, 610, 800*f*, *see also* clitic left or right dislocation

dissimilation 171*f.*, 193

Divine Comedy 63, 82, 636, 739, 741, 748, 793

Dixon, R. 432

Dolce, L. 100, 109, 125, 136, 147

Domaneschi, F. 504, 506, 508

Domenichi, L. 100

Dominicy, M. 361

Donatus 121, 128

Donazzan, M. 549*f.*

Donna Clara 144

Dotto, D. 708

double consonants *see* consonant length

doublets 161, 165*f.*, 176*f.*, 392, 759

Dovetto, F. M. 669, 672*f.*

Dressler, W. 399–402, 405, 409*f.*, 503, 632

Drinka, B. 42, 566*f.*

Drusi, F. 65

Dryer, M. 517

Du Bellay, J. 103

dubbing 75, 150, 152, 755, 759, 764

Dufter, A. 530–532, 767

Durand, O. 718

Durante, M. 63–65, 737, 766

Duso, E. 739

e-mails 634*f.*, 637, 647

e-taliano 645–648

Easterday, S. 169

Eckert, P. 652

Eco, U. 91, 150

economy, economic factors 16, 62, 77–81, 84–97, 143, 584, 689

education (*see also* schools) 16, 40, 87–89, 114*f.*, 135*f.*, 139*f.*, 142, 144–150, 597*f.*, 604, 608, 611, 629, 754, 790, 758, 760, 790*f.*, 794, 804

Egerland, V. 194, 224–227, 425

egli 12, 37, 47, 72, 194, 214, 230, 437, 599, 809, 816, 838

eglino, elleno 12, 72, 195

egocentric reference 666

elision (phonological) 161, 293*f.*, 317*f.*, 813, 836

Elizabeth I 137

ella 37, 72, 764, 194, 248*f.*, 363, 437, 599, 809, 816, 838

elliptical structures 383, 390, 394, 484, 586, 606, 801

-ello 401–404, 852

Elson, M. 181

Elspaß, S. 598

embedded clauses 209, 214, 272, 488, 493, 562*f.*

Emonds, J. 444

enclisis, enclitics *see* clitics

endearment 444

Endo, T. 302, 350, 835

English 68*f.*, 76, 87*f.*, 91, 116, 245, 274, 276*f.*, 292*f.*, 349, 372, 377, 409, 416*f.*, 419, 433, 464, 472, 484, 538, 580*f.*, 584–586, 605, 706, 712, 717, 724–730, 754–769, 777, 779–782, 784–786, 788, *see also* Anglicisms

epenthesis 163, 177, 834, 858
Equicola, M. 65, 101*f.*, 108
ergative-absolutive alignment 446
Ernst, G. 789
Errera, E. *and* R. 141
Erteschik-Shir, N. 475, 477, 587
Esher, L. 362
Espinal, M. T. 550, 552, 571*f.*
ethnic background 661
Etruscan 60, 96, 113, 578
-*etto* 165, 401–403, 693, 852
etymology 141
Eufe, R. 708
euphonisms 317
Eusebi, M. 740
evaluatives 399–414
exceptional case marking 480, 489, 492
exclamatives 258, 350, 419, 426, 480–483, 572*f.*, 887
experiencer 43, 221, 389, 392, 446, 477, 497, 775
exploitation 277
Extended Projection Principle 475
Fabbri, A. 769
Fabi, A. 402
factive 481, 486, 506, 657
Fadda, M. 871
Faithfull, R. 96
Fanciullo, F. 713, 853, 859

Fanfani, P. 73*f.*
Faraoni, V. 173, 195, 200*f.*, 259, 836*f.*
Farnetani, E. 323
Fascism, Fascists 75, 115*f.*, 128, 149*f.*, 252, 276*f.*, 584*f.*, 760, 764
Faust, N. 365
Fava, E. 319, 471, 480–482, 502
Favaro, G. 776, 785
feminine job titles 604
feminine noun formation 384*f.*
femininity 668
Ferguson, C. 281, 614–616, 807
Ferraresi, G. 21, 205
Ferrari, A. 131, 505*f.*, 508, 641, 689, 697
Ferraris Tamburini, G. 144
Ferrazzi, J. 54
Ferrero, F. 304, 314, 667
Ferrini, C. 732
Filipi, g. 629
Filipponio, L. 205, 221, 223–227, 229*f.*, 658*f.*, 681, 833
film 75, 252*f.*, 638, 639*f.*, 644*f.*, 759, 764, 810, 864, 871
Fincati, V. 771, 785
finite verbs 204*f.*, 209–213, 463–466
Fiorelli, P. 75
Fiorentino, G. 43, 298
Fiorin, G. 572
Firenzuola, A. 104
Fishman, J. 723

Flamm, H. W. 362

Flavio Biondo 95, 124

Florence, Florentine 4–6, 12–41, 60–67, 71–76, 78*f.*, 81*f.*, 84, 86, 89, 96, 98*f.*, 102–109, 112–114, 123–128, 153, 168, 251, 291*f.*, 303, 339, 596*f.*, 656*f.*, 659, 735, 809, 832–836, 842, 851

Florio, J. 137

Florio, M. 105

Flydal, L. 653

focus 21, 38, 205, 207, 217, 221, 227*f.*, 230, 328, 350, 440, 444, 452–455, 478, 510, 520–546, 851, 859, 878,

    focus particle 45, 569, 571, 602

Fogarasi, M. 129

Folena, G. 68*f.*, 86*f.*, 92*f.*, 138, 707, 737, 741

Folli, R. 226, 481

Forconi, G. 771, 786*f.*

Foresti, F. 586, 790

Forlano, M. 625

Formisano, L. 742

Fornaciari, L. 34, 70, 122, 128*f.*

Fornara, S. 119, 125, 127, 676

Fornero, E. 92

fortition 24, 46, 169

Fortunio, G. F. 65, 83*f.*, 98*f.*, 104*f.*, 124–126, 135

Foscolo, U. 70, 81, 713, 716

fotoromanzi 144

Frammenti di un libro di conti di banchieri fiorentini 12–15

France 114, 164, 582–584, 613, 739–741, 758

Franceschi, T. 163, 330

Franceschi Ferrucci, C. 142
Franceschini, F. 709
Francesco da Barberino 63
Franco-Italian 740, 742
Franco, I. 407, 569
Francoprovençal 613, 624*f.*, 758, 806
Frank, B. 736
Frankish 9, 739
Franks 582, 707, 744*f.*
Frascarelli, M. 500, 522, 537–539, 543, 545
Frederick II 748
Frediani, A. 65
French 28, 42–44, 68, 71, 85*f.*, 110*f.*, 127, 139, 147, 164, 248, 252, 276, 340, 372, 580–584, 589, 624–627, 670, 679, 682*f.*, 695*f.*, 699, 709, 712–715, 718, 739*f.*, 751, 757*f.*, 761–764, 767*f.*
Frescobaldi, F. 146
Fresu, R. 134, 143, 149, 653, 795, 797, 804
Friulian 5, 117, 141, 613, 623, 625*f.*, 806, 817
Fuchs, A. 527*f.*
Furiassi, C. 586
Fusco, F. 92, 330, 669, 771, 773, 785
future tense 162, 179, 190, 359*f.*, 363*f.*, 369*f.*, 486, 558–563, 600
future-in-the-past 21, 49, 205, 271, 488
Gabriele, G. 125
Gadda, C. E. 116
Gaeta, L. 372, 374, 389*f.*
Gajewski, J. 571

Galeani Napione, G. 89
Galician 740*f.*
Galilei, V. 86
Galileo Galiliei 67, 69, 86, 827
Galli de' Paratesi, N. 75, 117, 269, 602, 658, 864
Gallicism 60, 69–71, 276, 581, 693, 766
Gallo-Italic 78, 112, 806
gallomania 68, 116, 276, 583
Gallurese 871–876, 882
Gamberini, S. 130
Gambi, L. 90
Gambino, F. 740
gap hypothesis 755
Gardani, F. 201, 766
Garde, P. 319
Garzonio, J. 21, 823
Geeraerts, D. 576
Gelli, G. B. 96, 105, 123
geminates, gemination 158–160, 164, 166–172, 175–177, 182, 301–304, 316, 318, 331–333, 335–339, 346*f.*, 362, 364*f.*, 369, 693, 724, 807, 810*f.*, 828, 832*f.*, 836, 872
gender (social) 134, 652, 664–676, 833, 837, 839, 849*f.*, 879
gender 30–32, 46*f.*, 51, 179, 193, 195–198, 201, 229, 233, 283, 353*f.*, 356*f.*, 373–376, 379, 400, 394*f.*, 401, 405, 424, 436, 695, 727, 732, 761, 764, 775, 797,
    controller vs target gender 849*f.*
gender-inclusive usage 298*f.*, 604
generative grammar 118, 120*f.*, 130–132, 415

generic readings 476, 553
Genoa 626, 707, 718
Genoese 586, 624, 708, 710, 713*f.*, 717, 731
Genot, G. 180
Genovesi, A. 87*f.*
Gensini, S. 112, 118
geohomonyms 40, 55, 57, 59, 587, 818*f.*, 855
geosynonyms 39*f.*, 55–57, 819*f.*, 852, 855
German 68, 80, 315, 353, 487, 573
Germanic languages, structures 204, 209, 539, 582
Germany 111*f.*, 114, 138*f.*
gerund 45, 179, 277, 349, 358, 368, 370, 467*f.*, 495–497, 566, 600, 602, 739, 766, 841, 863, 870, 878, 882*f.*
gerundive 81, 211
Geurts, B 574
Gheno, V. 299
Ghezzi, C. 366, 511–514
Ghinassi, G. 73, 99, 101
Ghyselen, A. S. 653
Giacalone Ramat, A. 661, 771, 774
Giacomelli, G. 19, 28, 63
Giacomello, L. 777
Giambullari, P. 96, 105, 107, 126, 129
Giancarli, P. 880
Giannelli, L. 19, 170, 830*f.*, 836
Giannini, A. 304, 306
Giannini, S. 319

Gianollo, C. 19, 568*f.*, 571

Gidino da Sommacampagna 63

Giles, H. 615, 622

Gili Fivela, B. 325, 350, 543, 601, 658, 834*f.*

Giordani, P. 70

Giordano, R. 658

Giorgi, A. 21, 205, 231, 428, 557, 562*f.*

Giorgini, G. B. 73*f.*, 76, 113

Giovanardi, C. 65*f.*, 76, 101, 103, 724, 832, 834*f.*, 841

Giuliani, F. 139

Giuliani, G. 73

Giuliani, M. 62, 267, 270, 868

Giurgea, I. 471, 475–478, 481, 537

Giusti, Giuliana 205, 231, 234*f.*, 217, 421–423, 427, 429, 436, 525, 550, 552, 815, 842*f.*

Giusti, Giuseppe 71

givenness 227, 417, 520*f.*, 537*f.*, 543

Glessgen, M. 351

glides 155, 158*f.*, 162, 164, 169, 172, 177, 313, 342*f.*, 342–347, 365, 391, 811, 813, 832*f.*, 876

Goad, H. 345

goal 475*f.*

Gobbo, F. 628

Goebl, H. 717

Goffi, G. 669*f.*

Goffman, E. 502

Goglia, F. 771, 773–777, 780, 784*f.*, 787*f.*

Goidanich, P. 128
Goldbach, M. 21, 205
Goldsmith, J. 334
gorgia toscana 27, 66, 153, 170, 602, 659, 833
Gorra, E. 368
Gothic 582, 744*f.*
GRADIT 379, 579, 581*f.*, 585, 588, 591, 669, 671
Graffi, G. 111, 118
grammars of Italian 121, 123, 129–133
grammaticalization 363, 369, 407, 409, 419, 512, 514, 517, 544, 565*f.*, 571, 665, 761, 766
grammaticography 119–133
Gramsci, A. 90*f.*
Grandgent, C. 199
Grandi, N. 372*f.*, 395, 399*f.*, 402*f.*, 405–409, 411, 414, 660
'grandmother's language' 617
Granthan, H. 137
Graubünden *see* Grigioni
Greco, P. 572
Greek 4, 64, 112, 175, 177, 231, 290, 319, 349, 353, 378, 387, 404, 413*f.*, 578, 580*f.*, 589*f.*, 612, 708*f.*, 713*f.*, 716, 739, 747–749, 760–763, 859, 861
Greenberg, J. 415*f.*
Grice, H. 501*f.*, 505, 508, 666
Griffith, T. G. 15*f.*, 92, 206
Grigioni 3, 629, 681, 683*f.*
Grimani, G. 139
Grisons *see* Grigioni

Grossmann, M. 372, 376*f.*, 386*f.*, 392, 395, 407, 766
Gualdo, R. 79, 87*f.*, 584, 603, 655, 804
Guardiano, C. 233, 422, 433, 756, 880
Guazzo, S. 109, 146
Guerini, F. 116, 660, 771, 776, 779*f.*
Guerzoni, E. 571
Guevara, E. 372, 421
Guggenberger, R. 111
Guicciardini, F. 65, 100
Guinizelli, G. 62
Guiraud, P. 668, 670
Gullino, G. 98
Gumperz, J. 614, 625, 807
Gundel, J. 521*f.*, 537
Gurrado, G. 665, 667
Gusmani, R. 722, 726, 762
Haegeman, L. 476, 500, 538, 567, 569*f.*
Haiman, J. 204
Hajičová, E. 521
Hales, S. 146
Hall, R. 129, 351*f.*, 367
Halle, M. 334, 336
Haller, H. 725–727
Halliday, M. 520
Hansen, M.-B. 509, 514, 518, 823
Harley, H. 226
Hartmann, J. 736

Hartmann, S. 412
Haspelmath, M. 41–45, 400, 555, 570*f.*
Hasselrot, B. 403
Hayes, B. 175, 346
Hebrew 585, 716, 737, 748*f.*, 751
hedges, hedging 503*f.*, 513
Heeringa, W. 871
Heim, L. 555
Herburger, E. 571
Herczeg, G. 129
Heycock, C. 420*f.*, 553
hiatus 157, 303, 14, 342–344, 875*f.*
'high' code 615
Higher Adverb Space (HAS) 458–460, 464, 466–468
Hijmans-Tromp, I. 129, 749
Hinterhölzl, R. 537, 543
Hjelmslev, L. 355, 366
Hockett, C. 351
Hollyband, C. 137
Holmberg, A. 209
Homer, V. 571
homophony 282, 285, 289, 292
Horrocks, G. 154, 172
Hualde, J. 335
Huang, S. 413
Huber-Sauter, M. 366
Huddleston, R. 767–769

human reference 51, 357, 838
humanism 64*f.*, 84, 91, 94–96, 98–100, 109, 121, 124*f.*, 136, 737*f.*
Hummel, M. 850
Hungarian 546, 683
Hyltenstam, K. 618
hypercorrection 12, 29, 116, 162, 166–168, 621, 794*f.*, 797, 807, 813, 832, 838, 855
hyperdistantiation 793
hyphenation 297
hypocoristics 177, 398, 403*f.*, 815
hypotaxis 81, 798
Iacobini, C. 372, 377–379, 381, 402, 602, 763, 765*f.*, 814, 839, 843
-iamo 25, 291, 358*f.*
Iannàccaro, G. 300, 612*f.*, 616*f.*, 622–625, 627–630
Ibero-Romance 54*f.*, 182*f.*, 204, 270, 578, 743*f.*, 757
iconicity 192
Iemmolo, G. 54, 845
Igbo 771, 774, 776–782, 785
illocutionary force 405, 410, 480–483, 502–504, 512–514, 521, 538, 672
Imbs, P. 369
immigration 90, 626, 661, 679, 683, 728, 771–788, 830
imperative 74, 187, 292, 328, 358*f.*, 365–367, 375, 482*f.*, 488, 859,
  negative 262, 826*f.*, 854, 858
imperfective aspect 180*f.*, 557, 563–566, 600
implicatures 573*f.*
implicitness 505–508
in situ objects 227–230

inalienable characteristics 45, 222, 391, 435, 841*f.*

indefinite adjectives 439

Indo-European languages 41*f.*, 692

Indovinello veronese 61, 737*f.*

industrialization 89*f.*

infinitival clauses 488–495

infinitive 39, 175, 216, 262, 272, 368*f.*, 394, 455, 466*f.*, 471, 482*f.*, 486, 530*f.*, 644, 727, 766*f.*, 826–828, 836, 840*f.*, 859, 883–885

inflexion classes 179, 199, 351–353, 357, 394*f.*, 405, 837, 856

information structure 204, 232, 520–546

Inglese, G. 82

-ino 384, 389–391, 401–403, 405, 852

intelligibility 4, 9, 612, 626, 831

intensifiers 409, 886

intensional properties 429, 486, 499

interfixes 400*f.*

interjections 366, 676

interrogatives, questions 208, 211, 324, 326, 316, 350, 480*f.*, 485–488, 508, 519, 533, 543*f.*, 546, 568, 570, 605, 664, 672, 675*f.*, 769, 820, 821*f.*, 824, 827*f.*, 835, 844,

- interrogative clauses 488–495, 498
- interrogative intonation 324*f.*, 765
- interrogative markers 886
- multiple interrogatives 769
- polar questions 204, 481, 487, 568, 844
- yes/no questions 325*f.*, 543*f.*, 546, 824, 835
- wh-interrogatives 825

intersective reading 373, 375*f.*, 430*f.*

intonation 322–328, 344, 350, 481, 509, 516*f.*, 543, 694, 828, 835, 877

invariance 190, 195–198, 837

Invernizio, C. 145

inverse locatives 525

inversion of subject and verb 207, 209, 216, 476, 541

Ionian islands 715

irregularity
- in verbs 188–190
- in plural marking 198

Iscrizione sulla tomba di Giratto 61

Isolani, E. 21

-issimo 397, 408–410, 414

Italian
- abroad 137–139, 679, 720–732, 759, 796
- neostandard 150, 631, 790, 809, 839
- popular *see* *italiano popolare*
- regional 75, 90, 114–117, 131, 150, 233, 247, 260, 276, 300, 317, 328, 330, 339*f.*, 365, 464, 567, 575, 586*f.*, 598, 601*f.*, 621, 624, 644, 653, 657*f.*, 692*f.*, 699, 789*f.*, 799,
  - central 53, 657, 829–852
  - northern 36, 233, 268*f.*, 275*f.*, 454, 693, 806–828, 833, 843
  - Piedmontese 602, 612, 780
  - Sardinian 338, 370, 454, 657, 790, 832, 869–890
  - Sicilian 58, 244, 260, 454, 586, 622, 853–855, 858–861, 863, 878
  - southern 36, 204, 426, 450, 454, 466, 730, 853–868
  - Tuscan 53, 58, 442, 544, 817, 829–835, 838, 840–842, 845, 851*f.*
  - Venetan 624–626, 812, 814, 825*f.*

standard, standardization 59, 114, 149, 265, 448, 595–611, 650, 660*f.*, 686, 754, 809, *see also* *italiano*

italiano

dell'uso medio 115, 123, 637, 645, 790, 809

filmico 639, 644*f.*

interferito 824, 870

parlato-parlato 644

popolare 116, 632, 653, 659–663, 668, 789–805, 809*f.*

scritto-scritto 644

trasmesso 638

italianu porcheddinu 870, 879, 888

italici, Italicity 720*f.*

italiese 277

iterative, iterativity 379, 381, 389, 506, 884

Ivković, D. 732

Izutsu, K. 516

Izutsu, M. 516

Jackendoff, R. 402, 425, 539

Jäger, A. 571

Jakobson, R. 237

Janoušek, H. 520

Japanese 585, 757

Jernej, J. 129*f.*

Jews, Sephardic 711

Jezek, E. 221*f.*, 448, 564

Jin, Y. 572

Jones, Mari 757

Jones, Michael 878, 880, 882, 884

Joseph, J. 615
Judaeo-Italian 748*f.*
Jurafsky, D. 403, 407
Kadmon, N. 556
Kahane, H. *and* R. 713
Kamwangamalu, N. 776
Kayne, R. 225, 451, 473
Keenan, E. 231, 424, 439
Kenstowicz, M. 177
kinds 418, 550
kinesics 667
kinship terms 260, 425–427, 695, 815, 842, 846–848, 854, 876, 879
Kiss, S. 176
Klein, G. 760
Klein, W. 527, 567
Kloss, H. 616, 625, 686, 690, 755
Koch, H. 358
Koch, P. 577, 597, 636, 638–640, 647, 649, 654
Kochetov, A. 169
Koenig, J. P. 752
koiné, *koinai* 153*f.*, 596, 612, 621*f.*, 624, 627, 629, 691, 715, 728, 807*f.*, 810
Kołodziejczyk, D. 711
Kori, S. 323
Körtvélyessy, L. 399*f.*, 411
Krämer, M. 158, 330, 336, 343, 346, 370, 765
Kratshmer, A. 223

Krefeld, T. 654, 724, 870
Krifka, M. 539, 573
Kristiansen, T. 597
Kuryłowicz, J. 360, 363
Kuteva, T. 755–757
La Fauci, N. 222, 446, 448, 830
La Spezia-Rimini Line 5, 45, 83, 806
Labelle, M. 571
Labov, W. 598, 603*f.*, 614, 622, 630, 652, 665, 807, 831
Ladin 5, 613, 623*f.*, 627, 806
Ladusaw, W. 570*f.*
Lahousse, K. 529
Lakhdar, A. 715
Lakoff, R. 424, 502*f.*, 510
Lambrecht, K. 520*f.*, 528*f.*, 539
Lambruschini, R. 72, 74, 113
Lamiroy, B. 529, 551*f.*
Lampitelli, N. 355
Lancelot, C. 127
Landman, F. 556
Landry, R. 732
Lange, D. 512
Langobardic 861
language maintenance 622, 722*f.*, 772, 777, 784–786
language name 64–67, 75
language shift 722–724, 728, 784
Larsen, B. 355

Lass, R. 362

laterals 312, 755

Latin 4, 7–10, 20, 60–65, 77–80, 82, 87*f.*, 94–99, 101–103, 106–108, 112, 124, 127*f.*, 135*f.*, 138*f.*, 231, 276, 378, 388, 406, 577, 588, 621, 735–739, 744, 760*f.*

Latini, B. 62, 740*f.*

Latinisms 579*f.*, 862

Lausberg, H. 184, 359, 368

Lauta, G. 205, 209, 211, 232*f.*

Lavinio, C. 638, 869–871, 876, 878*f.*, 881*f.*, 886*f.*

Law 482/1999 623*f.*

Lawrence, J. 137

Lazio 626, 829, 831*f.*, 834, 851*f.*, 856

Lazzari Turco, G. 144

Lazzerini, I. 714

learnèd words, learnèd forms 4, 17, 159, 161, 163, 171, 177, 199*f.*, 209, 343, 347, 380, 388–390, 579*f.*, 737

Ledgeway, A. 5, 8, 19, 21, 24, 26, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 190, 206, 208, 211, 216, 218, 228, 231, 234, 244, 255, 267, 269, 369, 419, 421, 423, 427, 435*f.*, 444, 446, 456, 460, 464, 466, 468, 486*f.*, 717, 766*f.*, 814, 823, 829*f.*, 839, 845, 850*f.*, 880*f.*

Lee, B. 785

Leech, G. 767

left periphery 53, 204*f.*, 208–213, 216*f.*, 220*f.*, 415, 417, 444*f.*, 452–455, 498, 514, 522, 533–537, 541*f.*, 878

Lehmann, C. 359

lei 72, 103*f.*, 437, 599, 605, 809, 816, 838*f.*, *see also* address forms, polite

Lelli, F. 716

lenition 46, 169–171, 832, 833*f.*
lento speech 632
Lenzi, D. 79
Lenzoni, C. 105
Leonardo da Vinci 6
Leone, A. 858
Leonetti, M. 549–551
Leopardi, G. 70*f.*, 81, 111–113
Lepschy, A.-L. 130, 417, 419, 421, 423, 427, 430, 764
Lepschy, G. 5, 75, 130, 300*f.*, 322, 417, 419, 421, 423, 427, 430, 659, 764, 803
Leufkens, S. 404
Levi, C. 92, 865
Levi, P. 98
Levi, S. 344
Levinson, S. 502*f.*, 505*f.*
Lewis, B. 710*f.*
lexicography 69, 72*f.*, 76, 83–85, 89, 91, 125*f.*, 142, 576, 636, 654
Liala 145
Librandi, R. 67, 853, 859
Libri d'abaco 80
Libri del dare e dell'avere 78
Liburnio, N. 125, 136
Licata, D. 721, 732
light nouns 886*f.*
Linacre, T. 126
Lindschouw, J. 766

lingua cortigiana 90, 101, 104*f.*
Lingua Franca 714*f.*
linguistic landscape 620–622, 699, 712, 732
literacy 17, 114*f.*, 142, 148–150, 575, 628, 662*f.*, 804
Lo Duca, M. G. 131, 383*f.*, 389*f.*, 763
loanwords 581–586
locative relatives 821
Loi Corvetto, I. 870–877, 879, 882, 888–890
Lombard 6, 72, 100*f.*, 255, 341, 629, 693*f.*, 699
Lombard, A. 354
Lombardelli, O. 136
Lombardi, A. 231*f.*, 427, 464, 468, 508, 825
Lombardi, L. 136
Lombardi Vallauri, E. 328, 507*f.*, 521*f.*, 532
Lombardo, E. 771, 776, 780, 783
Longobardi, G. 118, 231, 233, 415, 417–419, 423*f.*, 442, 547, 549, 551, 554
Lonzi, L. 496*f.*, 525
Loporcaro, M. 5, 8*f.*, 19, 21, 25, 118, 154, 156, 158, 172, 176, 184, 187, 195, 201, 205, 224*f.*, 227, 255, 259, 302, 316, 330, 338, 343, 346, 425, 449, 473, 601*f.*, 657, 811*f.*, 829*f.*, 832–834, 836–838, 849*f.*, 883
Lorenzetti, L. 253, 575*f.*, 578, 588, 591, 830, 834
Lörinczi, M. 871*f.*
loro 30, 47, 72, 193–195, 240, 296, 424, 427, 438, 599, 797, 809*f.*, 816, 838
Lotherington, H. 732
'low' code 615*f.*, 617, 620, 626
Lower Adverb Space 458, 460–462, 465–469

Lubello, S. 144, 298, 300, 634, 744*f.*, 805
Lucca 12, 29, 62, 724, 834–836
Lucchesi, V. 224*f.*, 226*f.*
Lüdtke, H. 858
Lupo de Spechio 743
Luraghi, S. 368
Luti, E. 72, 142
Lyons, C. 419, 423–425
Lyons, J. 423*f.*
Macerata 831–835, 837–840, 844, 848*f.*, 851*f.*
Machetti, S. 728
Machiavelli, N. 65–67, 103*f.*, 125
Mackridge, P. 716
Maconi, L. 9, 13, 77, 80
Maddalon, M. 654, 670
Magazzeni, L. 134
Maggiore, M. 748
Magistro, G. 569, 823
Magni, E. 362
Magno Caldognetto, E. 319, 322, 667
Maiden, M. 8, 11, 14, 21, 23, 27*f.*, 45*f.*, 48*f.*, 132, 156, 158–160, 164–166, 168, 170, 172*f.*, 177, 182–184, 187–190, 195, 197, 200*f.*, 205, 231, 271, 273, 355, 357, 359, 361–366, 368*f.*, 423, 428, 436, 488, 566, 736, 757, 760, 765, 830, 832, 837, 842
Mairano, P. 811
malapropisms 803, 864
Malermi, N. 97
Malkiel, Y. 362

Malta 716–718

Mancini, M. 87, 154, 349, 583, 585

Mańczak, W. 353, 369

manner of articulation 306

Manni, D. M. 69

Manni, P. 10, 60, 63*f.*, 77, 79, 754

Mantea 148*f.*

manufacturing 91

Manuzio, A. 65, 98

Manuzzi, G. 70

Manzoni, A. 21, 71–75, 93, 111–115, 117, 127, 142–144, 597, 809, *see also* *Promessi sposi*

Manzotti, E. 518, 567

Maraschio, N. 60, 107, 115, 265, 596*f.*, 668, 672, 754

Marazzini, C. 17*f.*, 61, 65, 67, 72, 75*f.*, 80, 85*f.*, 88–90, 92*f.*, 96, 107, 111, 120, 127, 355, 760, 863

Marcato, C. 330, 587, 667, 731

Marcato, G. 103

Marche 626, 749, 829, 831–833, 852

Marchetti, P. 717

Marconi, D. 510

Marjani, I. 709

marked, markedness 21, 34, 43, 46, 50, 199, 205, 225, 347, 350, 356–358, 360, 400, 416, 418, 433*f.*, 449, 464, 463, 466, 472, 475, 478, 480*f.*, 486, 523*f.*, 526, 533, 544, 546, 599, 610, 617, 619*f.*, 622, 626, 633, 640, 642, 645, 654, 660*f.*, 694, 704, 801, 825, 870, 879, 882

‘market’ of variants 654

Marotta, G. 154, 156, 158, 177, 303, 318*f.*, 323, 330, 336, 338, 342*f.*, 345*f.*, 350, 356, 546, 834

Martino, P. 861
Marty, A. 520, 528
Marzo, S. 598, 609*f.*, 650, 658, 823
masculinity 668
Masia, V. 507*f.*, 522
Masini, F. 372, 378*f.*, 411–413, 509, 602, 843, 886
mass media 16, 149, 597, 637*f.*, 726, 807, 810, 869
mass nouns, mass readings 197, 354, 375, 402, 416–419, 551–553, 815, 837, 842, 849, 850
Massariello Merzagora, G. 785
Mastrelli, C. 744
Matarrese 60, 69, 107, 115, 265, 596*f.*, 717, 758
Matraini, C. 146
Matras, Y. 522, 754, 755*f.*, 780, 784
Mattarucco, G. 120
matter replication 756
Mauri, C. 407, 514
Mayol, L. 542*f.*
Mayr, P. 270
Mazara del Vallo 861
McLaughlin, Mairi 274, 277, 754–757, 759, 769
McLaughlin, Martin 98*f.*
Medici, Cosimo de' 66, 105
Medici, Lorenzo de' 64, 95*f.*
Medici, M. 414
Mediterranean 706–719
Meillet, A. 363, 366*f.*, 370

Melander, J. 515
melodic curves 323–325
melodrama 67*f.*, 138
Memoria di Coltibuono 61
Menarini, A. 722, 725, 727, 764
Mengaldo, P. 86, 657, 789
Menichetti, C. 710, 742
Mensching, G. 39, 494
-mente 319, 393, 396, 462, 514, 850, 856
merchants 17, 78–80, 84, 87, 582*f.*, 707–710, 740, 746, *see also* commerce
Mercuri, R. 83
Merlini Barbaresi, L. 399–405, 409*f.*, 503
Merlo, C. 60, 118, 358, 577*f.*
mesolect 621, 624–629
Meszler, L. 25, 205, 218*f.*
metaphony 23, 156, 269, 829*f.*, 837, 856, 863, 873–875, 877
Metastasio 68, 81, 86, 137
metathesis 171, 190, 731
meteorological verbs 221, 358, 393, 396, 766
Meyer-Lübke, W. 132, 158, 165, 181
Miatto, V. 175, 177
mica 460–466, 515, 517–519, 569, 823–825, 827
Micheli, M. S. 372, 374*f.*, 401, 407–413, 660, 766
Middle Ages 582*f.*, 706*f.*, 709, 713, 716, 735–752, 765
Miecznikowski, J. 514
Miestamo, M. 604

Migliorini, B. 15*f.*, 63, 69, 75, 86*f.*, 92*f.*, 96, 116, 128, 161, 177, 206, 248, 352, 354, 357, 368, 395, 651, 658, 748, 760*f.*, 763*f.*, 767*f.*

migration, migrants 16, 60, 90, 149, 164, 612, 617, 626–628, 641, 658, 661*f.*, 679, 683*f.*, 720–732, 754, 757*f.*, 771–788, 790, 830

Mihatsch, W. 386

Milan 21, 71, 75, 89*f.*, 117, 142, 626*f.*, 777, 780, 787, 831, 843

Milanese 24, 71, 75, 111, 117, 141*f.*, 658

Milani, C. 725

Milani, L. 75

Milione 740

Millardet, G. 366

Milroy, J. *and* L. 596

Minervini, L. 711, 714, 749

minimal pairs 23, 33, 51, 117, 164, 223*f.*, 284*f.*, 291, 300, 319, 331*f.*, 336–338, 340*f.*, 343, 348, 350, 427, 430, 441, 444, 452, 833, 874

minority languages 612*f.*, 614, 624*f.*, 627*f.*, 722, 724, 888

Minuz, F. 771, 786*f.*

Mioni, A. 300, 330, 343, 635, 776, 789, 791, 810

misogyny 147

mitigation 501–505, 510, 513*f.*, 518, 600

Mocciaro, E. 270, 404, 662*f.*

modern grammar 121

modesty 244, 253

Molinelli, P. 366, 511*f.*, 568

Molisan 709, 853

Molise 856, 858, 867

Momma, L. 270

money 77–80, 84*f.*

monophthongization 11*f.*, 28, 154, 157, 160, 174, 177, 835
Montanile, M. 100, 103
Monteleone, F. 149
Montermini, F. 372, 379, 383, 394, 400, 409
Monterosso, F. 112
Monteverdi, C. 67, 86
Monti, V. 66, 70
Montuori, F. 709, 857, 860
Monza, Glossary of 747
Morandi, L. 128
Morardo, G. 147
morbus anglicus 116, 276
Mordenti, R. 79*f.*
Moretti, B. 622, 650, 679, 683, 686, 691, 693*f.*, 700
Moretti, I. 599, 855
Morgana, S. 111, 758
Morlicchio, E. 745
Morlino, L. 740
Moro, A. 478
Moroccans 771–774, 777, 785*f.*
morpheme boundaries 159, 300, 302, 340
morphology 25–27, 29–33, 46–49,
    historical 179–202
    inflexional 351–371
    derivational 372–398
morphomic patterns 48, 375, 393
Morpurgo Davies, A. 112

Mortara Garavelli, B. 127, 317, 488

Mosca, M. 780

Moscati, V. 567*f.*

Mosè da Rieti 749

Moss, H. 633

Motolese, M. 120–122, 805

Motta, V. 633

Mourin, L. 367

Muljačić, Ž. 4, 7, 20, 67, 300, 303, 319, 330, 707

multilingualism 612–630, 682*f.*, 722–724, 726, 728, 736, 746, 771*f.*, 774, 776, 780*f.*, 783–788, 865

Munaro, N. 16, 21, 204, 218, 602

Mura, A. 871–875, 877

Muratori, A. 68

Muru, C. 711

Musi, E. 516

muta cum liquida 172, 175, 347

Muzio, G. 713

N-pattern 187*f.*

Nannucci, V. 361, 368

Naples 28, 58, 81, 98, 100*f.*, 103, 260, 544, 602, 716, 741, 743*f.*, 776, 843, 854*f.*, 857, 860*f.*, 573, 864, 867*f.*

Napoli, D. J. 330, 573

Napoli, M. 408*f.*, 556

nasal allophones 171, 314, 336*f.*

Natale, S. 277, 658, 683, 749

ne 193, 225, 274, 294, 490, 525, 601, 603,
    ne-cliticization 449, 525

Nebrija, A. 124

negation, negatives, negators 21, 204, 262, 357, 413, 460, 464, 466, 472, 483, 486, 493, 515, 517*f.*, 557, 567–574, 676, 806, 823–827,
expletive 571–574
negative concord 44, 204, 571
negative polarity 44, 204, 418, 557, 571, 846, 848

Nelli, P. 150

Nencioni, G. 62*f.*, 66–69, 71, 73, 110*f.*, 118, 123, 267, 359, 371, 638

Neo-Latin 378, 766

neoclassical affixes 404, 406, 408, 414, 582

neoformations 579*f.*, 588–590

Neogrammarians 112, 153*f.*, 737

Nesi, A. 76, 119, 602, 717*f.*, 831, 833, 835–837, 839, 841*f.*, 851*f.*

Nespor, M. 330, 573

neuter gender 46, 179, 201, 354, 837, 849–851

neutralization (phonological) 23, 163, 167*f.*, 300, 303, 336, 339*f.*, 341, 349, 658, 799, 811, 833

newness 520*f.*, 527

Niccolini, G. B. 73

Nicolae, A. 423

Niculescu, A. 244, 764

Nigerians 773*f.*

Nissim, M. 373, 395

Nobili, C. 634, 805

Nocchi, N. 658*f.*, 833*f.*

Nocentini, A. 228, 528, 762, 846, 851

noi 242–244,
noi si 25, 74

Nolan, J. 715
nominal group 231–235, 415–442, 472, 479
Nominal Mapping Parameter Hypothesis 417
nominative-accusative alignment 443, 445*f.*
non-finite forms 39, 179, 216, 368*f.*, 455, 466–470, 485, 489, 498*f.*, 766*f.*, 882, 883*f.*
Norde, M. 411*f.*
normative grammars, grammarians 122*f.*, 596, 604*f.*, 809
null indefinite/generic pronoun 52
null object 52
null subjects 52, 205, 213–216, 220, 437, 476, 496, 500, 775
number
    noun and adjective inflexion 195, 353–355
    verb inflexion 358*f.*, *see also* plural
numerals 439*f.*
Nuorese 871
Nuzzo, E. 640
O'Neill, P. 365
object 443
obsolescence 512, 514
Occitan 42, 205, 276, 624, 741*f.*, 806
Oesterreicher, W. 597, 638–640, 647, 649, 654
ognuno 428, 554*f.*
Ohala, J. 664
Olander, T. 193
Ondelli, S. 604, 759
-one 383*f.*, 389, 404*f.*, 408, 410

onomasiology 576*f.*, 586
opera 68, 71, 85–87, 138, 145, 790
Opera del Vocabolario Italiano 654
Orioles, V. 720–723
oriundi 720*f.*
Orlando furioso 65, 99*f.*, 137, 717, 793
Orletti, F. 672
orthography *see* spelling
Ostrogothic 744*f.*
Ottoman Empire 18, 706, 710–712
Ottone, P. 655
'out of the blue' 472, 475, 522*f.*, 544
overabundance 202, 353, 363, 375, 575, 838
Paciaroni, T. 9, 19, 829, 831, 832, 838, 849–851
Pacioli, L. 80
Pagliuca, W. 360, 566
palatalization, palatal alternation 29, 46, 159, 164–169, 174, 177, 180, 184–186, 189*f.*, 199–201, 286, 288, 353, 367, 613, 834, 855
palatals 12, 14, 17, 23, 46, 74, 92, 157, 159, 163–169, 173–175, 184–186, 286–291, 301, 305, 310*f.*, 311, 331, 334, 340, 367, 391, 694, 713, 811, 830, 854, 858*f.*
Palermo 6, 28, 64, 602, 674, 780, 860*f.*, 868
Palermo, M. 62, 507*f.*, 759, 798
Palumbo, G. 739
Panebianco, A. 654*f.*
Panunzi, A. 768
Panzini, A. 92, 128, 766
Paoli, P. 717

Paoli, S. 17, 517
paragogic vowels 11, 29, 727
paraliterary texts 142–145
parasynthesis, parasynthetic forms 380–382, 392*f.*, 395*f.*, 398
Pariani, L. 116
Parisi, D. 130
Parkinson, J. 269
paroxytones, paroxytonic 29, 46, 156, 177, 318, 349, 727, 836
Parry, M. 19, 21, 231*f.*
Partee, B. 558
participial constructions 455, 500
participial forms 368, 392
particle verbs 379, 814
particles 46, 127, 259*f.*, 517, 569, 571, 602, 764, 806, 814, 826, 843*f.*
partitive, partitive article 205, 225, 355, 416, 418, 547, 551, 830, 842
Pasolini, P. P. 75, 90*f.*, 117
Pasquali, G. 243, 247*f.*
passato prossimo 180*f.*, 183, 369*f.*, 558, 560*f.*, 563, 566*f.*, 695, 774*f.*, 840, 859
passato remoto 179, 180–183, 271*f.*, 276, 358, 362, 365, 367*f.*, 371, 558, 560*f.*, 566*f.*, 695, 807, 813, 840, 859
Passino, D. 176, 379
passive, passives 38, 43, 179, 221, 230, 263, 270–272, 371, 446*f.*, 449, 451, 470, 474, 490*f.*, 493, 497, 505, 607, 610, 756, 799, 813, 857
past participles 32, 368, 370*f.*, 388*f.*, *see also* agreement
Patota, G. 65, 76, 92, 119*f.*, 132, 157*f.*, 170
Pauwels, A. 776, 784*f.*
Pavese, C. 256

Payne, E. 301

Payne, J. 768*f.*

Pecorari, F. 507*f.*

Pellegrini, G. B. 5, 19*f.*, 75, 375, 401, 626, 657, 746, 750, 808, 810

Penello, N. 201, 460, 569

Penka, D. 567, 569*f.*

Penny, R. 183

perception verbs 226, 489–491

Percoto, C. 141

perfect *see* *passato prossimo*

perfective, perfectivity 21, 48–51, 179–181, 183, 205, 444, 446*f.*, 460, 468–470, 561, 563–567, 724, 810, 830, 882, 884*f.*

periphrases, periphrastic structures 26, 48, 56, 179, 269–272, 277, 357, 369–371, 446, 565*f.*, 600, 602, 742, 766, 820, 840*f.*, 869–871, 882, 884, 886

Perlmutter, D. 447, 474, 499

Pernicone, V. 128

Perra, A. 604

Persian 585, 751

Persiani, B. 120

personal names 670, 736, 739*f.*, 744

Perticari, G. 66, 70

Pescara 780*f.*, 858, 866*f.*

Pescarini, D. 5, 19, 21, 37, 192, 194, 460, 569, 806

Peterson, P. 768*f.*

Petralli, A. 88, 628, 693, 700–705

Petrarch 16, 63, 65*f.*, 81–83, 86, 96, 98–106, 111, 124, 126, 135, 136–137, 203, 206, 227, 257, 267, 596, 636, 753, 809

Petrocchi, A. 128
Petrocchi, G. 82*f.*
Petrucci, L. 61, 709
Pettorino, M. 304, 306
philosophy of language 110*f.*
phonosyntax 315–318
phrasal lexemes 378*f.*, 383
phrasal verbs 56, 379, 601*f.*, 609, 843
piane 318
Picchiorri, E. 231, 841, 867
pidginization 627
pidgins 714*f.*, 723, 726, 776*f.*, 780–782, 810
Piedmontese 23, 26, 624*f.*
Piedmontese regional Italian *see* Italian, regional
Pierucci, M. L. 732
Pike, K. 613, 629
Pinto, M. 478*f.*
Piredda, N. 873, 875, 890
Pirrelli, V. 372
Pisa 717
Pisan 77, 708–710, 750
Pisano, D. 268
Pisano, L. 62
Pisano, S. 869*f.*, 887*f.*
pitch, pitch accent 319, 323–326, 328*f.*, 350, 543–546, 664, 667
place names 170, 175, 233, 349, 391, 395, 582, 670, 736, 746, 750
Placito capuano 8, 77

Plautus 404
Ploiti, A. 67
plurals
bare 419, 449, 550*f.*
formation of 195–202
in *-a* 201*f.*
plurilingualism 614, 682
Poggi, L. 366, 676
Poggi Salani, T. 76, 119*f.*, 123, 602, 790, 831, 833, 835–837, 839, 841*f.*, 851*f.*, 853, 869
Poggio Mirteto 847*f.*
Poletto, C. 21, 37, 56, 206, 209, 216, 218, 444, 455, 474, 537, 539, 543, 552, 567, 767, 814, 821*f.*, 826, 843
Poli, D. 111, 731
Polimeni, G. 74
politeness 501–505, 518, 600, 672, *see also* address forms
Poliziano, A. 64, 95*f.*, 98, 106
Pollock, J.-Y. 444
Polo, Marco 740
Polonio, V. 708
polymorphism 41, 61, 72, 126, 353, 355*f.*, 359, 362*f.*, 368*f.*, 371, 575, 869
polysemy 58, 396, 576, 592, 642, 803
polyvalent *che see* *che polivalente*
Pons, A. 625
Poplack, S. 656
popular Italian *see* *italiano popolare*
Porcacchi, T. 100

Port-Royal 68*f.*, 121, 127, 139

Porta, C. 71, 111*f.*

Portner, P. 481, 573

Posner, R. 171

possessives, possessive adjectives 14, 30, 199, 205, 238, 254, 257, 391, 416, 424–429, 440, 441, 587, 659, 695, 730, 797, 807, 810, 815, 841*f.*, 855, 879

Postilla amiatina 9, 61, 77, 738

Potowski, K. 785

Pountain, C. 5, 272, 277, 755–757, 760

Pozza, M. 546, 708

Pozzi, M. 101–106

Prada, M. 638, 645

pragmatics, pragmatic factors 501–519, 526, 540, 550, 556, 571, 573*f.*, 610, 622, 632, 635, 643, 647, 656, 665, 668, 672–676, 697*f.*, 724, 764, 822, 825, 828, 849, 880, 887

Prague Linguistic Circle 521

praticamente 509, 512–514

preaching 18, 66*f.*, 597

prefixes, prefixation 171, 297, 300, 319, 375, 379–382, 400, 402, 404, 406–414, 589*f.*, 877

prepositional object marking, prepositional accusative *see* differential object marking

prepositions 57, 194, 232, 292, 298, 316, 375, 379, 404, 428, 481, 512, 534, 591, 694, 697, 768, 794*f.*, 798, 801, 885

present continuous 869

present participle 368, 389, 392, 395, 467, 749

prestige 5*f.*, 15*f.*, 18, 21, 40, 65, 75*f.*, 80–82, 96*f.*, 135, 137, 168*f.*, 577, 583, 585, 598, 603*f.*, 611, 613, 620, 628, 656–659, 665, 706, 710, 718*f.*, 755, 759*f.*, 801, 781, 810, 819, 831, 833, 837

presupposition, presuppositions 464, 466, 486, 505–509, 517*f.*, 533, 536, 550, 552, 569

preterite *see* *passato remoto*

Prifti, E. 725–727, 759

Prince, E. 517

Priscian 121, 128

prisoners of war 991, 793–794, 801

pro-drop 45, 205, 215, 238

proclisis, proclitics *see* clitics

productivity 190, 358, 368, 404, 590, 756, 763

professional titles 672, 698

progressive 277, 360, 370, 565*f.*, 600, 602, 766, 870*f.*, 882

Proietti, D. 67, 75, 79, 85, 530, 532*f.*

Promessi sposi 72–74, 93, 111*f.*, 142, 249, 255, 597, *see also* Manzoni

pronouns 12, 14, 31, 36*f.*, 42*f.*, 45, 47, 50–54, 72, 103*f.*, 107, 161, 179, 192–195, 204*f.*, 211*f.*, 214*f.*, 237–242, 247–256, 262*f.*, 294, 296, 316, 367, 436–438, 453, 505, 524, 605, 607, 609, 642, 646, 659, 764, 794, 797, 809, 815–818, 835, 837–839, 848,

  subject 37, 49*f.*, 104, 194, 215, 437, 599, 605, 775, 806, 809, 828, 845, *see also* clitics

pronunciation 72, 75, 107*f.*, 117, 150, 177, 200*f.*, 282, 291, 300, 302, 315, 319, 322, 330, 601*f.*, 604, 651, 657–659, 667, 693*f.*, 765, 833, 871

proparoxytones 11, 46, 156, 160, 175, 200, 318, 349, 727, 765

proper names 76, 233, 295, 354, 441*f.*, 549, 695, 748, 836, 842, 846*f.*, 876

proprio 428

Prose della volgar lingua 82, 83, 99, 106, 124, 135, 596, 636, 753

prosody, prosodic phenomena 25, 318*f.*, 322, 327, 330, 334, 339, 344, 346, 349*f.*, 367, 370, 453, 376, 378, 397, 506, 520*f.*, 536–539, 543–

546, 601, 534, 654, 665, 691, 693, 714, 789, 832, 825, 835–837
prosthesis 11, 14, 177, 346
Protestantism 80, 629
prototypicality 411–414
Provençal 81, 154, 276, 582, 613, 710, 713, 740–742
proxemics 667
publishing 65, 84, 89, 140
Puglia 6, 90, 331ş, 854, 856, 858, 851
Puglielli, A. 130, 500
Pulcini, V. 760, 768
punctuation 282, 297, 328, 599, 648, 660, 796, 799–801
Punjabi 777–779
Puoti, B. 70, 127
purism 70, 111, 116, 127, 584*f.*
Putzu, I. 880
qualche 176, 204, 316, 339, 555*f.*
qualitative evaluation 380, 406–412
quantifiers 232, 293, 357, 416, 440, 452, 525, 536, 554–557, 569–571, 848, 881*f.*, 886*f.*
quantitative evaluation 380, 400–406, 414
questione della lingua 61, 64, 85, 90*f.*, 94–118, 125–127, 134*f.*, 807
questione ladina 613
questions *see* interrogatives
Quintilian 231
Quirini, G. 739
Quondam, A. 84
Rabito, V. 801

raddoppiamento fonosintattico, rafforzamento fonosintattico 14, 24, 29, 75, 117, 169, 176, 292, 315*f.*, 331, 338*f.*, 346, 365, 603, 662, 795, 807, 811, 836

Radimský, J. 372–374, 378

radio 75, 115, 149, 330, 606, 637*f.*, 759

Radtke, E. 853

Raeto-Romance 204, 629

Raffaelli, S. 252

rafforzamento fonosintattico see raddoppiamento fonosintattico

Ragusa (Dubrovnik) 707*f.*

RAI 75, 150, 810

Raicich, M. 139

Raimbaut de Vaqueiras 741*f.*

Rainer, F. 372, 376, 387–390, 392, 402, 409, 411, 766

raising (phonological) 11*f.*, 14, 17, 22*f.*, 29, 154, 157*f.*, 161*f.*, 192, 364, 714*f.*, 837, 877

raising (syntactic) 212, 215, 234*f.*, 456, 464, 466, 489*f.*, 492, 494

Rajna, P. 65

Ramat, P. 43*f.*, 371, 514, 517

Ramus, F. 323

Rati, M. 44, 204

Ratto, G. B. 144

Reboul, A. 507*f.*

recomplementation 218, 221, 273

reduplication 397, 413*f.*, 854

reflexives 50*f.*, 222–224, 448, 474, 609, 763, 854, 883,
  argumental 223, 448
  pronouns 491, 797*f.*, 607, 609, 815, 816, 818

regional Italian *see* Italian

registers 34, 43*f.*, 47, 55, 95, 128, 194, 205, 272–274, 392, 423, 434–436, 494, 528, 532, 546, 632*f.*, 804, 807*f.*, 811, 814, 818–820, 827, 844, 879, 888

Regula, M. 129

Reichenbach, H. 558, 561

reinforcers 421–423, 797

Reinhart, T. 475, 521, 537

relational grammar 447, 473

relative clauses 43, 205, 431*f.*, 498*f.*, 507, 562, 603, 799, 820*f.*

relative constructions 43, 72, 659

relative pronouns 43*f.*, 194, 288, 599, 603, 609, 731, 799*f.*, 810, 820*f.*

Remberger, E.-M. 474–478, 481, 537, 878

Renner, V. 756

Renzi, L. 5, 18, 62, 123, 130, 132*f.*, 203–206, 216, 219, 22, 232*f.*, 238, 244, 248, 253, 255, 260, 263, 417, 483, 547, 549, 551, 554, 598, 650, 655, 760, 765–769, 830

repertoire 614–628

Repetti, L. 169, 176, 315, 355

Resistance Principle 756

restandardization 660

restrictives 431, 498*f.*, 507

restructuring 455, 489, 492–495, 828

retroflex sounds 859

reverence, reverential forms 247, 251, 253, 796, *see also* address forms

Rezasco, G. 92

rheme 521*f.*, 533

rhythm 322*f.*

Ricca, D. 35, 44, 342, 374*f.*, 377, 392, 407

Ricci, A. 62, 78, 520, 686

Ricci, C. 689

Ricci, I. 658

Ricci, L. 101, 108

Richardson, B. 98–100, 102–105, 107, 135, 138

Rigamonti, A. 518, 567

Riggsby, A. 160

Rindler-Schjerve, R. 223, 870

Rini, J. 364

Ritmo laurenziano 15, 61

Rivoira, M. 624*f.*

Rizzi, L. 43, 118, 209, 218, 444, 489, 492–494, 500, 520, 522, 524, 533–536, 539, 541*f.*, 546, 567

Roberts, I. 21, 451, 423, 468, 494

Robustelli, C. 27, 132, 273, 385, 428, 436, 842

Rohlfs, G. 8–14, 21, 26, 28*f.*, 32*f.*, 38, 44, 83, 132, 164*f.*, 167, 174, 181*f.*, 187–189, 191–193, 195, 199, 201, 204*f.*, 218, 223, 228, 230, 244, 247–249, 269, 319, 354, 361*f.*, 365, 368, 403, 407, 409, 436, 658, 667, 840, 844, 859

Rollinger, R. 520

Roma, Romani 612, 625

Romaine, S. 512

Roman Empire 4, 7, 579, 582

Romance languages 3, 16, 41–43, 45–59, 172, 183, 189, 204, 271*f.*, 353, 370, 437, 530, 543, 550, 560, 566*f.*, 576*f.*, 708, 714, 718, 744, 751, 757, 760

Romanesco 111, 116, 644, 657, 829, 863, 867*f.*

Romani, F. 871

Romani, G. 790

Romanian 46–48, 50, 52*f.*, 245, 348, 423, 546, 775, 783, 788

Romanians 245, 661, 772–774, 776, 780, 786

Romano, A. 301*f.*, 305, 314, 322, 327, 624

Romansh 3, 629, 682*f.*, 758

Romanticism 71

Rome 6, 22, 39, 58, 64*f.*, 67*f.*, 74–76, 89, 95, 97, 101*f.*, 116, 124*f.*, 248, 255, 259*f.*, 303, 339, 602, 621, 626, 657, 749, 777, 829–837, 840, 842–844, 847, 851*f.*, 854

roof language 625, 717*f.*, 736

root (lexical) 46, 829, 179–183, 189*f.*, 195, 198*f.*, 288, 291, 319, 321, 349, 352, 357, 362, 383, 388*f.*, 395

Rosen, C. 361

Rossebastiano, A. 746

Rossi-Doria, M. 865

Rossi, A. 638, 640, 645

Rossi, F. 86, 636, 644

Rubino, A. 722*f.*, 729, 785

Rucellai, G. 102, 104

Rüegg, R. 39, 76, 818, 852

Ruffino, G. 79*f.*

Ruggieri, R. 199

Ruscelli, G. 100, 107*f.*, 125, 136

Russi, C. 117, 193

Rustichello da Pisa 740

Rydberg, G. 369

/s/, voicing of 117, 164, 300, 302, 337, 340, 345*f.*, 602, 658, 693, 808, 833*f.*

Sabatini, A. 385

Sabatini, F. 72, 115, 123, 390, 637–639, 645*f.*, 790*f.*

Sabbatino, P. 103

Šabaršula, J. 369

Sagey, E. 336

Saino, S. 86

Saint Catherine 65

Sala, M. 754

Salento 6, 58, 622, 747, 854*f.*, 858–860

Salomone, R. 88

Saltarelli, M. 130

Salvatore, E. 759, 793, 796*f.*

Salvi, G. 62, 131–133, 194, 203–207, 211, 216, 219, 222, 224*f.*, 227, 229–230, 471, 479, 498, 528, 554, 490*f.*, 494, 485*f.*, 488, 481*f.*, 806, 849

Salviati, L. 66, 106–108, 126

Salvioni, C. 118, 366

Salza, P. 303, 342

Samek-Lodovici, V. 427, 522, 541

Sampson, G. 158, 177

Samu, B. 25, 205, 218*f.*

San Francisco 724, 726

San Marino 3, 628

San Martino, M. 125

sandhi 24, 29, 318, 336, 338, 807, 810*f.*, 834, 836

Sanfelici, E. 821*f.*

Sanga, G. 587, 808, 810

Sanskrit 585

Sansò, A. 643

Sanson, H. 109, 134, 138*f.*, 145–147

Sansovino, F. 107*f.*, 125

Sardinia, Sardinian 5, 19, 24*f.*, 58, 89*f.*, 114*f.*, 139, 239, 338, 613, 623–625, 743*f.*, 757*f.*, 869–890

Sardinian regional Italian *see* Italian, regional

Sassarese 871, 873, 882

Savoia, L. 5, 19, 21, 31, 113, 170, 260, 407, 552, 689, 829*f.*, 842

Savy, R. 658

Sbarbato, C. 257

Scaglione, S. 723*f.*

Scala, A. 587, 625

Scalise, S. 351, 372–374, 383, 388, 400, 402, 765

Schiaffini, A. 78*f.*, 85

Schifano, N. 21, 464, 468

Schirru, G. 758, 760

Schmid, H. 255

Schmid, S. 300, 322, 330, 683, 832

Schmitt Jensen, J. 129

Schneider, K. 399

schools 17, 62, 64, 72, 74–76, 77, 83, 88, 103, 113–117, 120*f.*, 127*f.*, 131, 135, 139–142, 148–150, 282, 584, 598, 604, 608, 611, 621, 625*f.*, 628*f.*, 655, 659, 661, 688, 690, 718, 760, 778, 783, 785, 789, 791, 793, 804, 813, 866, 869, 871

Schroten, J. 552

Schuchardt, H. 714

Schürr, F. 155
schwa 23, 175, 177, 299
Schwarze, C. 123, 130*f.*, 345*f.*, 380, 481, 637
Schwarzschild, R. 538
Schwegler, A. 363, 370
Schweickard, W. 576, 712, 750*f.*
Schwenter, S. 517
Scipione Lentulo 137
Scoppa, A. 139
Scotellaro, R. 865
scripta 79, 737
scrittura mercantesca 80
sdrucciole 318
Searle, J. 502
segmental phonology 331–344
Segneri, P. 67
Segre, C. 117, 737
Seifart, F. 762
Selkirk, E. 538
semantic headedness 373
semasiology 576*f.*, 581, 588
semicolto, *semicolti* 653, 791–794, 796, 798–801, 804*f.*, 809
Senza Peluso, M. 673
sequence of tense 483, 488, 561*f.*
Serao, M. 145, 860
Serianni, L. 63, 68, 72, 74, 81, 110, 114, 120, 130, 132*f.*, 138, 144, 238, 249, 265–269, 276, 283, 285, 289, 528, 579, 581, 631, 637, 651, 758,

764, 831, 849
Sermoneta, G. 716, 749
sex 374*f.*, 385, 666–668, 674, 676, 764
Sgall, P. 521
Sgroi, S. 127, 238, 260, 655
Shih, C. 429*f.*
shortening of consonants 338, 796
sibilant voicing 171, 337, 340, 602, 859
Sicilian, Sicily 6, 23, 59, 62, 79, 81, 103, 114*f.*, 117, 281, 582, 661, 666, 709, 715–717, 742–744, 747*f.*, 749*f.*, 757, 863, 866, 868
Sicilian regional Italian *see* Italian, regional
Siebetcheu, R. 771, 776*f.*, 779, 785
Siena, Sienese 12, 29, 62, 65*f.*, 104, 182, 659, 831, 833*f.*, 836, 842, 844
Signorelli, A. 720
Silone, I. 864*f.*
simil 411–413
Simone, R. 120, 123, 149, 300, 655, 886
Simoneschi, L. 150
singulative 354
Sinti 612, 625
Skilliter, S. 711
Skytte, G. 362, 490, 492, 494, 499
slang 587*f.*, 819, 861
Słapek, D. 362, 425
Slavic 42, 706, 708, 714
Slovene, Slovenia 613, 625*f.*, 627*f.*, 629, 679

Smith, C. 564, 567
Smith, J. C. 34, 200, 421, 757
Smith, P. 622
Soave, F. 69, 119, 122, 127, 129
Sobrero, A. 16, 657, 662, 818
social networks 647, 652, 662, 676, 732, 785, 804*f.*, 871
Solarino, R. 131
Soler, A. 743
Söll, L. 638
Sorace, A. 828
Sorianello, P. 322, 325, 328, 350, 665, 667, 834*f.*
Sornicola, R. 520*f.*, 522–524, 527, 530, 642, 659, 666, 767
Sorrento, L. 86, 260
Sosnowski, R. 79, 85
Sotgiu, S. 143
Sottile, R. 866, 868
sound change 153*f.*, 180
South America 731*f.*
South Tyrol 613, 623*f.*, 627
Spagnoletti, C. 361
Spain 757
Spanish 252, 147, 423, 484, 551, 571, 583, 636, 662, 711*f.*, 731, 743*f.*, 757, 760, 764, 775, 780, 787, 802*f.*
Sound Pattern of English 334*f.*
speech acts 237, 395
spelling 15, 24, 75, 104, 107*f.*, 117, 163, 177, 267, 281–299, 328, 651, 660, 795, 810*f.*, 832, 837

Speroni, S. 103
Spina, C. 744
Spina, S. 672
spirantization 28, 169*f.*, 811, 833, 836
Spitzer, L. 365*f.*, 791
Split-Infl Hypothesis 444
Spolsky, B. 778
Spore, P. 129
Sprachbund 41*f.*
Sprea Baroni, M. 141
Sproat, R. 429*f.*
Squartini, M. 204*f.*, 471, 486, 496, 519, 552, 557, 560*f.*, 565–567, 600, 840*f.*
St Clair, R. 615
Stammerjohann, H. 78*f.*, 85*f.*, 522, 706
Standard Average European 41–45
standardization, standard Italian *see* Italian, standard
stare + gerund 277, 566, 600, 602, 766, 841, 882
Stark, E. 550–552
Starke, M. 37, 338
Stavinschi, A. 35
Stavrou, M. 433
Steriade, D. 172
Stevens, M. 316, 338
Storto, G. 551*f.*
Stowell, T. 767
stra 397, 408*f.*

strambotti 739
stress 175–177, 348–350,
secondary 177, 321, 349*f.*
Strik Lievers, F. 766
structural borrowing 748, 756, 768*f.*
Structuralism 118, 120*f.*, 129*f.*, 331
Stump, G. 399
Stussi, A. 60, 78*f.*, 709
subject 443
subject pronoun *see* pronouns
subjectification 409, 411, 514–516
subjunctive 39, 116, 241, 482, 486*f.*, 496, 499, 600, 603*f.*, 654–657, 660, 724, 730, 799, 810, 813, 883,
imperfect, morphology of 49*f.*, 181–183, 358, 367*f.*
present, morphology of 31, 36, 49*f.*, 181*f.*, 184–187, 190–192, 358, 366*f.*
subordination 39, 609, 798, 859
substrate, substratum 60, 112, 577*f.*
suffixes, suffixation 33, 292, 321, 381–393, 399–413, 587, 589, 727, 763, 803, 877
superiority 239
superlatives 296, 409, 768, 798, 887
superstrate, superstratum 577, 741, 744
suppletion 45, 193, 366, 391
suprasegmentals 172–177, 318–329, 344–350
surnames 255*f.*, 354, 876, 879
Swearingen, A. 365
Switzerland 616, 628*f.*, 679–707, 758

syllable, syllable structure 156–158, 171–175, 177, 301, 314*f.*, 344–348, 813, 872
syncretism 50, 191*f.*, 365, 818, 850
syntagmatic verbs 56*f.*
Tabarchino 625, 874
Tagliavini, C. 75, 160, 364, 590
Taliàn 723, 725, 731
Talmy, L. 57
Tamburini, F. 373, 395
Tanzi, A. 180
Tasso, B. 103
Tasso, T. 66, 81, 86, 137
Tassoni, A. 65, 107
Tavoni, M. 79*f.*, 83, 95*f.*, 124
Tavosanis, M. 647, 732
Tekavčić, P. 132, 164, 195, 352, 361, 369
teknonymy 242
television 75, 115, 117, 149*f.*, 330, 637*f.*, 657, 726, 754, 759, 790*f.*
Telmon, T. 300, 330, 804, 811, 818, 827, 830, 832, 838, 850
Telve, S. 87*f.*, 108, 271*f.*
Tempesta, I. 854, 856, 858*f.*
temporal relatives 821
teoria cortigiana 64–66, 125
Tesi, R. 65, 270, 278, 760
Tesio, G. 117
Tesoro della lingua italiana delle origini 62, 654
Testa, E. 792

Testimonianze di Travale 9*f.*, 61

texting 293, 297*f.*

theme (thematic) vowel 25, 31*f.*, 179, 190, 351*f.*, 358–362, 364, 383, 368*f.*, 389

theme 207, 217, 392, 430*f.*, 443*f.*, 453, 474, 521, 525*f.*, 533, 528, 800*f.*, 856

thetic (clauses, contexts) 462, 472, 474–478, 606,
    thetic judgements 520
    theticity 528, 546

Thiella, A. 436

Thomas-Fusi, E. 141

Thomason, S. 723, 755–757

Thornton, A. M. 47, 195, 201*f.*, 299, 351–354, 356*f.*, 362–364, 372, 375, 378, 385, 388, 394, 397*f.*, 604*f.*, 839, 850

Three Crowns *see* *Tre Corone*

Ticino 3, 628, 681, 683*f.*, 695, 758

Tietze, A. 713

Timpanaro, S. 69, 74, 111, 113

tipo 512–514

Tizzone (da Pofi), G. 125, 136

Tobler-Mussafia Law 212

Togeby, K. 366

Tolomei, C. 66, 96, 104*f.*, 107

Tomasin, L. 7, 61, 63, 67, 71, 79, 80, 87, 120–122, 206, 710, 713, 742*f.*, 746*f.*, 750*f.*, 762

Tommaseo, N. 73, 89, 91*f.*, 142, 669, 671, 713

topic 21, 45, 205, 213, 217, 221, 228, 437, 444, 452*f.*, 475–478, 485, 520, 522–546, 674,
    contrastive 539

hanging 210, 217, 524, 537
shifting or *continuing* 537
stage 475–478, 480, 485
toponyms *see* place names
Toronto 728, 732
Torriano, G. 138
Tortora, C. 21, 37
Tosi, A. 758*f.*
Toso, F. 624, 708, 714
Tosto, E. 75
Touratier, C. 360, 366
Tovares, A. 776
Tovena, L. 357, 404
Trabalza, C. 95, 119, 126, 128
Tramutoli, L. 780*f.*
transitives, transitivity 207, 221–223, 229*f.*, 381, 421, 443, 445–449, 451, 474, 478, 491, 496, 523, 525, 695, 775, 854, 879, 883
translation 145*f.*, 681, 698, 711, 737, 748–750, 755, 758, 787
trapassato prossimo 558–559
trapassato remoto 271*f.*, 558
Traugott, E. 409, 514, 516, 519
Tre Corone 16, 81–84, 86, 111, 135
Trevisan, V. 245
Treviso 97*f.*, 742
Trifone, P. 60, 65, 132, 575, 626, 713, 724, 792, 830*f.*, 834, 866*f.*
Trioli, G. 147
Trissino, G, G. 66, 102–105, 107, 125

troncamento 161

Tropea, G. 858

troubadours 741*f.*

Trovato, P. 83*f.*, 98–100, 103*f.*, 125

Trudgill, P. 617, 627, 831

Trumper, J. 654, 670, 810

truncation 33, 72, 196, 284, 295, 354, 365*f.*, 633, 836, 840*f.*, 854, 876*f.*

Tsoulas, G. 418

tu 244–246

Turchetta, B. 720, 732

Turin 75*f.*, 89*f.*, 117, 626, 662, 758, 776, 780, 784, 810, 868

Turin Sociolinguistics School 614

Turkish 584*f.*, 711*f.*, 751, 757

Tuscan 7–15, 18–41, 60–86, 95–109, 113, 125–128, 132*f.*, 135*f.*, 142*f.*, 147, 153, 156, 162–170, 174, 182, 184*f.*, 191–193, 201, 206, 228, 244, 248*f.*, 266, 269, 281*f.*, 337–340, 368*f.*, 390, 421, 423, 576, 621, 626, 657–659, 710, 717*f.*, 735, 738, 740, 742, 746, 753*f.*, 829–835, 841*f.*

Tuscan regional Italian *see* Italian, regional

Tuttle, E. 165, 168*f.*

tutto 226, 294, 416, 452, 461, 466, 554, 881*f.*

Tylus, J. 146

U-pattern 184–186

Uberti-Bona, M. 771, 787

Udine 626

Ulfsbjorninn, S. 355

Ulleland, M. 129

Unaccusative Hypothesis 474, 525

unaccusatives 221–224, 229*f.*, 374, 421, 446–449, 451, 474–476, 485, 493, 496, 499*f.*, 525, 606, 883

unergatives 51, 221, 224, 229*f.*, 443, 446*f.*, 449, 451, 474, 476, 883

Unification of Italy 16, 59, 72, 74, 89, 93, 114*f.*, 122, 127, 139–143, 148*f.*, 575, 597, 621, 636, 679, 720, 758, 765, 790*f.*, 862

United States 720*f.*, 725–727, 757, 759

urbanization 754, 869

V 2, *see* verb second

Väänänen, V. 164

Val Bregaglia 629, 681, 684

Valdese community 625

Valente, V. 858, 868

Valera, S. 394

Van der Auwera, J. 41*f.*, 45, 569

Van der Veer, B. 161

Van Goethem, K. 411*f.*

Van Lier, E. 404

Vanelli, L. 26, 35, 121, 131, 190*f.*, 318, 330, 336, 343, 345*f.*, 350, 421, 423, 479–481, 486, 488, 490*f.*, 494, 498, 562, 660, 767, 774, 786, 806

Varchi, B. 66, 96, 105–107

Vardakis, G. 716

variationist perspective 651*f.*, 656*f.*, 666

Varvaro, A. 659, 743*f.*, 750, 754, 861

Vasari, G. 67

Vaugelas, C. 147

Vayra, M. 328, 545

Vedovelli, M. 720–722, 725*f.*, 728, 732, 786*f.*

Vékás, D. 323
Velupillai, V. 714
Vendler, Z. 564
Venetan regional Italian *see* Italian, regional.
Venetian 18, 78, 87, 586, 707*f.*, 710*f.*, 713, 716*f.*, 731, 747
Venezia Giulia 625, 773, 777
Venice 18, 65*f.*, 78, 84, 96–99, 706–708, 716, 790
Venier, F. 522, 528*f.*
verb
    historical morphology 180–192
verb movement 463–470
verb second 204*f.*, 207–217, 219–221, 455
Verga, G. 93, 864*f.*
verismo 864
Verri, A., Verri brothers 68, 87
Vertua Gentile, A. 143, 148
Viani-Visconti Cavanna, M. 140, 143
Vico, G. 69
Videsott, P. 808
Vidos, B. 713
Vietti, A. 302, 601*f.*, 606, 613, 617, 621, 654, 658, 662, 771, 775, 808, 816
Vigilante, M. 146
Vikner, S. 219
Villani, G. 62
Vincent, N. 111, 156, 203, 218, 234, 269, 273*f.*, 358*f.*, 431, 433–436, 566
Vineis, E. 124

Viola, L. 760, 764, 766
Violi, P. 668, 670
Virdis, M. 872–874, 877
Visconti, J. 277, 501, 508, 514–516, 518, 823
Vitale, M. 68, 70*f.*, 73, 115, 689, 758
Viviani, A. 530, 532*f.*
Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca 65*f.*, 69, 107*f.*, 126, 596
vocabolario di base 592
vocative 200, 248, 253–269, 354, 419, 426, 482, 836, 854, 876*f.*,
  inverse vocatives 260
Voghera, M. 349, 379, 512, 523, 604, 636, 642, 659
voi 192, 194, 204, 237–240, 244*f.*, 247–253, 255*f.*, 260–263, 276, 296, 698, 816, 839, 856
voicing 10, 158, 163*f.*, 166*f.*, 169*f.*, 175, 345, 713, 795, 808, 810, 832*f.*, 834, 859
volgarizzamenti 737, 739
Volpi, M. 9, 13, 77, 799
Von der Gabelenz, H. G. 521
von Wartburg, W. 5, 369, 744
vowels 154–162, 302*f.*, 314, 340–344,
  harmony 156, 875*f.*
  length, lengthening 154*f.*, 156, 176, 331, 342, 345, 872
stressed 155–160
unstressed 160–162
Wackernagel, J. 367
Wagner, M.-L. 790, 882
Wahlgren, E. 368
Waller, G. 137

Walser 625
Waltereit, R. 503, 511
Wandruszka, U. 390, 486*f.*, 522, 527
Wanner, D. 218
Watts, I. 146
Weil, H. 521
Weinreich, U. 723
wh-doubling 21
wh-*in situ* 21, 542
WhatsApp messages 447*f.*, 647*f.*
Whinnom, K. 714
Whorf, B. 41
Wilkins, E. 81
Wireback, K. 166
Wolof 780*f.*
women 134–150
word boundaries 315, 317*f.*, 322, 338, 659*f.*, 794, 836
word formation 587–590, 802*f.*
word order 207*f.*, 211, 225, 415, 446, 471–478, 522–533, 730, 878,
  SVO 45, 207, 219, 220, 471, 473, 478, 544
  VOS 207, 523
  VS 474, 476, 523
  VSO 207, 478, 523, 526–529, *see also* inversion of subject and verb
World War I 149, 651, 720, 722, 801, 890
World War II 75, 115, 129, 144, 149, 20, 722, 728*f.*, 759, 869, 889
writing 7*f.*, 15–18, 62*f.*, 78–80, 106, 281–299
Wyatt, M. 137

Yaguello, M. 668, 670
Ylinärä, E. 543
yod 164–169, 184, 189
Yoon, S. 573
youth varieties 588
Zaccarello, M. 736
Zadar 708
Zagona, K. 484
Zamboni, A. 830
Zamparelli, R. 420*f.*, 550–553, 555
Zampese, L. 131
Zanato, T. 96
Zannoni, G. B. 69, 366
Zanuttini, R. 21, 44, 204, 481, 517, 567, 569*f.*, 573
Zeijlstra, H. 567, 569*f.*
Zinelli, F. 709, 741
Zipf, G. 592
Zlitni, M. 715
Zolli, P. 672, 747, 762, 860
Zubizarreta, M.-L. 544
Zwarts, J. 550

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List of Illustrations

Part II Historical linguistics

Chapter 8 Historical phonology

Figure 8.1 The vowel system of Latin.

Figure 8.2 Modern vowels and diphthongs.

Figure 8.3 Development of stressed vowels from Latin to Italian.

Figure 8.4 Development of unstressed vowels.

Chapter 11 Address systems and their history

Figure 11.1 Speech act model.

Part III Structures of Italian

Chapter 13 Orthography and writing

Figure 13.1 Correspondence between vocalic sounds in stressed syllables and letters.

Figure 13.2 Correspondence between sounds and letters for approximants and close vowels.

Figure 13.3 Correspondence between sounds and letters for velar stops.

Figure 13.4 Correspondence between sounds and letters for palatal affricates.

Figure 13.5 From letters to sounds: the phonological values of the letters…

Figure 13.6 Correspondence between the letter S and the sounds it can represent.

Figure 13.7 Correspondence between the letter Z and the sounds it can represent.

Figure 13.8 Correspondence between the sequences SC/SCI/SCH and the sounds they can represent.

Figure 13.9 Correspondence between the groups GL/GLI and the sounds they can represent.

Chapter 14 Phonetics

Figure 14.1 The vowel sounds of Italian.

Figure 14.2 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to bilabial articulations realized for...

Figure 14.3 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to labio-dental articulations realized for...

Figure 14.4 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to alveodental (laminal-alveolar + apico-dental...

Figure 14.5 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to apico-alveodental articulations realized for...

Figure 14.6 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to lamino-alveolar articulations realized for...

Figure 14.7 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to lamino-alveolar (lateral) articulations realized...

Figure 14.8 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to (post)alveolar articulations realized for...

Figure 14.9 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to palatal (lateral) articulations realized...

Figure 14.10 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to articulations realized in the...

Figure 14.11 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms corresponding to nasal articulations realized in...

Figure 14.12 Orograms with rough indications corresponding to articulatory settings realizing: (a)...

Figure 14.13 Orograms with rough indications corresponding to articulatory settings realizing: (a)...

Figure 14.14 Orograms with rough indications corresponding to articulatory settings realizing: (a)...

Figure 14.15 Orograms, waveforms, and spectrograms with rough indications corresponding to the…

Figure 14.16 Overlapping orograms showing different articulatory configurations of the main Italian…

Figure 14.17 Waveforms, spectrograms, and graphic curves of acoustic variables for stress…

Figure 14.18 Waveforms, spectrograms, and graphic curves of acoustic variables for stress…

Figure 14.19 Scatter plot of Delta values (ΔC vs ΔV) for different…

Figure 14.20 'Gianni ha preso il giornale' ('Gianni has taken the newspaper')…

Figure 14.21 Prototypical diagrams (based on sentences produced by two speakers, in…

Figure 14.22 Focus effect on pitch curve and timing on the three…

Chapter 23 Information structure

Figure 23.1 Pitch contour of the utterance with Mirative FF (cf. 50): **…**

Figure 23.2 Pitch contour of the utterance with Corrective FF: *Alle Maldive* …

Part IV Sociolinguistics

Chapter 26 Standardization

Figure 26.1 Clusters of neo-standard features and literary standard features in students' speech.

Figure 26.2 Lexical variation between and within neo-standard Italian and literary standard Italian.

Chapter 28 Diamesic variation and registers

Figure 28.1 Medial language variation and examples of Italian varieties/realizations.

Figure 28.2 Mixed modes of medial communication (reported speech in newspaper articles).

Figure 28.3 Degree of conceptualization of three electronic text genres.

Part V Italian outside of Italy

Chapter 31 Italian in Switzerland

Figure 31.1 Varieties of Italian in Switzerland.

Figure 31.2 Language areas of Switzerland. Main languages.

Figure 31.3 Hierarchical reinterpretation of Petralli's (1990) taxonomy.

Part VI Italian in contact

Chapter 36 Italian and immigrant languages

Figure 36.1 Chinese electronics shop.

Figure 36.2 Notice in L2 Italian.

Chapter 38 Northern regional Italian

Figure 38.1 The linguistic repertoire of Italians.

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List of Tables

Part I The making of Italian

Chapter 1 Defining Italian

Table 1.1 Linguistic distance between Latin and the dialects of Italy (Devoto 1970)

Table 1.2 First person plural of the present indicative in Italo-Romance

Table 1.3 Treatment of intervocalic voiceless stops in Italian and Tuscany

Table 1.4 Italian and Tuscan possessive paradigms

Table 1.5 Comparison of the present indicative/subjunctive paradigms in Italian and Florentine

Table 1.6 Formation of the 3PL preterite in Italian and Florentine

Table 1.7 Italian and Tuscan demonstrative systems

Table 1.8 Italian and Tuscan spatial adverb systems

Table 1.9 Present indicative paradigm of the verb SLEEP in Italian, Florentine, and Carrarese

Table 1.10 Core morphosyntactic features of SAE compared across German, French, and Italian

Table 1.11 Some examples of Italian geosynonyms

Table 1.12 Some denominations for the division of the day

Part II Historical linguistics

Chapter 8 Historical phonology

Table 8.1 Effects of *gorgia toscana* in Tuscan

Table 8.2 Development in open stressed syllables

Table 8.3 Stressed short mid vowel in an open syllable in proparoxytones

Table 8.4 Low mid vowels before a nasal coda

Table 8.5 Diphthongs

Table 8.6 Latin consonants

Table 8.7 Italian consonants

Table 8.8 Yod and [g]/[d] + yod and the origin of alveo-palatal and dental affricates

Table 8.9 [k]/[t] + yod and the origin of alveo-palatal and dental affricates

Table 8.10 Velar stop + front vowel

Table 8.11 Treatment of short intervocalic alveo-palatals

Table 8.12 Palatalization from Latin to Italian

Table 8.13 Yod from post-consonantal [l]

Table 8.14 Lenition of intervocalic obstruents

Table 8.15 Consonant assimilation

Table 8.16 Dissimilation

Table 8.17 2SG and 3SG present indicative verb forms

Table 8.18 ACC.SG and ACC.PL forms

Table 8.19 NOM.PL forms

Table 8.20 ‘Phonetic hypothesis’ of Italian [i]/[e] inflexional endings

Chapter 9 Historical morphology

Table 9.1 Continuation of Latin perfective allomorphs in Italian

Table 9.2 The fate of Latin perfective allomorphs in Italian

Table 9.3 Alleged emergence of root allomorphy triggered by [w]

Table 9.4 Typical old Tuscan ‘U-pattern’ alternations created by sound change

Table 9.5 Old Tuscan ‘U-pattern’ velar-palatal alternations

Table 9.6 ‘U-pattern’ alternations in modern Italian

Table 9.7 Historically unexpected alternations
Table 9.8 ‘N-pattern’ vowel allomorphy
Table 9.9 ‘N-pattern’ distribution of reflexes of UADERE and AMBULARE
Table 9.10 Distribution of alternants in *uscire*
Table 9.11 Paradigmatic distribution of the augment
Table 9.12 Syncretism in the early Italo-Romance first conjugation present
Table 9.13 Syncretism in the modern Italian first-conjugation present
Table 9.14 Invariance and variance in compound plurals
Table 9.15 Invariance in masculine compound plurals
Chapter 12 Archaism and innovation
Table 12.1 Some examples of semantic changes
Part III Structures of Italian
Chapter 13 Orthography and writing
Table 13.1 Single and double consonants
Chapter 14 Phonetics
Table 14.1 Italian phonemes
Table 14.2 Constraints on consonant clusters
Table 14.3 Clusters with /s/ and /z/
Chapter 15 Phonology
Table 15.1 Italian consonants
Table 15.2 Distinctive features of the Italian consonants
Table 15.3 Places of articulation and distinctive features
Table 15.4 The Italian vowels
Table 15.5 The place features of Italian vowels
Table 15.6 Italian syllable types

Chapter 16 Inflexional morphology

Table 16.1 Italian noun inflexional classes

Table 16.2 Italian noun inflexional classes

Table 16.3 The Italian *-i* plurals

Table 16.4 Forms of the articles

Table 16.5 Present and past imperfective verb pradigms

Table 16.6 Italian perfect

Table 16.7 Italian future and conditional forms

Table 16.8 Italian present subjunctive forms

Table 16.9 Present subjunctive forms of *dare* 'to give', *avere* 'to have', and *andare* 'to go'

Table 16.10 Italian imperfect subjunctive forms

Table 16.11 Italian *passato prossimo* (present perfect) and future (*finire* 'to finish')

Chapter 19 The nominal group

Table 19.1 Definite, indefinite, and partitive article forms in Italian

Table 19.2 Italian demonstratives and reinforcers

Table 19.3 Possessive forms

Table 19.4 Properties of direct and indirect modification

Table 19.5 Ordering of Italian direct and indirect modification adjectival classes

Table 19.6 Subject personal pronouns

Chapter 20 The verbal group

Table 20.1 Verb placement in Italian

Chapter 23 Information structure

Table 23.1 Percentage (and tokens) of elicited information foci

Chapter 24 Semantics

Table 24.1 Simple and compound forms in the verb (indicative)

Table 24.2 Forms for the imperfective past (adapted from Squartini 2015:73)

Part IV Sociolinguistics

Chapter 26 Standardization

Table 26.1 Neo-standard features and literary standard features

Chapter 27 Multilingualism

Table 27.1 Abstract repertoire structures

Table 27.2 The abstract model for bidialectalism

Chapter 28 Diamesic variation and registers

Table 28.1 Diaphasically marked synonyms

Table 28.2 Basic medial forms of communication and core linguistic realization

Table 28.3 Active competence of spoken Italian (De Mauro 1963 [1999]; from Lorenzetti 2002:22)

Table 28.4 Linguistic features of *italiano dell'uso medio* (Sabatini 1990)

Part V Italian outside of Italy

Chapter 31 Italian in Switzerland

Table 31.1 Features of non-dominant varieties/nations and common language attitudes and language behaviour (adapted from Muhr 2012)

Table 31.2 Petralli's taxonomy (adapted from Petralli 1990)

Table 31.3 Proposal for a synoptic taxonomy

Part VI Italian in contact

Chapter 34 Italian in contact: The Middle Ages

Table 34.1 Presence or absence of traces of linguistic contact

Table 34.2 Sources of linguistic contact

Chapter 35 Italian in contact: The modern period

Table 35.1 Outcomes of language change

Chapter 36 Italian and immigrant languages

Table 36.1 Largest groups of immigrants by nationality in Italy, 1 January 2021

Table 36.2 Declared mother tongue of foreign citizens older than 6 years of age

Table 36.3 The Nigerian linguistic repertoire

Chapter 38 Northern regional Italian

Table 38.1 Strong pronouns: Italian vs northern dialects

Table 38.2 Patterns of syncretism in the paradigm of object clitics: Italian vs northern regional Italian vs northern dialects

Chapter 39 Central regional Italian

Table 39.1 Area mediana

Table 39.2 Tuscan and area perimediana

Table 39.3 Macerata third-person pronouns

Table 39.4 *Area perimediana* third-person pronouns

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