Inverse vocatives: the issue of reference and agreement mismatch

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Overview: In recent years, a substantial body of work has emerged articulating a layer of structure, above the CP, to encode properties of the Speech Act (e.g. Speas & Tenny 2003, Haegeman 2014, Wiltschko et al. 2015). Among other things, this layer has lent insight into the syntactic behavior of vocatives (e.g. Moro 2003, D' Hulst et al. 2007, Hill 2007, 2014, Haegeman 2014). Despite some differences regarding the application of the syntactic behavior of vocatives, the literature converges on one point about vocatives: A vocative phrase has been traditionally defined as an NP that refers to the addressee of an utterance (e.g. Zwicky 1974, Portner 2004, Hill 2007, 2014, Schaden 2010, Haegeman 2014, Haegeman & Hill 2013, a.o.). On the basis of the so-called *inverse vocatives* (1) and (2), found in several languages, e.g. Georgian (Abuladze & Ludden 2013), Arabic (Mohammad 2014), Turkish, this paper challenges the canonical view about the issue of reference in vocatives. Dealing with this topic, which to date has gone uninvestigated, the paper also provides an account for the phi-feature mismatches on these vocatives following Collins and Postal's (C&P, 2012) *imposter* analysis and Kratzer's (2009) *Feature Transmission* hypothesis.

(1) **Context:** The elder brother addresses his little sibling as follows.

Abi-si,	ayakkabılar-ım-ı	getir-ir	mi-sin?	(Turkish)
brother-3SG	shoes-1SG-ACC	fetch-AOR	Q-2SG	

Lit: 'His/her brother, can you fetch my shoes?'   (from *İntihar*, a book)

(2) **Context:** A patient addresses his/her doctor.

Peki,	sana ne	de-meli,	*doktor-cuğ-u*?	(Turkish)
well	you-DAT	say-should	doctor-DIM-3SG	

Lit: 'Well, his/her doctor, what about you?'

In (1), the lexical item *abi* 'brother' refers to the speaker himself, not the addressee in the conversation, while the possessive agreement on the vocative comes from the hearer. In (2) however, *doctor* 'doctor' refers to the addressee and the possessive to the speaker. Therefore, these instances challenge the view that reference is always to the hearer. Such instances are widespread particularly in Turkish and usually express kinship or professional relations between the speaker and the hearer.

Issues and Proposal: Several questions arise from the data in (1) and (2). One could suspect that the possessive agreement might come not from the speech act participants, i.e. the speaker and the hearer, but from an external source (Martina Wiltschko, p.c.). The evidence against this comes from Sason Arabic (3).

(3) a. (mother addresses her son)   b. (mother addresses her daughter)

ımm-u,	ta	nihane!	*ımm-a,*	tey	nihane!
mother-3M	come.2M	here	mother-3F	come.2F	here

Lit: 'His mother, come here!'   Lit: 'Her mother, come here!'

Unlike Palestinian Arabic (Mohammad 2014, Kristen Brustad, p.c.) and Turkish, Sason Arabic shows gender agreement, in that it reflects the gender of the hearer, which strongly suggests that the possessive agreement is due to the speech act participants.

Another question is whether such instances can be treated simply as a shift of perspective or a matter of expressivity. That is, the speaker is taking the perspective of the hearer, which makes the vocative *annem* 'my mother' in (4) possible. However, if it was just a matter of shift of perspective, the prediction would be that (5) should be grammatical in the same scenario, only with multiple hearers, contrary to fact (see Podobryaev 2014 for a similar argument for imposters).

(4) **Context:** The mother addresses her son as follows.

Anne-m,	kredi-ye	uygun	ev	var	di-yor-lar	(*Leyla ile Mecnun*, TV show)
mother-1SG	loan-DAT	eligible	house	there	say-PROG-3PL	

Lit: 'My mother, they say there is a house eligible for loan.

(5) **Context:** The mother addresses her sons as follows.

    Anne-miz   kredi-ye uygun   ev   var di-yor-lar
    mother-1PL   loan-DAT eligible   house there say-PROG-3PL

The next question concerns the function of such vocatives. (6) shows that these vocatives can be used as both *call* vocative and *address* vocative in the sense of Zwicky (1974), Haegeman (2014). The former is 'designated to catch the addressee's attention', while the latter is intended for a bonding relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

(6) a. *hoca-sı,*   nerde-sin?   (call)
        teacher-3SG   where-2SG
        Lit: 'His/her teacher, where are you?'

    b. Şimdi, *hoca-sı*   san-a   bir şey   söyle-yeceğ-im.   (address)
        Now   teacher-3SG you-DAT   something   say-FUT-1SG
        Lit: 'Now, his/her teacher, I will tell you something.'

Proposal of reference: Based on inverse vocatives, we argue for the dissociation of the vocative function from the 'reference' of the DP, and propose the structure in (7). This configuration proposes a layer above the vocative which determines the reference and phi-features of the vocative DP, in order to accommodate the data in various languages. This requires some modification to the feature complex attributed to the Voc° in the literature. Espinal (2013), for instance, proposes that the vocative head has a deictic feature and a 2nd person feature. This deictic feature in the vocative functional head will suffice to give the vocative interpretation. However, we dispense with the 2nd person feature, which automatically associates vocatives only with the addressee.

(7) [AUTHOR [ADDRESSEE [VOCATIVE   ]]]

We argue that denotation and Φ-features are the results of separate operations and assume that the reference is the result of the indices relation established between the vocative DP and the antecedent higher in the structure, i.e. either AUTHOR or ADDRESSEE of C&P (2012), following the proposal of several researchers, e.g. Speas and Tenny 2003, Baker 2008, Miyagawa 2012.

Proposal of phi-feature licensing: Note that (1) and (4) show the same properties, in that the reference is to the speaker, but vary in the phi-features of the possessive, which does not correspond to any change in the truth value. This exemplifies the properties of *imposters* of C&P (2012). Regarding the licensing of these Φ-features, we adopt *Feature Transmission* analysis (Heim 2008, Kratzer 2009), which posits that Φ-features are percolated from a functional head, identified as v°, but follow C&P (2012) in allowing different phi-features to be transmitted from multiple sources. We argue that this revised condition is necessary in order to explain cases such as (8).

(8) **Context:** A radio show hostess addresses her listeners.

    Günaydın   *can-lar-ı*   umarım her şey   yolundadır.   Sizleri çok özledim.
    good morning   dear-PL-3SG   I hope everything   alright   you   a lot I missed
    Lit: 'Good morning, *his/her dears,* hope everything is alright. I missed you a lot.'

In this scenario, Φ-feature transmission takes place from different sources. The person feature percolates from the AUTHOR, i.e. speaker, while the number feature comes from the ADDRESSEE. Full application of these analyses to inverse vocatives will be presented.

Conclusion: This paper looks at *inverse vocatives*, from the perspectives of the reference of the vocative and the licensing of the phi-features on it. It suggests dissociation of the vocative function from the denotation of the DP, and shows that Collins and Postal's *imposter* analysis has a larger empirical coverage and can be extended to account for such instances. It also provides another piece of evidence for the presence of the speech act participants.