

The Zurich database of agreement in Italo-Romance

M. Loporcaro, S. Negrinelli, T. Paciaroni, D. Pescarini, S. Romagnoli, T. Zakharko

1. Introduction

Topic

- Investigation of agreement systems in selected Italo-Romance varieties.
- Agreement is defined as a “systematic covariance between a semantic or formal property of one element and a formal property of another” (Steele 1978: 610).

Problem

- Data from Italo-Romance are grossly underexploited, although they are extremely interesting and at times even unparalleled across Indo-European.
- Dialects of Italy are heavily endangered at present.

Aim

- To set up a database illustrating agreement phenomena in seven selected Italo-Romance dialects (Fig.1).



Fig.1:

- Ripatransone:** in the southern Marche (about 4300 inhabitants, province of Ascoli Piceno). Previous studies: e.g. Parrino (1967), Harder (1988), Ferrari-Bridgers (2010), Paciaroni and Loporcaro (forthcoming).
- Agnone:** in northern Molise (about 5100 inhabitants, province of Isernia). Cf. Ziccardi (1910), Meo (2003).
- Naples** (about one million inhabitants). Cf. e.g. De Blasi and Imperatore (2000), Ledgeway (2009).
- Altamura:** in Apulia (about 70000 inhabitants). Cf. Loporcaro (1988).
- Verbicaro:** a northern Calabrian village (about 3100 inhabitants, province of Cosenza). Cf. e.g. Lausberg (1939:13, 260), Manzini and Savoia (2005), Loporcaro and Silvestri (2011), (2015).
- Pantelleria:** an island located 95 km off the coast of Sicily, and 67 km from that of Tunisia (ca 7500 inhabitants, province of Trapani). Cf. Tropea (1988), Loporcaro (2012).
- Luras:** in northern Sardinia (about 2500 inhabitants, province of Tempio-Olbia). Cf. Depperu (2006), Loporcaro (2015).

2. Agreement phenomena under investigation

Ripatransone

- Agreement of prepositional phrases with the clause subject

(1) a. *fi* *rɔmɔʃt-u* *a* *rrom-u*
 be.PRS.2SG stay.PST.PTCP-M.SG in Rome(F)-M.SG/
 b. *set-i* *rɔmɔʃt-i* *a* *rrom-i*
 be.PRS.2PL-M.PL stay.PST.PTCP-M.PL in Rome(F)-M.PL
 'thou.M stayed in Rome/you.M.PL stayed in Rome'

- Syntactic factors determining overt gender agreement

(2) *kɔ* *tʃemb-u/*-a* *bʀut-u/*-a*
 what time(M)-M.SG/-nonF.SG bad-M.SG/-nonF.SG
 'what a bad time/weather!'

(3) *kɔ* *bʀutu* *tʃemb-a/*-u*
 what bad.M.SG time(M)-nonF.SG/-M.SG
 'what a bad time/weather!'

Agnone

- Dedicated neuter form of the indefinite article

(4) *keʃtə* /**kwiʃtə* *e* *n-ə* /**n-u* *mɔʃlə* *enandrɔnzɛ*
 DEMN/DEM.M.SG be.PRS.3SG INDF-N/-M honey(N) exceptional
 'this is exceptional honey'

Altamura

- Split of masculine gender according to the [±human] feature

(5) a. *u* *wɔppɔn* *ʃrɔvɔr*
 DEF.M.SG boy(M)SG black\M
 b. *i* *wɔppɔn* *ʃrɔvɔr*
 DEF.PL boy(M)PL black\M
 'the black boy/-s'

(6) a. *u* *kwavaddɔ* *ʃrɔvɔr*
 DEF.M.SG horse(A)SG black\M
 b. *i* *kavarrɔ* *ʃrɔvɔr*
 DEF.PL horse(A)PL black\F
 'the black horse/-s'

(7) a. *la* *wɔppɛdda* *ʃrɔvɔr*
 DEF.F.SG girl(A)SG black\F
 b. *i* *wɔppɛddɔ* *ʃrɔvɔr*
 DEF.PL girl(F)PL black\F
 'the black girl/-s'

Luras

- strong 3rd person pronoun unmarked for gender

(8) a. *kie* *ɛʃ* *vɛnnið-u* ?
 who be.PRS.3SG come.PST.PTCP-M.SG
 'who came?'
 b. *isse* *ma* *iss-u* *o* *iss-a* ?
 3SG but 3-M.SG or 3-F.SG
 'who came?' 'it's him/her' 'yeah, but [do you mean] him or her?'

Verbicaro

- Past participle agreement depending on its inflectional class

(9) a. *ddʒəsɛppɔ* *a* *kkɔt-a* /**kkɔt-ə*
 Joseph(M) have.PRS.3SG pick.PST.PTCP\F-F.SG/pick.PST.PTCP\M-M.SG

dɔ *ɔtʃɔn-a*
 DEF.F grapes(F)-SG
 'Joseph has picked grapes'

b. *ddʒəsɛppɔ* *a* *llavat-ə* /**llavat-a*
 Joseph(M) have.PRS.3SG wash.PST.PTCP-M.SG/wash.PST.PTCP-F.SG

n-a *kammis-a*
 INDF-F.SG shirt(F)-SG
 'Joseph has washed a shirt'

Pantelleria

- Subject clitics as marker of progressive aspect

(10) *ɪdɔz-a* *dɔz-a* *mantʃ-a*
 3-F.SG PROGR.3-F.SG eat.PRS-3SG
 'she's eating'

3. Research plan

Fieldwork

- Seven locations.
- Ten native dialect speakers for each location.

Data collection

- Three types of data:
 - grammaticality judgements on dialect utterances
 - Italian to dialect translations
 - connected speech in the relevant dialect based on retellings of picture stories.
- Advantages of grammaticality judgements and translations: yielding informative data with reduced elicitation and post-processing costs.
- Advantages of narrating and retelling a picture story:
 - providing ecological data;
 - recording a coherent story, important when aiming at anaphorical chains (see (8)) and progressive constructions (see (10)).
 - increasing the possibility of individuating new phenomena, outside those searched for.

Database outline

- The annotation tool operates on an entity-relationship model, backed by the industry standard SQLite3 database storage. The model implements an ontology that consists of tokenized corpus data (transcription and translation), relations and annotations over tokens and relations.
- In its current form, the annotation system permits annotation of items and relations with respect to part of speech and selected morphological, syntactic and semantic features. This is illustrated in (Fig. 2), where the analysis of (1a) is displayed.
- Each annotation item is linked to the original text via a system of unique identifiers and also to the relevant metadata.
- For archiving purposes, the final database will be converted to a standard-compliant XML format and made publicly available.
- For long-term storage of the research results, the data will be committed to a safe archive (such as *The Language Archive* at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, <http://tla.mpi.nl/>).

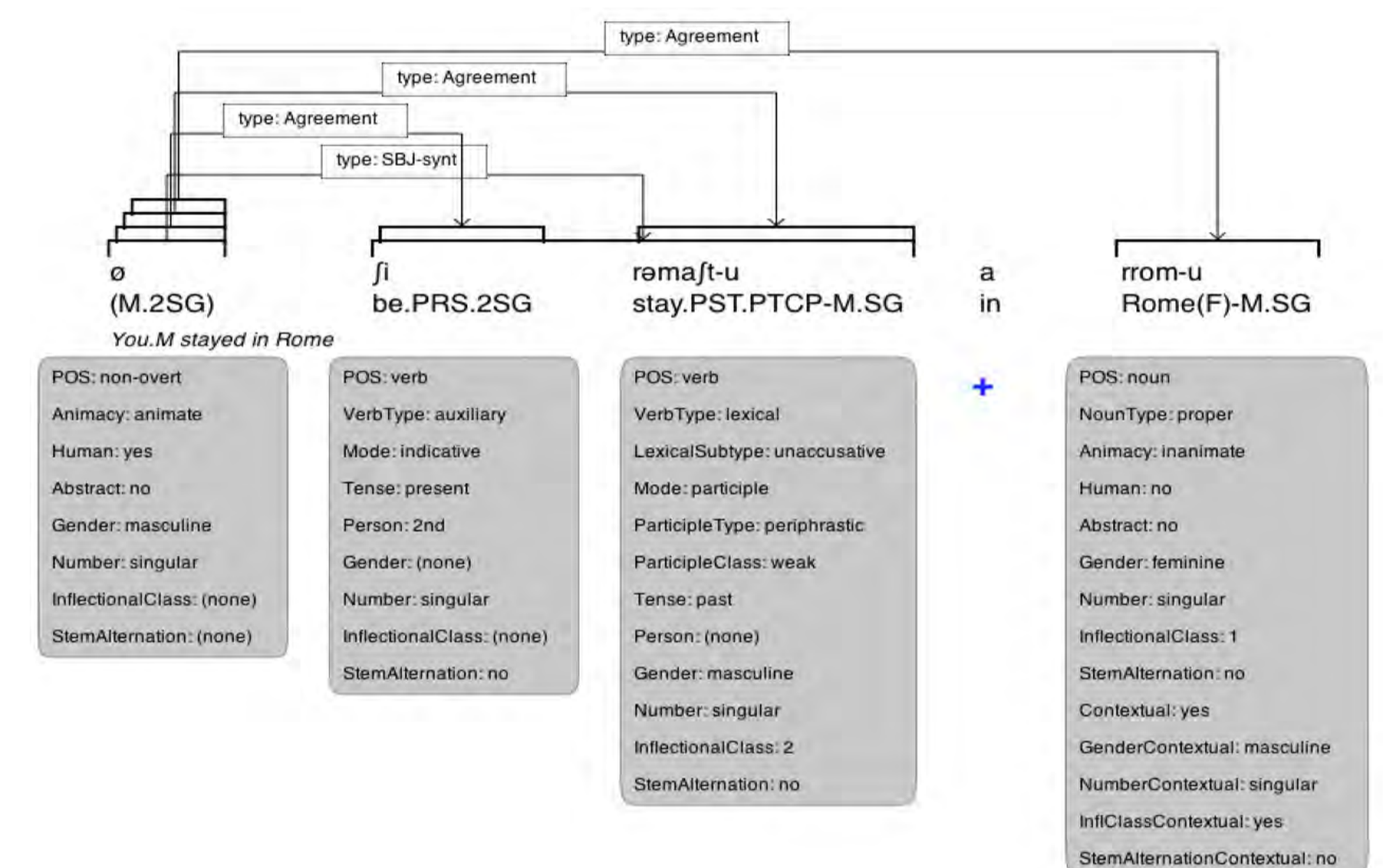


Fig.2:

- The annotation tool allows to create annotations on individual items (such as words – here *fi*, *rɔmastu*, *romu*) and to specify relations (agreement and government) between them.
- Under the participle 'stayed' one finds a specification of the class the participle belongs to (e.g. weak/strong): this is relevant for agreement in Verbicaro in (9).
- The annotation field below the noun 'Rome' allows marking both (inherent) gender and contextual gender agreement, occurring on nouns in Ripano, see (1).

Cooperation network

University of Zürich

- Professor Elvira Glaser (Deutsches Seminar).
- Dr. Tanja Samardzic, Director of the Corpus Lab.
- Phonogrammarchiv, UZH; Phonetisches Labor (Professor Stephan Schmid, M.A. Camilla Bernardaschi).

International consultants

- Professor Greville G. Corbett (University of Surrey).
- Professor Jürg Fleischer (University of Marburg).
- Professor Anna M. Thornton (University of L'Aquila).

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