

## Inflected prepositions in Italian\*

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In Italian certain prepositions (Ps) can appear morphologically combined with articles, inflecting for number and gender. We will dub this the inflected form of the P for the moment, without prejudice as to the analysis of this form:

- (1) Sta *nella* terza camera 'It's in the third bedroom'  
is in/the (fem sg) third bedroom
- (2) C' è abbastanza carta *sulle* scrivanie  
there is enough paper on/the (fem pl) desks  
'There's enough paper on the desks'
- (3) Ci va *col* vicino  
there goes with/the (masc sg) neighbour  
'He's going there with his neighbour'
- (4) L' ho dato *ai* ragazzi 'I gave it to the boys'  
it I-have given to/the (masc pl) boys

The inflected form of the P has desinences similar to those found on the articles and the demonstrative adjective *quel(lo)*. These forms are given overleaf in Table I (where only one inflected P is shown, but the forms for the other inflected Ps vary for number and gender in the same way). In general the inflected forms do not alternate with P + article:

- (5) \*Sta *in la* terza camera (cf. (1))  
is in the third bedroom

However, for most speakers the P *con* can so alternate:

- (6) Ci va *con il* vicino (cf. (3))  
there goes with the neighbour

	article		dem. adj.	P
	[+def]	[-def]		<a>
fem sg + consonant	la	una	quella	alla
fem sg + V or diphthong	l'	un'	quell'	all'
fem pl	le	—	quelle	alle
masc sg + consonant	il	un	quel	al
masc sg + special sounds	lo	uno	quello	allo
masc sg + V or diphthong	l'	un	quell'	all'
masc pl + consonant	l	—	quei	ai
masc pl + V, diphthong, or special sounds	gli	—	quegli	agli

[Table 1. *The masculine forms are special before the letters <sc, z, gn, ps, x>. We call these the special sounds for ease of exposition. Vowels and diphthongs also occur with these forms in the plural*]

For some speakers the preposition *per* also alternates, but in general *per* cannot appear in the inflected form in (7) (*pel* is an archaic form):

- (7) \*L' ho fatto *pel* professore  
 it I-have done for/the professor
- (8) L' ho fatto *per* il professore 'I did it for the professor'  
 it I-have done for the professor

All Ps which have an inflected form are monosyllabic when they appear in their regular P form. Thus the polysyllabic Ps listed in (9) never appear in an inflected form.<sup>1</sup> (9) is a representative rather than exhaustive list:

- (9) dopo 'after', sotto 'under', sopra 'over', fuori 'outside', durante 'during', prima 'before', davanti 'in front of', accanto a 'beside', dietro 'behind', vicino a 'near', senza 'without'

All monosyllabic Ps that take NP complements have an inflected form, with the exception of *fra* and its phonological variant *tra* 'between, among', and *per* (as seen in (7) *vs* (8)), and all Ps occur in complementary distribution to their inflected forms (if they have them) except *con*, which shows free variation (as seen in (3) *vs* (6)).

There are several possible analyses one might consider for these inflected forms. There might be a phonological rule which combines a P with a following article. There might be an allomorphy rule which predicts the occurrence of these inflected forms. There might be a rule of cliticisation which attaches the article to the preceding P. On the other hand, the inflected form of the P might be present in the lexicon as an unanalysable unit, either as a Case-marked article or as an inflected preposition. We will now go through each of these possible analyses and argue for the last: that is, we contend that Italian has inflected prepositions.

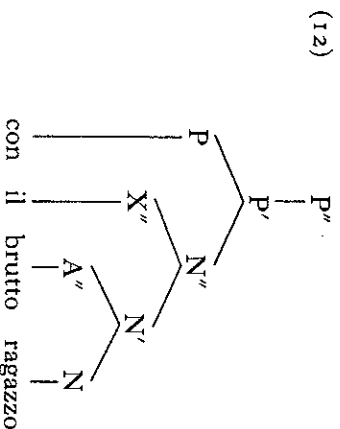
## 1 Phonological analysis

If one were to propose a phonological rule to produce the inflected form of a P from a combination of the P plus an article, the rule would have to be an external sandhi rule sensitive to the structural relationship between the P and the article. Thus in (10) we see *su* 'up' followed by *il* 'the', but we cannot have the inflected form *sul* 'on/the' here, as (11) shows:

- (10) Quando ho guardato in su, il medico mi ha spennellato le tonsille di iodio  
 'When I looked up, the doctor painted my tonsils with iodine'
- (11) \*Quando ho guardato in sul medico mi ha spennellato le tonsille di iodio

It turns out that a P appears in its inflected form only when the material that immediately follows it forms a PP with it. (This is, in fact, similar to the restrictions on the external sandhi rule of *Raddoppiamento Sintattico* (RS) in Italian (see Napoli & Nespor 1979; Nespor & Vogel 1982), which can operate between a P and a following word only when that following word begins a complement of the P.)

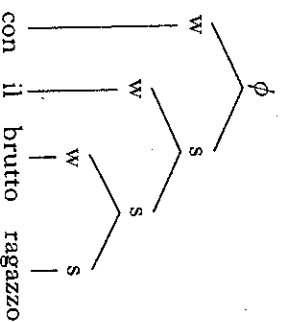
The question then arises as to whether this fact is best captured by a syntactic constraint or a phonological constraint. The answer is that the two constraints would be identical. That is, the syntactic branching here will always be isomorphic to the phonological branching. Consider the internal syntactic structure of the PP in (12), in terms of X-bar theory:



The P node will always be a left sister of the node whose left daughter is the article.

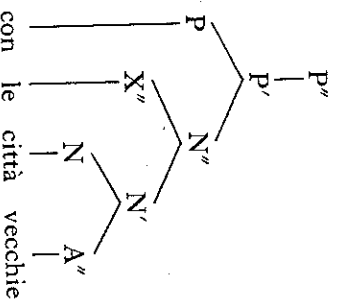
Now consider the internal phonological phrase structure of the same PP in (13), where we adopt the phonological phrase construction rules of Nespor & Vogel (1982). Thus in (13) we employ the  $\phi$  construction rule: 'Join into a  $\phi$  any lexical head (X) with all items on its non recursive side within the maximal projection and with any other non lexical items on the same side . . .' (1982: 228). Ps are treated as non-lexical by this rule:

(13)

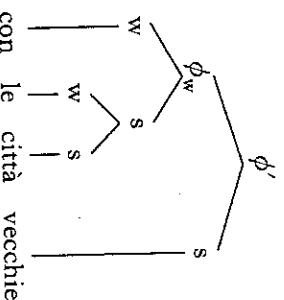


If there is a non-branching complement of the head N on its recursive side (in Italian, on its right), the syntactic and phonological phrase structures differ, but the difference is not pertinent to the branching relationships between the P and the following article:

(14) syntactic structure



phonological structure



It is impossible in Italian to find a  $\phi P$  within which the syntactic phrase structure and the phonological phrase structure will have different branching relationships between the P and a following article. Thus if the inflected form of the P in Italian is the result of an external sandhi rule, it is impossible to determine on empirical grounds whether a syntactic or phonological constraint best accounts for the failure of the inflected form of the P in examples like (11).

This situation is not so distressing, however, because there is good reason to suspect that no phonological rule has applied to produce the inflected form of these Ps.

First, if there were such a phonological rule, it would be unlike any other phonological rule of Italian. Consider the example in (1). The P here is *in*. The article is *la*. The phonological rule which would produce *nella* from *in + la* might operate as in (15):

- (15) [in la] → [ni la] by metathesis  
 → [ne la] by vowel lowering  
 → [nella] by consonant gemination

In (15) we have inversion of [l] and [n], followed by lowering of the vowel

and lengthening of the initial consonant of [la]. This metathesis rule has no role in the phonology of Italian other than in the context in (15). The vowel-lowering rule also has no role in the phonology of Italian other than in contexts like (15). Thus, while *di* plus the article *la* also undergoes lowering to *della*, *di* never becomes *de* before other types of words:

- (16) di/\*de lunga durata di/\*de Luigi di/\*de notte  
 'long lasting' 'of/from Luigi' 'at night'

And, finally, the consonant-lengthening rule is also particular to this context. That is, we cannot identify this consonant-lengthening rule with that of RS (as in Napoli & Nespor 1979 and Nespor & Vogel 1982), since not all Ps that have an inflected form undergo RS. For example, both *da* and *di* have inflected forms which exhibit the putative lengthening rule (*dalla*, *della*, . . .) but *da* differs from *di* with regard to RS (see Napoli & Nespor 1979).

The derivation in (15) is totally ad hoc, then. It is the type of derivation we would want our grammar to eschew. Alternatives to (15), such as dropping the initial vowel and having an epenthetic *e*, are equally unmotivated.

Second, the inflected form of these Ps behaves syntactically as a unit with respect to conjunction. To see this, consider first the facts about conjunction with uninflected Ps. We can find conjoined Ps followed by an NP (as in (17a)), but not P + article conjoined to another P + article (as in (17b)):

- (17) a. sotto e sopra la tavola (verde)  
 'under and over the (green) table'  
 b. \*sotto la e sopra la tavola (verde)  
 'under the and over the (green) table'

We can account for (17a) in at least two ways: either we have base-generated conjunction, or else Right Node Raising (RNR) can apply to the NP object of a P in conjoined PPs. In either instance, we predict (17b) to be out: (17b) cannot be base generated, since our PS rules do not generate a constituent of P plus an article; (17b) cannot be produced by RNR, since RNR cannot leave behind a specifier, but must take the maximal projection of the N.<sup>2</sup> Thus uninflected P never forms a constituent with a following article.

If we assume that a phonological rule produces inflected Ps from a combination of P plus a following article, we would predict the occurrence of conjoined monosyllabic Ps with a following NP having an article as its specifier, parallel to (17a). But we don't find such conjunctions, regardless of whether the putative phonological rule applies to the second conjunct or not:

- (18) a. \*a e di la ragazza 'to and of/about the girl'  
 to and of the girl  
 b. \*a e della ragazza  
 to and of/the girl

Furthermore, we predict that we will not find conjoined inflected Ps for the same reason that (18b) is out. But such conjunctions do occur:

- (19) Parlava alla e della ragazza  
to/the of/the  
'He spoke to the and about the girl'

The source for (19) cannot be RNR, since RNR applies only to N" (see the discussion of (17b) and note 2). Thus (19) is strong evidence that inflected Ps are units in the syntax.

We expect, then, that inflected Ps cannot be conjoined to uninflected Ps. And indeed they can't:

- (20) a. \*sulla e sotto la tavola 'on the and under the table'  
on/the under the  
b. \*sotto e sulla tavola 'under and on the table'  
under on/the

Now if inflected Ps are units in the syntax, they cannot be the result of a phonological rule, given a framework in which the PF component operates on the S-Structure and S-Structure is autonomous from the PF component (as in Chomsky 1973, 1981 and elsewhere).

## 2 Allomorphy analysis

A close alternative to a phonological analysis would involve an allomorphy rule, such as that in (21):

- (21) # in # → ne / — ART

The rule must be stated precisely as in (21): it does not generalise to all sequences of [in] and it occurs only before an article, not before other items that begin, for example, with [l]. In support of this claim, notice that the alternation of *in* with *ne* would occur only when *in* is the preposition *in* and never when *in* is the last two sounds of some other word. In standard Italian there are no words which end in *in* other than the preposition. However, in colloquial Italian some words can end in *in* when the final vowel is dropped, as in *bambin* for *bambino* 'baby'. But the alternative *bambne* is unthinkable, regardless of context. Here, however, *bn* is not a possible consonant sequence in Italian, so *bambne* would be impossible regardless of the existence of an allomorphy rule. Still, the *in* → *ne* rule should be blocked from applying to *in* in final position of a word other than the preposition, as dialectal evidence shows. In some dialects there are words ending in *in*, such as *pin* and *oselin* (as in the Milanese nursery rhyme *Pin pin oselin*...). And it is clear that no one would say *pne* in place of *pin*, or *osehne* in place of *oselin*, regardless of context, even though both *pn* (as in a handful of words of Greek origin, like *pneumatico*) and *ne* are well-formed syllable onsets in Italian. Furthermore, the allomorphy rule applies only when the material following the preposition *in* is an article.

For example, *in* + *illuminare* becomes *illuminate* 'illuminate' and not \**nelluminare*. Thus the allomorphy rule is restricted to the preposition *in* only followed by an article only, and is not generalisable.

This allomorphy rule is just as problematic and unmotivated as the phonological rule given in (15). First, it is unlike any other type of rule in Italian. That is, a vowel and a following consonant do not alternate with their inverted counterpart in other Ps before articles:<sup>8</sup>

- (22) per/\*pre la ragazza 'for the girl'

Second, with such allomorphy rules we make the same wrong predictions for conjunction that we made with the phonological rule discarded above. For example, parallel to (17a) we predict that (23) will be good, but it is ungrammatical (just like (18)):

- (23) \*a e nella casa 'to and in the house'  
to in/the

And parallel to (17b) we predict that (24) will be bad, but it is good (just as (19) is good):

- (24) alla e nella casa 'to the and in the house'  
to/the in/the

We can see that the predictions made here are wrong because these inflected forms of the Ps are syntactic units in the base. Thus no allomorphy rule is responsible for them.

We will consider the allomorphy rule no further.

## 3 Cliticisation analysis

The inflected form of the Ps also cannot be the result of cliticisation (that is, of a phonological readjustment rule of the type discussed in Nevis 1986, or of a phonological rebracketing rule plus merger of the type discussed in Pranka 1983). We follow Zwicky & Pullum (1983) in having all rules of cliticisation follow rules of syntax. But if cliticisation were operating to produce inflected Ps by cliticising the article to a preceding P (or, perhaps, vice versa), we would make the same wrong predictions for the conjunction facts that we did with the phonological and allomorphy analyses. That is, we have no source for examples like (19) and (24), since RNR is impossible here (see the discussion of (17b)). And if we tried to say that our explanation for (17b) was wrong and RNR is possible in these contexts, we would predict the existence of non-existent conjunctions like that in (25):

- (25) \* del e con il ragazzo 'about and with the boy'  
of/the with the

Since *con* would optionally undergo cliticisation in the second conjunct (witness (3) vs. (6)), and *di* would obligatorily undergo cliticisation in the

first conjunct, we have no way to prevent conjunction like that in (25) if RNR has applied in examples like (19) and (24).

We conclude that inflected Ps are not the result of cliticisation.

#### 4 Case-marked article analysis

Let us consider the possibility that a form like *nella* might be a special form of the article, so that *nella terza camera* in (1) is an NP, not a PP. With this analysis, we are admitting Case-marked NPs in Italian, where the article would be the item which exhibits Case. This approach has the immediate advantage of treating the inflected form of the P as a syntactic unit, and thus does not encounter the problems for conjunction noted for the other three analyses above.

This analysis cannot be correct, however. The phrases in question have the syntactic behaviour of PPs, not of NPs. They can't undergo NP movement. Thus (26) is good only with the intonation that distinguishes it as having an initial topic (where any PP, not just ones with inflected Ps, can be an initial topic). It is ungrammatical with the intonation in which *della rivoluzione* is in subject position:

- (26) \**Della rivoluzione è stato parlato* 'Of the revolution was spoken  
of/the  
(cf. *Abbiamo parlato della rivoluzione*  
'We spoke of the revolution')

If movement were the only point upon which Case-marked NPs differed from other NPs, we might try to say that only non-Case-marked NPs can move into A-positions. This explanation seems correct, in light of the fact that any given chain created by movement can have only one Case associated with it. However, movement is not the only distinguishing point between the so-called Case-marked NPs and other NPs.

So-called Case-marked NPs do not trigger subject-verb agreement:

- (27) Nelle grotte {e / \*sono} dove voglio andare  
in/the pl sg pl  
'In the caves is where I want to go'

Since nominative NPs do trigger subject-verb agreement in finite clauses, we might try to account for (27) by some sort of ad hoc stipulation to the effect that NPs with audible Case cannot trigger subject-verb agreement.<sup>4</sup> This already fairly precise exception must be further complicated by the exclusion of pronouns from the excepted class of NPs, since pronouns in Italian do have audible Case. The exception is without independent motivation and begs for an explanation.

Another way in which the so-called Case-marked NPs differ from other

NPs is that they satisfy the subcategorisation requirement of verbs that call for locative or directional PPs:

- (28) *Ho messo il libro sullo scaffale* 'I put the book on the shelf'  
on/the

Furthermore, they conjoin with PPs, whereas other NPs do not:

- (29) a. *Abbiamo parlato dell' America e di Ronald*  
of/the  
'We spoke about America and about Ronald'  
b. \**Abbiamo parlato dell' Italia e (l') italiano*  
of/the the  
'We spoke about Italy and Italian'  
(cf. *Abbiamo parlato italiano* 'We spoke Italian')

Syntactically, then, the items in question are PPs and not NPs.

Another argument against these items being Case-marked articles is that their form corresponds phonologically to the monosyllabic Ps with articles (see Table I above). If we were dealing with Case-marked articles here, we would have to say that the underlined parts of the words in (30) (disregarding the question of whether any part of the lengthened consonant should be underlined) represent Case markings:

- (30) alla, della, nella, colla, sulla, dalla

We now find ourselves with several new Cases in Italian (in fact, more Cases than in Latin and in any other modern Romance language), and the number and range of these new cases is entirely predictable: we have the same number of new Cases as we have monosyllabic Ps minus three (since *per* is an exception, as noted in (7)-(8), as are *tra* and *fra*). NPs with these new Cases have the same distribution as PPs with a monosyllabic head P that is phonologically close to the underlined portion of the Case-marked article in (30). Thus we find the pairs in (31) having the same syntactic distribution:

- |      |                            |     |                            |
|------|----------------------------|-----|----------------------------|
| (31) | <i>Case-marked NP</i>      |     | <i>regular PP</i>          |
|      | al ragazzo 'to the boy'    | vs. | a Roberto 'to Robert'      |
|      | del frate 'of the friar'   | vs. | di Federico 'of Federico'  |
|      | nell'anno 'in the year'    | vs. | in America 'in America'    |
|      | coll'uomo 'with the man'   | vs. | con Umberto 'with Umberto' |
|      | sulla torre 'on the tower' | vs. | su Teresa 'on Teresa'      |
|      | dalla rete 'from the net'  | vs. | da Roma 'from Rome'        |

The fact that the items in the two columns in (31) have the same syntactic distribution is completely arbitrary in this analysis. A generalisation is surely being missed.

Furthermore, in general, NPs with different Cases cannot be conjoined

in Italian. Thus a nominative pronoun and an oblique pronoun cannot be conjoined:

- (32) a. \*Te ed io siamo amici 'You and I are friends'  
 obl nom  
 (cf. Tu ed io siamo amici)  
 b. \*Ci sono andati con tu e me  
 nom obl  
 'They went there with you and me'  
 (cf. Ci sono andati con te e me)

But so-called Case-marked articles can be conjoined with other Case-marked articles, as we have already seen in (19) and (24). (19) and (24) are not unique; any Case-marked article can be conjoined with any other Case-marked article, so long as their gender and number inflections are the same. Thus the so-called Case-marked NPs behave differently under conjunction from other NPs. And the difference suggests that the so-called Case-marked NPs really do not have different Cases from each other.

Finally, notice that if the initial phrase in (33) (cf. (27)) is a Case-marked NP and not a PP, then this NP is in a position to receive two Cases:

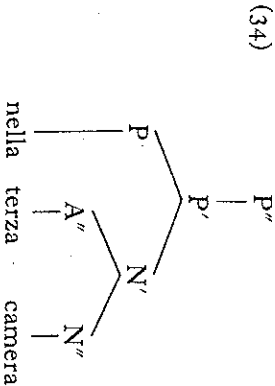
- (33) Nelle grotte è dove voglio andare  
 'In the caves is where I want to go'

If *nelle grotte* is an NP, it is governed by *acr* here and should receive nominative Case. With the Case-marked article analysis, however, this NP already has Case (seen in the word *nella*). But only one Case can be assigned to any NP. Thus examples like (33) would present a significant problem for Case theory.

We conclude that items like *nella* are not Case-marked articles.

## 5 Inflected P analysis

We have now arrived at the proposal we will defend. A form like *nella* is an inflected form of the P (inflected for number and gender in agreement with the object N' of that P), so that *nella terza camera* in (1) is a PP in the base and at all points throughout the derivation. The syntactic structure of a phrase like *nella terza camera* is given in (34):



This is exactly the structure argued for in Hinrichs (1984) for inflected Ps in Modern German.

The inflected P analysis will account for all the facts presented thus far. First, the inflected P ends in the same way as articles and demonstrative adjectives (see Table I), because these three sets of items comprise the class of non-predicative items inflected for gender and number in Italian. (Among predicative items we include APs and participles.)

Second, inflected Ps are present in the lexicon under this analysis, with the welcome result that we need no ad hoc phonological or allomorphy rules to produce them.

Third, inflected Ps can conjoin in the base to produce examples like those in (19) and (24). But inflected Ps cannot conjoin with uninflected Ps, since inflected Ps introduce N' but uninflected Ps introduce N'. Thus we will correctly never generate examples like those in (18b), (20), (23) and (25).

Fourth, inflected Ps introduce PPs. And these PPs cannot undergo NP movement, just as other PPs cannot undergo NP movement. Hence we will correctly never generate examples like (26).

Fifth, PPs with an inflected P will never trigger Subject-Verb agreement, since no PP triggers Subject-Verb agreement. Hence we will correctly never generate examples like (27) with the plural verb form.

Sixth, PPs with an inflected P can satisfy the subcategorisation requirement of certain Vs for directional or locative PPs, since they are *bona fide* PPs. Hence, examples like (28) are expected.

Seventh, PPs with an inflected P can conjoin with other PPs whether or not their head P is inflected, since PPs can conjoin. Hence we will generate examples like (29).

Eighth, PPs with an inflected P have the same external distribution as corresponding PPs with an uninflected P (as in (31)), since both are externally PPs.

With the analysis in (34) we also predict that inflected Ps will never introduce pronouns, since pronouns are N' and not N'. Likewise, inflected Ps should not introduce proper nouns, which are N' and not N'.<sup>5</sup> These predictions hold:

- (35) a. \* col te (cf. con te) 'with you'  
 with/the with  
 b. \* alla Roma (cf. a Roma) 'to Rome'  
 to/the to

There are some new questions that the analysis in (34) presents, however. The structure in (34) is problematic for the grammar in that the phrase structure rule for PP must now have two expansions: one in which P takes an NP complement, as in (12), and one in which P takes an N' complement, as in (34). This fact sets PP aside from all other major categories and raises important questions, both syntactic and semantic in nature.

First, why should PP be different from the other major categories in this

way? Certainly, the PS rule is not the only way in which PP is unique. Many have argued that P is not a proper governor (see Kayne 1981, who also argues that N is not a proper governor, and Aoun 1985 and Safir 1985, among others). Napoli (to appear) argues that P does not assign a theta role (and this claim is consistent with other analyses of prepositions, including that of George 1980, who says some Ps are Case markers).

One would hope for a situation in which inflected Ps behave differently from uninflected Ps in ways relevant to the remarks above. However, as far as government and theta role assignment go, all Ps act the same in Italian. Thus P can never be stranded, suggesting that no P, whether inflected or uninflected, is a proper governor in Italian:

- (36) a. \*Chi hai parlato dopo? 'Who did you speak after?'  
 (cf. Dopo di chi hai parlato?)  
 b. \*Casa di chi sei entrata nella?  
 'Whose house did you enter into?'  
 (cf. Nella casa di chi sei entrata?)  
 In cui casa sei entrata?)

And most Ps, whether they inflect or not, are not theta role assigners, according to Napoli (to appear). However, some Ps can allow their objects to undergo compositional theta role assignment. This happens when the P is lexically or structurally selected by the lexical head of which the PP is a sister. For example, the V *dipendere* 'depend' chooses the P *da*, and the object of *da* in (37) receives a theta role by compositional theta role assignment:

- (37) Dipendo da mio marito 'I depend on my husband'

However, as seen in (37), both inflected Ps and uninflected Ps can allow their objects to undergo compositional theta role assignment.

We therefore have no answer to the question of why PP should be defective with respect to X-bar theory. But we can at least point out that PP is also defective with respect to government theory and theta theory.

Second, if the inflected P in (34) introduces an N' rather than an NP, and if NP is the referring category and not N or N', where does the reference lie in a phrase like (34)? A discussion of this issue would lead us far astray from the central point of this article, especially since it would, unfortunately, be inconclusive. We therefore leave this question unanswered as well. Let us point out in passing that the inflected P has the same semantic effect on the givenness or newness of its object as an article has on the NP to which it is a specifier.

There are, however, some new questions arising from (34) which we would like to try to answer in a more satisfying way. Notice that if P can be expanded to introduce either N'' (as in (12)) or N' (as in (34)), we face the problem of how to block an uninflected P from introducing an N' and an inflected P from introducing an N'', as in (38):

- (38) a. \*in ritratto 'in portrait'  
 in  
 (cf. nel ritratto 'in the portrait')  
 in/the  
 b. \*nel il ritratto  
 in/the the

This can be handled simply by allowing the PS rules which expand PP to make use of the feature [ $\pm$ inflected]. If a P is [+inflected], it introduces N'. If a P is [-inflected], it introduces N''. Notice that we cannot simply make reference to mere inflectability, since *con* can appear in either an inflected form or an uninflected form, and it is the form it appears in, not the fact that it is inflectable, which determines whether it is followed by an N' or an N''. We adopt, then, the PS rules in (39):

- (39) P''  $\rightarrow$  X'' P'  
 P'  $\rightarrow$  P N''  
 [-inflected]  
 P'  $\rightarrow$  P N'  
 [+inflected]

(The X'' in the expansion of P'' is the specifier – cf. Chomsky 1986.)

A second question is how we prevent PPs like that in (40):

- (40) \*di la ragazza (cf. della ragazza) 'of the girl'  
 of the of/the

The answer is that this is an example of the phenomenon of blocking (see Aronoff 1976), whereby the existence in the lexicon of the inflected P blocks the occurrence of the rule-generated form in (40). *Con* would be an exception to the blocking phenomenon (as we noted in (3) vs. (6) above).

And the third question we would like to address is why Italian should have inflected Ps at all. We may well have here an example of fast speech coalescence which led to cliticisation and finally morphologisation. Thus, as Nigel Vincent has pointed out to us, *della*, for example, is easily derived from the Latin P *de* plus the definite article *illa*. And *nella* is derived from *in + illa* by aphæresis and vowel lowering. That the diachronic derivations from the Latin forms to the Italian forms are so straightforward suggests that the morphologisation occurred early in the history of Italian.

## 6 Conclusion

In Italian, words that look like a coalescence of a preposition and an article are present in the lexicon as inflected prepositions and are not synchronically the result of phonological, morphological or cliticisation rules. These inflected prepositions belong to the natural class of non-predicative items that inflect for number and gender.

What initially appears to be a phonological process with syntactic conditions turns out to be a lexical entity that triggers the blocking phenomenon. While the results of this study go counter, perhaps, to native speakers' intuitions and to classical analyses of the items in question, they are certainly justified on historical grounds.

Other languages exhibit items that look like inflected prepositions in Italian and may well be open to the same analysis. Hinrichs (1984) has, in fact, offered just such an analysis for German inflected prepositions. French inflected prepositions differ from the Italian ones in interesting ways. Still, they appear to be best handled with a lexical analysis (see also Piera 1985). Finnish has postpositions inflected for Case. And in Modern Irish prepositions inflect to agree with pronouns they govern (McCloskey & Hale 1983). We hope the present study will lead to new analyses of phenomena previously assumed to be external sandhi phenomena in a variety of languages.

## NOTES

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[1] A question arises here as to whether the items listed in (9) are Ps or perhaps adverbs which can take PP complements, since these items can occur without a following NP (as in *Vai dopo* 'Go after') and can take not only NP complements, but also PP complements (as in *dopo di te* 'after you'), sometimes with the proviso that the object of the P be a pronoun. In fact, some of them require a following PP (with a resulting composite preposition, in traditional terms) if they have a complement (regardless of whether the object of the P is a pronoun or a full NP), as in *accanto alla casa* 'beside the house'.

However, at least two items in (9) must be Ps and not adverbs: *durante*, which must take an NP complement whether that NP be a pronoun or a full NP, and *senza*, which must take an NP complement except when the complement is a pronoun and then must take a PP complement.

Thus, while it is certainly not clear that all the items in (9) are Ps, we cannot say all Ps in Italian are monosyllabic, because of the exceptional behaviour of *durante* 'during' and *senza* 'without'. For this reason we single out the monosyllabic Ps as having inflected forms.

[2] RNR moves N', not N or N', regardless of the analysis of inflected Ps:

- (i) *Compro e mangio il miglior cibo del mondo*  
'I buy and I eat the best food in the world'  
(ii) \**Compro il e mangio il miglior cibo del mondo*  
'I buy the and eat the best food in the world'  
(iii) \**Compro il miglior(e) e mangio il miglior(e) cibo del mondo*  
'I buy the best and eat the best food in the world'

[3] In fast speech one hears things like *presempio* for *per esempio* 'for example'. This is not an example of inversion before an article. If this is inversion at all, it's before a vowel. (Of course the most likely analysis is that of loss of the medial vowel of *per*.)

[4] Pronouns are phonetically distinct for Case in Italian, but full NPs are not. Thus *il medico* 'the doctor', for example, has the same phonetic shape regardless of its Case governor.

[5] Proper nouns can be introduced by an article in at least three situations. The first is when they are used as common nouns. For example, if we want to pick out a

certain Maria from a list of Marias, we might say *la Maria che abbiamo incontrato ieri* 'the Maria that we met yesterday'. In this usage the so-called proper noun can also appear with the demonstrative adjective and with an inflected P.

Second, in some varieties of Italian, an article may be used with a proper first name of a female (and, less commonly, of a male). Often this usage signals affection on the part of the speaker for the referent of the proper noun. And in all varieties of Italian it is obligatory to use the article with a proper first name that is modified by an adjective and with a proper last name of a female if no other title appears. Third, proper names with titles appear with articles except when they are used as vocatives.

Inflected Ps can introduce proper nouns in exactly the same three situations and with precisely the same restrictions and connotations. This fact supports the hypothesis that inflected Ps belong to a grammatical class with articles and demonstrative adjectives.

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