

# The role of person in Ibero- and Gallo-Romance demonstratives

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## Abstract

Demonstratives in Romance languages display greater morphological complexity than the definite articles that developed from them, illuminating the internal structure of both sets of forms. Building on the work of Leu (2015), Bernstein et al. (1999), and others, we claim that Ibero- and Gallo-Romance demonstratives can be decomposed into a deictic or locative component and a definite determiner, and that an agreement relation involving person connects these two heads (cf. Guardiano & Stavrou 2020). Compared with their Latin precursors, which displayed a three-way system (1<sup>st</sup>/proximal, 2<sup>nd</sup>/medial, 3<sup>rd</sup>/distal), the modern Romance forms are relatively unstable: a loss of forms through grammaticalization is followed by a gain through realignment or addition of forms. Our analysis also builds on the ideas that the D head encodes person (Bernstein 2008a,b; Longobardi 2008) and that Romance demonstrative systems are person-oriented (Vincent 1999; Ledgeway 2015; Terenghi 2023). When a definite determiner is decoupled from its demonstrative source, as happened across Romance in its transition from Latin, it retains its person feature and loses its deictic force, which it subsequently regains.

**Keywords:** demonstratives, determiners, Ibero-Romance, Gallo-Romance, grammaticalization.

## 1. Introduction: the decomposition of demonstratives

Building on the work of Leu (2015), Bernstein et al. (1999), and others, we pursue a fine-grained analysis of the Ibero- and Gallo-Romance demonstrative systems. What becomes immediately apparent is that demonstratives display their morphological composition transparently. We propose that demonstratives can be decomposed into two syntactic heads: one is Deictic (DeicticP) and the other is D (DP).

Leu (2015: 12) entertains the idea that demonstratives in English (and more generally) contain a “deictic/anaphoric element, an agreement head, and a definite marker” contained in an extended adjectival projection. He bundles these elements as in (1).

- (1) [DEM the-AGR HERE] → *this*  
       [DEM the-AGR THERE] → *that*

The definite marker corresponds to a definite article and the deictic/anaphoric element corresponds to a silent or pronounced locative adjective (HERE, THERE; *here, there*). An important observation made by Leu (p. 39) and relevant for us here is that not all the components of a demonstrative have to be overtly expressed.

Similarly, Bernstein et al. (1999: 500) proposes that English demonstratives are related to definite articles. They propose a decomposition of English demonstratives along the following lines:

- (2)  $the_{[+def]} + \text{number} + \text{deixis} = \text{this, that (sg.)}; \text{these, those (pl.)}$

In other words, demonstratives (in English) are decomposed into the definite article, which encodes a definiteness feature, number marking (singular, plural), and a deixis feature with a two-way alternation: proximal vs. distal.

The incorporation of person in the Romance demonstrative system follows a traditional line of work on Latin, going back to Benveniste (1946; see also Vincent 1999).

The morphology of Romance demonstratives is more transparent than that of languages like English. Distal demonstratives clearly have a locative source (see Guardiano & Stavrou 2020). In many Romance languages, the locative adverbs even share morphology with the demonstrative elements. Compare the locative adverbs with the demonstrative determiners in the following examples:

- (3) a. Spanish  
       *aquí* (ADV)        *aqu-el* (DET)  
       b. Catalan  
       *aquí* (ADV)        *aqu-ell* (DET)  
       c. Italian  
       *qui* (ADV)        *qu-ello* (DET)

Similarly, the distal demonstratives also have a definite article component:

- (4) Spanish  
 a. *el* (DEF ART.MS)    *aqu-el* (DEM.MS)  
 b. *la* (DEF ART.FS)    *aqu-ella* (DEM.FS)

Our proposal for the structure of demonstratives is straightforward and incorporates the observations above. We interpret the locative component as corresponding to a deictic phrase (DeicticP) and the definite article component corresponding to D, the head of DP. We reason that DeicticP, which plays a role in the deictic interpretation, is merged above DP, which is anaphoric. We assume the structure in (5) for demonstrative determiners and illustrate the decomposition of distal demonstratives like *quello* (Italian), *aquel* (European Spanish),<sup>1</sup> or *aquell* (Catalan) in (6):

- (5) [DeicticP [DP ..... ]]
- (6) a. Italian  
       [DeicticP *qu-* [DP *ello* ..... ]]  
       *quello*  
       ‘that’  
 b. European Spanish  
       [DeicticP *aqu-* [DP *el* ..... ]]  
       *aquel*  
       ‘that’  
 c. Catalan  
       [DeicticP *aqu-* [DP *ell* ..... ]]  
       *aquell*  
       ‘that’

Distal, medial, and proximal values of the demonstrative are determined by how speaker and [+/-] participant are mapped onto a spatial axis in the deictic head. This mapping varies cross-linguistically, corresponding to a three-way system, a two-way system, or even the relatively rare one-way system. For instance, in Catalan’s two-way demonstrative system, 1<sup>st</sup> person indicates proximity to the speaker and might also include proximity to the hearer. In the three-way systems of Latin and Spanish, proximity to the hearer is indicated by a dedicated 2<sup>nd</sup> person form. And in Italian’s two way system, 3<sup>rd</sup> person cannot include the speaker but might include the hearer.

The structure we propose also incorporates the idea that the notions of distal, medial, and proximal (i.e., spatial deixis) appear to be represented via person features (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>) in the D head. Bernstein (2008a,b) and Longobardi (2008) have proposed that D encodes person, building on ideas going back to Postal (1966; see also Dechaine & Wiltschko 2002). One reason among others is based on paradigms like the following ones found in English and other languages:

- (7) a. General English  
       [DP [D *we* [NP *students* ] ] ]

<sup>1</sup> Some varieties of Spanish in the Americas display a two-way system, having lost distal *aquel* (e.g., Kany 1945). See section 3.2.

## b. General English

[DP [D you [NP students ] ] ]

## c. Nonstandard English

[DP [D them [NP students ] ] ]

In these examples, the referent is 1<sup>st</sup> person plural in (7a), 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural in (7b), and 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural in (7c),<sup>2</sup> interpretations that are supplied by the pronoun in D and not the noun.

Such a connection between demonstratives and person is displayed transparently in a language like Turkish, where the personal pronouns and demonstratives are aligned isomorphically (from Kornfilt 1997: 311-312, cited in Leu 2015: 38-39).

(8) demonstratives (nominative + -n)    personal pronouns (nominative)    (Turkish)

bu(n)	(proximal)	ben	(1 <sup>st</sup> )
şu(n)	(medial)	sen	(2 <sup>nd</sup> )
o(n)	(distal)	o	(3 <sup>rd</sup> )

We adopt the proposal that D encodes person and combine it with our own proposal for DeicticP:

(9) [DeicticP [DP<sub>1st,2nd,3rd person</sub> .....]]

We construe the relationship between the Deictic and D heads as one of agreement. We propose that the interpretation of the Romance deictic elements is the product of an Agree relation (Chomsky 2000) between the D head (corresponding to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> person) and the Deictic head (corresponding to proximal, medial, distal). The idea is that in Ibero-Romance languages like Spanish and Catalan, the invariable Deictic head (filled with *aqu-*) is uninterpretable and probes into D where it finds a goal with the relevant interpretable person feature. We illustrate the relationship in European Spanish, a language with a three-way demonstrative system:

(10) European Spanish

a. [DeicticP Deic<sub>up</sub> [DP D<sub>3p</sub> . . . . ] ]    →    distal *aquel*



b. [DeicticP Deic<sub>up</sub> [DP D<sub>2p</sub> . . . . ] ]    →    medial *ese*



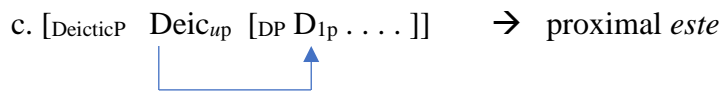
<sup>2</sup> In nonstandard and nonmainstream varieties of English, we find 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural pronouns in the D head:

(i) *them students* (general nonstandard English)

‘those students’

(ii) *they/thae linguists* (Devon English/Scots; Milroy & Milroy 1993: 65)

‘those linguists’



In this kind of system, there is a one-to-one mapping between deixis and person, as illustrated above. In contrast, other Romance languages display a two-way system. Terenghi (2023) points out that in these languages 2<sup>nd</sup> person has been re-aligned, either with the 1<sup>st</sup>/proximal demonstrative or the 3<sup>rd</sup>/distal demonstrative. The latter pattern is found in Italian, whose two-way demonstrative system pairs 2<sup>nd</sup> person/medial with what was unambiguously 3<sup>rd</sup> person/distal in Latin, that is, *quello* (see (10a) for Spanish). Italian proximal *questo* is uniformly associated with a 1<sup>st</sup> person/proximal interpretation. In contrast, in Catalan, which also displays a two-way system, 1<sup>st</sup> person/proximal maps unambiguously to a proximal interpretation (see (10c) for Spanish) and additionally maps to a 2<sup>nd</sup> person/medial interpretation. As Terenghi (2023) has discussed, in Romance demonstrative systems 2<sup>nd</sup> person is the one to lose and/or gain back a dedicated form. However, the path to that end is varied, as is the form that is lost.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we provide an overview of the demonstrative system in Latin and changes that led to a reorganization of the system in Romance. In section 3, we consider the demonstrative systems in Ibero-Romance, which typically resuscitated three-way systems in the more conservative European varieties, and compare them with weakened demonstrative systems found in the Americas. In section 4, we examine Gallo-Romance, whose diminished demonstrative systems were strengthened through different means and yet achieved similar ends. We offer some concluding remarks in section 5.

## 2. Latin's Three-way System and its Evolution in Romance

The association between person and spatial deixis has already been made by many authors (see Benveniste 1994 [1946], 1999, Roberts & Roussou 2003, Stavinschi 2012, Ledgeway 2015, among others). In Classical Latin (see (11)) we see the alignment between the demonstratives, which convey spatial deixis, and personal pronouns, which convey person deixis.

(11) Classical Latin

demonstratives (spatial deixis)		personal pronouns (person deixis)	
HIC	(proximal, 1 <sup>st</sup> )	ME	(1 <sup>st</sup> )
ISTE	(medial, 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	TE/VOS	(2 <sup>nd</sup> )
ILLE	(distal, 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	-----	(3 <sup>rd</sup> )

(distal demonstrative → 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun)

Note that the Latin distal demonstrative, ILLE, is recruited to fill the gap in the personal pronoun paradigm, specifically 3<sup>rd</sup> person.<sup>3</sup> We will propose that the Classical Latin demonstratives correspond to the Deictic head and assume that the personal pronouns correspond to D. The table is now set for 3<sup>rd</sup> person deictic ILLE to eventually grammaticalize to D, where it fills a gap and comes to express 3<sup>rd</sup> person deixis, and for the general weakening and destabilizing of the Latin demonstrative system. We examine this in more detail in the next section.

## 2.1. Analysis of Latin demonstratives

We suggested above that the Classical Latin extended DP included DeicticP, the locus of spatial deixis, and DP, the locus of person (via personal pronouns). But these two projections would not typically be filled simultaneously with overt material. The Classical Latin DP is present, but silent. This is consistent with the fact that Classical Latin did not have overt definite articles, elements that may even cooccur with demonstratives in some modern Romance languages such as Spanish.<sup>4</sup>

- (12) Spanish  
*el libro aquel*  
 the book that  
 ‘that book’

With this in mind, we propose the following structure for demonstratives in Classical Latin:

- (13) Classical Latin
- |   |   |          |
|---|---|----------|
| a. [DeicticP HIC [DP D <sub>1p</sub> ] ]  | → | proximal |
| b. [DeicticP ISTE [DP D <sub>2p</sub> ] ] | → | medial   |
| c. [DeicticP ILLE [DP D <sub>3p</sub> ] ] | → | distal   |

In (13), we find 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> person deixis expressed via the three distinct demonstrative forms.

Between Classical and Vulgar Latin, 1<sup>st</sup> person HIC disappears, perhaps due to either the “erosive effects of sound change” (Vincent 1988 [1997]: 53) or to the gradual overlapping of 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> forms, then redundancy, then phonetic erosion (Stavinschi 2012: 90). An expansion of the denotation of 2<sup>nd</sup> person/medial ISTE comes to include 1<sup>st</sup> person/proximal. Third person ILLE is unchanged, except for its grammaticalization to the D domain. When the 3<sup>rd</sup> person/distal demonstrative loses its deictic force (and structure) it develops into a 3<sup>rd</sup> person anaphoric element on its path to developing into a definite article.

<sup>3</sup> A reviewer asks why ISTE never develops into a 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun, unlike ILLE, which will develop into a 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun. Although we do not have a precise explanation, it may be related to the fact that Latin already had 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns. It lacked 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns, a void filled by ILLE.

<sup>4</sup> We do not treat examples like (12) in this paper (but see Bernstein 1997 and 2001). They have additional properties that require further elaboration.

ILLE, in its transition to becoming a Romance definite article, grammaticalized from a Deictic head into a 3<sup>rd</sup> person D head. As a Deictic element, it encoded both deixis and anaphora (see Bernstein et al. 2021). Its D status in Vulgar Latin involves loss of a deictic feature and retention of an anaphoric feature (van Gelderen 2011, Ledgeway 2012, Adams 2013). The transition of ILLE from a Classical Latin demonstrative to a Romance definite article is schematized in (14) (cf. Giusti 2001).

- ### 2.3 The deictic head

(15) [DeicticP [DP ILLE]] → [DeicticP ECCE/ACCU [DP ILLE]]  
 anaphoric demonstrative

We propose a similar evolution for proximal demonstratives with the difference being that the person feature in D is 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> person ISTE (1<sup>st</sup> person HIC having been lost) and that the locative particle ACCU was not consistently added and, in some cases, disappeared (e.g., in Spanish vs. Italian). We illustrate the evolution in Catalan:

- |      |                        |                         |                                  |
|------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (16) | [DeicticP ISTE [DP] ]→ | [DeicticP [DP ISTE] ] → | [DeicticP (ECCE/ACCU) [DP ISTE]] |
|      | demonstrative          | demonstrative           | demonstrative                    |
|      | Latin                  | Old Catalan             | Modern and Old Catalan           |
|      | <i>iste</i>            | <i>este/aquest</i>      | <i>aquest</i> <sup>5</sup>       |
|      | (deictic)              | (anaphoric)             | (anaphoric)                      |

Most contemporary European Ibero-Romance languages display a three-way deictic distinction in demonstratives: proximal, medial, and distal (see RAE/ASALE 2009, Raposo et al. 2013, Álvarez et al 1992, ALA 1999, Nagore 1989). We exemplify the masculine singular forms across several Ibero-Romance varieties:

<sup>5</sup> Although *aquest* is currently the most widespread form in Modern Catalan, *est(e)* is maintained in certain (western) varieties such as Valencian Catalan (see below).

- (17) a. European Spanish  
*este / ese / aquel* (1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup>)  
 b. European Portuguese  
*este / esse / aquele*  
 c. Galician  
*este / ese / aquel*  
 d. Asturian  
*esti / esi / aquel, aquelli*  
 e. Aragonese  
*iste / ixé / aquer*

These demonstratives are interpreted relative to the degree of proximity to the deictic center, which corresponds to 1<sup>st</sup> person. We exemplify this with European Spanish:

- (18) European Spanish  
 a. *este libro*  
 this book  
 ‘this book (near me)’  
 b. *ese libro*  
 that book  
 ‘that book (near you)’ / ‘that book (far from us, but relatively close)’  
 c. *aquel libro*  
 that book  
 ‘that book (far away from us)’

Thus, Ibero-Romance languages reproduce the Classical Latin three-way system, but with slightly different forms: a) the proximal demonstrative *este/esti/iste*, which has its origin in the medial demonstrative *ISTE* that subsumed medial and proximal (formerly *HIC*) identification in Vulgar Latin; b) the medial demonstrative *ese/ese/esi/ixe*, which evolved from the originally emphatic Latin pronoun *IPSE* voided of its emphatic content; c) the distal demonstrative *aquel/aquele/aquelli/aquer*, which results from the addition of the locative particle *ECCUM* to the pronoun *ILLE*. This is summarized in (19) below.

- (19) European Spanish  
 a. *este* (< *ISTE*) → 1<sup>st</sup> / proximal  
 b. *ese* (< *IPSE*) → 2<sup>nd</sup> / medial  
 c. *aquel* (< *ECCU* + *ILLE*) → 3<sup>rd</sup> / distal

In terms of our analysis, demonstratives consist of the combination of a definite determiner in *D*, which specifies person (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>), plus the Deictic Phrase, whose head is spelled out as the locative particle in the case of the distal demonstratives and lexically empty in the case of medial and proximal demonstratives. The internal structure assumed for the European Spanish forms in (19) is provided in (20).

- (20) a. [DeicticP ∅ [DP *este* ]]      Deictic + D[1<sup>st</sup>]      → proximal  
 b. [DeicticP ∅ [DP *ese* ]]      Deictic + D[2<sup>nd</sup>]      → medial  
 c. [DeicticP *aqu-* [DP *-el* ]]      Deictic + D[3<sup>rd</sup>]      → distal



We turn next to Catalan, which provides justification for assuming a lexically empty, yet present, DeicticP projection and Deictic head across the demonstrative forms.

### 3.1 Catalan

In contrast to the examples above, Catalan has two demonstrative systems. The one found most extensively distinguishes only proximal vs. distal. The proximal form (*aquest*) encompasses both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person. Consequently, the proximal demonstrative is used for referents that are located in the realm of the speaker and/or the hearer, as in (21a), where the hearer is holding the book in his/her hands. The proximal form is deviant in cases where the referent is distant from both speaker and hearer, as in (21b).

(21) Catalan

- a. *aquest llibre que tens a les mans*  
this book that have.2sg in the hand  
'this book that you have in your hands'
- b. \**aquest llibre que hi ha al fons de la sala*  
this book that loc has to.the back of the room

In contrast, the distal demonstrative shows the opposite distribution. That is, it is used to designate referents far away from the speaker and the hearer (22b), but not for objects located in the speaker/hearer domain (22a):

(22) Catalan

- a. \**aquell llibre que tens a les mans*  
that book that have.2SG in the hands
- b. *aquell llibre que hi ha al fons de la sala*  
that book that LOC has to.the back of the room  
'that book that is at the back of the room'

The internal composition of the two-way deictic system is illustrated in (23). Each form incorporates a deictic component (< ECCU) plus a combined 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> participant component (< ISTE) or 3<sup>rd</sup> non-participant component (< ILLE):<sup>6</sup>

(23) Catalan

- a. *aquest* (< ECCU + ISTE) → 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> / proximal
- b. *aquel* (< ECCU + ILLE) → 3<sup>rd</sup> / distal

<sup>6</sup> A reviewer asks why the pronominal system can be "richer" (three-way distinction) than the demonstrative system (two-way distinction in some languages), especially since the presence of pronouns in D is a key justification for the structure assumed in this paper. While we do not have an explanation for the disparity, we note that even true pronouns may not display the full paradigm. In (7a,b) we illustrated English D+N examples like [<sub>D</sub> we [<sub>NP</sub> students]]. These examples work well with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns across varieties of English, but with 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns only in nonstandard and nonmainstream varieties, as illustrated in (7c) and fn. 2.

In Valencian and *la Franja* Catalan the demonstrative system involves a three-way distinction and is parallel to the rest of the Romance languages of the Iberian Peninsula (recall (17)). Unlike the paradigm in Spanish (and other Iberian languages), where only the distal form displays an overt element derived from ECCUM, the Valencian Catalan demonstratives may display *aqu-* across the paradigm.<sup>7</sup>

- (24) Valencian Catalan  
*aquest, este / aqueix, eixe / aquell* (1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup>)
- (25) Valencian Catalan  
 a. *aquest/este llibre*  
     this           book  
     ‘this book (near me)’  
 b. *aqueix/eixe llibre*  
     that           book  
     ‘that book (near you)’ / ‘that book (far from us, but relatively close)’  
 c. *aquell llibre*  
     that    book  
     ‘that book (far away from us)’

The internal composition of the three-way demonstrative system is illustrated in (26). Each form incorporates a locative component (< ECCU) plus a 1<sup>st</sup> person (< ISTE) or 2<sup>nd</sup> person (< IPSE) or 3<sup>rd</sup> person (< ILLE) component:

- (26) Valencian Catalan  
 a. *aquest* (< ECCU + ISTE)   → 1<sup>st</sup> / proximal  
     *este* (< ISTE)  
 b. *aqueix* (< ECCU + IPSE)   → 2<sup>nd</sup> / medial  
     *eixe* (< IPSE)  
 c. *aquel* (< ECCU + ILLE)   → 3<sup>rd</sup> / distal

Note that the *aqu-* element in DeicticP is found in the complete series of Catalan demonstratives. This means that the Deictic head is occupied with all demonstratives:

- (27) Catalan  
 a. [DeicticP *aqu-* [DP *-est*]]   Deictic + D[1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>] → proximal  
 b. [DeicticP *aqu-* [DP *-ell*]]   Deictic + D[3<sup>rd</sup>]   → distal
- (28) Valencian Catalan  
 a. [DeicticP (*aqu-*) [DP *est(e)*]] Deictic + D[1<sup>st</sup>]   → proximal  
 b. [DeicticP (*aqu-*) [DP *eix(e)*]] Deictic + D[2<sup>nd</sup>]   → medial  
 c. [DeicticP *aqu-* [DP *-ell*]]   Deictic + D[3<sup>rd</sup>]   → distal

The locative particle in DeicticP was also present in the demonstrative determiners of other Ibero-Romance languages in previous stages of these languages. They coexisted with the non-reinforced forms and they present a different distribution

<sup>7</sup> Overt and covert deictic heads alternate in Valencian Catalan. According to AVL (2006: 132), *aquest* and *aqueix* are used in more formal registers.

and dialectal extension (García Fajardo 2009, Enrique Arias 2018, Sánchez Rei 2002). In (29a) we illustrate the demonstrative forms in Old Spanish and in (29b) those from Old Galician-Portuguese.

- (29) a. Old Spanish  
*este, aqueste / ese, aquesse / aquel*  
 b. Old Galician-Portuguese  
*este, aqueste / ese, aquesse / aquel(e)*

Note that in both (29a,b) the 1st/proximal and 2nd/medial forms could appear either with or without the locative particle derived from *ECCUM*. This optionality is represented structurally as follows:

- (30) a. [DeicticP (*aqu-*) [DP *este* ]] Deictic + D[1<sup>st</sup>] → proximal  
 b. [DeicticP (*aqu-*) [DP *esse* ]] Deictic + D[2<sup>nd</sup>] → medial  
 c. [DeicticP *aqu-* [DP *-el(e)* ]] Deictic + D[3<sup>rd</sup>] → distal

The structure of the modern languages matches that of (30) above. The only difference is that the *aqu-* is no longer overtly expressed, except with 3rd person/distal forms:

- (31) a. [DeicticP Ø [DP *este* ]] Deictic + D[1<sup>st</sup>] → proximal  
 b. [DeicticP Ø [DP *esse* ]] Deictic + D[2<sup>nd</sup>] → medial  
 c. [DeicticP *aqu-* [DP *-el(e)* ]] Deictic + D[3<sup>rd</sup>] → distal

This structure applies to all of the Ibero-Romance languages represented in (17).

### 3.2 Spanish and Portuguese of the Americas

Although the European Ibero-Romance varieties are in large part three-way systems (cf. Catalan), Brazilian Portuguese and Spanish of the Americas are in large part two-way systems. For example, in some varieties of Latin American Spanish, a dedicated 3<sup>rd</sup> person form (*aquel*) was lost, and in spoken Brazilian Portuguese a dedicated 1<sup>st</sup> person form (*este*) dropped out.<sup>8</sup> In the relevant varieties of Latin American Spanish (e.g., Rioplatense Spanish), *este* is reserved for 1<sup>st</sup> person and *ese* bridges 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person (Terenghi 2023: 34). Brazilian Portuguese resorts to a system of adverbial locatives to obviate 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person interpretations (examples from Jungbluth & Vallentin 2015):

- (32) Brazilian Portuguese  
 a. *esse (aquí)* (speaker-oriented, 1st person)  
     ‘this here’  
 b. *esse aí* (hearer-oriented, 2nd person)  
     ‘that there’

<sup>8</sup> According to Meira (2003: 8), whereas normative and written Brazilian Portuguese maintains the three-way demonstrative system of European Portuguese, spoken Brazilian Portuguese has a two-way system of demonstratives plus a series of locative elements that re-establish the three-way system.

- c. *aquele (lá)* (distal, 3rd person)  
 ‘that’

Jungbluth and Vallentin (2015: 317-318) provide these additional examples:

- (33) Brazilian Portuguese  
 a. Muito bom *esse aí* e *aquele* prato *lá*!  
 ‘Excellent this [dish] here [in the middle] and that dish there!’  
 b. Acabaram de chegar *essas* [calças em malha].  
 ‘These [leggings] just arrived’.

In (33a), the reinforcer *aí* identifies a 2<sup>nd</sup>/medial interpretation for the demonstrative *esse*. According to Ledgeway and Smith (2016: 888), *aí* is obligatory in this context and optional in (33b), where the unreinforced demonstrative *essas* receives its default 1<sup>st</sup>/proximal interpretation. The *lá* reinforcer that accompanies *aquele* in (33a) seems to introduce redundancy, since *aquele* is unambiguously 3<sup>rd</sup> person/distal, though the appearance of the reinforcer is optional in this context according to Ledgeway and Smith.<sup>9</sup> A reviewer suggests an alternative to redundancy, namely, that an additional Brazilian Portuguese reinforcer, *ali*, signals “a shorter distance from the deictic center than *lá* does” (see Meira 2003).<sup>10</sup>

Our original analysis aligns naturally with Iberian three-way demonstrative systems, with an adaption to accommodate Catalan’s two-way system in (26) above. We propose a parallel accommodation for the relevant two-way systems of Latin American Spanish as follows:

- (34) a. [DeicticP (*aqu-*) [DP *este* ]] (Deictic) + D[1<sup>st</sup>] → proximal (Lat. Amer. Sp.)  
 b. [DeicticP (*aqu-*) [DP *esse* ]] (Deictic) + D[2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>] → medial, distal

Interestingly, Catalan 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person are expressed via an ISTE-derived demonstrative. In the Latin American case in (34) above, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person are expressed via the IPSE-derived form. Such an adaptation would also be necessary for other formerly three-way systems, such as those of Italo-Romance.

We return to examples like those above in Brazilian Portuguese, which regain a three-way system via the implementation of reinforcers, within the context of our discussion of Gallo-Romance in the next section.

#### 4. Gallo-Romance

Old French had two demonstrative forms (*cist* - proximal/medial; *cil* - distal) from Latin ECCE + ISTE or ILLE. In the modern Gallo-Romance languages the traces of ISTE/ILLE appear prevocally and/or mark feminine gender, but are no longer indications of person or relative proximity. We illustrate the forms in French, Picard (of France), and Walloon, and indicate their development from Latin:

<sup>9</sup> Ledgeway and Smith (2016: 888) explicitly states that the Brazilian Portuguese system of reinforcers (*esse (aqui)* vs. *esse aí* vs. *aquele (lá)*) resurrects the three-way demonstrative system.

<sup>10</sup> We thank the reviewer for bringing this to our attention.

- (35) a. French  
       *ce(t(te))*     (< ECCE + (ISTE))  
       b. Picard  
       *che(l(e))*     (< ECCE + (ILLE))  
       c. Walloon  
       *ci(ss(t))*     (< ECCE + (ISTE))

This means that all three modern languages above lack an alternation (three-way or even two-way) and therefore a person feature with demonstratives. To re-establish person (or relative proximity), the languages resort to (near-)obligatory enclitic demonstrative reinforcers (e.g., proximal *-ci*, and distal *-là* in French and their equivalent in the other Gallo-Romance varieties illustrated in (36)-(38)):<sup>11</sup>

- (36) French  
       a. *ce livre-ci*  
           this/that.M book-here  
           ‘this book here’  
       b. *cet enfant-là*  
           this/that.M child-there  
           ‘that child there’  
       c. *cette maison-là*  
           this/that.F house-there  
           ‘that house there’  
       d. *cette femme-ci*  
           this/that.F woman-here  
           ‘this woman here’
- (37) a. Boulogne Picard, Haigneré (1901:285)  
       *chel éfant-là*  
           this/that.M child-there  
           ‘that child’  
       b. Boulogne Picard, Haigneré (1901:285)  
       *che bos-chi*  
           this/that.M wood-here  
           ‘this wood here’  
       c. Boulogne Picard, Haigneré (1901:285)  
       *chelle maison-là*  
           this/that.F house-there  
           ‘that house’

<sup>11</sup> Terenghi (2023: 147) points out that languages with a single demonstrative form are relatively rare, and that languages always have at least two reinforcers. She states that French may be an exception: distal adverbial *là* and enclitic *-là* have been progressively encroaching on proximal adverbial *ici* and enclitic *-ci* (Terenghi illustrates: *je suis là* ‘I am here’). We note that this change has gone to completion in Mesnil-Martinsart Picard, which displays what was a distal enclitic, *-lô*, almost exclusively (Flutre 1955: 51).

- d. Brayonne Picard, Lebesgue (1984: 14)  
*cheull'fanme chi*<sup>12</sup>  
 this/that.F woman-here  
 'this woman here'

- (38) Liège Walloon, Fabry (1951: 52)  
 a. *cist-éfant-chal*  
 this/that.M child-here  
 'this child'  
 b. *ci pan-là*  
 this/that.M bread-there  
 'that bread'  
 c. *cisse mohone-chal*  
 this/that.F house-here  
 'this house'  
 d. *cisse vôle-là*  
 this/that.F road-there  
 'that road'

Namur Walloon is interesting. As in the other Gallo-Romance varieties its demonstratives lack person features; however, unlike in the other languages, Namur Walloon demonstratives display no gender alternation (i.e., /-t/, from Latin *ISTE*, appears prevocally with both masc. and fem. nouns):

- (39) Namur Walloon, Léonard (1972: 18)  
 a. *ci tch'fau-ci*  
 this/that horse.M-here  
 'this horse'  
 b. *ci-t-aube-ci*  
 this/that tree.M-here  
 'this tree'  
 c. *ci-t-ârmwère-la*  
 this/that armoire.F-there  
 'that armoire'  
 d. *ci comère-la*  
 this/that woman.F-there  
 'that woman there'

In contrast, in French, Boulogne Picard, and Liège Walloon ((36)-(38)) the masculine singular form is *ce*, *che*, and *ci*, respectively, forms which all derive from Latin *ECCE*. The alternation for feminine singular derives from Latin *ISTE*, *ILLE*, *ISTE*, respectively. We return to the relevance of the Namur facts in section 4.3.

<sup>12</sup> The absence of a hyphen between noun and reinforcer reflects Lebesgue's orthographic convention.

#### 4.1 The deictic head

As a first step, we schematize the ECCE-derived demonstratives of Picard, French, and Walloon as corresponding to the head of DeicticP. We also include, for illustration purposes, the traces of Old French person marking in D:

- (40) [DeicticP *ce, che, ci* [DP *-t(te), -l(e), -ss(t)*] ]

We map the initial representation of the internal structure of the Gallo-Romance demonstratives as follows:

- (41) French  
[DeicticP *ce-* [DP *-tte* ..... [NP *maison*] ] ] → *cette maison*  
'this/that house'
- (42) Picard  
[DeicticP *che-* [DP *-l(e)* ..... [NP *maison*] ] ] → *chelle maison*  
'this/that house'
- (43) Walloon  
[DeicticP *ci-* [DP *-sse* ..... [NP *mohone*] ] ] → *cisse mohone*  
'this/that house'

In other words, the ECCE-derived form corresponds to the Deictic head and the ISTE- and ILLE-derived forms correspond to the person head, DP. In a general sense, this is parallel to the structure attributed to other Romance two-way systems, such as those of Latin American Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese and even standard Italian. The trouble is that the vestiges of the Latin forms that occupy D in Gallo-Romance no longer provide information about person; their presence identifies only gender. We have claimed that Romance demonstratives are built from a complex structure consisting of a DeicticP and a DP, and that the system is constructed on person features. We have furthermore claimed that an Agree relation holds between the two heads. Specifically, we have claimed that the Deictic head probes into D, its goal the relevant person feature encoded there. How is this achieved in Gallo-Romance, where demonstratives in the modern languages have lost overt person-marking in the D head?

#### 4.2 Grammaticalization of *che, ce*

In Picard (Panwitz 2018; Bernstein et al. 2021) and also in French (Harris 1977; Kayne & Pollock 2010; Mulder & Carlier 2006) deictic elements (*che, ce*) have weakened and generalized (in the sense of Roberts 2019: 5) to D and function as definite articles. We illustrate this with Picard *che(le)* used as a definite article:

- (44) Boulogne Picard, Haigneré (1901: 265-266)  
a. *che père, che cat, che frère* (m.sg.)  
'the father', 'the cat', 'the brother'  
b. *chel abre, chel éfant* (or *che l'infant*), *chel honme* (m.sg.)  
'the tree', 'the child', 'the man'

- c. *chele mère, chele fille, chele maison* (f.sg.)  
 ‘the mother’, ‘the girl’, ‘the house’

We update the structures in (41)-(43) for Gallo-Romance as follows, with the grammaticalized elements *ce-*, *che-*, and *ci-* now occupying the D head instead of the Deictic head:

- (45) French  
 [DeicticP [DP *ce-tte* ..... [NP *maison* ]]] → *cette maison*  
 ‘this/that house’
- (46) Picard  
 [DeicticP [DP *che-l(e)* ..... [NP *maison* ]]] → *chelle maison*  
 ‘this/that house’
- (47) Walloon  
 [DeicticP [DP *ci-sse* ..... [NP *mohone* ]]] → *cisse mohone*  
 ‘this/that house’

This change in Gallo-Romance aligns with what we saw for Latin above in (14).

Once a demonstrative has grammaticalized and developed into a definite article, it is no surprise that person alternations are absent. To recover the person identification necessary for demonstratives the languages resort to obligatory (Picard) or nearly obligatory (French) demonstrative reinforcers to supply the required information: French *-ci* (1<sup>st</sup>/proximal), *-là* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/distal). This was illustrated in (36)-(38) above and is repeated here in (48) for Boulogne and Brayonne Picard:


- (48) a. Boulogne Picard  
*chel éfant-là*  
 this/that.M child-there  
 ‘that child’
- b. Boulogne Picard  
*che bos-chi*  
 this/that.M wood-here  
 ‘this wood here’
- c. Boulogne Picard  
*chelle maison-là*  
 this/that.F house-there  
 ‘that house’
- d. Brayonne Picard  
*cheull’fanme chi*  
 this/that.F woman-here  
 ‘this woman here’

So, although the D element does not encode person, the reinforcers encode the equivalent proximal/distal information through the Deictic head, where we assume the reinforcers are merged. These facts and our analysis of demonstratives support the following structure for demonstratives in Picard, and also modern colloquial French:



- (49) Picard  
*chele maison-là*  
 [DeicticP [Deictic *-là*<sub>3p</sub>] [DP *che-l(e)*<sub>up</sub> ..... [NP *maison* ]]]

In other words, the former demonstrative, *che-* in Picard, no longer able to serve as a demonstrative on its own since it has lost a person alternation, is now syntactically a D element devoid of person specification. An obligatory enclitic reinforcer element (*-là*) in the Deictic head supplies the relevant feature (i.e., 3<sup>rd</sup>/distal). The DP *chele maison* raises to Spec,DeicticP:<sup>13,14</sup>

- (50) Picard  
*chele maison-là*  
 [DeicticP [DP *che-l(e)* ..... [NP *maison*]]<sub>i</sub> [Deictic *-là*] [DP *t<sub>i</sub>* ] ]
- 
- The diagram shows a blue arrow pointing from the DP *che-l(e)* in the Spec position of the DeicticP to the DP *t<sub>i</sub>* in the complement position, indicating movement.

Although we assume the same underlying structure for demonstratives in Ibero- and Gallo-Romance, with DeicticP merged above DP, the agreement relation in (49) goes in the opposite direction: from uninterpretable D (probe) to the interpretable Deictic head (goal), as illustrated in (49). This relation has been proposed and labeled ‘Upward Agree’ in Bjorkman and Zeijlstra (2019). In the present example in Gallo-Romance, the uninterpretable person feature in invariable D probes up to the interpretable person feature in the Deictic head. This contrasts with the earlier analysis of Ibero-Romance, in which the Agree relation went downward between the uninterpretable Deictic head (the probe) and the interpretable D head (the goal) in (9).<sup>15,16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> As illustrated in Bernstein (1997: 98-99), the XP that raises can include a complex NP:

(i) *cette femme intelligente ci*  
 the woman intelligent here  
 ‘this intelligent woman’

<sup>14</sup> A reviewer asks why the reinforcers could not be adjuncts to the deictic head, rather than heads themselves. The answer is both syntactic and phonological. Unlike the related spatial adverbs (e.g., French *ici*), which are independent words, may modify a wide variety of lexical items, and may be stressed, the reinforcers are enclitic bound morphemes that rely on the presence of a demonstrative and are associated with nouns (see Bernstein 1997). We expect that the enclitic nature of these forms may play a role in triggering movement. The same reviewer wonders if the movement involved in our proposed cases of ‘Upward Agree’ violate a locality constraint (Abels 2003). This is something we need to explore more fully. For now, we conjecture that the proposed movement is to a specifier position merged higher than DeicticP.

<sup>15</sup> A reviewer asks if there is a way to capture whether a system will display Downward or Upward Agree. We have also considered this issue, and it seems to us that the Upward Agree cases, as in Gallo-Romance, are innovative, or at least the latest iteration of innovation given the unstable nature of demonstrative systems, which are constantly reinventing themselves. And within Ibero-Romance, Brazilian Portuguese clearly illustrates innovation relative to European Portuguese. The reviewer suggests a possible diachronic relationship between Downward and Upward Agree, something we are pursuing in current work.

<sup>16</sup> A reviewer points out that reinforcers may precede demonstratives in certain Germanic varieties, something we explore in current work (Bernstein et al. 2025).

We return to the examples of Brazilian Portuguese demonstratives and reinforcers from section 3.2 (examples (32) and (33)), repeated here:

- (51) Brazilian Portuguese
- a. *esse (aqui)* (speaker-oriented, 1st person default)  
‘this here’
  - b. *esse aí* (hearer-oriented, 2nd person)  
‘that there’
  - c. *aquele* (distal, 3rd person)  
‘that’
- (52) Brazilian Portuguese
- a. Muito bom *esse aí* e *aquele prato lá*!  
‘Excellent this [dish] here [in the middle] and that dish there!’
  - b. Acabaram de chegar *essas* [calças em malha].  
‘These [leggings] just arrived’.

Recall that European Portuguese, like most of European Ibero-Romance, has a three-way demonstrative system. In contrast, spoken Brazilian Portuguese has been reduced to a two-way system in terms of its demonstrative forms (*esse*, *aquele*). However, a system of reinforcers returns the language to a three-way system. This suggests that the language is a hybrid, combining the Ibero-Romance system--deixis expressed via person-marking in D and Downward Agree--and the Gallo-Romance system--person supplied via reinforcers in the Deictic head and Upward Agree. In other words, both mechanisms are in play in Brazilian Portuguese. For 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person, the Agree relation in (53) for Brazilian Portuguese matches that seen earlier for Ibero-Romance:

- (53) Brazilian Portuguese
- a. [DeicticP  $\emptyset_{up}$  [DP *esse*<sub>1p</sub> ]] Deictic + D[1<sup>st</sup>] → proximal
  - b. [DeicticP *aqu*-<sub>up</sub> [DP -*ele*<sub>3p</sub> ]] Deictic + D[3<sup>rd</sup>] → distal

In (53a,b) the D head establishes person (1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>). The uninterpretable Deictic head, through Downward Agree, probes D’s interpretable person feature, 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person. The structure in (54) for Brazilian Portuguese matches that seen above for Gallo-Romance:

- (54) Brazilian Portuguese
- [DeicticP [Deictic *aí*<sub>2p</sub>] [DP *esse*<sub>up</sub> ]] Deictic (medial) + D → 2<sup>nd</sup> person

In other words, *esse* on its own would establish 1<sup>st</sup> person as its default interpretation, as schematized in (53a). A 2<sup>nd</sup> person interpretation is achieved when *esse* is paired with the distal reinforcer *aí*, as in (54). In this case, the D probes the Deictic head and, via Upward Agree, locates the reinforcer *aí* as the goal, which supplies the relevant person feature, 2<sup>nd</sup>/medial. Brazilian Portuguese *esse* is apparently underspecified and defaults to 1<sup>st</sup> person unless a reinforcer overrides that feature. This underspecification suggests that grammaticalization is underway.

The Brazilian Portuguese pattern seen above recalls the pattern described for Northern Italian dialects in Ledgeway (2015), where person alternations have shifted from the demonstrative itself, now “a mere marker of definiteness” (Ledgeway, p. 78),

to the reinforcer. He illustrates with the following examples (pp. 78-79):

- (55) Ligurian  
*sta dona là*  
 lit. ‘this woman there’  
 ‘that woman’
- (56) Friulian  
*kel libri ka/la*  
 lit. ‘that book here/there’  
 ‘this book here’/‘that book there’

Note here that the (former) demonstratives in these examples (*sta*, *kel*) no longer play a direct role in establishing person, a function now accomplished by the reinforcers. Treated in this way, the problem of apparent mismatches between demonstratives and reinforcers disappears. The loss of meaningful alternations in the demonstrative elements in varieties of Northern Italy, and by extension in Brazilian Portuguese, recalls the diachrony of the corresponding forms in Gallo-Romance, which we return to in the next section.

### 4.3 What about Walloon? A continuum.

Walloon differs from the other Gallo-Romance languages (i.e., Picard and French) in that ECCE-derived demonstratives have not grammaticalized to definite articles, which are instead the more familiar *l-* (i.e., ILLE-derived) forms (example from Remacle 1952, vol. 1):

- (57) La Gleize Walloon  
*lu peupe italyin*  
 the people Italian  
 ‘the Italian people’

Nevertheless, as in Picard and French, the Walloon demonstrative reinforcers are obligatory, as we saw in (38). We presume that, although they have not fully grammaticalized to definite articles, the Walloon demonstratives no longer correspond to the Deictic head. Instead, they are D elements. The Walloon forms, like those of Picard and French, lack proximal/distal alternations. Recall that this is the path we traced for the Latin demonstrative forms, which grammaticalized to D elements before becoming true definite articles.

Namur Walloon provides further evidence for this idea. Recall that in Namur Walloon (see (39)) demonstratives lack a gender alternation. The absence of a gender alternation with demonstratives is not typical of Walloon generally and is instead something associated with definite articles across varieties of Walloon (except in the southeastern region), including Namur Walloon. Example (58) (from Pirsoul 1902) illustrates the absence of a gender alternation in Namur Walloon definite articles, as we saw above for Namur Walloon demonstratives in (39).

- (58) Namur Walloon  
 a. *li père*  
     ‘the father.M’  
 b. *li mère*  
     ‘the mother.F’  
 c. *l’èfant*  
     ‘the child.M’

Based on the comparative facts of Picard and French on the one hand, and Walloon on the other, we can situate Walloon on a continuum with the other Gallo-Romance varieties we have examined:

- (59) (i) Walloon → Demonstratives are D elements but not yet articles.  
 (ii) French → Demonstratives are D elements and for the most part function as articles.  
 (iii) Picard → Demonstratives are D elements and full-fledged articles.

In the most advanced variety, Picard (of France), ECCE-derived forms serve as regular definite articles. In order to function as demonstratives, they must be reinforced. The former *l-* articles still exist, though they have been relegated to accompanying abstract, unique, and generic nouns, contexts that would correspond to bare nouns in English and also early Romance (see Bernstein et al. 2021). French demonstratives, which may function as articles and require reinforcers in deictic contexts, have probably not progressed quite as far as their Picard counterparts, but they are well on their way. And as in Picard, French *l-* articles still play a role. Walloon is the most conservative variety of the three, distinguishing *l-* articles and *ch-* demonstratives while at the same time requiring reinforcers with demonstratives. The loss of gender on demonstratives in some varieties, aligning them with definite articles in those same varieties, hints at further grammaticalization.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper builds on the frequent observation that Latin demonstratives involve an association between person and spatial deixis (i.e., 1<sup>st</sup>/proximal, 2<sup>nd</sup>/medial, and 3<sup>rd</sup>/distal). We implement this association in our proposal about the morphosyntactic structure and behavior of demonstratives in modern Ibero- and Gallo-Romance languages. The novel idea we have developed is that DeicticP and DP together form demonstratives. Specifically, we have claimed that person, through an agreement relation, aligns proximal/medial/distal in DeicticP and 1st/2nd/3rd person in DP. The patterns found in the modern languages are the result of weakening of the Latin demonstrative system (deictic to anaphoric) that led to the grammaticalization of demonstratives from a higher projection, DeicticP, to a lower one, DP. This in turn led to the development of definite articles in DP, and the eventual recovery of DeicticP by way of elements that developed from locative elements. The weakening of person features followed by their renewal through innovation recalls Jespersen’s (1917) cycle as it was originally applied to sentential negation.

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