The Romanian vocative: Innovations, Redundances, Restrictions

Throughout the last century, much attention has been drawn on the heavily debated origins of the Romanian vocative, but rather little on its recent development.

The Romanian vocative presently boasts an abundance of phonological, morphological and syntactic features distinguished from and interfering with other categories (such as syntactic case and derivation); these features are applicable to most nouns and adjectives in singular.

Regard, for instance, the paradigm of generic stem *vecin-* 'neighbour' (without genitive case):

Gender	Form	Grammatical categories	Pragmatic use	Remarks on address use
masc.:	*vecin-Ø*	nom. / indet.	reference	
	vecin-ul	nom. / det.	reference	
	vecin-u'	nom. / det.	reference / address	**marked** (colloquial)
	vecin-e	voc.	address	non-marked
	vecin-ul-e	voc.	address	**marked** (rare)
fem.:	*vecin-ă*	nom. / indet.	reference / address	non-marked
	vecin-a	nom. / indet.	reference / address	**marked** (distanced)
	vecin-o	voc.	address	**marked** (emphatic, familiar)

However, there are also several morphonological restrictions inherent in the Romanian language system which yield syncretisms of nominative and vocative:

1) No vocative suffixes are applied to nouns ending on *-e* (appellatives, mostly), *-i* or *-o* (some proper names, colloquial diminutives); therefore, nominative is the only means of address available: *frate (m)* 'brother' – *frate! moarte (f)* 'death' – *moarte! Gigi (*PN.m) – *Gigi! Scolo* (PN.m) – *Scolo!*

Furthermore, the are certain morphosyntactical restrictions within the noun phrase:

2.a) Vocative (like genitive, but unlike nominative) morphology applies to one constituent only: *iubit-e vecin_!* 'beloved neighbour', *vecin-u-le drag_!* 'dear neighbour'

2.b) In plural, the Romanian language displays no unique vocative forms; however, all suffixed plural forms are used as address under certain conditions:

Gender	Form	Grammatical categories	Pragmatic use	Remarks on address use
masc.:	*vecin-i*	nom. / indet.	reference / address	non-marked
	vecin-i-i	nom. / det.	reference / address	**marked** (distanced)
	vecin-i-lor	gen. / det.	reference / address	**marked** (emphatic)
fem.:	*vecin-e*	nom. / indet.	reference / address	non-marked
	vecin-e-le	nom. / det.	reference / address	**marked** (distanced)
	vecin-e-lor	gen. / det.	reference / address	**marked** (emphatic)

2.c) If possessive determiners are applied, only def. nom. is used: *vecin-ul_ meu! vecin-e-le mele!*

Thus, one might say, vocative morphology is blocked (or substituted) by possessive determiners.

Other phenomenons are attested for address as well, especially in derogatory context: particles (e.g. *curvă* 'whore' – *fă curvă!*), name shortenings (*Alexandra – Ale!*), prepositional phrase (*săracul de tine!* 'poor you'), relative clause (e.g. *curva ce ești!*, lit. 'the whore which (you) are').

My aim is to give an entire overview of all strategies af address available within the Romanian language system, and to specify these strategies upon their application in pragmatics.

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