Vocatives and the "Minimal Word" syndrome

The question of the definition of Vocative and the problem of its place within or outside the case system has long been discussed. The aim of this talk is not to account for the general status of Vocatives, but to investigate the phonological and morphological properties of Vocatives in some Indo-European languages. It will be argued that these appeal forms often show up with exceptional properties and thus they may not be fully integrated in the system. We shall concentrate our attention on Romance Vocatives, and we shall show, on the basis of these data, that a) morphologically, Vocatives cannot be analyzed as "bare stems" ; b) Vocatives may violate the rules and constraints that are active in a given language.

One of the most interesting properties of Romance Vocatives is found in some Southern Italo-Romance dialects: as a matter of fact, in these dialects, proper nouns used in calling may appear as truncated. As shown in examples (1), vocative forms only retain the stressed syllable and the syllables on its left:

(1)

	Full form	Vocative		Full form	Vocative
1a.	**'pjɛ:ro**	**'pjɛ**	1f.	**an'to:njo**	**an'tɔ**
1b.	**'sandro**	**'sa**	1g.	**te'rɛ:za**	**te'rɛ**
1c.	**'silvja**	**'si**	1h.	**fran'čɛsko**	**fran'čɛ**
1d.	**'franko**	**'fra**	1i.	**ko'r:a:do**	**ko'r:a**
1e.	**salva'tɔ:re**	**'tɔ** (< **'tɔ:re**)	1j.	**džu'zɛp:e**	**džu'zɛ**

It is a well-known fact that Russian has lost the Indo-European inherited Vocative. However, this language has in recent time (re)created a « neo-vocative ». This "neo-vocative" does not show up as a nominal stem, but as a truncated surface form – more specifically, examples (2) show that the Russian neo-vocative is obtained truncating the corresponding nominative form :

(2)

	Hypochoristic		neo-vocative
2a.	**vánja** (< Iván)		**ván´**
2b.	**gálja** (< Galína)		**gal´**
2c	**míša** (< Mixail)		**miš**
2d	**díma** (< Dmitrij)		**dim**
2e	**sáša** (< Alexandr)		**saš**
2f.	**maška** (< Máša < Maríja)		**mašk**

It will be argued that Vocative forms often show up with an anomalous or deviant make-up; these deviant or anomalous patterns will be taken to illustrate the fundamental peripherality of Vocatives in the case system.

Bibliographie

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