

## UNAGREEMENT BETWEEN ITALIAN AND SOUTHERN ITALIAN DIALECTS

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Definite plural noun phrases trigger third person agreement in Standard Italian/Std.It. (1). Non-third person agreement with lexical subjects is only possible with adnominal pronoun constructions (APCs) using pronominal determiners (Postal 1969), as in (2).

- (1) I bambini \*giochiamo/ \*giocate/ giocano. (2) Noi bambini giochiamo.  
 the kids play.1PL play.2PL play.3PL we kids play.1PL  
 ‘\*We/\*you/the kids are playing.’ ‘We kids are playing.’ [Std. It.]

In some Southern Italian varieties, however, all three plural verb forms can appear with a definite plural subject, e.g. Northern Calabrese (3), and Southern Calabrese (4).

- (3) I quattrarə iucwamə/ iucwazə/ iocənə. (4) I figghioli iocamu/ iocati/ iocanu.  
 the kids play.1PL play.2PL play.3PL the kids play.1PL play.2PL play.3PL  
 ‘We/you/the kids are playing.’ [N.Cal.] ‘We/you/the kids are playing.’ [S.Cal.]

**Unagreement** Such a pattern of apparent mismatches between a definite plural subject and non-third person verbal agreement has been described as unagreement for Spanish (Ackema and Neeleman 2013), see (5), and has also been observed for a variety of other languages, e.g. Standard Modern Greek/SMG (6), Catalan, Bulgarian (Choi 2014; Höhn 2014). We suggest that the Southern Italian patterns are also instances of unagreement.

- (5) Los niños jugamos/ jugáis/ juegan. (6) Ta paidia paizoume/ paizete/ paizoun.  
 DET.PL kids play.1PL play.2PL play.3PL the kids play.1PL play.2PL play.3PL  
 ‘We/you/the kids are playing.’ [Spanish] ‘We/you/the kids are playing.’ [SMG]

**Complication for previous analyses** It has been proposed (Choi 2014; Höhn 2014) that there is a correlation between (a) the availability of unagreement and the presence of definite articles in adnominal pronoun constructions (APCs), see (7), and (b) the absence of unagreement and the lack of a definite article in APCs, see (8).

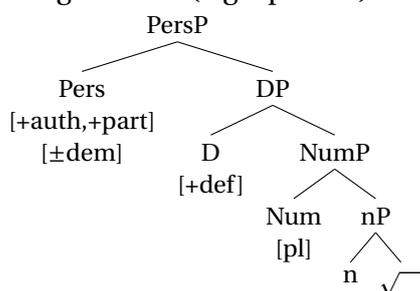
- (7) Unagreement (8) No unagreement  
 emis \*(i) fitites [Greek] noi (\*gli) studenti [Std. Italian]  
 nosotros \*(los) estudiantes [Spanish] nós (\*os) estudantes [E.Port]  
 we \*(the) students we \*(the) students

However, the Southern Italian varieties suggest that this is not universally valid, since they allow unagreement although their APCs do not contain a definite article:

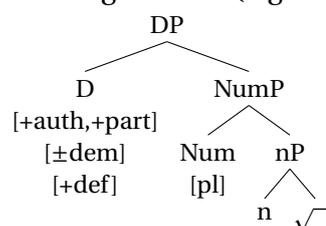
- (9) Nua \*(i) quattrarə iucwamə. (10) Nui \*(i) figghioli iocamu.  
 we the kids play.1PL we the kids play.1PL  
 ‘We kids are playing.’ [N.Cal.] ‘We kids are playing.’ [S.Cal.]

**Analysis** Höhn (2014) proposes that languages with the structure in (11) allow unagreement because person features are encoded independently of the definite article, while unagreement is blocked in languages with pronominal determiners due to the requirements on the realisation of D. We adopt the spirit of Höhn’s analysis, but suggest that the structure in (10) does not necessarily rule out unagreement—as instantiated in the examples from Northern (3) and Southern Calabrese (4).

- (11) Unagreement (e.g. Spanish)



- (12) No unagreement (e.g. Std. Italian)



Adopting the framework of Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993), we propose that the crucial difference between Std. It. and the Southern varieties lies in the specification of the vocabulary items (VIs) realising the D head. In Std. It., the definite article is specified for third person ([-auth,-part]) as in (13), while in the Southern varieties it is underspecified for person, cf. (14).

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (13) Std. It.                              | (14) Northern/Southern Calabrese             |
| D[+auth,+part,+def,pl] ↔ <i>noi</i>        | D[+auth,+part,+dem,+def,pl] ↔ <i>nua/nui</i> |
| D[-auth,-part,+def,pl,masc] ↔ <i>i/gli</i> | D[+def,pl,masc] ↔ <i>i</i>                   |

In a structure like (12) with D syntactically specified as non-third person, the VI corresponding to the definite article in Std.It. (13) is not eligible for insertion in D and the pronoun is inserted, resulting in an APC. In the Southern It. vocabulary in (14), however, the pronoun and the article are both in principle compatible with D in (12)—the former because it matches the person specification, the latter because it is underspecified for person. The important distinguishing feature is then the requirement of [+dem(onstrative)] for the pronominal. If D is specified as [+dem], the pronoun is inserted, yielding an APC. If D is specified as [-dem], the pronoun VI is incompatible and the article is inserted instead, yielding unagreement.

Since the pronoun VI in Std.It. is underspecified for [ $\pm$ dem], APCs should be compatible with a demonstrative and a non-demonstrative reading. Correspondingly, a speaker reporting (2) can replace the pronominal determiner by a demonstrative, (15), or the definite article, (16), depending on the context.

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| (15) Ha detto che questi bambini giocano. | (16) Ha detto che i bambini giocano.  |
| has said that these kids play.3PL         | has said that the kids play.3PL       |
| ‘She said that these kids are playing.’   | ‘She said that the kids are playing.’ |

In Northern and Southern Calabrese, on the other hand, the distinction between an APC and unagreement leads to different choices in reporting. A speaker reporting an utterance with an APC, (9) and (10), would replace the pronoun by a demonstrative, i.e. (17) and (19). On the other hand, an utterance involving unagreement, (3) and (4), would be reported retaining the definite article as in (18) and (20). These patterns support the assumption reflected in the VIs in (14) that the pronoun is necessarily associated with demonstrativity in the Southern varieties, while it is underspecified for it in Std. It. (13).

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|---|---|
| (17) Ha dittə ca sə quatrərə iocənə.          | (19) Dissi chi sti figghioli jocanu.          |
| has said that these kids play.3PL             | said.3SG that these kids play.3PL             |
| ‘He said that these kids are playing.’        | ‘He said that these kids are playing.’        |
| (18) Ha dittə ca i quatrərə iocənə.           | (20) Dissi chi i figghioli jocanu.            |
| has said that the kids play.3PL               | said.3SG that the kids play.3PL               |
| ‘He said that the kids are playing.’ [N.Cal.] | ‘He said that the kids are playing.’ [S.Cal.] |

**Conclusion** We have shown a contrast in agreement patterns between Std.It. and non-standard Southern varieties, which we interpret as an instantiation of the unagreement phenomenon attested in other Romance and non-Romance languages. Taking into account the structure of APCs in the Southern varieties, we propose a refinement of previous approaches in order to explain the availability of unagreement in these languages. The demonstrative interpretation of personal pronouns even in APC contexts plays a crucial role in providing a link between the effects found elsewhere with the structures in (11) and (12).

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