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CYCLIC CHANGE IN GRAMMAR AND DISCOURSE

Edited by
MAJ-BRITT MOSEGAARD HANSEN
and RICHARD WALTEREIT

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OXFORD STUDIES IN DIACHRONIC & HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

Cyclic Change in Grammar and Discourse

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Series preface

Modern diachronic linguistics has important contacts with other subdisciplines, notably first-language acquisition, learnability theory, computational linguistics, sociolinguistics, and the traditional philological study of texts. It is now recognized in the wider field that diachronic linguistics can make a novel contribution to linguistic theory, to historical linguistics, and arguably to cognitive science more widely.

This series provides a forum for work in both diachronic and historical linguistics, including work on change in grammar, sound, and meaning within and across languages; synchronic studies of languages in the past; and descriptive histories of one or more languages. It is intended to reflect and encourage the links between these subjects and fields such as those mentioned above.

The goal of the series is to publish high-quality monographs and collections of papers in diachronic linguistics generally; that is, studies focussing on change in linguistic structure, and/or change in grammars, which are also intended to make a contribution to linguistic theory, by developing and adopting a current theoretical model, by raising wider questions concerning the nature of language change, or by developing theoretical connections with other areas of linguistics and cognitive science as listed above. There is no bias towards a particular language or language family, or towards a particular theoretical framework; work in all theoretical frameworks, and work based on the descriptive tradition of language typology, as well as quantitatively based work using theoretical ideas, also feature in the series.

Adam Ledgeway and Ian Roberts

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3

The role of pragmatics in the cyclical renewal and reinforcement of demonstratives from Latin to Italian

Chiara Fedriani and Piera Molinelli

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the development of demonstratives from Latin to Italian in terms of a possible pragmatic cycle and analyses a recent development in contemporary Italian, viz. the emergence of reinforced demonstratives, in relation to the framework of cycles. Specifically, we argue that some major diachronic changes that Latin and Italian demonstratives underwent may be interpreted as phases of an onomasiological pragmatic cycle; that is, a cyclical renewal whereby the same function came to be expressed over time by different forms whose original source is similar, functionally competing for a while and gradually replacing one another (cf. Ghezzi and Molinelli 2016; Hansen 2018a). In addition to verifying the existence and nature of this cyclical change, the study aims to assess the role of pragmatic motivations in triggering and constraining its historical development, also considering the interaction of pragmatic factors with different patterns of language change such as reinforcement and subjectification. We then focus on the recent development, in contemporary Italian, of reinforced demonstratives; that is, demonstratives strengthened by the addition of a locative adverb (e.g. *questo qui* ‘this here’). We argue that these complex forms specialized pragmatically as expressions of the speaker’s stance, expanding from their original core meaning of spatial deixis to the discursive subjective sphere, where in some contexts they can express deliberate distancing from negatively evaluated referents. Based on these premises, another aim of this chapter is to provide a first corpus-based account of Italian reinforced demonstratives and their subjectification in recent times, with a view to verifying whether they fit a broader process of cyclical renewal that has extended over a time span of approximately 2,000 years.

In the literature, so-called demonstrative cycles have been mostly investigated in terms of demonstratives developing into grammatical markers, such as personal

pronouns, definite articles, and case endings (see, e.g. Greenberg 1978; Lyons 1999; van Gelderen 2011: 197–202) and, in the domain of Romance languages, with a focus on French (e.g. Marchello-Nizia 2006; van Gelderen 2011: 219–224). In this study, by contrast, we investigate different historical phases whereby older demonstratives have recurrently been replaced by *equi-functional forms* resulting in items *with the same categorial status*; and we do so by focusing on the long diachrony of two understudied languages in relation to this topic, Latin and Italian.

This development implies two major cyclical changes. The first is a *cyclical reorganization of the number of distinctions* involved in the demonstrative system. In Latin, the system was originally tripartite (*hic* ‘this’, *iste* ‘that of yours’, *ille* ‘that’); Late Latin had a bipartite system (*iste* ‘this’ vs. *ille* ‘that’); Old Italian restored a deictic trichotomy (*questo* ‘this’, *codesto* ‘that of yours’, *quello* ‘that’); and in contemporary Italian we have a further simplification to two terms (*questo* ‘this’, *quello* ‘that’, with the exception of Tuscan, Sardinian, and other varieties mainly spoken in central and southern Italy: see Ledgeway 2015). These major changes are summarized in Table 3.1.¹

Table 3.1 Cyclical alternation in deictic distinctions

	Proximal	Medial	Distal
Early to Postclassical Latin	HIC	ISTE	ILLE
Late Latin		ISTE	ILLE
Old Italian	QUESTO	CODESTO	QUELLO
Contemporary Italian		QUESTO	QUELLO

Secondly, this change is characterized by a *cyclical renewal of forms* strengthened by means of deictic elements (a process felicitously named *re-deictization* in Marchello-Nizia 2006). In a nutshell, the main steps of the cycle are as follows. In Latin, there was a functional competition between a simple form, *is* ‘he’, and the morphologically reinforced forms *hic* and *iste* ‘this’, the latter gradually replacing the other two. Over the centuries, in spoken Latin, as far as it can be glimpsed through several written non-literary documents,² a new form emerged through the agglutination of a deictic element, *eccu(m)* ‘here it

¹ In this chapter, we follow the periodization of the Latin language and literature drawn from Cuzolin and Haverling (2009: 20), who distinguish between Early (ca. 240–90 BCE), Classical (90 BCE–14 CE), Postclassical (14–ca. 200 CE), and Late Latin (ca. 200–600 CE). As for the periodization of the historical development of Italian, we distinguish between three major phases: Old Italian, which spans from the documents of the origins (9th–10th century) to the death of Boccaccio (1375); Modern Italian, running from the end of the 14th century to political unification (1861), a period in which Italian gradually became a common literary language, with the establishment in the 16th century of a norm based on 14th-century literary Florentine; and contemporary Italian, from the unification to the contemporary age, when Italian became the language of national use.

² The difficulty of studying Latin taking into account its varieties across the centuries is well known (cf. Molinelli 2025).

is!'; Italian, like many other Romance languages, inherited this form (e.g. It. *questo* < ECCU(M)-ISTU(M) 'this'). A third phase of deictic intensification is documented in contemporary Italian, where demonstratives, as we have anticipated above, can be optionally reinforced by a locative adverb under certain pragmatic circumstances.

We thus employ the term *renewal* with reference to a process whereby 'existing meanings take on new forms' (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 122). Since the demonstratives under scrutiny are recurrently renewed through formal (morpho-phonetic) and functional (pragmatic) *reinforcement*, we follow Vindenes (2018b: 644) and refer in this respect to the notion of a *reinforcement cycle*, defined as a process of renewal where the new forms must arise via reinforcement of the old form *through the addition of an intensifier element*, as in Jespersen's (1917) negative cycle.

In recent literature, there are basically two main approaches to the issue of demonstrative reinforcement. According to some scholars, some demonstratives undergo feature loss (e.g. due to phonetic erosion), which can be restored through cyclical reinforcement (e.g. Lightfoot 1991: 171; van Gelderen 2011: 197–244). This view would imply that the bleaching and renewal happens prior to the reinforcement. Other scholars have suggested instead a non-teleological account of demonstrative reinforcement (most recently, Goldstein 2023; see also Hopper and Traugott 2003; Haspelmath 2018). According to this view, reinforcement is not triggered by feature restoration, and reinforced demonstratives do not necessarily express only spatial deixis, since reinforcement does not serve only to restore a deictic feature (Goldstein 2023: 92–97). Accordingly, this approach pursues the idea that reinforced forms can also express pragmatic meanings, such as an attention-directing function or, as we will see in Section 3.4, the speaker's subjective stance. In this chapter, we adhere to the latter model of language change, highlighting how pragmatic factors contribute to the reinforcement and to the renewal of Latin and Italian demonstratives.

A crosslinguistically widespread source for reinforcement is constituted by *deictic forms*, which can be added to demonstratives with an intensifying function: examples are the Latin presentative particle *eccu(m)* 'here it is!' and the Italian locative adverb *qui* 'here'. This is probably because demonstratives typically convey deixis, distinguishing proximity and distance of referents with regard to time, location, and speech participants, and guiding the hearer's attention to referents (see, e.g. Lyons 1999: 18–21; Diessel 2006). Intensifying deictics have fully grammaticalized in some languages: for example, van Gelderen (2011: 223) discusses the diachronic development leading to the grammaticalization of French intensifiers *ci* and *là* into demonstratives proper (*ce livre-ci*, lit. 'this book-here', *celui-ci*, *celui-là*, lit. 'this-here', 'that-there'), tracing the beginning of deictic strengthening back to the 16th–17th century. In many other languages, intensifying deictics instead constitute a pragmatic option. In such constructions, deictic elements can express concepts and relations beyond the spatio-temporal scenario and index the

subjective position of the speaker in the discourse situation. Lakoff (1974) speaks of *emotive demonstratives* in this respect, Lyons (1977: 677) of *emphatic deixis*, and Rybarczyk (2015: 29) of *demonstratives with an attitude*. All these scholars are concerned with deictics functioning as *qualifiers* that give a pragmatic, evaluative interpretation within the discursive subjective sphere. This is precisely what we find in contemporary Italian, where the reinforcement of demonstratives by means of locative adverbs often expresses a subjective, typically negative connotation—as in (1), where speaker A, a student, is in fact insulting one of his professors.

(1) KIParla corpus (BOA3021)

A: *eh dici ma **questo qui** è un coglione*

B: [*eh ma magari (.)*] *è uno di quei prof che ha bisogno di ripetere lo stesso concetto venti[mila volte]*

A: eh you say but **this here** is an asshole

B: [eh but maybe (.)] he is one of those professors who needs to repeat the same concept twenty [thousand times]

In Italian, these forms have so far not yet received a great deal of scholarly attention. Most reference and historical grammars do not discuss them (see, e.g. Rohlfs 1968; Renzi, Salvi, and Cardinaletti 1988/1995; Maiden 1995). In her monograph on demonstratives in spoken Italian, Gaudino-Fallegger (1992: 237–248) does include reinforced demonstratives in her analysis; however, their frequency in the two spoken corpora considered is remarkably low (47 tokens) and does not allow us to give a fully satisfying description of their uses and pragmatic functions. Sabatini (1985: 159) limits himself to listing reinforced demonstratives among the 35 diagnostic features of what he calls *italiano dell'uso medio*, lit. 'Italian of average usage', renamed 'neo-standard Italian' by Berruto (1987). Neo-standard Italian corresponds to a structurally simpler variety of language in which constructions that are mostly typical of spoken varieties—and as such not included in reference grammars—have lost much of their socio-linguistic markedness. Neo-standard Italian thus constitutes a new variety of contemporary Italian characterized by phenomena of restructuring and re-standardization, which are particularly evident in the area of pronouns (Berruto 1987: 78–79). Reinforced demonstratives are also present in the deictic systems of a number of dialects of Italy: Ledgeway (2015) is a very thorough study that provides a precise description of different diatopic varieties. Such forms have recently been mentioned in passing also by Da Milano (2015: 61) in relation to their 'derogatory meaning', and by Zanchi (2018: 99, 119), who is interested in pragmatically loaded usages of the 'simple' demonstratives *questo* 'this' and *quello* 'that'.

Although valuable observations have been made in these previous studies about the socio-linguistic profile and geographical distribution of reinforced

demonstratives, they do not amount to a pragmatically informed account. The corpus-based study provided in [Section 3.4](#) aims to contribute to filling this gap. Before turning to contemporary Italian, however, we describe the main developmental phases of the demonstrative cycle from the Latin situation up to Modern Italian ([Section 3.3](#)), after first introducing the corpora and procedures we have used in our analysis ([Section 3.2](#)). The chapter ends with a discussion of the nature of the cyclical renewal discussed and assesses the status of reinforced demonstratives in relation to the framework of cycles ([Section 3.5](#)).

3.2 Data and methods

The study of Italian reinforced demonstratives provided in [Section 3.4](#) focuses on recent evolutions in the short diachrony of the last 40 years. It is carried out on a written corpus of journalistic Italian, *LaRepubblica* corpus, which collates newspaper articles published between 1984 and 2018. Our analytic procedure is both quantitative and qualitative. First, we provide a quantitative analysis of all the documented constructions involving the demonstratives *questo* ‘this’ and *quello* ‘that’, inflected for different genders and numbers, in combination with *qui* and *qua* ‘here’ and *lì* and *là* ‘there’. Then, after considering the frequency of use of reinforced demonstratives in the four decades selected, we describe their pragmatic meaning also in relation to deictic features.

We have relied on a corpus of written language for three main reasons. Firstly, for the sake of general coherence of the linguistic data investigated: since our study examines texts produced over a long period of around 2,000 years, the texts representing the diachronic phases prior to the 20th century are necessarily written. Secondly, because this corpus makes it possible to cover a diachronic span of several decades, allowing us to appreciate the development of reinforced demonstratives in the short diachrony of a crucial moment in their development. And lastly, because journalistic writing often incorporates stretches of speech and its characteristic features in the transcription of interviews and telephone wiretaps, thus indirectly mirroring incipient changes emerging in the spoken language.

Finally, to explore some aspects related to the emergence of reinforced demonstratives in the history of Italian, we also used the *Biblioteca Italiana* corpus, which collects around 1,600 Italian literary texts produced over a period of time ranging from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century.

3.3 The onomasiological cycle of Latin and Italian demonstratives

As anticipated in [Section 3.1](#), the two characteristic—and deeply intertwined—features of the renewal of demonstratives from Latin to Italian are:

- (i) *a cyclical alternation* in the number of distinctions involved in the demonstrative system, and
- (ii) *a cyclical re-deictization* of demonstratives, which undergo recurrent reinforcement through deictic intensifiers.

In this section we discuss the nature and dynamics of both developments. We look first at the Latin situation (Section 3.3.1) and then follow the development of demonstratives up to Old and Modern Italian (Section 3.3.2), before focusing on the scenario of contemporary Italian, whose main innovation—the emergence of reinforced demonstratives—will be the subject of an in-depth analysis in Section 3.4.

3.3.1 The first segment of the cycle: Latin

Early to Postclassical Latin (3rd century BCE to ca. 3rd century CE) had a three-term system made up of three demonstrative pronoun-determiners: *hic*, a proximal or first-person-oriented demonstrative, indexing reference to the speaker in an immediate situation ('this'), featuring an enclitic demonstrative suffix *-c*;³ *iste*, a medial or second-person-oriented demonstrative, pointing to an entity in a space nearer to the hearer ('that of yours'), featuring a demonstrative suffix *-te*;⁴ and *ille*, referring to the space beyond the proximity to the speaker and hearer ('that'), featuring a deictic element—*l̄*⁵—which conveyed the notion of distance (see Lüdtke 2015: 541).⁶

The system also included a deictically neutral demonstrative pronoun-determiner *is*, reserved for anaphoric use. This form was used frequently by Lucretius, Catullus, and in 'lower' poetry (e.g. in Horace's *epistulae* and *satirae* and in Ovid's *Tristia*) but was never fully established in higher registers (e.g. it is found only once in Horace's lyrics: *carm.* 4, 8, 18). With the beginning of the Imperial period, the form began to suffer competition from other demonstratives: Seneca, Pliny the Elder, and Quintilian, for example, overwhelmingly use *hic* instead of *is* (Leumann, Hofmann, and Szantyr 1972: 181). In Late Latin, *is* survived only in a few circumstances: as a pronoun, in disyllabic forms such as the genitive singular *eius*, and when situated close to the verb or the relative pronoun (which reinforced its tendency to become a clitic). Adjectival *is* survived only in crystallized phrases (e.g. *eō locō* 'in this place', *id est* 'this is':

³ This is the shortened form of the suffix *-ce*, which is also found in other pronouns (e.g. *huiusce*, *hunce*, *horunce*, *hosce*) and also in combination with the interrogative *-ne*, in *hocine*, *istucine*, and *illicine* (see Allen and Greenough 1903: 67) and in the presentative particle *ecce* (on which see below).

⁴ This suffix originates from a demonstrative pronoun **to-* (also present in, e.g. *talis*, *tam*, and *tantus*), of which it constitutes the accusative masculine singular form **tom* (Walde and Hofmann 1982 [1822] II: 715).

⁵ This deictic element is present also in *ultra* 'beyond' and *olim* 'at that time' (see Bauer 2007: 113).

⁶ We excluded *idem* and *ipse* from our investigation in order to limit our research to the joint study of the three demonstratives characterized by a person-oriented deixis, namely Latin *hic*, *iste*, and *ille* and their Italian continuators.

see [Fruyt 2010: 21](#)). In the *Itinerarium Egeriae*, *is* does not have a very marked demonstrative character according to [Trager \(1932: 13–14\)](#), and it is mainly used pronominally, its utility being quite restricted ([Hertzenberg 2015: 7](#)). All in all, the gradual abandonment of *is* was probably determined by a decisive factor, namely the ambiguity derived by the partial coincidence with some forms of *hic*: since the *h* was silent, several forms of *hic* were homophonous with forms of *is* ([Bauer 2007: 117](#); [Fruyt 2010: 28](#)). This first developmental phase is illustrated in [Table 3.2](#).

Table 3.2 The renewal of Latin demonstratives: the expansion of *hic*

	Anaphoric	Proximal	Medial	Distal
Early and Classical Latin	IS	HIC	ISTE	ILLE
Postclassical to Late Latin	IS/HIC	← HIC	ISTE	ILLE

The other main change in the reorganization of the demonstrative system between Classical and Late Latin concerned *iste* in relation to *hic*, whose boundaries were not always clear-cut. A reason for this is that both demonstratives were employed at this stage to retrieve a nominal referent without establishing an apparent connection with either the speaker or the hearer ([Carlier and Guillot 2018: 214](#)). This prompted the loss of the original discourse configuration where the personal spheres of the speaker (*hic*) and the hearer (*iste*) were separate, and the substitution with a new discourse configuration where the two spheres were combined in a common sphere of interlocution, with speaker and hearer no longer kept distinct. According to [Carlier and Guillot \(2018: 214\)](#), bridging contexts triggering the merge of *hic* and *iste* were those where the distinction between the personal spheres of the speaker and the hearer was irrelevant. Therefore, from Classical Latin onwards *hic* continued to maintain its monopoly on deictic reference in the immediate context of the utterance (*in hoc seculo* ‘in this century’, *hac nocte* ‘this night’), but *iste* was occasionally chosen in competition with *hic*, without any apparent semantic distinction, to link a nominal referent or proposition to the shared sphere of interlocution.

Motivations of a different nature appear to be at the root of the gradual decline of *hic*. Firstly, there were morphological reasons, as pointed out by [Carlier and Guillot \(2018: 206\)](#), who note that *hic* (like *is*) does not separate the lexical morpheme from the inflection as it is characterized by a fusion between the lexical and the inflectional morphemes. Conversely, *iste* (like *ille*) presents an invariable lexical morpheme to which an inflectional suffix is added, thus entailing a more straightforward and unequivocal pairing of form and meaning. Moreover, *iste* was also used already in Early Latin to denote well-known referents, thus having to do with the expression of shared information and the management of common ground. An example is (2), where *isti* points to people whom

both the speaker and his interlocutor know well. In such cases, the deictic relation with the referent is not very prominent and *iste* works as a passe-partout demonstrative.

- (2) *verum ita sunt <morati>isti nostri divites:
si quid bene facias, levior pluma est gratia,
si quid peccatum est, plumbeas iras gerunt.* (Plaut. *Poen.* 811–813)
‘But that’s the way **these our rich men** are: if you do them a good turn, the thanks is lighter than a feather; if you make a mistake, their anger is as heavy as lead.’

This usage probably triggered and fostered the neutralization of the clear association with the second person, determining an increase in frequency of this item and a consequent decrease in specificity, and helped this form gain functional space in the domain of *hic*. We have clear signs already in Catullus, where *iste*, modified by a possessive adjective like *meus* ‘my’, is used as a proximal or first-person-oriented demonstrative instead of *hic* ((3)); then in Horace, Ovid, Lucan, and in prose from Vitruvius to Seneca, Pliny, and Quintilian.

- (3) *iste meus stupor nil videt, nihil audit* (Catull. 17, 21)
‘**this my** boobey sees nothing, hears nothing’

In Late Latin, *iste* ‘is lexically a word for “this”, a strong, unmistakable “this”’ (Trager 1932: 16). Nocentini (1990: 146) argues that *iste* is a proximal deictic in the *Itinerarium Egeriae*, and as such it is used in direct speech (see further Adams 1967: 26; Väänänen 1987: 48; Fruyt 2003: 117). Examples (4) and (5), taken from Hertenberg (2015: 276–277), make this point clear: in (4), *iste* is manifestly a proximal demonstrative pointing to a concrete, perceivable entity, thus functioning as what Fruyt (2003: 117) calls ‘a déictique concret, du visible et du visuel’; in (5) the bishop and Egeria are both in Batanis, and interpreting *civitatem istam* as ‘the city near you’ does not make sense since both interlocutors are in the same place—*iste* has now developed into a proximal demonstrative, meaning ‘this’.

- (4) *Nam ecce ista via quam videtis* (Itin. XIV, 3)
‘For **this** road that you see’
- (5) *pervenit ad civitatem, id est Batanis [...] Et tunc retuli michi de ipsa aqua sic sanctus episcopus dicens: [...] transacto ergo aliquanto tempore superveniunt Persae et girant civitatem istam* (Itin. XIX, 18)
‘Then, I came to a city whose name is Batanis. Then the holy bishop told me about the water, saying: when some time had passed, the Persians came against **this** city and surrounded it’

Motivations of various kinds contributed to the development of this outcome. Crucially to our concerns, they include two main pragmatic factors. The first is the bleaching of *iste*'s specialized deictic reference, which has its roots in Early Latin, when *iste* could be used to refer to well-known referents *irrespective of their relation to the personal sphere of the hearer*. This shows that the original semantic-pragmatic deictic component of *iste* is intrinsically fragile. The second is the expansion of *iste* at the cost of *hic*, correlating directly with a weakening of the pragmatic force of the latter, which progressively became an anaphoric expression without emphasis (thus taking over the previous role of *is*, which was used to express neutral anaphora). The resulting scenario is schematically represented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 The renewal of Latin demonstratives: the expansion of *iste*

	Anaphoric		Proximal		Medial		Distal
Early and Classical Latin	IS		HIC		ISTE		ILLE
Postclassical and Late Latin	IS/HIC	←	HIC/ISTE	←	ISTE		ILLE

In conclusion, the renewal of Latin demonstratives can be summarized as shown in Table 3.4, where Stage 2 constitutes the crucial phase of the cycle we have been discussing so far, representing a scenario of competition between forms: *hic* expanded into the functional space of *is*, and *iste*, in turn, underwent semantic-pragmatic expansion, causing it to encroach on the domain of *hic* (Stage 3). In the domain of person-oriented demonstratives, there was a change from a tripartite system to a bipartite one, with the merging, at Stage 4, of the speaker's and the hearer's spheres in the common sphere of interlocution (*iste*) as opposed to the sphere beyond the proximity of the interlocutors (*ille*).

Table 3.4 Stages in the renewal of Latin demonstratives

	Anaphoric		Proximal		Medial		Distal
STAGE 1	IS		HIC		ISTE		ILLE
STAGE 2	IS/HIC	←	HIC/ISTE	←	ISTE		ILLE
STAGE 3	HIC				ISTE		ILLE
STAGE 4			ISTE				ILLE

3.3.2 The second segment of the cycle: from Old to Modern Italian

In Old Italian varieties, the two major factors characterizing the renewal of demonstratives that we have discussed so far, namely the alternation in the number of distinctions involved and the process of formal strengthening through

re-deictization, are both relevant and subject to new developments. Succinctly put, in the transition from Latin to Italian a set of new pronoun-determiners emerged, once again altering the configuration of the system; and their formation featured a process of reinforcement by means of the same deictic element. Such a pivotal deictic form is the Latin presentative particle *ecce* ‘here it is!’, which also has complex forms such as *eccum*, *eccillum*, and *eccistum* with the accusative of the demonstratives it governs, as we shall see below.⁷

Presentative particles and constructions (such as English *there’s* or *here they are*) basically serve to bring an entity to the attention of the interlocutor(s) and have a clear deictic meaning. The addition of *ecce/eccum*, ‘expressing immediacy and engagement’ (Dionisotti 2007: 83), to a demonstrative thus established an opposition between a basic deictic meaning and its pragmatically emphatic counterpart. Reinforced forms featuring the univerbation of the particle *ecce* and the demonstratives *ille* or *iste*, such as *eccillum*, *eccillam*, and *eccillud*, are documented from Plautus to Apuleius and in epigraphic texts (cf. *ThLL* V, 2, 25,13ss.; see Perdicoyianni-Paléologou 2006; Sornicola 2011: 274–277; Adams 2013: 469–480, among others). In such forms, *ecce* originally pointed to something that was present and it had a ‘reinforcing demonstrative effect’ (Bauer 2007: 114), as shown by examples (6) and (7):

- (6) *sed generum nostrum ire eccillum video cum adfini suo* (Plaut. *Trin.* 622)
 ‘But look, I can see our son-in-law walking with his relation’
- (7) *certe eccistam video* (Plaut. *Curc.* 615)
 ‘I certainly see her right before my face’

Reinforced forms are well represented from Early Latin to Classical and Postclassical Latin; they later re-surfaced in Christian and Late Latin writers (e.g. (8), and also (4) above):

- (8) *Ecce ista fundamenta* (Itin. XIV, 7)
 ‘These foundations which you see here’

Later, syntagmatic forms coalesced into grammaticalized, univerbated expressions, gradually losing their semantic-pragmatic markedness (Lüdtke 2015: 543). A large number of Romance demonstratives can be explained in terms of this process of reinforcement. Northern Gallo-Romance varieties, for example, show forms which originated in *ecce* and a demonstrative pronoun (e.g. Old French

⁷ Semantically similar *eccum* is well attested in Plautus and Terence, but rarer in later periods (Sornicola 2011: 276), and manifests traces of declension in *eccum*, *eccos*, *eccam*, etc. (Lüdtke 2015: 543).

cist masc. sing. ‘ce’, *ceste* fem. sing., Old and Middle French *cil* masc. sing. ‘ce...là, celui...là’: Marchello-Nizia 2006: 108; Sornicola 2011: 234). The Italo-Romance and Ibero-Romance areas, by contrast, are characterized by forms derived from *eccu/accu*. The presentative particle played a crucial role in the formation of all Old Italian demonstratives, which re-established a trichotomy featuring three demonstrative pronoun-determiners, namely:

- (i) a proximal demonstrative *questo* (< ECCU(M)-ISTU(M)) ‘this’, referring to the personal sphere of the speaker;
- (ii) a distal demonstrative *quello* (< ECCU(M)-ILLU(M)) ‘that’, pointing to the space beyond any proximity to speaker and hearer;
- (iii) and a new medial or second-person-oriented demonstrative *cotesto/codesto* (< ECCU(M)-TIBI-ISTU(M)) ‘that of yours’, which denoted either a person, thing, or event in a space nearer the hearer, such as the knight pointed to in example (9), standing close to the interlocutor of the woman.

- (9) *Allora il marito dimandava la donna chi ella fosse. A cui ella rispondea: ‘Io sono stata menata da **codesto** cavaliere’* (Boccaccio, *Filocolo* 4, 67, 13th century)

‘Then her husband asked the woman who she was. To which she replied: “I’ve been brought by **this knight (there)**”’

The emergence of a new second-person-oriented demonstrative represents a major change in the restructuring of the Old Italian demonstrative system. The semantic value originally linked to the slot denoting proximity to the hearer disappeared in Late Latin and was reallocated to the new pronoun-demonstrative *cotesto/codesto*, which re-established a tripartite system. The cyclical restoration of a trichotomic deictic distinction is summarized in Table 3.5, a slightly modified version of Table 3.1.

Table 3.5 Cyclical alternation in deictic distinctions: from Latin to Old Italian

	Proximal	Medial	Distal
Early to Postclassical Latin	HIC	ISTE	ILLE
Late Latin		ISTE	ILLE
Old Italian	QUESTO	CODESTO	QUELLO

However, this system was not destined to last. In Modern Italian (16th–18th century), clear signs of a further reduction to a simplified dichotomy gradually emerged. Interesting pieces of evidence show that this new phase of transition had

its roots in the 16th century. As Sosnowski (2010: 62–64) reports, in contemporary grammars the use of *cotesto/codesto* is often described as old-fashioned and generally in decline. The grammarian Tani writes about the infrequency of *cotesto* in contemporary use (*COTESTO e CATUNO che gli antichi usarono, usano hoggi di rado* ‘COTESTO e CATUNO, used by ancient people, are used rarely today’; Tani, *Avvertimenti*, 1550), and Alberti claims that the only demonstrative elements in use are *questo* and *quello*; *codesto* is not even mentioned in his grammar (*questo e quello serve a ogni dimostrazione* ‘*questo* and *quello* serve for every designation’).

Sosnowski (2010: 114) further notes that a frequent violation of the Tuscan norm in theatrical texts of 16th-century Italy is precisely the use of *questo* instead of *codesto*, which tends to be substituted by *questo* and the analytic specification *tuo* ‘your’ (*codesto* = *questo tuo*: examples (10)–(11)), which paved the way for the elimination of the medial, second-person-oriented demonstrative.

- (10) *Tutto'l dì mi prieghi, stimoli e tormenti ch'io trovi modi di far che tu abbi questa tua femina* (Ariosto, *Cassaria*, act II, sc. 1)

‘All the day you beg me, urge me and torment me to find ways to make you have **this your** woman’

- (11) *Hor dov'è dunque questo tuo desiderio di piacerle?* (Tasso, *Aminta*, I, 3)

‘Now where is then **this your** desire of being pleasant to her?’

Non-canonical uses of *questo* to denote a person in a space nearer to the hearer are documented as well. In (12), *questo* is first used to refer to the personal sphere of the speaker, and then to that of the hearer:

- (12) *Che rumore è questo? Che fai tu con questo uomo?* (Contile, *La Pescara*, sc. 5)

‘Which noise is **this**? What are you doing with **this** [= that of yours] man?’

The quantitative analysis provided by Sosnowski (2010: 245–249) helps us gain further understanding of this process of functional convergence. In his corpus comprising a selection of theatrical plays written in the 16th century, he found that *codesto/cotesto* was not used in 30 texts out of 74. These 30 texts were all written by authors from regions other than Tuscany, who tended to abandon this form. At the beginning of the 17th century, the grammarian Buonmattei wrote that ‘*cotesto* struggles to be accepted outside of Tuscany, and is often misunderstood’ (Migliorini 1960: 425). This trend clearly anticipates the contemporary situation, where vestiges of the ternary system survive in Tuscan, Sardinian,

and a variety of dialects of central and southern Italy, but a binary system is most widely used elsewhere (Maiden 1995: 115; Vanelli 1997: 112; Ledgeway 2015).

Register variation played a role as well in the gradual dismissal of the medial demonstrative, since lower degrees of literacy seem to be related to the rare use of *codesto/cotesto*. To cite an example, the *volgarizzamenti* of Plautus's comedies show that *iste* is always translated with *questo* instead of *codesto*, this being a very telling piece of evidence for the abandonment of the latter form—even in cases where the original texts featured a tripartite demonstrative system.

In conclusion, the situation emerging from Modern Italian data points to a multi-layered transitory system which is both *dialect-oriented* and *style-oriented*, and where the unconscious adoption of the dialectal demonstrative system by a large number of non-Tuscan authors reveals the inherent fragility of the tripartite deictic series, the primary deictic centre (*ego*) was stronger and tended to attract the secondary one (*tu*). The reduction to a new binary system has been fully accomplished in contemporary Italian, where there is a two-term opposition between *questo* 'this' denoting proximity to speaker and hearer and *quello* 'that' expressing distance beyond the sphere of interlocution. *Codesto* 'that of yours' is limited to Tuscan varieties and a number of central-southern dialects, as explained above. To give an idea of the quantitative occurrence of *codesto* in contemporary spoken Italian, in the *Lessico di frequenza dell'Italiano Parlato* (LIP) corpus (1990–1993) we found only five hits (of which four are found in colloquial texts collected in Florence and one in a bureaucratic text gathered in Milan); in the *Lessico di frequenza dell'Italiano Radiofonico* (LIR) corpus (1995–2003) our search yielded 11 occurrences, all from an advert reproducing spoken Tuscan. The KIParla corpus of spoken Italian (2016–2019) collected in Bologna and Turin yielded even more interesting evidence. The form *codesto* appears only in one conversation and is used in a metalinguistic sense: friends from Emilia Romagna and Tuscany are discussing the geographical distribution of the form, and the former recognize in it a typical lexeme qualifying the Tuscan variety (example (13)). The Tuscan friend (speaker D) confirms that he uses it 'always', 'all the time', and gives an example that arouses general hilarity ('it sounds like a joke')—a fact that testifies to the extraneousness of the medial demonstrative in the Italian spoken outside of Tuscany.

(13) KIParla corpus (BOA3003)

A: *cos'è >che(=no<), aspetta. cos'è che dicono sempre? codesto.*

B: *code[sto.]*

C: *[chi lo dice] code[sto?]*

A: *[eh. si dice] che i toscani, usino sempre (.) co[desto.]*

D: *[noi.][>io lo uso sempre codesto.<]*

C: *lo usi?*

D: ***noi si usa di continuo.***

C: *codesto, tipo?*

B: *cos'è, che ci hai messo dentro, [(a questo piatto.)]*

C: [*codesto:, piatto,*]

D: [***che hai messo in codes***]ta *insalata.*

B: *eh?*

A: ***vedi allora, che mi ricordavo bene, [che i toscani dicono codesto?]***

D: [*che c'hai messo in codesta insalata.*]

C: [*code-*] >***sembra una***< ***presa per il [cu.hlo.]***

A: what is >that(=no<), wait. what is it that they always say? codesto.

B: code[sto.]

C: [who says] code[sto?]

A: [eh. **they say**] **the Tuscans always use (.) co[desto.]**

D: [us.] [**>I always use code[sto.]**]

C: do you use it?

D: **we use it all the time.**

C: like what?

B: what is it, that you put in there, [(to this dish.)]

C: [*codesto:, plate,*]

D: [**that you put in codes**]ta *salad.*

B: *huh?*

A: **see then, that I remembered well, [that Tuscans say codesto?].**

D: [which you put in codesta salad.]

C: [*code-*] >**sounds like a joke**'

Taking into consideration the pool of data discussed so far, it is now possible to make some preliminary observations on the nature of the two cyclical changes involved in the diachronic development of the demonstrative system from Early and Classical Latin up to Modern and contemporary Italian.

Firstly, Latin and Italian demonstratives underwent cyclical re-deictization, a process of recurrent formal and functional strengthening realized through the addition of deictic intensifiers. Secondly, the linguistic change under scrutiny also featured a cyclical reorganization of the number of distinctions involved in the Latin and Italian demonstrative systems. The data discussed so far documented a switch from the Early and (post-)Classical Latin ternary system to its binary

counterpart in Late Latin. Old Italian restored a deictic trichotomy, which underwent gradual reduction to two terms starting from Modern Italian. Following Anderson and Keenan (1985), the two configurations at play, binary and ternary, can be interpreted in terms of a ‘person-oriented’ system based on the speaker’s deictic centre and featuring a tripartite distinction (speaker, hearer, or ‘me and you’ interlocutors vs. the ‘non-person’, to use Benveniste’s [1946] terms), and a ‘distance-oriented’ binary system, based on a shared sphere of interlocution. The alternation between the two opposing poles is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

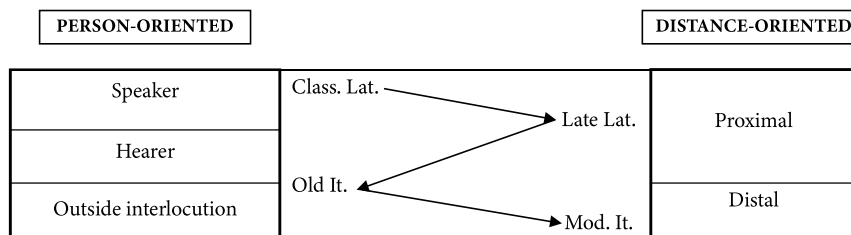


Figure 3.1 Cyclical alternation between person- and distance-oriented demonstrative systems

As mentioned at various points in this chapter, contemporary Italian features a binary, distance-oriented opposition, fully establishing the process of innovation that emerged in the 16th century. However, a new set of forms needs to be added to this configuration: that of reinforced demonstratives with a clear pragmatic meaning. This will be the focus of attention in the next section.

3.4 Reinforced demonstratives in contemporary Italian

The demonstrative system in contemporary Italian is based on a binary opposition between *questo* ‘this’ denoting proximity to speaker and hearer and *quello* ‘that’ expressing distance beyond the sphere of interlocution. An interesting phenomenon, however, is currently at work in reshaping the system, namely the addition of locative adverbs *qui* and *qua* ‘here’ and *lì* and *là* ‘there’, found especially in informal varieties.⁸ As we have seen in Section 3.1, the addition of a locative adverb is fully grammaticalized in French (*celui-là*), where the demonstratives themselves are not marked for the proximal/distal features and only the locatives denote which is intended. In Italian, on the other hand, the locative is redundant with respect to that distinction and constitutes a pragmatic option,

⁸ *Qui* and *qua* identify a place as connected to the deictic centre represented by the place where the speaker is located at the moment of utterance through coincidence, inclusion, or proximity. *Lì* and *là*, on the other hand, identify places that are interpreted as distant with respect to the speaker. However, between the two forms that make up each pair there is also a slight difference: *qui* and *lì* indicate precisely defined places, while *qua* and *là* point to a more undetermined area, which is not precisely delimited (Vanelli and Renzi 2001: 269–274).

which can carry a subjective connotation. An example is (14), where a young speaker, aged under 25 years old, reports what a friend said, pointing to someone he does not like—a dangerous person, apparently—by using the reinforced distal demonstrative *quello lì* ‘that there’:

- (14) KIParla corpus (BOD2014)
*io ero fuori con tobia, lui fa, **quello lì non mi piace**, la energia:: tipo tutte
 (.) cose del genere, però ci sta. a parte che ha minacciato un cinese con un
 taglierino l'altro giorno*
 ‘I was out with Tobia, he says, **I don't like that there**, the energy:: like all
 (.) stuff like that, but he is OK. except that he threatened a Chinese man
 with a box cutter the other day’

A metalinguistic comment such as the one made in (15) provides further evidence for the pejorative nuance often implied by reinforced demonstratives—in this case, *quella lì* ‘that here’, a form cited by the speaker as a marker of subjective stance used to convey a harshly derogative evaluation. Note that the journalist clearly perceives the metapragmatic value of the form and puts it between inverted commas:

- (15) *LaRepubblica* corpus_19/12/13
 ‘Voglio uscire da questa storia, sono additata da tutti come “quella lì” e io non
 ho fatto nulla però’
 ‘I want to get out of this story, I am singled out by everyone as
 “**that one there**”
 and I didn't do anything though’

As we will show, this process of reinforcement through re-deictization considerably broadened the functional spectrum of demonstratives in contemporary Italian, where they can function as subjective qualifiers that do not serve to situate a referent with regard to the speech situation or the external world (exophoric function of demonstratives, according to Diessel 1999), but to give a pragmatic, evaluative interpretation within a discursive sphere. The aim of this section is to offer a pragmatically grounded, corpus-based account of this recent process of subjectification both in quantitative and in qualitative terms.⁹

As one might expect, reinforced demonstratives are attested above all in reported speech taken from interviews (66 per cent of cases), as in (16), and wire-taps (17 per cent); sometimes, they also surface in online written Italian (17). Examples (16) and (17) show the typical derogatory meanings conveyed by the reinforced demonstratives: in (16) the speaker uses the form to distance himself

⁹ Because of space constraints, in this study we have limited our investigation to pronominal demonstratives, leaving adnominal uses (e.g. *questa casa qui* ‘this house here’) to future research.

from a person whom he claims not to know, and who is negatively connoted, whereas in (17) students comment on the high school leaving exam of 2013, where a little-studied 20th-century writer, Claudio Magris, was the subject of the textual analysis part of the exam, causing general discontent.¹⁰ Such contexts show how reinforced demonstratives are used as pragmatically specialized devices expressing the speaker's stance, mostly indexing a deliberate distancing from negatively evaluated referents.

(16) *LaRepubblica* corpus_07/08/10

*'L'ex presidente degli industriali di Roma' insiste 'Fofò'. 'Nun lo sacc chi è **chistu cà** (non lo so chi è **questo qua**)', è la risposta in campano di Lombardi.*

“The former president of the industrialists of Rome” insists ‘Fofò’. “Nun lo sacc chi è **chistu cà** (I do not know who is **this here**)”, is Lombardi’s answer in Campanian’.

(17) *LaRepubblica* corpus_20/06/13

*Gli studenti, spiazzati, hanno consegnato ai commissari d'esame i loro temi scritti a penna per poi correre a confidarsi con la tastiera. 'E io che mi lamentavo di Montale'. 'Un anno a prepararsi sull'analisi del testo e poi esce **sto qua**'.*

‘The students, staggered, gave the examining commissioners their hand-written essays and then rushed to confide in their keyboards. “And I complained about Montale”. “A year spent preparing for the textual analysis and then we get **this here**”’.

Figure 3.2 shows the frequency of reinforced demonstratives in the *LaRepubblica* corpus, totalling 5,708 hits. It highlights a clear frequency peak between 1995 and 2005, a decade where there is an increase of 133 per cent in the use of these forms, affecting masculine ones especially, and above all the distal demonstrative *quello li/là*. After 2005 there follows a phase of relative stabilization.

We compared this figure against a control corpus, a second journalistic corpus based on articles published in another Italian newspaper, *La Stampa*, focusing on the years between 1992 and 2011. It is noteworthy that the trend that emerged from the *LaRepubblica* corpus is confirmed by the data taken from *La Stampa*, which includes 1,245 reinforced demonstratives, and where a frequency peak is documented precisely during the same years (Figure 3.3). Masculine forms also prevail in this corpus—and among them, again distal demonstratives.

These data allow us to add some pieces to the fragmentary picture of the emergence and consolidation of reinforced demonstratives in Italian.

¹⁰ This example features the use of the shortened variant ‘sto, an apheretic form of *questo*.

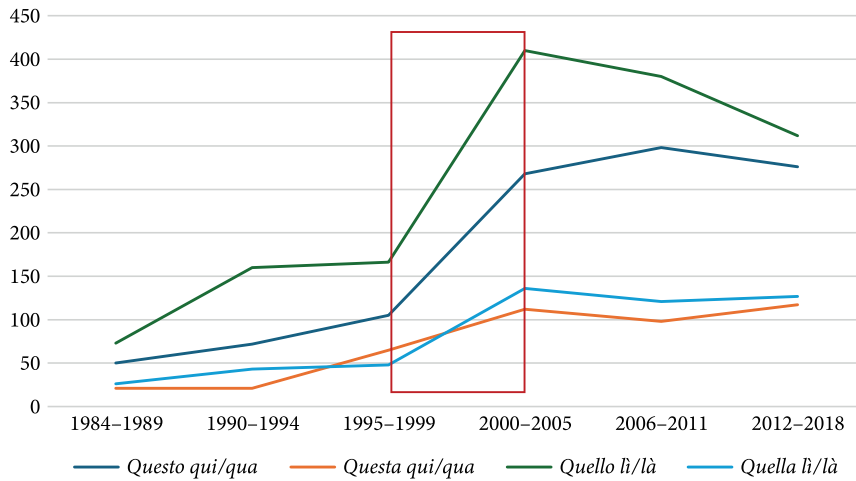


Figure 3.2 Frequency of *questo/a qui/qua* and *quello/a qui/qua* in the *La Repubblica* corpus

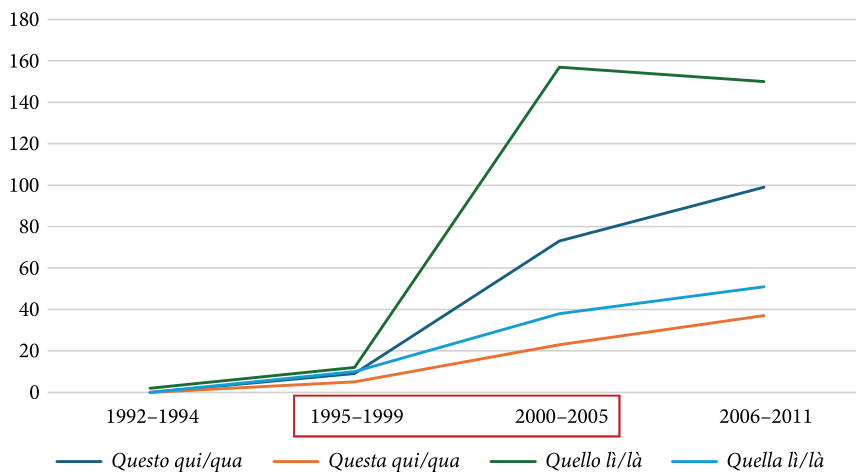


Figure 3.3 Frequency of *questo/a qui/qua* and *quello/a qui/qua* in the *La Stampa* corpus

Earlier scholarship attested to their scant presence in texts dating back to the 19th or early 20th century. Brodin (1970: 67, 112) detected only sporadic traces of these forms in 19th-century literary texts, all limited to *questo qui/qua*. According to this author, the penetration of reinforced demonstratives in Italian literature seems to coincide with the spread of verist and realist literary currents in Italy, which had significant repercussions on the linguistic choices made by the authors of the

time.¹¹ Along similar lines, in her analysis devoted to the language of the main Milan newspapers published between 1900 and 1905, [Bonomi \(2002: 72\)](#) reports that reinforced demonstratives are sometimes attested, in line with a use of the language as spoken mainly in the north. Based on these observations, it is reasonable to assume that starting from a circumscribed use, mirrored only occasionally in written texts in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century, the use of reinforced demonstratives gradually increased, to the point where it caught the attention of sociolinguists in the mid-1980s ([Sabatini 1985](#); [Berruto 1987](#): see §1). Data from the main corpus of spoken Italian collected in the 1990s, the LIP corpus, still point to a minority pattern. To give an idea, out of 3,393 occurrences of *questo*, only 138 are accompanied by *qui*, corresponding to the 4 per cent, and with the main function of strengthening exophoric reference. The question that thus arises at this point is: how did the pragmatic meaning of reinforced demonstratives emerge, through what process of subjectification? And what is the frequency of this meaning in the journalistic corpus examined?

A preliminary step to take when tackling this issue is to distinguish between spatial deixis and pragmatic deixis. Reinforced demonstratives can be used to strengthen the deictic indication of an entity located within the spatial coordinates of the enunciative *hic et nunc* and as such clearly perceivable through the senses, as in (18), or to refer to participants that are not necessarily present in the context and who undergo subjective evaluation by the speaker, as in (19). We speak of spatial deixis, connected to exophoric functions of demonstratives, in the former case, and of pragmatic deixis in the latter. In (19), for instance, the journalist reports a statement by a former prefect about Lele Mora, who in 2011 was investigated by the Public Prosecutor's Office for aiding and abetting prostitution together with Silvio Berlusconi. The former prefect explains that Mora had actresses and prostitutes whom he offered to his friends; however, he only refers to prostitutes by means of a reinforced demonstrative (*queste qua* 'these here'), which does not serve to identify a referent present in the context but to allude to them with a certain derogatory tone. It should be noted that, in transcribing the interview, the journalist decides to put the expression in inverted commas, clearly aware of—and highlighting accordingly—its pragmatically connoted value.

¹¹ These findings tie in inherently with the results of our research based on the *Biblioteca Italiana* corpus (see [Section 3.2](#)). The higher frequency of these forms (44 tokens) is found precisely in Verga's work, the greatest representative of Italian Verism. Next come Tozzi and Fogazzaro, totalling, however, only six and seven tokens, respectively. They were all born between the 1840s and 1880s. To be precise, we have also found a couple of occasional occurrences in texts from earlier periods (17th century). They show that deictic accumulation was in fact possible, although not frequent, under specific pragmatic circumstances, namely to express additional pragmatic emphasis or in contrastive contexts (as in *queste qui di Venezia, e non quelle d'Ancona, di Napoli o di Genova* 'these here of Venice, and not those of Ancona, Naples or Genoa' [Galileo, *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi*, day four], where the astronomer Salviati speaks of the waters of Venice, and is indeed in Venice: the expression *queste qui* therefore has a clear spatial deictic reference).

- (18) *LaRepubblica* corpus_04.11.08
*Vorrei farmi un altro tatuaggio. Ora c'ho solo **questo qui** sul braccio*
 'I'd like to get another tattoo. Now I only have **this here** on my arm'
- (19) *LaRepubblica* corpus_01.04.11
'Perché - spiega l'ex prefetto ai suoi interlocutori - Mora c'ha le attrici e poi ha tutte "queste qua"... che dà agli amici diciamo
 "Because", explains the former prefect to his interlocutors, "Mora has actresses and then has all '**these here**'... that he gives to his friends, let's say"

As we will argue further below, pragmatic meanings may have developed from certain endophoric functions of demonstratives, such as anaphoric tracking of a referent, with the addition of some subjective evaluative features. Based on general principles of semantic-pragmatic change, whereby spatial, concrete meanings are typical sources of more abstract, non-spatial meanings (see, e.g. Tyler and Evans 2003), and non-subjective meanings can develop subjective meanings (see, e.g. Traugott and Dasher 2002), it is reasonable to assume that the spatial, non-subjective deictic meaning is the one originally conveyed by reinforced demonstratives. This claim is corroborated by diachronic corpus data: in Verga, the mid-19th-century author in whose work these forms are employed with some frequency for the first time in Italian literature, the typical context of use is in direct speech with clear deictic reference to entities located in the discourse situation. In (20), for instance, the speaker refers to a concrete, visible referent: note the co-occurrence of a verb of vision, which points to a direct perception of the entity being indicated. The locative adverb clearly serves to strengthen deictic reference, also in a contrastive sense ('as for donkeys, *this here* and not others').

- (20) *O guarda l'asino di san Giuseppe! Perché non comprate **questo qui**, compare Neli?*
 (Verga, *Novelle rusticane*)
 'O look at St Joseph's donkey! Why don't you buy **this (fellow) here**, comrade Neli?'

The addition of the locative adverb serves to call joint attention to a visible referent and perhaps simultaneously to add pragmatic salience to the reference tracking process. Another example is (21), a pragmatically loaded utterance, which in our view includes a component of subjective evaluation, since the man spoken of stands with his wife in front of a half-naked girl on a stage—a scene that was deemed quite inappropriate.

- (21) *Questo qui, disse uno nella folla, s'è maritato che non è un mese, e la sposa è li che guarda, in seconda fila.* (Verga, *Per le vie, Al veglione*)
 'This (fellow) here, said one in the crowd, got married not a month ago, and the bride is standing there looking on, in the second row'

Bridging contexts leading to the development of clearer subjective values are documented for example in Pirandello. In his famous play *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* 'Six Characters in Search of an Author' (1921), we find uses such as those in (22), where *quella* is firstly used by the mother with endophoric reference, pointing to a person mentioned in the previous discourse, but who is not present on stage. The stepdaughter then refers to the same person with a reinforced demonstrative, where the locative adverb serves to strengthen her reference to background knowledge and possibly to align it with the mother's subjective attitude and viewpoint.

- (22) LA MADRE. *Mi crederà, signore, se le dico che non mi passò neppur lontanamente per il capo il sospetto che **quella megera** mi dava lavoro perchè aveva adocchiato mia figlia?*
 LA FIGLIASTRA. *Povera mamma! Sa, signore, che cosa faceva **quella li**, appena le riportavo il lavoro fatto da lei?*
 'THE MOTHER. Will you believe me, sir, if I tell you that the suspicion never even remotely crossed my mind that **that vixen** was giving me work because she had her eye on my daughter?
 THE STEPDAUGHTER. Poor mother! Do you know, sir, what **that there** did as soon as I brought back the work she had done?'

In similar contexts, the speaker refers to a previously mentioned entity, known in the universe of discourse, which is again brought to prominence, as the speaker wishes to express additional subjective evaluation. Thus, the function of such forms is not limited to reference tracking, but enriched by further qualificatory predication (typically, disregard or dislike, as in example (22); on this point, see further Zanchi 2018: 116–117).

Figure 3.4 shows the quantitative distribution of spatial versus pragmatic deixis in a selected subcorpus, on which we carried out a more fine-grained qualitative analysis. This was compiled from online editions of *La Repubblica* published between 2000 and 2018, where reinforced demonstratives amount to 753 tokens. As is readily apparent, pragmatic meanings clearly prevail (93 per cent of total cases).

The data in Figure 3.4 document two main facts: on the one hand, the high degree of subjectification developed by reinforced demonstratives at the beginning

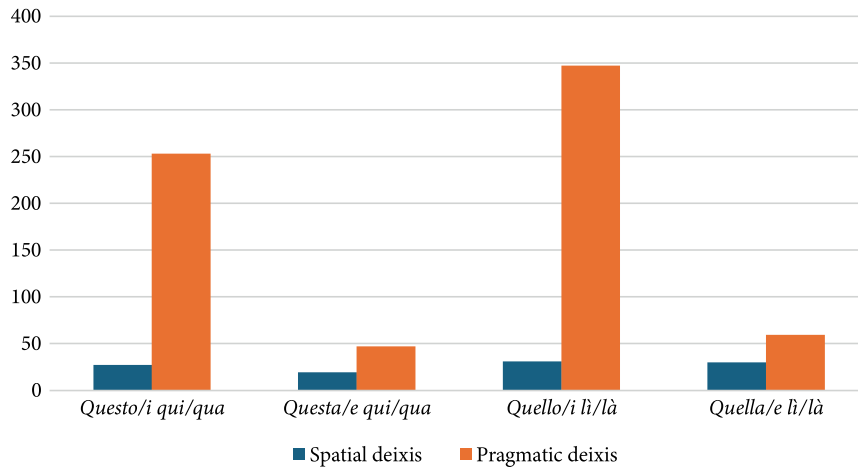


Figure 3.4 Spatial versus pragmatic deictic values in the subcorpus of *LaRepubblica* online editions

of the 21st century. On the other, the fact that there appears to be no significant correlation between proximal and distal deixis and the development of positive versus negative pragmatic meanings. In some languages, distal demonstratives have turned out to be privileged forms to express negative evaluation, because they are used iconically to point to entities that the speaker excludes from their sphere (see, e.g. Marchello-Nizia 2006: 60). Such an association basically rests on the metaphorical conceptualization of intimacy and solidarity in terms of SPATIAL CLOSENESS (Grady 1997: 203–206), and ultimately on the mapping AN EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS A DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO ENTITIES (Kövecses 2000: 92). Our findings, however, show that the metaphorical projection based on the idea of emotional distance is not relevant to the subjectified meanings developed by Italian reinforced demonstratives.¹² In our view, the addition of locative adverbs primarily serves to strengthen the process of reference tracking and gives new pragmatic prominence to a previously mentioned entity. It is picked up again because the speaker wishes to add some evaluative features to it, characterizing it in terms of their subjective stance—irrespective of whether the entity referred to belongs to the speaker’s sphere or not.

¹² This result is in line with the data discussed by Zanchi (2018), who argued that the negatively oriented uses of the simple demonstrative *questo* require a different explanation. The metaphorical approach, moreover, likewise fails to explain the surprising similarity of attitudinal *questo* and *quello*, which is also documented by our data.

3.5 Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, we have interpreted subsequent phases of change affecting the Latin and Italian demonstrative system as belonging to the same spiral, made up of a curve emanating from a starting point and moving farther as it revolves around two basic poles: that of ‘person-oriented’ deictic systems, based on the speaker’s deictic centre, and that of ‘distance-oriented’ deictic systems, based on a shared sphere of interlocation (Figure 3.5).

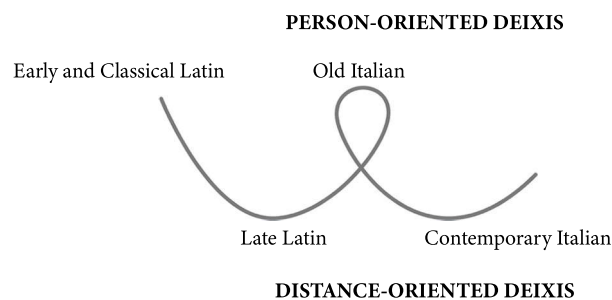


Figure 3.5 Spiral from person- to distance-oriented deixis.

Within this spiral, the first phase leads from person- to distance-oriented deixis through *semantic reduction* (*iste* encroaching on the functional domain of *hic* and levelling out the medial vs. distal deictic distinction); the second phase goes back to person-oriented deixis through *semantic elaboration* with the restoration of a third category (the medial demonstrative *codesto*) in Old Italian. The spiral then curves again towards the distance-oriented dichotomy, where the primary deictic centre (*ego*) attracts the more fragile secondary one.

From a pragmatic viewpoint, the cyclical change under scrutiny documents a recurrent renewal through deictic elements expressing a functional reinforcement. This process rests on the fact that speakers recurrently strengthen the old demonstrative with new material (re-deictization). Such additions are marked in bold in Figure 3.6. This process is particularly evident if the lexical root remains diachronically stable—see the long phase highlighted with a bold box in Figure 3.6. Importantly in the present context, however, in contemporary Italian the process of reinforcement has resulted in a set of analytic demonstratives that are fundamentally different from the other forms involved in the cyclical renewal under scrutiny, precisely because the locative expression they feature is *optional* and *not agglutinated* to the demonstrative it accompanies. This suggests a different pathway of change that does not appear to fit cyclic development in a straightforward way. This conclusion corroborates the point made by Goldstein (2023: 92), namely that it is necessary to distinguish between two distinct changes: ‘demonstrative

reinforcement on the one hand and the process by which they become the basic demonstratives of a language on the other’.



Figure 3.6 Cyclical re-deictization of Latin and Italian demonstratives.

Functional and usage-based factors play a major role in the process of deictic reinforcement between Latin and Italian: inflectional transparency enhances the online processes of coding and decoding and reduces cognitive costs; ambiguity is abandoned in favour of simpler morpho-phonological parsing, which facilitates the semantic analysis of complex forms; forms with a unique identifiable meaning are diachronically more stable. And what is more, our analysis of contemporary Italian reinforced demonstratives suggests that the process of reinforcement may be triggered by pragmatic factors, since the addition of locative adverbs primarily served to strengthen the process of reference tracking, giving pragmatic prominence to an entity to which some evaluative features can be added in terms of stance and intersubjective alignment.

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