

Demonstrative-reinforcer constructions and the syntactic role of deictic features

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In this paper I take Romance demonstrative-reinforcer constructions as a way to test whether the deictic features encoded by demonstrative and locative forms are active in the syntax. From a descriptive point of view, I claim that demonstrative systems can be best accounted for by making reference to two binary deictic person features: [DEM_[±Author]] and [DEM_[±Participant]]. Then I show how these features combine in demonstrative-reinforcer constructions, providing a comprehensive overview of demonstrative-reinforcer constructions in Italo-Romance varieties. Finally, I argue that deictic person features are inactive in the syntax of demonstrative and locative forms: this is suggested by the shortcomings that Agree-based accounts face when dealing with demonstrative-reinforcer constructions. Therefore, I contend that the best analysis for such constructions is a non-core syntactical one, the relevant derivation point being either within the morphological component or at the interface between syntax and semantics.

Keywords: demonstrative-reinforcer constructions, Italo-Romance varieties, deixis, person features, inactive features

1. Introduction

Demonstrative-reinforcer constructions (Bernstein 1997, 2001; Brugè 1996, 2002; Roehrs 2010) are constructions in which a demonstrative adjective or pronoun is combined with a locative element, the reinforcer, which in most Romance varieties looks like a locative adverb.¹ Examples of demonstrative-reinforcer constructions are provided in (1):

- (1) a. questo qui (Italian)
 'This here'

1. In this paper, I only take exophoric demonstrative and locative forms into consideration.

- b. quello là (Italian)
 'That there'

The proximal combination (1a) makes reference to something that is close to the speaker, while the distal combination (1b) makes reference to something that is far away from the speaker, resulting in the same deictic value as the demonstrative form alone. However, it is not possible to combine demonstratives and reinforcers differently: **quello qui* and **questo là* are out. This restriction on co-occurrence patterns is commonly referred to as deictic compatibility: intuitively, something that is close to the speaker (*questo*, 'this') cannot be located in an area that is far away from the speaker (*là*, 'there'). More formally, the demonstrative and the reinforcer encode a deictic feature (or a combination thereof) each, and those features have to be, if not identical, at least compatible, when occurring within the same demonstrative-reinforcer construction. The main questions that this paper addresses are: how to make sense of the deictic compatibility restriction holding on co-occurrence patterns in a formal way and whether it is possible to derive it in narrow syntax.

To answer these questions, I will first introduce the relevant features (Section 2) and their interactions in the attested co-occurrence patterns (Section 3). Then, I will claim that these features are inactive in the syntax of these forms (that is: they are always interpretable and valued), and I will support this claim by showing the shortcomings of Agree-based accounts for demonstrative-reinforcer constructions (Section 4). Instead, I will suggest two possible alternative analyses: a morphological approach and an interface one (Section 5).

2. Deictic person features

As suggested above, deictic features are involved in demonstrative-reinforcer constructions. Specifically, they define the location of an object (pronouns and adjectives: *this*, *that*) or of an area (adverbs: *here*, *there*) in the external world in relation to a deictic centre. The deictic centre relevant for Romance languages is most frequently the speaker (as in (2)), although in some varieties it is identified with discourse participants (3). Some other varieties have an additional specific term referring to the hearer's deictic domain (4) (data from Ledgeway & Smith 2016: 879, 888, 884; henceforth, LS16):²

- (2) questo / quello (Italian)
 DEM (close to me) DEM (far from me)

2. Data provided in this section are limited to demonstrative forms (specifically: pronouns). However, locative elements display the same behaviour (LS16:890–896).

- (3) kessa / (Altamurano)
 DEM (close to the participant(s))
 kedda
 DEM (far from the participant(s))
- (4) custu /cussu /cullu (Sardinian)
 DEM (close to me) DEM (close to you) DEM (far from me and you)

Hence, these data suggest that Romance demonstrative systems, whether binary (2–3) or ternary (4), are arguably person-oriented.³ I hold that this ultimately calls for a characterisation of such systems in terms of person features.

This goes against the view expressed a.o. by Lander & Haegeman (2016), who argue at length in favour of locative features. However, locative features themselves are in turn semantically linked to person values: Lander & Haegeman (2016:3) define [Proximal] as “close to the speaker”, [Medial] as “close to the hearer” and [Distal] as “far from speaker and hearer”. A further point in favour of the use of person features for spatial expressions is made by Harbour (2016: ch. 7), who stresses that such expressions can display the same organisation (“partition”) as personal pronouns and agreement, calling therefore for a unified system.

Different feature systems have been proposed to analyse person phenomena: here I assume two binary features, namely [\pm Author] and [\pm Participant], respectively defining a set of referents that contains (or that does not contain) the speaker, and a set of referents that contains (or that does not contain) one of the discourse participants.⁴ Beside broad empirical evidence in favour of such a feature system (see for example Nevins 2007 and Harbour 2016), these two binary features can be shown to characterise Romance demonstrative systems in the neatest way possible. Specifically, only [\pm Author] and [\pm Participant] are able to contrastively define the two binary systems (2–3) resorting to just one feature for each of them. Hence, the demonstrative systems presented above (2)–(4) are featurally representable as (2')–(4'), respectively:

(2') [+Author] / [–Author]

(3') [+Participant] / [–Participant]

(4') [+Participant, +Author] / [+Participant, –Author] / [–Participant, –Author]

3. To some extent, it is still a matter of debate whether demonstrative systems are to be best described as person-oriented or as distance-oriented (Anderson & Keenan 1985; Diessel 1999). For the sake of space, I will only point to the possible co-occurrence of such systems, as highlighted by Harbour (2016:178) on the basis of (among other data) Brazilian Portuguese demonstrative-reinforcer constructions; and to the hypothesis that distance-oriented systems are derived from person-oriented ones via modification (Lander & Haegeman 2016:53–54).

4. For the sake of space, here I only assume features to be binary and not privative, *contra* a.o. Harley & Ritter (2002).

The alternative binary person features system mostly referred to in the literature, instead, consists of [\pm Author] and [\pm Hearer] (see a.o. Bobaljik 2008).⁵ With such a feature inventory, the demonstrative systems in (2)–(4) would be represented as (5a), (5b), and (5c), respectively:

- (5) a. [$+$ Author] / [$-$ Author]
 b. [$+$ Author, $-$ Hearer] or [$-$ Author, $+$ Hearer] or [$+$ Author, $+$ Hearer] / [$-$ Author, $-$ Hearer]
 c. [$+$ Author, $-$ Hearer] / [$-$ Author, $+$ Hearer] / [$-$ Author, $-$ Hearer]

As (5a) and (5b) show, this system is less straightforward in capturing the difference between the two binary systems than the one I am advocating for here. In fact, while the speaker-oriented binary system (in (2), and corresponding to (5a)) is univocally accounted for by only one feature, *i.e.* [\pm Author], the participant-oriented one (in (3), and corresponding to (5b)) is not: both [\pm Author] and [\pm Hearer] are necessary to define it. Moreover, the characterisation of the participant-oriented form (*kessa*, in (3)) is ambiguous, and three feature sets possibly represent it: [$+$ Author, $-$ Hearer], in case the form refers to the speaker alone; [$-$ Author, $+$ Hearer], in case the form refers to the hearer alone; [$+$ Author, $+$ Hearer], in case the form refers to both participants. Instead, as shown by (2') and (3'), a feature system consisting of [\pm Author] and [\pm Participant] contrasts (2) and (3) by means of only one feature, with [$+$ Participant] univocally defining the participant-oriented term *kessa* in (3); hence, its adoption in what follows.

Finally, in the domain of deictic person, I take [\pm Author] and [\pm Participant] to be sub-features of a [DEM] feature. Sub-features can be defined as features that are associated to a feature or to a feature set at “a further level of [...] specification” (D'Alessandro 2007:133) and that typically convey “semantico-pragmatic information” (D'Alessandro 2007:30). [\pm Author] and [\pm Participant] would therefore provide [DEM], the constitutive feature of demonstrative forms (Lyons 1999:20 ff.), with the appropriate person-oriented deictic value. I graphically render the sub-feature relation adding a subscript [\pm Author] and/or [\pm Participant] to the right-hand side of [DEM].

Notice that this formally implements the independent status of deictic person features with respect to person features of the φ -bundle (henceforth: φ person features). Although they can be decomposed through the same features, φ person features undergo the syntactic operation Agree, whereas deictic person features only relate the position of the actual referent of the demonstrative form to (one of) the speech act participants, *i.e.* the speaker or the hearer, or to somebody who

5. Bobaljik (2008) refers to [\pm Speaker], which is semantically equivalent to [\pm Author]. For the sake of consistency, I will refer to [\pm Author] in what follows.

is neither the speaker nor the hearer. The most straightforward piece of evidence for such an independent status comes from demonstrative pronouns: they always display third person syntax (6a), while their deictic features make reference to different deictic persons, but never intervene in agreement phenomena (6b), (6c):

- (6) a. *custù/cussù/cullù* jε ppazzə
 DEM.SG.M (near me/near you/far from both) be.PRS.3SG crazy.SG
 ‘This/that/that guy is crazy.’ (Eastern Abruzzese)
- b. **custù* sɔ ppazzə (Eastern Abruzzese)
 DEM.SG.M (near me) be.PRES.1SG crazy.SG
- c. **cussù* si ppazzə (Eastern Abruzzese)
 DEM.SG.M (near you) be.PRES.2SG crazy.SG

Therefore, I ultimately take the forms in (2)–(4) to be featurally representable as (2'')–(4''), respectively:

- (2'') $\{[\varphi], [\text{DEM}_{[+\text{Author}]}]\} / \{[\varphi], [\text{DEM}_{[-\text{Author}]}]\}$
- (3'') $\{[\varphi], [\text{DEM}_{[+\text{Participant}]}]\} / \{[\varphi], [\text{DEM}_{[-\text{Participant}]}]\}$
- (4'') $\{[\varphi], [\text{DEM}_{[+\text{Participant}, +\text{Author}]}]\} / \{[\varphi], [\text{DEM}_{[+\text{Participant}, -\text{Author}]}]\} / \{[\varphi], [\text{DEM}_{[-\text{Participant}, -\text{Author}]}]\}$

3. Demonstrative-reinforcer constructions

Deictic features are associated with demonstrative forms and locative elements and define their semantic interpretation. However, it is not immediate to assess whether such features play a role in the syntax: at first sight, it appears that they do not have syntactic effects within the DP, and that they can only be at odds with the truth-conditional values of the sentence they occur in. Still, the two forms combine in demonstrative-reinforcer constructions, and there are constraints (deictic compatibility, see Section 1) on such combinations. After introducing the attested deictic features co-occurrence patterns, I will inquire whether the constraints banning all other conceivable patterns can be derived as a syntactic effect linked to the deictic features' activity in the syntax.

3.1 No co-occurring deictic person features

In the first pattern, there is no interaction between deictic features, as they are contrastively expressed on the reinforcer alone:

In Piedmontese varieties, the demonstrative system is binary and speaker-oriented (LS16:879), thus its only feature is $[DEM_{[\pm Author]}]$. In Messinese, on the other hand, the binary demonstrative system is participant-oriented (LS16:886) and therefore based on $[DEM_{[\pm Participant]}]$. In both cases, the reinforcer system is instead ternary, hence both $[DEM_{[\pm Author]}]$ and $[DEM_{[\pm Participant]}]$ are involved in its featural definition. In (10') and (11') I explicitly provide the set of deictic features involved in the characterisation of the two systems, following the discussion in Section 2:

- (10') *cust* $[DEM_{[+Author]}]$ + *sì* $[DEM_{[+Participant, +Author]}]$
cul $[DEM_{[-Author]}]$ + *lì* $[DEM_{[+Participant, -Author]}]$
cul $[DEM_{[-Author]}]$ + *là* $[DEM_{[-Participant, -Author]}]$
 **cust* $[DEM_{[+Author]}]$ + *lì* $[DEM_{[+Participant, -Author]}]$
- (11') *chistu* $[DEM_{[+Participant]}]$ + *ccà* $[DEM_{[+Participant, +Author]}]$
chistu $[DEM_{[+Participant]}]$ + *ddhocu* $[DEM_{[+Participant, -Author]}]$
chillu $[DEM_{[-Participant]}]$ + *ddhà* $[DEM_{[-Participant, -Author]}]$
 **chillu* $[DEM_{[-Participant]}]$ + *ddhocu* $[DEM_{[+Participant, -Author]}]$

As the featural representations in (10') and (11') show, reinforcers contribute one deictic feature more than demonstratives to the construction: $[DEM_{[\pm Participant]}]$ in Piedmontese and $[DEM_{[\pm Author]}]$ in Messinese. This is how the (pragmatically marked) combination of the two forms ultimately yields a ternary system.

Notice that combinations of demonstratives and reinforcers are strictly determined by the featural composition of the two forms. Specifically, the deictic compatibility constraint holds inasmuch as possible, that is: for the deictic person feature which is displayed by both forms, $[DEM_{[\pm Author]}]$ in Piedmontese and $[DEM_{[\pm Participant]}]$ in Messinese. This makes the constructions given in (10a) and (11a) the only possible ones. The difference between the Piedmontese speaker-oriented demonstrative system and the Messinese participant-oriented one is reflected by the combinations of demonstratives and reinforcers used to make reference to the hearer's domain, which are etymologically mirror-like as far as the demonstrative form is concerned: *cul lì* and *chistu ddhocu*, respectively (compare to the unacceptable combinations in (10b) and (11b)).

On a purely descriptive level, for all sub-sections above, we can say that the possible combinations follow neatly from the deictic featural composition (as defined in Section 2) of each item. The question is then whether (and, in the positive case, how) it is possible to derive all and only these demonstrative-reinforcer constructions in narrow syntax.

4. Do deictic features undergo Agree?

The most obvious solution to derive all and only the four co-occurrence patterns introduced above is to assume that demonstratives and reinforcers undergo syntactic Agree. However, this approach has some shortcomings on the featural side that make it untenable. I take this as a diagnostic of the inactivity of deictic person features in the syntax of demonstrative and locative forms.

The structure for demonstrative-reinforcer constructions that I assume here, following Bernstein (1997: 97), is introduced in (12):

$$(12) \left[{}_{\text{DP}} D \left[\dots \left[{}_{\text{FP}} \text{DemP (Reinf)} \left[\dots \left[{}_{\text{NP}} N \right] \right] \right] \right] \right]$$

Demonstratives are standardly taken to be XPs in the specifier position of a FP that is located somewhere between the DP level and the NP level.⁷ This structure is assumed for demonstratives regardless of the presence of reinforcers (Bernstein 1997: 97). Reinforcers, when present, head that FP.⁸ In most Romance varieties, demonstratives move from their position below D to SpecDP (*contra* Bernstein 1997), for definiteness reasons, stranding their reinforcers. Finally, XP-raising of the lower NP (and AP, if present) yields the discontinuous pattern of demonstrative-reinforcer constructions typical of Romance varieties, as in (13):

$$(13) \text{ quel gatto arancione l\grave{i}} \quad \text{(Italian)}$$

that cat orange there
'That orange cat there'

The definition of Agree assumed here is close to Chomsky's (2000) classical one, but the standard c-command condition required for the Matching relation to hold between the Probe and the Goal is not adopted here, so as to test both the possibility of Upward Agree and that of Downward Agree. Two main issues arise: the first one concerns the actual activity of the demonstrative and the reinforcer;

7. As the position of demonstratives within the DP is not fully crucial for the analysis that will be developed below, I will make no claim as to where exactly the FP hosting DemP sits in the DP.

8. As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, the optionality of reinforcers rather suggests that they are not heads, but modifiers of the demonstrative. However, taking reinforcers to be modifiers (hence: phrasal elements) would amount to identifying them with locative adverbs (given their homophony). This faces problems both on the theoretical side (there should be no such elements as DP-internal adverbs) and on the empirical one (cf. Terenghi 2018 for evidence in favour of a different treatment for locative adverbs and reinforcers, building on restrictions on modification and coordination that are displayed by reinforcers, but not by adverbs). Therefore, I conceive of F° as a head that can be empty, or that can host reinforcers, which descriptively restates their optionality. An explanation for this fact, however, is left as an open question.

the second one relates to valuation in case deictic features partially overlap (see Section 3.4).

4.1 Activity

An Agree approach that relies on valuation implies that both forms, the demonstrative and the reinforcer, are active, and that they have matching features. Recall from Section 2 that [DEM] has been assumed to be pivotal in the definition of demonstrative and locative elements: it is therefore plausible that such feature, along with its deictic person sub-features, is always interpretable at the interface with C-I. Following Pesetsky & Torrego's (2007) discarding of the Valuation/Interpretability Biconditional, derivation is taken to be driven by unvalued features, rather than by uninterpretable ones. For the demonstrative and the reinforcer to be active, then, it is necessary that one of their features be unvalued. Demonstratives can be said to carry unvalued ϕ features; instead, there is not clear external evidence as to which form carries unvalued deictic features.

The structure put forward in (12) above is incompatible with the analysis of reinforcers as phrasal elements (*i.e.* as locative adverbs). This suggests that, while demonstratives can occur independently outside demonstrative-reinforcer constructions, reinforcers (differently from locative adverbs) only occur in demonstrative-reinforcer constructions. The implication of such distributional facts is that the deictic features of demonstratives can reasonably be thought of as originally valued, as they unquestionably need not value their features when outside demonstrative-reinforcer constructions; instead, the deictic features encoded by reinforcers can indeed be unvalued, as there is no evidence of their independent valuedness outside these constructions. Beside such distributional evidence, theory-internal reasons point towards reinforcers as carrying unvalued deictic features, too. In fact, if reinforcers had their deictic features valued, they would most likely be inactive, given that they do not seem to encode other features: this would prevent the matching relation from being established at all.

Let's assume then that reinforcers have their deictic features unvalued. As soon as the demonstrative is merged, the reinforcer enters an agreement relation with it (Upward Agree). Notice that the demonstrative, in turn, is active because of its unvalued ϕ features, that it values *via* Concord with the lower NP. However, if we assume Agree and Concord to ultimately be the same operation, and if we assume ϕ Agree and the deictic Agree under exam here to work in the comparable ways, the hypothesis that reinforcers carry unvalued deictic features implies two irreconcilable versions of Agree at the same time: Upward Agree and Downward Agree (or Concord) would cooperate in the derivation, making the analysis more expensive, if not untenable.

4.2 Valuation

Leaving aside the conclusions drawn from the previous sub-section, it is also worth exploring how valuation works within demonstrative-reinforcer constructions. In case of coinciding features, the value of the Goal's deictic features is plainly copied to the Probe's deictic features. In case of partially overlapping features, however, it is not clear how to enforce copying only on a subset (or even on a superset) of the deictic features encoded by the two forms, without positing any external constraint.

Let's assume that the demonstrative probes the reinforcer (most unlikely option, see 4.1) to copy the values of its features. Recall from Section 3.4 that, the reinforcer system being ternary, reinforcers are defined by the combination of both deictic person sub-features: $[DEM_{[\pm Author, \pm Participant]}]$. The result of valuation would be that demonstratives encode the same combination of deictic person features as reinforcers; however, demonstratives are binary and hence defined by just one deictic person feature, either $[DEM_{[\pm Author]}]$ (as in Piedmontese, (10)) or $[DEM_{[\pm Participant]}]$ (as in Messinese, (11)), as discussed in Section 2. Therefore, it is not clear how to make sure that the demonstrative does not copy the feature value of its Goal in its entirety.

Let's turn then to the most plausible scenario: the reinforcer probes the demonstrative to copy the value of its deictic features. In this case, and given the forms' featural composition, the straightforward prediction is that the reinforcer has only one deictic person feature after valuation. However, reinforcers in these constructions are part of a ternary system, and therefore defined by two deictic person features at once. Thus, it is not clear how the reinforcer displays one deictic person feature more than its Goal.

One highly stipulative solution for both scenarios would be to assume that binary demonstrative systems are in fact ternary, and therefore defined by the exact set of two deictic person features encoded by ternary reinforcer systems (*modulo* φ features), and that two out of the three demonstrative forms are syncretic. However, this solution in turn requires a further stipulation as to which forms in the paradigm are syncretic (and possibly: which of the two deictic person features loses its contrastive value). Finally, there is no empirical evidence in support of the syncretism hypothesis, as reference to the hearer's domain never appears to be contrastively made (e.g. in Standard Italian). Therefore, a syncretism approach would call for the syntactic encoding of one feature on pure theoretical grounds, making this solution even less appealing.

Finally, it has to be recalled that the hypotheses introduced above and in the previous sub-section all lie on theory-internal assumptions (about the structural position and hence the categorisation of reinforcers) and lack external evidence.

5. Inactive features and restrictions on co-occurrence:

Possible derivations

As discussed in the previous section, the hypothesis that deictic features agree within demonstrative-reinforcer constructions, deriving all and only the attested patterns, has to be rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that deictic features do not enter any agreement relation, and that they are ultimately inactive in the syntax of demonstrative and locative forms. This leaves an open question as to how demonstrative-reinforcer constructions can be derived. In this section, I suggest two possible analyses that do not depend on the activity of deictic features, but that work after core syntax; however, details of these alternative approaches exceed the scope of this paper.

One possible derivation is a post-syntactic one, to be implemented in a Distributed Morphology framework.⁹ The overall deictic value of demonstrative-reinforcer constructions can be taken to be specified in the syntax as abstract features encoded by one single terminal node (call it DemP), while the actual demonstrative and reinforcer are inserted in the Morphology.¹⁰ This reduces the compatibility constraint to a Vocabulary Insertion issue: as most Romance varieties do not have a Vocabulary item that matches all features on the terminal node, in order to avoid underspecification, a morphological operation (Fission) splits the single terminal node in two, so that it can be fully matched by two Vocabulary items (the demonstrative and the reinforcer).

A Fission account would correctly derive all attested co-occurrence patterns. In case deictic features do not actually co-occur (3.1), Fission splits the terminal node in a \emptyset part and in a deictic (and possibly Focus) part. Instead, if deictic features are identical (3.2), Fission splits the terminal node in a \emptyset and deictic part and in a Focus part. Finally, with partially overlapping features (3.4), Fission splits the terminal node in a \emptyset and deictic part and in a Focus and residual deictic part. In all these cases, the two parts of the terminal node resulting from Fission are to be matched by demonstratives and reinforcers, respectively. The actual split is internally conditioned by the Vocabulary List available to each variety. The inclusion of a Focus feature, besides making sense of the use of demonstrative-reinforcer constructions in marked contexts in featural terms (see Section 3.4, and Bernstein 2001), accounts for a linearisation issue as well. As seen in (13), demonstrative-reinforcer constructions display a discontinuous pattern when in the adnominal

9. For a recent overview and for extensive references, see Bobaljik 2017.

10. In what follows, I will take the feature cluster associated to demonstrative-reinforcer constructions to include a [Focus] feature as well. In fact, as convincingly shown by Bernstein (2001), reinforcers are focussed elements.

use. [Focus]-carrying items can be thought of as elements that have to move to one of the phrase edges to satisfy prosodic well-formedness conditions: hence, (13) can be derived *via* a prosodically-driven movement of the reinforcer, in line with Zubizarreta (1998)'s derivation of VOS in Spanish (and Italian) as a repair strategy in case of conflicts between the Nuclear Stress Rule and the Focus Prominence Rule.¹¹

An alternative account for the attested demonstrative-reinforcer constructions could simply assume that the two forms enter the derivation with their interpretable deictic features already valued and that potential non-matching features within the construction get blocked at the interface with semantics because of compositionality issues. This approach is immediate and does not call for non-standard machinery, as is instead the case for the Fission account.

However, an anonymous reviewer pointed out to me a possible shortcoming of the interface analysis, namely its inability to account for a (plausible) syntactic dependency between the two forms.¹² As discussed in Section 3 and 4, reinforcers only occur with demonstratives, while demonstratives are independent elements: thus, it seems that reinforcers are dependent on demonstratives (see also Bernstein 1997: 91,97). A possible counter-example that could suggest that no syntactic dependency is established between the two forms is the case of a definite marker followed by locative elements, as found in creoles (Maurer 2013) and in sub-standard Italian, as in *il cane qui*, 'the dog here'. However, further investigation is needed to assess the exact structure for these constructions, as they could be analysed as reduced relative clauses, too: *il cane (che è) qui*, 'the dog (that is) here'.

Nonetheless, the (apparent) dependency between the two forms could in turn be an interface effect. As mentioned in Section 4, demonstratives (and demonstrative-reinforcer constructions) imply definiteness (besides carrying φ features). Reinforcers, however, do not carry definiteness features: therefore, a reinforcer standing alone at the interface with semantics would yield a structure that compositionally lacks definiteness, which would result in its blocking. Given the discussion above, I leave the existence of a syntactic dependency between the reinforcer and the demonstrative, as well as its possible explanation, as open questions worth exploring.

11. For a more thorough discussion of the Fission approach, see Terenghi 2018.

12. The Fission account, instead, would easily make sense of such a dependency, albeit a featural (instead of a strictly syntactic) one, with the reinforcer being parasitic on the lack of features of the demonstrative.

6. Conclusions

In this paper, I took Romance demonstrative-reinforcer constructions as a way to test whether deictic features encoded by demonstrative and locative forms are active in the syntax. I first defined such deictic features as being ultimately decomposable through two binary person features: [\pm Author] and [\pm Participant]. These person features act as further specification (that is: sub-features) of a [DEM] feature that positively defines all and only demonstrative/locative forms. I then turned to the possible combinations of features within demonstrative-reinforcer constructions: a compatibility constraint holds on such combinations and it can be directly brought back to the featural composition of the single items that enter the construction. This constraint looks like the only syntactic effect of the deictic features encoded by these forms: however, an Agree approach to these constructions has been proven to be untenable. Therefore, deictic features can be said to be inactive in the syntax and constraints on their combinations in demonstrative-reinforcer constructions could be the result of a morphological process or of semantic compositionality.

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