

Lingue e Contesti

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On demonstratives in relative clauses¹

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Abstract. This paper investigates the use of demonstratives as relativizers from a new empirical and theoretical perspective. Looking at three varieties, namely colloquial Italian, Venosino and Marebbano, we argue that relative demonstratives are the result of a renewal process of the relative pronoun. This process is described in terms of reanalysis starting from a nominal apposition structure. Basing our analysis on Cinque (2013)'s idea that relative clauses have both an internal and an external head, we propose that demonstratives can undergo this reanalysis process because they can be reinterpreted as the spell-out of a portion of the internal head. The development of demonstratives as relativizers is thus accounted for in structural terms: the demonstrative, originally part of an apposition, is reanalyzed as part of the internal head of the relative clause.

1. Introduction

In this work we present empirical evidence that Italian varieties can use demonstrative forms as relative pronouns, which we think is to be interpreted as the renewal of a relative cycle that can be formalized according to the following steps:

¹ A first version of this paper was presented at the *36th Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Sprachwissenschaft (DGfS)* in Marburg and at the *Linguistik Kolloquium* in Frankfurt; we are grateful to those audiences for their comments. We also would like to thank Esther Rinke as well as the two reviewers for their helpful comments. For the concerns of the Italian academy, Cecilia Poletto takes responsibility for sections 1 and 2 and 5, Emanuela Sanfelici for sections 3 and 4, and 6.

relative pronoun > agreeing complementizer/complementizer+doubling > demonstrative > relative pronoun

Here we focus on the last step of the cycle and show that the process of extension of the demonstrative is sensitive to the features of the head noun.² A survey of three varieties (colloquial Italian, Venosino, a Basilicatan dialect, and Marebbano, a Ladin V2-variety spoken in S. Vigilio di Marebbe) allows us to determine the evolutionary path of the demonstrative and to propose a structural reason why the change targets precisely these elements.

The reason why we think this evolutionary path is particularly interesting is that it provides empirical evidence for the idea that a relative pronoun is nothing else than a portion of the head noun internal to the relative clause which can be spelled out (or not). This explains why exactly demonstratives, which are clearly elements internal to the Determiner Phrase (DP), can be used as relative pronouns.

In section 2 we present data coming from our competence as speakers of colloquial Italian. In section 3 we examine Venosino, which shows that some of the restrictions present in colloquial Italian for the use of a demonstrative in relative clauses are relaxed, and suggests that demonstrative relativizers are an instance of a well-known diachronic process known in the typological literature, namely renewal (Hopper, Traugott 2003, *inter alia*). Section 4 presents data from Marebbano, which displays a further extension of demonstrative relativizers, as demonstratives can be used in all contexts, in appositive as well as in restrictive relatives except for one single case, namely, first and second person pronouns. In section 5 we sketch out a possible explanation of the reason why demonstrative pronouns can be “reinterpreted” as relativizers.

1.1 *On the syntax of relative clauses*

Here we assume the structural analysis of relative clauses provided by Cinque (2013): all relative clauses have a relative clause internal head and an external head located in the DP. Whether the internal or the external head is the one that turns out to be spelled out and how it is spelled out (either totally or only partially) depends on the syntactic movements found in a specific language. We cannot discuss Cinque’s analysis (2013: ch. 17) in detail

² On agreeing complementizers, see Sanfelici, Caloi and Poletto (2014).

here, but simply assume his proposal that there is indeed an internal head in the relative clause, whose existence can be proved by child-Italian as in (1):

- 1) [*la bambina* [*che il nonno bacia la bambina*]]
the child-FEM that-REL the granddad kisses **the child-FEM**
 ‘The child that the granddad kisses...’

We can add dialectal evidence to this, as there are Lombard dialects, like Dosoiese, where both the external and the relative clause internal head are realized:

- 2) *Al pütel c at cunosi anca te col pütel l'è partì.*
The boy that-REL you-CL know-2SG also you **that boy** he-CL is left
 ‘The boy whom you also know left.’

Therefore, we assume here that relative clauses contain a copy of the external head noun, which can be spelled out differently according to the language.³ With this basic assumption in mind, we now move to an analysis of the distribution of demonstratives in relative clauses in colloquial Italian.

2. The colloquial Italian relativizer system

Italian, as well as other Romance languages, displays a mixed relativizer system. We observe two types of relative elements: *wh*- elements, namely *quale/cui*; an element that also serves to introduce complement clauses, namely *che* ‘that’. Their distribution is sensitive to two parameters: the type of relative clause, that is, whether restrictive or appositive, and the argumental function of the relativized phrase. In restrictive relative clauses *che* relativizes subjects and complements not selected by prepositions as in 3a), contrary to appositives where we find *quale* 3b), while *cui/quale* serve as

³ On the realization of the internal head, languages differ in the sense that in some languages the internal head is always deleted at PF, whereas in others it is spelled out (Cinque 2013: ch. 17). The realm of the internal head is also argued in the raising and matching analyses of relative clauses. Adopting the copy theory of movement, every analysis of relatives that involves movement will have internal heads which are copies of the moved element, though scholars differ on what they allow to be spelled out (Kayne 1994, Bianchi 1999, Hulsey, Sauerland 2006). For the moment, we leave aside the discussion regarding the nature of the internal head, whether a copy of the moved element or an independent head. As stated above, we adopt Cinque (2013)’s proposal that relative clauses contain two independent heads, an internal one and an external one, and through the text we provide support for such claim.

relativizers for all the other complements selected by a preposition 3c) in both restrictive and non-restrictive relatives.

- 3) a. *La ragazza **che**/***la quale**/***cui** ho incontrato ieri mi ha parlato di te.*
 ‘The girl that I met yesterday talked about you.’
 b. *Maria, **che**⁴/**la quale**/***cui** non vedo da oltre tre anni, arriva domani.*
 ‘Maria whom I haven’t seen since three years arrives tomorrow.’
 c. *La ragazza **con cui**/**la quale**/***che** ho parlato ieri si chiama Maria*
 ‘The girl with whom I talked yesterday is called Maria.’

However, colloquial Italian also allows for a distal demonstrative, which agrees in gender and number with the antecedent, followed by *che* in some special contexts, that is, the demonstrative restricts on the set of entities introduced by the antecedent.

- 4) a. *Maria, **quella che** conosci anche tu, è partita per Roma.*
 Maria **that that-REL** know-2SG also you is left for Rome
 ‘Mary whom you also know left for Rome.’⁵
 b. *Le locandine del museo, **quelle che** non mi piacciono, sono appese per tutta la città.*
 the posters of.the-SG.MASC museum **those that-REL** not to.me like-3PL are hung for all the city
 ‘The posters of the museum, which I don’t like, are hung around all the city.’

Notice that the use of distal demonstratives is restricted to nouns which do not necessary entail unique reference. This is proven by the pragmatic oddness of (5), where the demonstratives refers to ‘your father’, a noun of unique reference.

- 5) *#Ho incontrato tuo padre, **quello che** è stato in prigione.*
 Have-1SG met your dad **that that-REL** is been in jail
 ‘I met your dad, who was in jail.’

⁴ *Che* is still possible for subject and object in so called *integrated* appositives.

⁵ Although relative clauses which are combined with proper names are generally analyzed as appositives, the relative clause in the example 4a) serves to identify the reference of Maria, more precisely to restrict the set of possible individuals that have the properties of having the name Maria to being also known by the addressee of the discourse.

Demonstratives are also banned from contexts where the head noun is a pronoun of first or second person (6a) as well as when the antecedent is indefinite (6b):

- 6) a. **Mario ha incontrato te/me, quello che è stato in prigione.*
 Mario has met you/me **that that-REL** is been in jail
 ‘Mario met you/him, who was in jail.’
- b. #*ho incontrato un uomo, quello che è stato in prigione.*
 have-1SG met a man **that that-rel** is been in jail
 ‘I met a man, who was in jail.’

The fact that 5) is infelicitous indicates that this type of relative clause has the same structure as appositions (as suggested to us by Giusti, personal communication) of the type illustrated in 7):

- 7) #*tuo padre, quello simpatico*
 your father **that nice**
 ‘your father, the nice one’

Notice however, that contrary to real appositions, epithets can indeed occur with nouns with unique reference:

- 8) *Tuo padre, quell’imbecille, è stato in prigione*
 ‘Your father, that imbecile, was in prison.’

This shows that the first stage in which it is possible to use a demonstrative in relative clauses as 4) involves a nominal apposition of the type illustrated in 7). In other words, the structure of the grammatical examples above would be something like the following:

- 9) a. [_{sc} [_{DP} Maria] [_{DP} quella [_{RC} che...]]]
 b. [_{sc} [_{DP} Maria] [_{DP} quella [_{AdjP} carina...]]...]

Assuming that the structure of an apposition is akin to some sort of small clause (labelled SC in 9)) indicating identity of the two referents, in the Italian examples the relative clause (RC in 9)) is associated to a DP containing the demonstrative, which is in turn the apposition of the noun *Maria*. Hence, in Italian there should not be any direct link between the DP *Maria* and the relative clause. This would then be a structure similar to what we have in 7), but not similar to cases of epithets of the type in 8), which must

be of a different sort. The difference between the syntax of appositions and that of epithets indeed will be crucial for our analysis (see section 3).

As we will see later, there are dialects where the presence of the demonstrative cannot be reduced to an apposition. We turn now to the dialect of Venosa, where the distribution of the demonstrative is different.

3. Venosino

Venosino, a variety spoken in Basilicata, displays a more extensive usage of a demonstrative form. As in Italian (see ex. 4a)), the distal demonstrative can be used to restrict the set of individuals, whose name is Mario in 10).

- 10) *S'n'jè sciout' Mario cor ca amm' vest' ajr'.*
 is gone-IMPER-REFLEX Mario **that that-REL** have-1PL seen yesterday
 'Mario, whom we saw yesterday, left.'

Moreover, the demonstrative can also appear with exhaustive referents as in 11) (to be compared to the ungrammatical Italian 5)).

- 11) *Ajj nguntrat a ppant, cor ca jè stat ign carcær.*
 Have-1SG met dad-your **that that-REL** is been in jail
 'I met your dad, who was in jail.'

Again, we notice that, as in Italian, the reference of *cor* cannot be a speech participant (see 12)) and cannot be an indefinite (see 13)).

- 12) *Ie' (*cor) ca su stat a u fresk u trov sobbt u fateig.*
 I, **that that-REL** was at the jail not find easily of work
 'I, who I was in jail, cannot easily find to work.'

- 13) *canosc n atlet (*cor) ca scapp bell.*
 know-1SG an athlete (**that that-REL**) runs well
 'I know an athlete that runs with grace.'

One interesting fact about Venosino is that it has other restrictions with respect to Italian, as the presence of the demonstrative is always related to an evaluative component, often a negative one: the complement of the demonstrative must entail the speaker's judgment about the reference of the

demonstrative (see 14a)). If no evaluation is entailed, then the simple complementizer must appear, as in 14b).

- 14) a. *Mario cor ca je proprj nu ciut pass l jurnat a u bar.*
 Mario **that that-REL** is really a stupid passes the day at the bar
 ‘Mario, who is a great idiot, passes his days at the bar.’
- b. *Attanama e mamm ca ann fategat na veit mò stann n pension.*
 Father-my and mother **that-REL** have worked a life now stay in retirement
 ‘My father and my mother, who have worked their entire life, are now retired.’

Given that the distribution of the demonstrative is different in Venosino with respect to Italian, we can capitalize on the observation made above that the special type of appositions found with epithets are compatible also with nouns with exhaustive reference (see 8) and 11)). The difference between Italian and Venosino can thus be captured in structural terms by assuming that the structure of epithets is different from standard appositions and that the demonstrative usage of Venosino has the same structure as epithets. This would capture both the grammaticality of the demonstrative with a noun with exhaustive reference and the presence of an evaluative component, which is a feature typical of epithets, but not of appositions in general. Thus, while Italian has a small-clause like structure where the noun and the demonstrative are inserted, in Venosino, the demonstrative is, similarly to epithets, an element inserted inside the extended functional projections internal of the DP in a functional projection related to evaluation.⁶ Epithets are in general used as resumptive forms in Hanging Topic constructions, which points towards an analysis of epithets as DP internal, as illustrated in 15):

- 15) [_{DP} [_{DP} quello [_{RC}]] [tuo padre]]

Structure 15) is still a case in which the relative clause is not directly associated to the head noun ‘your father’, but depends on the demonstrative, which is a DP, but is now inside the structure of a single DP. The next step in the renewal process is provided by Ladin, where the demonstrative has a much wider use.

⁶ Epithets are probably similar to quantifiers in having two structural possibilities: in one case, they are inserted in an extended projection of the DP like adjectives, in the other they are independent nouns which select the other DP as its complement.

4. Marebbano

In Marebbano, a Ladin variety spoken in S. Vigilio di Marebbe, a demonstrative occurs in relative clauses on oblique objects. No distinction has been found between restrictive (16a) and appositive relatives (16b):

- 16) a. *L seniëur de chël che cunësci la sor röa enco*
 the man **of that that-REL** know-1SG the sister arrives today
 ‘The man of whom I know the sister arrives today.’
- b. *Mio pere a chell che mia oma à da ti scraiè ados laura*
 my father **to that that-REL** my mother has to at scream against works
trep.
 too.much
 ‘My father whom my mum reprimanded works too much.’

In Ladin varieties the demonstrative does not display any contrastive or evaluative interpretation, but is simply the way relatives on oblique objects are formed. Also the indefiniteness restriction is not found, and the demonstrative is present even when the antecedent is indefinite, contrary to what happens in Italian and Venosino.

- 17) *Maria ie na persona sun chëla che te posses te lascé.*
 Mary is a person **on that that-REL** you can you leave
 ‘Mary is a person whom you can rely on.’

The only residual restriction found in Marebbano has to do with person, as the antecedent cannot be first or second person.

- 18) **A mé mo plej te sun chel che i poss i lascé.*
 To me cl-1SG like-2SG you **on that that-REL** I can me leave
 ‘I like you on whom I can rely.’

In our view, this shows that the demonstrative has become the standard relativizer for indirect object relatives as shown in (19):

- 19) [_{DP} tuo padre [_{RC} quello [_{AdjP} tuo [_{NP} padre]]]]

The reason why the demonstrative can be reanalyzed as the relativizer starting from a structure similar to an apposition is however still to be discussed.

5. Why can a demonstrative become a relativizer?

Demonstratives are frequently reanalyzed across languages as grammatical markers (very often as definite articles, but also as copulas, relative and third person pronouns, sentence connectives, focus markers). In addition to the fact that they are “prone” to be grammaticalized, there are clues that the process of creating a relativizer out of a demonstrative is actually a cycle and has already happened at least once. The form of the relativizer is etymologically the one of the distal demonstrative *quello*, that is, (EC)CUM (ostensive reinforce) + *ILLU* (Rohlf's 1966). Giusti (1998) proposes the following two steps for the grammaticalization of the demonstrative: at the first stage *EC-CUM* was inserted in the specifier of the Demonstrative Phrase (DemP); in the second stage a phonological cliticization of the head in DemP – which had lost its stress – further led to a second stage of reanalysis of the resulting phonological word into a syntactic word in the position of the head of DemP.

The fact that the element *eccum* is used as a reinforcer cannot be by chance, as demonstratives are related to a property, namely individuation, which is also involved in the process of Focus. The change generally affecting demonstratives is thus a change in terms of loss of the Focus property, when demonstratives are no longer used to focus the interlocutor's attention on entities in the outside world, and they are used deictically in a non-contrastive way. This change is evident in the shift from Classical to Late Latin, where demonstratives can also serve as relativizers (Carrier, de Mulder 2010).

However, this still does not answer the question as to why this is so. We believe that the key to understanding why demonstratives can be relative pronouns is again to be found in Italian dialects, and specifically in those like Cosentino, a Calabrian dialect, which presents the following pattern:

- 20) *Maria chira Maria ca canusc pur tu, er a Napulə.*
Maria that Maria that-REL know also you, is in Neaples
 ‘Maria whom you also know is in Neaples.’

Cases like 20) show that Cinque (2013) is correct in postulating the existence of two heads, a relative clause internal and an external one, both realized here. Furthermore, the internal head is preceded by a demonstrative, which clearly shows that demonstratives are part of the internal head of the relative clause. We argue that this is the reason why they appear as relativizers: they are simply a portion of the internal head which has been spelled out.

Cases like 21a) are parallel to 20) with the difference that the external head is not realized, whereas in 21b) the internal head only contains the demonstrative:

- 21) a. **Chira Maria ca** *canusci puru tu, è a Napuli*
That Maria that-REL know also you, is in Neaples
 ‘Quella Maria che conosci anche tu è a Napoli.’
- b. **Maria chira ca** *canusc pur tu, er a Napulà*
Maria that that-REL know also you, is in Neaples
 ‘Maria, che conosci anche tu, è a Napoli.’

More generally, these data confirm Cinque (2013)’s idea that in some cases one of the two heads can be only partially spelled out; this is precisely our case, where the portion of the internal head that is spelled out is not a classifier-like element as in languages like Japanese, but a demonstrative. This helps us to interpret also examples like the one of Dosoese mentioned in section 2:

- 22) a. **Al pütel c** *at cunosi anca te l’è partì incò.*
- b. **Col pütel c** *at cunosi anca te l’è partì incò.*
- c. **Al pütel col c** *at cunosi anca te l’è partì incò.*
- d. **Al pütel c** *at cunosi anca te col pütel l’è partì incò.*
 ‘The boy whom you also know left this morning.’

In addition to the doubling example 22d), Dosoese has the possibility of spelling out only the external head without the demonstrative 22a), the internal head with the demonstrative 22b) or the external head followed by the internal one which only contains the demonstrative 22c). Notice that a case like 22b) could actually be analyzed either as the external or as the internal head: the distinction between the two comes, following Cinque (2013), from the fact that only cases where the internal head is spelled out have reconstruction effects and are subject to island constraint. The next step of our empirical investigation will thus be to test whether Dosoese or Cosentino display these effects in constructions like those exemplified in 22).

6. Concluding remarks: the relativizer Cycle

In this work we have shown that demonstratives undergo a development which can be described as a process of renewal of the relative pronoun. The

demonstrative, originally part of an apposition, is then reanalyzed as part of the internal head of the relative clause. The reason why a demonstrative can become a relativizer is that it is embedded into the structure of the relative clause itself: the demonstrative is not a relative pronoun, it is the portion of the internal head that gets spelled out. From a more general point of view, the analysis of the data presented here is only possible if we assume Cinque (2013)'s idea that all relative clauses have two heads, an external and an internal one and therefore lends indirect support to it.

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