

The Cultural Semantics of Forms of Address

A contrastive study between English and Italian

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Declaration

Unless otherwise stated, this thesis is entirely the result of my own work.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Human Ethics Approval

Part of the linguistic data used in this study was obtained through elicitation tests (questionnaires and informal surveys) for which Human Ethics Approval was necessary. The data collection was approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee, Protocol 2014-
_191.

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Abstract

This study analyses forms of address from both a semantic and cultural point of view with a twofold aim: (i) to show that forms of address express a proper meaning which can be clearly pinpointed with a suitable methodology; (ii) to highlight the differences in address practices of different linguacultures and their implications for cross-cultural communication.

The approach taken is that of cultural semantics, the branch of linguistics which investigates the relationship between meaning and culture. Combining semantics and cultural studies, cultural semantics is closely related to various sub-branches of linguistics, most importantly cross-cultural communication, intercultural pragmatics and translation theory. Researchers in cultural semantics adopt the methodology of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage created by Anna Wierzbicka and Cliff Goddard and developed in collaboration with numerous academics from around the world. Over decades of cross-linguistic research, NSM has proved itself an optimal methodology to investigate the meanings of words in cross-linguistic perspective, in particular emotion words, cultural keywords and more recently musical terms. The analysis of forms of address is a new application of NSM, and in this case, too, the methodology has proved itself the ideal tool for this purpose. To the best of my knowledge, never before in address research has a scholar done an extended study of the meanings of address expressions and the set of cultural values which guide address practices in a linguacultural world.

In line with NSM researchers, the premise to this study is that to pinpoint the meaning of various address expressions and capture the cultural assumptions underlying address practices in English and Italian, it is necessary to produce definitions which are comparable. This permits to highlight the differences between the two linguacultures clearly and to provide language learners and culture outsiders with optimal tools which they can use for cross-cultural training. Although the present study is not written in the form of textbook, being based on NSM it is of considerable pedagogical use. This study is aimed at a very wide readership which includes not only scholars in linguistics, but anyone interested in issues in intercultural communication.

In Chapter 1 of the thesis, I review the main studies on address with particular attention to those which are most pertinent to my analysis. In Chapter 2, I introduce the methodology of semantic analysis which I adopted and present my body data. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the “greetings” *Hi* and *Ciao*. In chapters 5 and 6 I analyse nouns used to address people in English and Italian. Chapters 7 to 10 are dedicated to the analysis of the meaning of opening and closing salutations in letters and e-mails and finally, Chapters 11 to 13 focus on cultural scripts and the implications of differences in address practices for intercultural interactions.

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Chapter 1. Analysing address from a semantic point of view

1.1 Introduction

In this introductory chapter, the objects of investigation of the present study, the research gap identified and the differences with previous studies on address are discussed. The chapter presents a summary of the main points made in previous studies on address and discusses the need for a cultural semantic analysis of address together with the ways in which this kind of analysis can be made.

First of all, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by *address*. Friederike Braun (1988) defined *address* as “a speaker’s linguistic reference to his/her collocutor(s)” (7), in other words the linguistic means of calling someone signalling that this person is the intended recipient of a message. A word used to address someone is called by Braun ‘*term of address*’ and the totality of the words of a language used to address people ‘*address system*’ (12). Braun writes that different languages have different address systems, both because the number of available words differs and because the words are used differently (*ibidem*).

Very often, the same words are also used to talk *about* someone, in which case their function is that of *reference*. The distinction between the address and reference function of a word is important and not always clearly stated in dictionaries. For the purposes of the present study this distinction is fundamental, as one of the main points which I will make is that words and phrases used to address someone convey a specific meaning which is different from their meaning as “forms of reference” (next chapter).

Braun lists various linguistic means of addressing people. First of all address pronouns, which have received most attention in the literature and for this reason are only partly analysed in the present study (except for the Italian VOI, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 11).

There is also a large number of nouns used to address people which Braun calls “address nouns” and other scholars call “nominal forms of address” (Clyne et al. 2009; also cf. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (ed.) 2015 on ‘*formes nominales d'adresse*’). Not all nouns which are used as forms of address are analysed in this study, but only those which Braun and Clyne et al. (2009) call “titles” or “polite terms of address”, as well as first-name address (more in 1.3.2).

Braun’s classification of “terms of address” includes pronouns and nouns used to address people, but does not include the so-called “greetings” and “leave-taking phrases”, the expressions used to open or close an exchange (both oral and written) such as *Hi*, *Ciao*, *Best wishes* and *Cordiali saluti*. In this study, these expressions are analysed, too. Differently from previous studies, the present one proposes a categorisation of forms of address based on strictly semantic criteria, according to which *Hi*, *John*, *Professor* and *Best wishes* can be grouped together because they share the same semantic core paraphrasable as ‘I want to say something to you now’ (more in Chapter 2). In sum, three major categories of expressions are analysed in this study: nouns used to address people, “greetings” and “salutations” used in letters and e-mails. The aim is to compare the meanings of various forms of address (in the broad sense of the term proposed here) in English and Italian and pinpoint the key cultural values which underlie address practices in Italian and Anglo culture.¹

There are three main analytical reasons for the choice of these two languages. The first is that Italian is a good example of a language still associated mainly with one nation and one culture,² whereas English is a global language spoken by millions of people with different linguacultural backgrounds. This implies that more variation can be expected in the address practices of speakers of English than of speakers of Italian. Sociolinguistic variation in the use of forms of address, however, will not be discussed in this study. However interesting,

¹ The term ‘Anglo culture’ is used by Wierzbicka (2006:6) to refer to the cultural core shared by all speakers of English as a first language (U.K., U.S.A., Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada) belonging to Kachru’s (1985) *inner circle*.

² According to Risager (2006), because of *global flows* the “one nation-one language” association is not valid anymore, but all languages can be considered as world languages.

sociolinguistic variation is beyond the scope of the present study, which is strictly semantic and cultural in nature.

The second reason is that although English and Italian are similar in many respects, both the address repertoires and the address practices of their speakers are very different. More importantly, the cultural values which underlie address practices in Italian are considerably different from those underlying the address practices of speakers of English. The final three chapters of this study are dedicated to the differences in the address practices of Italian and English speakers, with an emphasis on the implications for intercultural communication.

The third reason is that the Italian nouns which are used as forms of address have never been sorted out into categories on the basis of cogent and explicitly stated criteria. In Chapter 6, I will propose for the first time a categorisation of three groups of Italian “titles” based on semantic criteria.

1.2 Key points in previous address research

1.2.1 Previous research on pronominal address

Although pronominal address is not discussed in detail in this study, it is impossible not to mention the studies on address pronouns, as they represent the cornerstone of research on address. I will begin with a review of the pioneering study by Brown and Gilman (1960) on the pronominal system of three European languages and will then mention three critiques to this study, before reviewing the research which pertains more directly to the objects of the present analysis.

The study conducted by Brown and Gilman (1960, henceforth B&G) focused on singular address pronouns in French, German and Italian. The authors suggested that in European languages the pronominal system for singular address is bipartite and proposed the labels T and V to distinguish the two variants TU and LEI in Italian, DU and SIE in German and TU and VOUS in French. They suggested that the distinction is based on two social “dimensions”, those of *power* and *solidarity*. “Power” is the dimension characterising the asymmetrical relationship between two people. It can be a matter of strength, sex, profession, wealth and other social factors which can constitute a difference in the relationship between people (257). In this kind of relationship address is non-reciprocal, because the superior uses T to the inferior and receives V. If the relationship between two people is equal in “power”, address is determined by the other dimension, “solidarity”. B&G contended that the core of this dimension is “like-mindedness”, which can result from similarity of behaviour or of way of thinking, or for being members of the same group. In this kind of relationship pronominal address is reciprocal, and depending on the speakers can be either reciprocal V or reciprocal T.

B&G’s study was aimed, in particular, at investigating the “semantics of the pronouns of address”, understood as the variation between the use of a pronoun and the actual relationship between the interactants (252). The authors asked several native speakers of German, French and Italian living in America to answer a questionnaire which they compiled (in English) and indicate which pronoun they would use to specific interlocutors. The respondents were all males from middle and upper classes. Analysing the results, B&G concluded that address practice in these three languages had changed historically. They suggested that in the nineteenth century the “power dimension” was determinant for the choice of the address pronoun and that, for example, a customer would address a waiter with T and receive V. By contrast, the results of their questionnaire suggested, in their view, that the “dimension of solidarity” was prevailing over “power” in these three languages, with pronominal address

becoming reciprocal even in “unequal” relationships. The direction of change seemed to be towards reciprocal T used in a number of relationships, for example fellow students, colleagues, members of the same political group and people sharing a hobby. B&G added that in French, German and Italian speakers can invite their interlocutors to shift from reciprocal V to reciprocal T, but that the proposal is done only by the superior speaker because “solidarity is recognised by the superior” (261). As I will discuss in Chapter 11, this suggestion is consistent with the proposal to shift from LEI to TU in Italian through the expression *dammi del tu* (“give me the TU”), which can only be made by the speaker who is seen as being the “superior” one.

Finally, among the factors determining the choice of the address pronoun B&G also indicated the speaker’s choice to act out of the customary “rule” (277). According to the authors, this apparent violation of the “rules” of address represents an expression of attitude on the part of the speaker:

The general meaning of an unexpected pronoun choice is simply that the speaker, *for the moment*, views his relationship as one that calls for the pronoun used. This kind of variation in language behaviour expresses a *contemporaneous* feeling or attitude. (ibidem, emphasis added)

B&G emphasise the momentariness of the attitude expressed, the fact that the variation does not reflect how the speaker usually thinks or feels for the addressee, but how the speaker chooses to relate to the addressee at the time of the interaction. This is a very important point which has been reiterated by various scholars, including Dunkling (1990) and Wierzbicka (1992), and which is also at the core of my own analysis, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

1.2.2 Criticism of Brown and Gilman’s study

Friederike Braun (1988) criticised B&G’s approach because, in her view, they presupposed that the address system of the three languages which they investigated was closed and

homogenous, consisting of a limited number of variants which speakers choose and use systematically. As against this, Braun pointed out that there is variation from speaker to speaker, not only in the repertoire of address variants available to them, but also in the “rules” which a speaker follows in selecting different forms (18-19). Because of this, address cannot be reduced to a standardised set of “rules” and “violations” of these rules, and in fact, according to Braun, variation itself is the “rule” rather than the exception:

The greater the social diversity in a given community, the more pronounced can be the variation in address behaviour. [...] The more factors [determining the choice of a form of address] there are, the smaller will be the group speaking a variety which could be called homogeneous. (23)

The group of respondents in B&G’s study was too small and homogenous for variation to occur. In the case of Italian speakers, for example, B&G only had eleven respondents and did not specify where they were from, a factor which would have revealed a great deal of variation. The bipartite distinction between TU and LEI posited by B&G does not reflect the address repertoire of some speakers, specifically those from the central and southern regions of the country, who use a third variant VOI (Renzi et al. 1995; Serianni 2010; Chapter 11 of this study). As I see it, the dichotomy between T and V forces the analyst to recognise VOI as either T or V and this is what Braun, too, did. She suggested that some speakers of Italian use two V forms, an “intimate V”, which is VOI, and a “distant V”, which is LEI, and described VOI as a sort of an in-between variant of TU and LEI (21). In fact, for the Italian speakers of the central and southern regions VOI is neither TU nor LEI, but a completely different variant, as I will argue in Chapter 11.

Another major criticism of B&G’s approach comes from Clyne et al. (2009). The authors agree with B&G on the importance of address practices for social relationships; “address usage”, they write, “reflects cultural values and acts as an indicator of major social and political changes that affect human relationships and social networks” (1). At the same time, though,

they criticise B&G on three main points: (i) the prediction of a movement from non-reciprocal V/T to reciprocal T-address in European languages; (ii) the “politeness”-address interface; (iii) the lack of attention to variation in address practices.

In relation to the first point, for Clyne et al. to state that European languages now tend to favour a reciprocal T-like address in most interactions is too broad a generalisation; although the general trend seems to be towards reciprocal T-address, some European languages (e.g. Spanish, Dutch) present a great deal of variation in the use of address pronouns in different national varieties. In addition, the authors’ data on their investigated languages (French, German, Swedish and partly English) provide evidence which contradicts B&G’s prediction (the same applies, as I will show, to Italian). As the authors point out, English represents the greatest challenge to B&G’s prediction because “it is the V form *you*, not the T form *thou*, that has become the almost universal English pronoun of address” (16).

In relation to the second point, the interface between address and “politeness” theory, Clyne et al. criticise Brown and Gilman for assuming that “speakers of a particular cultural background share assumptions about politeness, informing their choice of communicative strategies” (18). As against this, the authors argue that “politeness” strategies vary across cultures, “and thus cannot be described using a single model” (25). “Politeness”, they argue, “is not seen as a pre-existing, static concept or list of strategies, but as something which is discursively constructed by the interlocutors” (ibidem). The emphasis on variation and especially on negotiation of address practices is shared in this study, as I will discuss in the final three Chapters.

In relation to the third point, like Friederike Braun Clyne et al. mainly criticise B&G for completely dismissing variation in address systems and address practices. For Clyne et al., speakers do follow some principles and tacit norms when choosing their address mode. These principles are informed by cultural norms and by shared cultural assumptions (the authors call

it “common ground”) which guide speakers’ linguistic behaviour, including address practices. “These assumptions”, they write, “can be fruitfully explored, not only by examining actual interactions but also by asking people about their experiences and views on address practices” (25). However, it is not that address systems are homogenous and that address practices are based on a set of “rules” which speakers follow or deliberately violate.

For Clyne et al., address practices are based on three intertwined factors: (i) the repertoire of address expressions available in a given language; (ii) the principles for using these expressions, i.e. the pragmatic and cultural norms underlying address practices in that language; (iii) contextual factors and idiosyncratic preferences (156). This means that much variation can be expected at both the intralinguistic and the extralinguistic level: variation across national varieties of a language (e.g. English, Spanish, French), variation in different domains and institutions (e.g. address in the academic context or in the workplace), variation in the medium of communication (oral exchanges vs. letters or e-mails), and variation in language contact situations, especially in cross-cultural interactions.

Idiosyncratic variation, that is variation depending on individual speakers’ address choices and preferences, is one of the most emphasised points by Clyne et al. On the one hand, there are conventionalised, ritualised meanings which speakers express through forms of address in particular contexts because they are encouraged by specific cultural norms. On the other, speakers can use forms of address in their own creative and meaningful way, which may differ considerably from the general “rule” for addressing people in a language. As Clyne et al. point out, “the conventionalised social meanings attached to particular terms – for example, that German *Sie* is ‘polite’ – can be taken up, challenged and renegotiated by individuals in their situated identity work” (30). Indeed, there are various cases of apparently clashing combinations of forms of address, for example first name plus LEI in Italian (Chapter 11), *Hi Professor* in English (Chapter 3) or first name plus VOUS in French, which are regularly used

by speakers of these languages. Each combination expresses its own specific meaning which reflects the speaker's intentions and attitude towards the addressee during the interaction and which can be precisely pinpointed with a rigorous semantic analysis.

A similar observation is made by Kendall (1981):

The model articulated by Brown and Gilman [...] does not just assume a systematic and consistent correspondence between behaviour and ideas, it also assumes that this relationship is *determinate*. It incorporates a theory of meaning intent, and it fails to consider the possibility of multiple meanings for the same form.

(237)

Like Braun and Clyne et al., Kendall criticised the idea of address behaviour as a regulated, determined linguistic practice which does not permit individual variation and creativity. She did not deny the existence of conventions in address practices, but pointed out that speakers can choose whether to follow them or not (245). In Kendall's view, the choice of an address expression which conventionally would not be considered suitable for a situation should not be seen as a "violation of a rule", but as the willingness on the part of a speaker to ascribe *multiple meanings* to that expression. For Kendall, the semantics of address is not regulated by the "dimensions" which according to B&G guide the use of address pronouns, but by the meaning(s) *intended* by the speaker and *interpreted* by the interlocutor. Kendall advocated the need for a cultural semantic analysis of address practices, whose scope would be

to go beyond what forms 'mean' and discuss what speakers *meant to do with these forms*. An adequate semantic model must incorporate a theory of communicative intent and also, it seems clear, some notion of 'shared understanding', 'commonsense knowledge' or 'mutual knowledge'.

(246, emphasis in original)

This is precisely the scope of the present study, which is aimed at proposing a contrastive semantic and cultural analysis of address expressions. More recently, the semantics of address pronouns in German, French and Italian has been discussed by Wierzbicka (2017), who has

questioned a number of points made by B&G. One of these is the assumption made by B&G (1960:265) that the Italian LEI is “reverential”. According to Wierzbicka, there is no inherent “reverence” in the interactional meaning of LEI and neither is this pronoun used only to address people who can be seen as being “above” the speaker. As Wierzbicka points out, “*Lei* is always compatible with ‘deference’ but does not imply ‘deference’” (219, emphasis in original).

The second point questioned by Wierzbicka is the assumption that the so-called “V forms” in European languages match in meaning. In her view, there are important semantic differences between the Italian LEI, the German SIE and the French VOUS, which is why it is inappropriate to call them all “V forms”:

First, unlike *vous* (but like *Lei*), *Sie* cannot be addressed to God. Second, unlike *vous* (but like *Lei*), *Sie* cannot be addressed to one’s husband or wife. Third, unlike either *Lei* or *vous*, *Sie* is normally not used asymmetrically in relations among adults, for example between students and lecturers [...]. What these facts suggest is that *Sie* is comparable to *Lei* in being more ‘distant’ than *vous*, but in some ways is even more ‘distant’ than *Lei*.

(229)

Wierzbicka also points out that the factors determining the use of an address pronoun differ considerably in different languages and are not only a matter of “power” and “solidarity”. Crucial factors which are not taken into consideration by B&G are, for example, whether or not the speaker knows or purports to know the addressee well or not well (214).

1.2.3 Previous research on nouns used to address people

Friederike Braun talked about “nouns of address” (1988:9) and included in this category first-name address (e.g. *John*, *Mary*), kinship nouns like *mum* and *dad*, nouns like *Mr./Mrs.* which

she called “general forms”, nouns like *Doctor* and *Count*, which she called “titles”,³ “abstract nouns” referring to some abstract quality of the addressee like *Your Excellency* and *Your Honour*, “occupational terms” like *waiter* and *driver* and the so-called “terms of endearment”, which Braun did not exemplify, but simply stated that they are used to address children or “persons to whom the speaker feels close” (10).

The category of “nominal forms of address” proposed by Dunkling (1990) is much larger and includes “first names”, “surnames”, “nicknames”, “family terms of address”, nouns like *darling*, *love*, *mate*, *honey*, which he called “terms of endearment and of friendship”, nouns like *waiter* and *driver*, which he called “neutral terms of address”, and expressions like *You fool!* and *You bastard!*, which he defined as “insulting and unfriendly terms of address”. In addition to these, Dunkling introduced a category of so-called “polite terms of address”, which comprises: a) “social titles” like *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Sir*, *Madam*, *Gentlemen*; b) “military titles” like *Sergeant*; c) “religious titles” like *Vicar* and *Father*; d) “professional titles” like *Doctor*.

A common characteristic of both Braun’s and Dunkling’s classifications is that personal names, too, are included in the category of “nominal forms of address”. In Wierzbicka’s (1992) study of personal names in English, Russian and Polish, the semantic differences between different forms of the same personal name are analysed. For English, Wierzbicka distinguished standard male and female short forms like *Tom* and *Kate*, child-oriented male and female forms like *Tommy* and *Katie*, and non-standard male and female full forms like *Thomas* and *Katherine*, suggesting that different forms of the same name have a different *expressive value* (231) which encodes the speaker’s expressed attitude and feelings towards the interlocutor. The expressive

³ Braun recognised that the label “title” is not helpful because, she wrote, “there is no unanimity as to what should be classified as a ‘title’. Frequently, especially in English, the term title is used without distinction for all nominal variants except names” (10).

value of address expressions is at the core of my analysis, too, and will be further discussed in 1.4.

For the purposes of the present study, it is also important to mention the studies on '*les formes nominales d'adresse*' in the volume edited by Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2015), in which various nouns used as forms of address are investigated in cross-linguistic perspective. Among the various contributions, those by Ravazzolo and Cosma and Giaufret are the most pertinent to my analysis. Both in Ravazzolo and in Cosma and Giaufret, "titles" used as forms of address in French and in Italian are compared. It is suggested that in French "titles" are used in an "egalitarian" way, whereas in Italian the use of "titles" reflects the vertical, "hierarchical" character of society. Ravazzolo, in particular, suggests that "in comparison to French, the Italian FNA [nominal forms of address] seem to operate a more rigid categorization of the interlocutors, based not only on their profession but also on their level of education" (2015:214, my translation). All these observations are consistent with the semantic and cultural analysis of Italian "titles" which I propose in Chapter 6.

Among the various nouns used to address people listed in different studies, I will only analyse first names and specific categories of "titles", those often defined in the pragmatics literature as "professional titles" (e.g. *Professor, Avvocato*), "generic titles" (e.g. *Signore/Signora, Sir/Madam, Mr./Mrs.*) and the Italian nouns used to address people who hold a top position in an institution (e.g. *Direttore, Presidente*). I will not analyse the so-called "military titles", "religious titles" and what Braun called "abstract titles", e.g. *Your Honour* and *His Excellency*. The reason for this choice is that first names and the selected categories of "titles" have common syntactic and semantic characteristics. Syntactically, they can be used either by themselves (e.g. *John, Professor, Sir*) or in combination with a first name, a surname, or another noun (e.g. *Doctor Smith, Mr. Smith, Signora Maria, signor avvocato*). Their shared semantic characteristics will be discussed in the next chapter.

1.2.4 Previous research on “greetings” and “opening salutations”

Apart from nouns used as forms of address, I will also analyse the meaning of words like *Hi* and *Ciao*, expressions used to open an oral exchange typically described as “greetings” in the pragmatics literature. Archer et al. (2013), for example, mention “greeting” among the list of “polite speech acts” which are ritualised and “conventionally linked to the form” (45). Before them, Searle (1969) described the speech act of “greeting” as the mere acknowledgement of the presence of another person through the use of a “formulaic” expression:

In the utterance of “Hello” there is no propositional content and no sincerity condition. The preparatory condition is that the speaker must have just encountered the hearer, and the essential rule is that the utterance counts as a courteous indication of recognition of the hearer.

(64-65)

Duranti (1997) questioned Searle’s assumption that “greetings” are only “phatic, predictable exchanges”, suggesting that in many languages an information-seeking phrase or action-control strategy constitutes a “greeting” (for example ‘where are you going?’ in Samoan languages). He was critical of the fact that although there is no generalizable definition of “greetings” which could be valid for many languages, “researchers have felt at ease identifying ‘greetings’ in different languages and providing hypotheses about what greetings ‘do’ for or to people” (63). He was critical of the fact that very often researchers have imposed the English label “greeting” to describe speech practices of other languages regardless of the fact that these differ considerably in content and performance from the English “greetings”. Moreover, Duranti questioned Searle’s assumption that “greetings” are semantically empty formulae, a point to which I will return in 1.4.

Another study aimed at highlighting cross-linguistic differences in “greetings” is that conducted by Eisenstein-Ebsworth et al. (1996). The authors pointed out that in Puerto Rico greeting a friend is so important that conversations are often interrupted to greet a friend passing by, whereas in English speaking countries it is considered rude to interrupt a conversation to greet someone else, as it is seen as a lack of “respect” for one’s conversational partner (99). Another cultural difference that the authors discussed concerns the topic of the greeting. They pointed out that in American English it is common to ask about the well-being of the addressee and of this person’s family, whereas their Russian and Ukrainian informants commented that in their culture this is not common at all and that “they sometimes found the question so unexpected and startling that they responded with silence and an embarrassed expression on their faces” (100).

In a different study, Duranti (1986) discussed the then emerging use of “greetings” in e-mails, focusing in particular on “greetings” in American English used in e-mails sent by university students to lecturers. Duranti suggested that in e-mails “greetings” are part of longer and asynchronous interactions which can last several weeks or months. This means that unlike face-to-face encounters, in which case “greetings” may be exchanged more than once in the same day, in e-mails “greetings” may be used only in the first message and may not be repeated in the following ones. According to Duranti, “greetings” in e-mails

signal the beginning of an interaction in a *new discourse domain* which, once established, does not need to be renegotiated every time. It would seem that senders assume a continuous availability on the part of the recipient that might be related to the asynchronous nature of the interaction.

(66, emphasis in original)

Another point made by Duranti is that in e-mails speakers can use combinations of “greetings” and forms of address which are not used in oral exchanges. In some of the e-mails which he analysed, the combinations *Hi* Professor plus surname and *Hello Dr.* plus surname

were used. The fact that these combinations also occur in the data presented by Merrison et al. (2012) and in my body of data for English suggests that they have become common combinations in e-mails in Anglo academic environments (together with the use of bare first names from students to lecturers). In this study, too, the “greetings” *Hi* and *Ciao* are analysed both in oral interactions and in e-mails. As I will discuss in chapters 3 and 4, although there are differences in how these expressions are used in oral interactions and e-mails, my hypothesis is that there is no difference in meaning (e.g. that *Hi* in oral interactions and *Hi* in e-mails mean the same), and so far no counterevidence for this hypothesis has emerged.

The other expressions used in e-mail exchanges which are analysed in this study are the English *Dear* and the Italian *Caro*, *Gentile* and *Egregio*, referred to as “opening salutations” in the literature (as opposed to “closing salutations” like *Yours sincerely* and *Cordiali saluti*, next section). In their study of “greetings” and “closings” in e-mail exchanges between students and supervisors, Hallajian and Khemlani David (2014) argue that in e-mails “greetings and closings are considered as *politeness markers* since they are oriented to the addressee’s face needs and pay attention to the recipient” (86, emphasis added). They use “greeting” and “salutation” as different terms without explaining the difference, and mention *Dear* in the section on “salutations”. Strangely enough, they describe *Dear* as a “term of deference” (90), but there is no such element in the meaning of *Dear*, as I will discuss in Chapter 7.

More closely related to the present analysis is the comparative study by Vergaro (2005) on the differences between business letters written in English and Italian. Among the differences discussed by the author, there is mentioning of the differences between “opening salutations” and “closing salutations” used in each language. Vergaro writes that an “opening salutation” is “typical of Italian business writing style” and that this is “in general very formal” and “very deferential” (116). The examples she gives are *Egregi Signori* and *Gentile Cliente*, which she respectively translates in English as “*Dear (=distinguished) Sirs*” and “*Dear Customer*”,

leaving the reader with the impression that *Dear*, *Egregio* and *Gentile* are identical in both use and meaning. In fact, there are very important differences in use between *Dear*, *Gentile* and *Egregio*, the most important of which being that the two Italian opening salutations are chosen from a set of three variants (which also includes *Caro/a*), whereas *Dear* is the only opening salutation used in English. This implies, as I will discuss in Chapters 7 and 8, that *Gentile*, *Egregio* and *Dear* are also different in meaning; not only does neither *Gentile* nor *Egregio* contain an element of “deference” in their meaning, but the English *Dear* is nowhere as “formal” as its Italian presumed equivalents. Vergaro seems to recognise this herself when she moves on to discussing English business letters:

[In English] The addressee is generally identified as ‘Dear Mr/Ms + Surname, this denoting a preference for the V level of reference. However formal, this OPENING SALUTATION is not equivalent to the Italian *ne* as far as the level of formality is concerned. (*sic*, 120)

1.2.5 Previous research on “leave-taking phrases” and “closing salutations”

Unlike *Hi*, *Ciao* is not just a “greeting”, but can also be used at the end of an exchange. In this case, its function is often described in the pragmatics literature as “leave-taking”. Other expressions which are described as “leave-taking phrases” are *Bye*, *Goodbye* and *See you* in English, and *Arrivederci* (“See you”) and *Addio* (“Farewell goodbye”) in Italian. There is less research on these expressions than on “greetings”, and for the purposes of the present discussion it will suffice to mention the study by Knapp et al. (1973).

In this study, the authors discussed at the same time leave-takings in oral interactions like *Goodbye* and what they called “complementary closes” in letters (and e-mails) like *Sincerely*. They found that regardless of the relationship between the interactants there are some consistent patterns of use of leave-taking expressions and identified two primary functions of

leave-taking. One is to signal “inaccessibility”, i.e. signal that the exchange has come to an end and that there will not be “communicative access” with the interlocutor for some time. In the authors’ words, a leave-taking expression conveys the message “Yes, communicative access will be denied us for a while, but you should not perceive my leave-taking as threatening the end of our relationship” (5). The second function is to signal “supportiveness”. The authors suggest that the end of an interaction is always a delicate moment, and to avoid the risk of giving the impression that one wants to end the relationship with the addressee one uses a leave-taking expression to signal one’s “good disposition” towards the interlocutor and support future encounters (9).

Knapp et al. stressed, in particular, the importance of leave-taking expressions for the reinforcement of social relationships, because if omitted or if not used well the interaction could be perceived, in the end, as “unsatisfactory” and the speaker’s attitude as hostile (3). They made the example of two speakers, one saying “Goodbye, it was nice seeing you” and another saying “Goodbye, it wasn’t”, the second case being, in their view, a “violation of these [leave-taking] norms which will have definite consequences for the perceived efficacy of the leaving behaviour” (ibidem). In the authors’ view, signalling support is an important function of leave-taking because “since leave-taking signals the end of things, we are often concerned with terminating our intentions on the “right-note”, that is, on a note of mutual regard” (26). According to Knapp et al., these two functions apply both to “leave-taking phrases” in oral interactions and to “complimentary closes” in letters and e-mails.

In relation to the latter, it is worth mentioning again the study by Vergaro (2005), who calls phrases like *Yours sincerely* and *Cordiali saluti* “closing salutations”, suggesting that these are part of the “END POLITELY move” made by the sender to conclude the letter. Comparing how this “move” is done in English and Italian, Vergaro writes that in English “the end politely move is, however, never as formal as its Italian counterpart” (121), but she does not clarify

why and how this is the case. Moreover, Vergaro presents two different business letters in Italian in which the same phrase *Cordiali saluti* is used, and without any explanation this phrase is translated in English as *Sincerely Yours* in the first example and as *Best wishes* in the following example (128). As I will show, neither *Sincerely Yours* nor *Best wishes* is equivalent in meaning to *Cordiali saluti* (Chapters 9 and 10).

1.3 The need for a cultural semantic analysis of forms of address

So far, forms of address have been investigated predominantly from a pragmatic and sociolinguistic point of view, but scarcely from a semantic and cultural point of view. The lack of attention to the semantic aspects of address is probably due to the assumption that forms of address have no proper semantic content (Searle 1969:64-65) but are simply “ritualised semantic formulas” (Eisenstein-Ebsworth et al. 1996:90) with particular social functions (e.g. signalling “distance”, “respect”, etc.). Similarly, when looking up a “greeting” or a “title” in a dictionary the reader can find some information on how it is used, but there will rarely be any attempt at pinpointing its meaning or at distinguishing its meaning as a “form of address” from its meaning as a “form of reference”.

The assumption that forms of address are semantically empty has been questioned by Duranti (1997), who has pointed out that however “formulaic” an expression might be it is not that “participants have nothing invested in the propositional value of what is said” (70). According to Duranti, speakers use different forms of address to *say* different things, and if the semantic content of a form of address is not considered “differences in what people say can be ignored” (67). A similar objection was made by Wierzbicka (1992), who pointed out that “the use of a word or expression with a certain meaning may be forced on us by circumstances or

by a social convention (for example, “Nice to see you” or “Nice to have met you”), but this doesn’t mean that this meaning is no longer there” (233). The present study builds on the idea that something is said in addressing someone in a particular way, and is aimed at showing that forms of address have a proper meaning which can be clearly determined if a suitable methodology is adopted.

Braun (1988) distinguished the *lexical* from the *social* meaning of “terms of address”. The lexical meaning is the meaning that a word has in all contexts of use, whereas the social meaning is the meaning expressed by a word when used specifically as a “term of address”. According to Braun, in most cases the two meanings are initially related, in that “when words start to be used as forms of address, it is mostly because of their lexical meaning, which qualifies them for certain situations and certain types of addressees” (260). This is the case for words which, according to Braun, express the idea of ‘master, superior’ like the German *Herr* (‘master’), the Arabic *ustadh* (‘professor’), the Japanese *sensei* (‘teacher’) and the Italian *signore* (‘master’), whose lexical meaning at an earliest stage is likely to have favoured their use as forms of address. However, later on the bond between the two meanings loosens and “the social meaning comes to be entirely determined by the interplay and interdependency of variants” (ibidem). Braun added that the lexical meaning of a “term of address” may be less relevant or even missing, whereas a term will always have a social meaning, which “consists of speaker-addressee relationship, speaker’s evaluation of addressee (and situation), and of speaker’s social background” (258).

Relatedly, Wierzbicka (1992) talked about the *interactional meaning* of personal first names in relation to the choice between different forms (232). She suggested that the choice of a particular form of a first name depends on the attitude that a speaker wishes to express to the addressee. The expressed attitude consists of particular ways of thinking about the addressee and particular feelings conveyed to the addressee. Depending on the contexts of use and on the

number of competing expressions, the interactional meaning of a form of address can be quite rich in semantic components. To analyse the interactional meaning of an address expression it is necessary to consider all the possible combinations of a word with other words as well as the combinations which are not allowed (e.g. **Mr. Paul* in English). The latter represent invaluable negative evidence suggesting that there is a semantic clash with the meaning of another form. For the same reason, it is necessary to consider the situational contexts in which speakers do and do not use an expression. The non-use of an expression in a given context suggests that its meaning is not felt to be appropriate for that situation or for that interlocutor. Furthermore, determining the interactional meaning of a form of address is important to distinguish minimal pairs semantically. For example, an explication of the meaning of *Professor* used by a university student to address a lecturer (Chapter 5) is necessary to explain the semantic differences between *Good morning* and *Good morning, Professor*. If *Professor* is omitted the meaning conveyed is not the same because something less is said to the addressee.

The interactional meaning is also closely related to culture. The ritualised use of an address expression in particular contexts suggests that there are specific cultural values which encourage the expression of particular meanings in those contexts. The cultural values which underlie address practices vary substantially across linguacultural worlds; the expression of an attitude through a form of address may be encouraged in one culture but not in another culture, and this may lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding in intercultural interactions.

Issues related to address in intercultural interactions were discussed by Clyne (2009), who argued that when engaging in conversation in English it is likely that Anglo address practices end up prevailing, even though “English address patterns may clash with their [non-native speakers’] own cultural norms” (407). Clyne found that often non-native speakers adapt their address practices to those of English, not only when interacting with native speakers, but also when interacting with speakers of the same language with whom they had previously interacted

in English. Clyne mentioned the case of German speakers meeting for the first time at international conferences or business meetings conducted in English (400). Clyne wrote that in such situations German speakers have problems interacting with other German speakers with a different age or social position because they do not know whether to use the “polite” SIE, in accordance with German address norms, or the “intimate” DU, following the English “T-like” address modes. In fact, he suggested that in such cases some speakers do not even know whether or not to use German at all, and that if two German speakers initially address each other with DU this “T relationship” is likely to continue in following exchanges in their home country.

Clyne’s study highlights not only the fact that speakers’ address practices in intercultural interactions can be influenced by the practices of another language, but also the fact that speakers sometimes change their address practices because they need to negotiate address with speakers with different linguacultural backgrounds. So far, apart from Clyne, the risks of miscommunication in intercultural interactions due to different address behaviours have scarcely been discussed in the pragmatics and cross-cultural communication literature, with some exceptions including Archer et al. (2012), Scollon and Scollon (2001) and Wierzbicka (2003).

1.4 The importance of a clear and non-ethnocentric description

The present study is made with two precise objectives in mind: (i) explaining the semantic differences between English and Italian forms of address clearly; (ii) freeing the description from any ethnocentric bias. It is often the case in linguistics as well as in other social sciences that English technical terminology is used to compare and describe different languages. In such cases, English terminology is often not clearly explained or is used on the assumption that it is

cross-culturally applicable. An example of unclear technical terminology is found in Spencer-Oatey and Franklin's (2009) discussion of address. Emphasising the importance of address for rapport management in various languages the authors write:

This is because they indicate both the *power* and the *distance-closeness* of the participants, and if these *relational indicators* are not in accordance with the assumed or desired relationship rapport is to be affected.

(2009:123, emphasis added)

The authors seem to use the labels "power", "distance" and "closeness" as if these were intuitively clear and without trying to explain what they mean by these terms. In addition to that, they do not specify in what ways any violation of these "relational indicators" affects the relationship between the interlocutors (either positively or negatively). Another example is Grieve and Seebus' (2008) account of the differences between *G'day* in Australian English and *Guten Tag* in German used to open telephone conversations. Throughout the paper the authors use the labels "formal" and "informal" to describe and compare the two "openings" without clearly specifying what they mean by these terms and in what ways *G'day* is "more informal" than *Guten Tag*. The question is: if both "openings" are "informal", how can one distinguish them?

Other labels often used in an unclear way in comparative studies on address are "friendly", "familiar", "intimate", "close", "distant" and most of all "(im)polite". Wood and Kroger (1991) talked about the "politeness of forms of address" in relation to nouns. They suggested that "address forms are an integral part of polite language use" (145) and distinguished forms in terms of "distance" and "closeness". They maintained that *Your Majesty* and *Mr. President* are used to create "vertical distance" and "deference" (146), whereas two strangers who address each other as *Mr. Smith* and *Mr. Jones* are expressing "mutual deference" (147). By contrast, "the maintenance of positive face requires the achievement of closeness", which in their view is achieved through the use of first-name address (ibidem). Not only do they not explain what

they mean by “closeness”, “distance” and “deference” and in what way these features are expressed by certain nouns as forms of address, but they also seem to suggest that there are some combinations of forms of address which are inherently “polite”, for example a “title” plus surname combination:

The use by a speaker of a TLN [title plus last name] *is potentially an instance of two negative politeness strategies*, ‘Impersonalise’, and ‘Show deference’. [...] TLN serves to show deference only if it is used non-reciprocally. More specifically, TLN is deferential only if the speaker is in turn addressed by a more intimate, personal form, such as FN [first name].

(148, emphasis added)

What does it mean that a TLN combination “shows deference” when used non-reciprocally? And how is a first name “more intimate” than a TLN combination? Furthermore, it is not clear if the authors are considering TLN and FN in opposition to each other or to all the possible address variants with which these forms compete in a context. Arguably, in an exchange between members of the same family or between two friends who have always addressed each other by first name a sudden switch to a TLN combination would be seen as “impolite”.

I reject the use of the label “polite” to describe forms of address and endorse Braun’s view that “politeness” is inappropriate because forms of address in the same language and especially in different languages are not equally “polite” (1988:43). One clear example of cross-linguistic difference in “politeness” made by Braun in support of her arguments against the use of this term concerns the range of so-called “V forms” in different languages. For B&G LEI, SIE and VOUS are the “polite” V forms in Italian, German and French. As Friederike Braun suggested, accordingly one would be tempted to consider USTED, too, as the “polite” V form in Spanish. However, in various American varieties of Spanish USTED is used by adult speakers to address children and pets. Braun suggested that in such cases the V form expresses “a high degree of intimacy” which “does not at all harmonize with the characteristics otherwise attributed to the V forms” (44). For this reason, Braun suggested that USTED in American varieties of Spanish

should not be labelled as V but should be considered as an independent variant. Similarly, Braun emphasised that in German both DU and SIE are “polite” in different situations. SIE is “polite” when a student addresses a lecturer, but is not “polite” if the same student addresses fellow students in this way. In contrast, DU is more “polite” than SIE to address family members, including in-laws. According to Braun, “non-reciprocal *du* used by a superior can be perceived as a mark of appreciation more flattering than the V pronoun” (49).

At this point, two questions arise: (i) if two forms which are “polite” in different ways are both described as “polite” how can they be distinguished?; (ii) given that “polite” has different meanings in different languages, what is the point of using this label at all? As I see it, in most cases the use of a technical term which is supposed to improve clarity is in fact less clear than simple words like ‘I want so say something good to you now’ (next chapter). Furthermore, “polite” and other terms like “intimate” and “power” reflect cultural values specific to Anglo culture which are absent or different in other cultures. As pointed out by Wierzbicka,

we cannot identify conceptual categories without using language. If we want to identify them through English, then we need to recognize that most English words are not cross-translatable into other languages and carry with them a particular culturally shaped perspective.

(2014:50)

In line with Wierzbicka and Natural Semantic Metalanguage researchers, the premise to the present study is that English words cannot be used as culturally-neutral means of describing characteristics of other linguacultural worlds. If this is not done, there is a risk of imposing an Anglo perspective onto those worlds and giving a distorted idea of that characteristic. For example, if speakers of languages other than English were asked to comment on their own address practices in terms of “distance” or “politeness” they would have problems because they would have to use terms which are not indigenous to their language. “Politeness is an Anglo label and an Anglo idea with comparable, but not identical concepts in other linguacultures,

especially in Europe. Moreover, they could be negatively influenced by having to talk about their own linguistic practices in English, both because they could have substantially different perceptions of what “distance” and “politeness” are in their culture and, perhaps more importantly, because they simply do not think in these terms. As Wierzbicka pointed out,

what is at issue here, however, is not whether a person could entertain a concept without having a word for it, but whether it is justified to posit an indigenous concept – that is, a concept supposedly shared by the indigenous community – if this alleged concept is named in English but not in the indigenous language itself.

(2014:44)

The assumption shared by NSM researchers is that it is far better to use universal words of natural languages to explain complex concepts and meanings than using technical jargon or ethnocentric labels assuming that they represent the “human norm”. These points are fundamental for the purposes of a contrastive study like the present one, whose aim is to pinpoint the meaning of various address expressions and capture the cultural values underlying address practices in English and Italian providing definitions which are comparable, i.e. which permit to highlight the differences between the two linguacultures clearly. Comparability implies that the definition has to be first of all recognisable by native speakers of both languages as indigenous and by cultural outsiders as foreign, so that they can improve their cross-cultural awareness and learn how to use forms of address adequately when immersed in the foreign linguacultural world. In order to maximally enhance the clarity, intelligibility and comparability of the definitions, they have to be phrased in truly culturally-neutral terms. This is possible if the methodology of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage is adopted, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 2. Research methodology and data

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the methodology of semantic analysis and the data used for the present study are presented. The chapter begins with an introduction to the general characteristics of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage. In the next sections, the way this methodology has been used for the present analysis is explained. Also discussed in this chapter is the theory of cultural scripts, used to capture the cultural norms and values underlying address practices in English and Italian.

2.2 The Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach

2.2.1 NSM primes

The methodology of semantic analysis adopted in the present study is that of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (henceforth NSM), created by Anna Wierzbicka and developed in collaboration with Cliff Goddard and several other researchers (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994, 2002, 2014; Goddard (ed.) 2008, 2011a; Wierzbicka 1996, 2014; Peeters 2006). NSM is a reduced language based on a set of sixty-five *semantic primes*, basic and indefinable concepts which cannot be further decomposed into more simple concepts and are intended to represent the semantic core shared by all humans. As Wierzbicka writes:

The NSM approach to linguistic description is based on two fundamental assumptions: first, that every language has an irreducible core in terms of which the speakers can understand all complex thoughts and utterances and, second, that the irreducible cores of all natural languages match, so that we

can speak, in effect, of the irreducible core of all languages, reflecting in turn the irreducible core of human thought.

(2006:17)

Over decades of cross-linguistic investigation lexical exponents for the primes have been identified in all sampled languages, although with different realisations and morpho-syntactic properties. The lexical exponents of the primes represent the mini-lexicon of the Metalanguage, presented in its English and Italian version in Table 1:

Table 1. Italian NSM primes with English equivalents grouped into semantic categories.

IO, TU, QUALCUNO, QUALCOSA, GENTE, CORPO	substantives
I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING~THING, PEOPLE, BODY	
GENERE, PARTE	relational substantives
KINDS, PARTS	
QUESTO~CIÒ, LO STESSO, ALTRO	determiners
THIS, THE SAME, OTHER~ELSE	
UNO~UN/UNA, DUE, TANTO, POCO~UN PO', ALCUNI~DEI, TUTTO	quantifiers
ONE, TWO, SOME, ALL, MUCH~MANY, LITTLE~FEW	
BENE~BUONO, MALE~CATTIVO	evaluators
GOOD, BAD	
GRANDE, PICCOLO	descriptors
BIG, SMALL	
PENSARE, SAPERE, VOLERE, NON VOLERE, VEDERE, SENTIRE	mental predicates
THINK, KNOW, WANT, DON'T WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	
DIRE, PAROLE, VERO	speech
SAY, WORDS, TRUE	
FARE, ACCADERE, MUOVERSI	actions, events, movement
DO, HAPPEN, MOVE	
ESSERE (DA QUALCHE PARTE), C'È/CI SONO, ESSERE (QUALCUNO QUALCOSA)	location, existence, specification
BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)	
(È) MIO	possession
(IS) MINE	
VIVERE, MORIRE	life and death
LIVE, DIE	
QUANDO~TEMPO~VOLTA, ORA, PRIMA, DOPO, TANTO TEMPO, POCO TEMPO, PER QUALCHE TEMPO, MOMENTO	time
WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	
DOVE~LUOGO~DA QUALCHE PARTE, QUI, SOPRA, SOTTO, LONTANO, VICINO, SU UN LATO, DENTRO, TOCCARE	place
WHERE~PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE, TOUCH	
NON, FORSE, POTERE, PER~PERCHÉ, SE	logical concepts
NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	
MOLTO, (DI/IN) PIÙ	intensifier, augmentor
VERY, MORE	
COME~COSÌ	similarity
LIKE~AS	

The lexical exponents of the primes have two important properties: *polysemy* and *allolexy*. The exponent of a prime in a language can have other senses (e.g. SIDE), but only one of these represents the shared concept and in NSM the word is used only in that sense. The opposite case is when the same concept is lexicalised by two or more words in a language. For example, in English the concept ‘I’ is lexicalised by two words in complementary distribution, I and ME. Similar cases are LIKE/WAY in English (‘someone *like* me’/‘in this *way*’) and GENTE/PERSONE in Italian (e.g. ‘*tanta gente pensa così*’/‘*in questo luogo ci sono due persone*’, ‘many people think like this’/‘there are two people in this place’).

2.2.2 *Semantic molecules*

In addition to semantic primes, NSM has a small number of so-called “*semantic molecules*” (indicated with [m]), complex concepts which are decomposable into smaller meaningful units but used as such to explicate even more complex concepts. Molecules are distinguished according to their degree of specificity; a small number appears to be available in all sampled languages, whereas most molecules are found to be language-specific. The most common semantic molecules are presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Universal and language-specific semantic molecules

<i>Proposed universal or near-universal molecules</i>
BODY – hands, mouth, eyes, head, face, teeth
SOCIAL – children, men, women, mother, father, wife, husband, be born
PHYSICAL – long, round, flat, hard, sharp
ENVIRONMENTAL – sky, ground, fire, water, day, night
ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES – make, laugh, play, kill
<i>A selection of English-specific molecules (most of these are shared across European languages)</i>
SOCIAL – name, surname
ENVIRONMENTAL – rain, wind, sea, hot, cold, sound
TIMES – year, day month, week
ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES – eat, drink, sleep, write, read, lie

Semantic molecules have proven themselves essential to explicate the interactional meaning of address expressions; in particular, the molecules *man*, *woman*, *father*, *mother*, *wife*, *child*, *be born*, *write*, *read*, *country*, *day* and their Italian equivalents are used in the explications which I have produced. All of these appear to be available in the sampled languages. In addition to these, the word *kiss*, which is technically not a molecule, is used as a “pseudo-molecule” in the semantic explication of the closing salutation *Un bacio* discussed in Chapter 10.

2.2.3 NSM syntax

The mini-vocabulary of NSM also has its own syntax. Semantic primes can be combined to form certain canonical syntactic constructions which appear to be available in all sampled languages. Each semantic prime has specific valency options and combinatorial possibilities. For example, the available evidence suggests that the prime DO can be used in three canonical constructions: (i) ‘someone does something’, (ii) ‘someone does something good/bad to someone’ and (iii) ‘someone does something with something’. The prime KNOW, instead, has four valency options: (i) the simple constructions ‘I know it’/‘I don’t know it’, (ii) ‘someone knows something (about something)’, (iii) ‘this someone knows this’ and (iv) ‘someone wants to know something’.

In some canonical clauses, two allomorphs of the same prime may be used, for example SOMETHING and THINGS in the clauses ‘I feel something good towards you’ and ‘this someone can do many things of many kinds’ (Chapter 6). Specific canonical clauses of different primes can then be linked together through the so-called ‘logical concepts’ (MAYBE, BECAUSE, IF) and can be further expanded with determiners, adjectives and adverbs (BIG, SMALL, MANY, SOME, VERY) to form larger stretches of text which eventually become *semantic explications* (see below).

Some valency options and syntactic constructions may be allowed in a language but not in others, for example the constructions ‘*do something about something*’ and ‘*say how something happened*’. The same goes for relative clauses (e.g. ‘I know the people who did this’), comparatives (e.g. ‘better than’, ‘more than’) and reported speech phrases (e.g. ‘this someone said that...’) which are not available in many languages. Constructions which are not directly cross-translatable are not allowed in the NSM syntax. Consequently, the NSM syntax allows for a limited range of expressive possibilities: it permits the expression of negation (‘I don’t want this’/‘I don’t know (it)’), of change in time (‘a long time before it was like this, it is not like this anymore now’), of contrast (‘I want to say it not like I can say it to many people at many times’), of repetition (‘I feel something very very bad in my body’), but does not permit questions (‘What is this?’) and the use of conjunctions (‘you and I’/‘one or two things of one kind’). In general, NSM syntax favours parataxis to hypotaxis and subordination.

2.2.4 *Semantic explications*

The mini-lexicon and the mini-syntax of NSM are the only permitted tools to create *semantic explications*, NSM-based definitions. NSM explications can consist of one or more lines, single lines being referred to as *semantic components*. For the longest and most complex explications, a particular template is created. The same template is used for a series of comparable explications organised according to a certain schema. Most of the explications presented in this study are structured on a specific template which I will discuss in 2.3.3.

A semantic explication can be considered valid if it satisfies three important conditions: (i) substitutability, (ii) correct phrasing, (iii) cross-translatability. First, an explication works if it can be used to replace a word in all its contexts without provoking a change in meaning. Second, explications must be well-formulated, using only semantic primes, molecules and syntax which

are permitted in the metalanguage. Third, an explication works if it can be directly translated into as many languages as possible. To satisfy these criteria the formulation process generally takes a long time and explications often go through numerous versions. As Goddard explains:

Before generalizations and explanatory hypothesis can be formed, data from any given source has to be interpreted and data from various different sources has to be integrated into some common framework. As this proceeds, emergent generalisations and hypotheses begin to guide and to focus the investigative process.

(2012:1047)

Despite being very limited in vocabulary and grammar, NSM explications offer four main advantages over dictionary definitions and other methods of semantic analysis: (i) being phrased only in basic, simple terms they are intuitively clear; (ii) they exclude the risk of circularity;⁴ (iii) because the terms are available in all languages, the explications are directly cross-translatable and therefore free from any terminological ethnocentrism; (iv) the possibility of reading an explication in one's native language favours an insider's perspective, which is a great advantage both for native speakers, who can test the validity of the explication against their intuitions, and for culture outsiders, who can use it for cross-cultural training.

Moreover, the possibility of capturing the meaning of a word in single semantic components permits to identify and highlight the differences with the meaning of other words much more clearly and precisely than with ambiguous and unclear labels like "more direct" or "less formal". In this respect, NSM has already proved itself a suitable methodology for the comparison of the meanings of cultural keywords (Wierzbicka 1992, 1997, 2006, 2010a; Levisen 2012; Gladkova 2010; Wong 2014; Ye 2004), speech act verbs (Wierzbicka 1987; Maher 2002; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014), emotion terms (Wierzbicka 1999; Goddard and Ye (eds.) 2014; Farese 2016) and more recently musical terms (Tien 2015; Farese and Farese

⁴ In semantics, a definition is circular if it is phrased with words whose meaning ultimately refers back to the meaning of the word being defined.

2016). In the next section, I will discuss how NSM can be used to analyse and compare the interactional meaning of address expressions.

2.3 Using NSM to analyse the semantics of address

The present study differs from previous research on address because here “address” is understood very broadly, with a specific group of nouns used to address people (first names and “titles”), greetings, opening salutations and closing salutations in letters and e-mails being all regarded as “forms of address” on a par with address pronouns. The reason for this agglomeration is semantic, the hypothesis being that all these expressions share a common semantic core which can be clearly pinpointed through NSM.

2.3.1 The shared semantic core of the expressions analysed in this study

To be classified semantically as “form of address”, an expression needs to have some fundamental semantic components in its interactional meaning, a “semantic core” shared by all or nearly all address expressions. The first key component of the semantics of a “form of address” is ‘I want to say something to you now’, which is inherent, to begin with, in the interactional meaning of nouns used to address people. This component is particularly important to distinguish the meanings of those nouns which can be used both to say something *about* someone and *to* someone. The broad category of nouns presented in the previous chapter includes nouns which can only be used to say something to someone (e.g. *Sir*, **this Sir*) and nouns which can be used to say something both to and about someone, as in the following pairs:

(1) a. **Mr. Smith**, may I have a word with you?

b. **Mr. Smith** told me that the ceremony is at 6 p.m.

(2) a. *Signore*, *faccia attenzione!*

Please pay attention, *signore*!

b. *Il signore è un membro importante della nostra organizzazione.*

The signore is an important member of our organisation.

In (1a) and (2a) *Mr. Smith* and *Signore* are used to say something *to* someone, whereas in (1b) and (2b) they are used to say something *about* someone. In this study I argue that the meaning expressed by *Mr. Smith* and *Signore* as used in (1a) and (2a) is different from the meaning of these nouns as used in (1b) and (2b), because in (1a) and (2a) the nouns indicate ‘YOU’ (‘I say something to you’), whereas in (1b) and (2b) they indicate ‘SOMEONE’, who is neither ‘I’ nor ‘you’ but ‘someone else’ about whom the speaker is talking (‘I say something about someone’). This difference suggests that within the broad category of nouns used to address people there is a sub-class of nouns which are polysemous, because they express at least two distinguished meanings: one meaning as a “form of address” and another meaning as a “form of reference”. The hypothesis of polysemy of nouns like *Mr. Smith* and *Signore* might strike the reader as weird, however the semantic distinction between saying something about someone and saying something to someone is consistent with Apresjan’s (1973:16) notion of ‘regular polysemy’:

Polysemy of the word A with the meanings a_i and a_j is called regular if, in a given language, there exists at least one other word B with the meanings b_i and b_j , which are semantically distinguished from each other in the same way as a_i and a_j and if a_i and b_i , a_j and b_j are not synonymous.

The question is how to distinguish clearly the meanings ‘say to’ and ‘say about’ of polysemous nouns. In his classification of nouns used to address people, Dunkling (1990) used the term “vocatives”. Indeed, in languages with a vocative case (e.g. Polish, Latin), it is this

case that distinguishes the address from the reference meaning of a noun. In languages without case (e.g. English, Italian), it is the syntactic construction that distinguishes the two meanings. In the case of polysemous nouns like *Mr.* and *Signore*, it is the possibility of using these nouns by themselves in a short utterance separated by a comma (as in 1a and 2a) which distinguishes the meaning ‘I want to say something to you now’ from ‘I want to say something about someone’. In such short utterances, *Mr.* and *Signore* unequivocally perform the function of saying something *to* someone.

Within the large number of nouns used to address people with a component ‘I want to say something to you now’ in their meaning, many nouns also include a component ‘I want to say something good to you now’. This component has to do with the reason why nouns like *Professor*, *Doctor* and *Signore* used as forms of address are often described as “polite titles” or “polite terms of address” (Braun 1988). As I will discuss, the only case in the category of nouns used to address people in which a component ‘I want to say something good to you now’ is not part of the interactional meaning expressed is first-name address. The presence of nouns used to say not just something, but “something good” to someone may not be universal, but is undoubtedly a characteristic of many languages. Such nouns perform important social functions, such as expressing something like “respect” for the interlocutor and signalling that one is not hostile to the interlocutor and wants to have a pleasant and smooth interaction with this person.

To say “something good” to someone is the function of greetings and salutations, too, as mentioned in dictionary definitions, but in less clear terms:

- Definition of *salutation* in LODTEL (Longman Dictionary of the English Language):
An expression of greeting, goodwill, or courtesy by word or gesture.
- Definition of *greeting* in LODTEL (Longman Dictionary of the English Language):

*A greeting is something you say or do that expresses your **friendliness** or **pleasure** when you meet someone.*

In the following example, the speaker overtly laments the fact that the person in question “did not even say *Ciao*” after three months:

(3) *Non ha aggiunto altro dopo tre mesi, **nemmeno uno “ciao, come stai, ho voglia di vederti?”***

Didn’t he/she add anything after three months, **not even a “Ciao, how are you (TU), I want to see you?”**

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

From the semantic point of view, it is the absence of *Ciao* lamented by the speaker which is significant; considering that non-expression of a greeting is itself another address variant, it is necessary to capture the semantic differences between cases in which a greeting is used and cases in which it is not used. As I see it, the absence of *Ciao* is seen negatively by the addressee because it represents the non-expression of that “something good” which is usually expected from a friend whom one has not seen for a long time. The absence of *Ciao* could be interpreted by the addressee as a sign of hostility (‘I feel something bad towards you’) or as the indication that there is something wrong in the relationship with the speaker, who for some reason does not want to say “something good” to the addressee (‘I don’t want to say something good to you now’).

A similar difference can be noticed in the following pair in which the opening salutation *Dear* is used and not used:

- (4) a. **Dear Alice,**
 Thanks a lot. And thanks for the pleasant dinner last Monday...
 Best wishes
 John
- b. **Alice,**
 A pleasure.
 Matt

If *Dear* were semantically empty, the sender would be conveying the same message to the recipient in both cases. This is not the case because, as I will discuss in Chapter 7, semantically (\emptyset) *Alice* is not *Alice* without *Dear*, but a separate address variant with its own interactional meaning. As with the non-expression of *Ciao*, the non-expression of *Dear* in a letter or e-mail could convey the message ‘I feel something bad towards you’ or ‘I don’t want to say something good to you now’. In this last case, the message ‘I don’t want to say something good to you now’ could signal the intention not to follow the conventions of letter and e-mail writing which make people say “something good” to the recipient before saying other things. This could mean, for example, that for the sender the relationship with the recipient is such that it does not require the expression of “something good” of the kind that many people say when writing a letter, possibly because the two have known one another for a long time and are in frequent or very frequent contact.

For the same reasons, closing salutations, too, can be regarded as ways of saying “something good” to the interlocutor at the end of an interaction. In the previous chapter I have mentioned the study by Knapp et al. (1973), who suggested that an important function of leave-taking is to “signal supportiveness”, i.e. to signal that one is willing to engage in future interactions with the addressee, and in this way one can reinforce the relationship with this person. The authors suggested that “since leave-taking signals the end of things, we are often concerned with terminating our intentions on the ‘right-note’, that is, on a note of mutual regard” (26). As I see it, the “right note” and the “mutual regard” about which the authors talk can be captured precisely with the idea ‘I want to say something good to you now’. The difference with opening salutations is the moment during the interaction in which this “something good” is said (the beginning vs the end).

In addition to ‘I want to say something to you now’ and ‘I want to say something good to you now’, there is a third semantic component shared by the expressions analysed in this study.

This component captures the speaker's professed way of thinking about the addressee at the time of the interaction, and in the explications which I present it either appears as 'when I say this, I think about you like this: ...' or 'when I say this, I don't think about you like this: ...'. In a few cases, both kinds of formulation are used in an explication.

2.3.2 *Expressions excluded from the present analysis*

Having discussed the shared semantic core of the expressions analysed in this study, I will spend a few words explaining why other expressions whose interactional meaning shares some or all the three semantic components discussed are not analysed. Essentially, it is the combination of the three semantic components identified which has served as the criterion for the selection of the expressions analysed in this study. First of all, the leave-taking phrases *Goodbye*, *Bye*, *See you*, *Arrivederci* and *Addio* are not analysed for reasons of space. In Chapter 4, however, much will be said about the leave-taking function of the Italian *Ciao* and its variants *vabbè ciao* and *ciao ciao*. Kinship nouns used as forms of address (e.g. *Mum*, *Dad*, *grandma*) are also not analysed for lack of space, however their semantic properties will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Numerous other nouns and expressions are not analysed for semantic reasons. For example, it could be asked why the expressions *Excuse me*, *Mi scusi* and *Sorry*, which are also used to say something to someone and are typically described as "polite" expressions, are not analysed here. The reason is that the only semantic component which the meaning of these expressions shares with the meaning of *Hi* or *Signore* is 'I want to say something to you now'. The "politeness" of *Excuse me* and *Sorry* is not an essential element of their meaning, i.e. the component 'I want to say something good to you now' is not part of the semantic invariant. *Excuse me* and *Sorry* convey a specific message to the interlocutor paraphrasable as 'I want to

say something to you now’ and “I say: ‘I feel something bad at this moment’”. These two components are sufficient to explicate their meaning and any additional semantic component is redundant (in line with Occam’s razor principle) and related to the sphere of pragmatics rather than to that of semantics.

By contrast, *Hi* and *Ciao* do not convey any specific message to the interlocutor; if the component ‘I want to say something good to you now’ is not posited for their meaning, there would be no other component capturing the interactional nature of these expressions. In the case of *Hi* and *Ciao*, the component ‘I want to say something good to you now’ is essential, because there is nothing else that the speaker says to the addressee (in the sense of a message captured in an ‘I say: ...’ component, whereas there is, in both cases, a professed way of thinking about the addressee expressed by the speaker). Similarly, expressions like *Go to hell!* or *You idiot!* are not analysed because their interactional meaning includes the components ‘I want to say something to you now’ and ‘when I say this to you, I think about you like this: ...’, but not the component ‘I want to say something good to you now’.

Among the nouns used to address people excluded from the analysis, there is the group of so-called “terms of endearment” (Braun 1988), for example *honey*, *darling* and *tesoro* or *caro/a* (‘honey’; roughly, ‘dear’) in Italian. Of the three semantic components shared by the expressions analysed, these nouns only share ‘I want to say something to you now’, in addition to a component ‘when I say this, I feel something good towards you’ (Chapter 5).

2.3.3 *The structure of the proposed explications*

The key semantic primes used in the explications proposed in this study are: I, YOU, THINK, FEEL, SAY and GOOD. An important feature of the explications is that they are all phrased in first person; this is done to make a portrait of the cognitive scenario associated with a given

expression which is as similar as possible to the speaker's professed way of thinking about the addressee. The first person perspective has largely been absent in other approaches, and NSM provides all the necessary tools to express it.

The explications for "titles" and those for opening and closing salutations are structured on a specific template, which consists of a number of specific sections including one or more semantic components. The first section WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU captures what the speaker wants to say to the addressee at the beginning or at the end of an interaction. Another section WHY I WANT TO SAY IT captures the prototypical scenario in which this "something good" is said to someone. The way one chooses to say this "something good" is also a distinctive element and is captured in a section HOW I WANT TO SAY IT. The expressed attitude is captured in two different sections, HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS or HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS, depending on the expression. In some cases, the interactional meaning of an expression can include both a section 'how I think about you when I say this' and a section 'how I don't think about you when I say this'. Finally, the feelings expressed are captured in the section WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY THIS, which is not part of all explications and therefore is an important element of distinction.

2.4 The theory of cultural scripts

In cultural semantics the analysis of speech practices goes hand in hand with the analysis of the cultural norms and values which underpin those practices. Thus, in addition to the analysis of the interactional meaning of various forms of address, the other aim of the present study is to capture the key cultural assumptions which underlie address practices in Australia and Italy and explain them to culture outsiders in a way which can be useful for cross-cultural training.

To do this, in Chapters 11 and 12 I propose a number of *cultural scripts* for both Australian and Italian address practices.

Cultural scripts (Goddard and Wierzbicka (eds.) 2004, Goddard (ed.) 2006, Wierzbicka 2003, 2010b, 2010c, 2012; Wong 2014) are semantic representations of the culture-specific norms, values, ways of thinking and practices of a speech community. Being phrased in NSM primes, the scripts are phrased “in terms which are clear, precise, and accessible to both cultural insiders and outsiders” (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004:153). Cultural scripts are based on the assumption that “different ways of speaking of different societies are linked with and make sense in terms of different local values” (ibidem) and that “people speak differently because they think differently, feel differently and relate differently to other people” (Goddard 2006:3).

Cultural scripts have a specific structure. Those which I present in this study have an introductory component which is either ‘in country X, many people think like this’ or ‘in some parts of country X, many people think like this’. This introductory component presents the value or speech practice captured in the script as widely shared in a particular society, or at least as a belief which is recognised as salient in a given linguaculture. The components which follow capture the shared way of thinking and their phrasing is typically that of moral evaluation (‘it is good/bad if someone does/says this’) or of (im)possibility of doing something (‘when it is like this, people can/can’t do this’). Cultural scripts also have different levels of generality: high-level or “master” scripts capture the main value or way of thinking of a society, whereas low-level scripts capture the interactional consequences of that value.

Cultural scripts are not intended as prescriptions of linguistic behaviour, but as attempts at interpreting and articulating tacit rules of linguistic performance. The assumption is that “even those who do not personally identify with the content of a script are familiar with it, i.e. that it forms part of the interpretive backdrop to discourse and social behaviour in a particular cultural context” (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004:157). As Wierzbicka suggests, it is culture outsiders

who are typically more aware of the existence of shared norms and who would benefit most from being able to learn how to behave appropriately in a different cultural world:

The failure to formulate any such “rules” clearly and precisely often leads to a great deal of miscommunication. In particular, it handicaps the immigrants to English-speaking countries who learn that the prevailing local norms and expectations are in order to build successful lives for themselves within the host society.

(Wierzbicka 2012:121)

For culture insiders, a script may seem obvious and universally valid, but in fact cultural scripts vary considerably across cultures and differences can have serious effects on cross-cultural interactions. In Chapters 11 to 13 I will show in detail that address practices, too, are guided by specific cultural scripts which differ across linguacultures and can cause problems in intercultural interactions. An advanced cross-cultural awareness (cf. Byram 1997; Baker 2012) is fundamental in this respect; knowing which attitudes and meanings speakers are encouraged to express when addressing someone in a linguacultural world can help understand the address practices of those speakers and prevent cases of miscommunication.

Cultural scripts are particularly helpful for cross-cultural training for three main reasons: (i) they do not just describe speech practices but also explain the reasons why people speak in a particular way, which can help understand the practice itself; (ii) being phrased in NSM terms they can be phrased and taught in the learner’s language, which favours an insider’s perspective; (iii) learners become more aware of their own cultural scripts, understanding the differences and appreciating the similarities with their own cultural world.

2.5 Data used in the present study

The data used for this study is collected from a variety of sources including:

- 1) Corpora of English and Italian

The corpus examples in English are collected from the Collins Wordbanks, COCA, BNC and the ICE-AUS corpora. For Italian, the corpus used is the CORIS/CODIS, which contains 130 million words and is updated every three years. For both languages, I have not collected examples which are older than twenty years. Although I do acknowledge that demographic factors can play an important role in shaping the differences in the way people speak, these are not identifiable in corpus examples.

2) Literary sources in extended context

Novels and plays have proved themselves invaluable sources of data. In the dialogues of a play or a novel, there are always many forms of address used, and although I acknowledge that some scholars regards these as non-authentic data, there is a lot of specific demographic information about the interactants (age, job, social position) and their relationship in novels and plays which is simply not available in corpora. To be able to know how well the interactants know each other and which expressions are part of their address repertoire is tremendously important for the analysis of the invariant meaning.

3) E-mails from university students to lecturers and personal e-mails

I have collected around 200 e-mails from undergraduate students of linguistics at the Australian National University and 25 e-mails from undergraduate students at the University of Naples L'Orientale. In addition, I have also collected numerous personal e-mails written by both English and Italian speakers. Unfortunately, I did not have any e-mails written by British or American students to compare with my Australian English data. The e-mails have proved themselves essential to analyse the use of greetings, opening salutations and closing salutations in both languages and to pinpoint the differences between the two languages.

- 4) Collections of letters. For the analysis of opening and closing salutations on letters and e-mails, I have also drawn on the letters includes in the collection *Here and Now* (2013) by Paul Auster and J.M. Coetzee for English, and on the letters written by Aldo Moro during his days of captivity for Italian.
- 5) Questionnaires. I have also compiled two questionnaires on closing salutations, one for English and one for Italian to obtain negative material which would show in what contexts a given salutation is not used.

All the material taken from these sources has been grouped in a large body of data which I have used for my analysis. Some materials were specifically used for some Chapters (e.g. letters for the analysis of opening and closing salutations), however in most cases the examples adduced in a given Chapter are taken from different sources, most commonly corpus and literature.

Chapter 3. The interactional meaning of *Hi*

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the interactional meaning of the English greeting *Hi* is analysed. The assumption mentioned in the previous chapters that greetings do not express any propositional meaning appears to be shared by lexicographers as well as by linguists. Looking up *Hi* in an English dictionary, the reader can get some comments on how this word is used, but there is virtually no attempt at pinpointing its meaning:

- *Hi* in the Cambridge online English dictionary:
used as an *informal* greeting, usually to people who you know
- *Hi* in the Collins online English dictionary:
In informal situations, you say 'hi' to greetsomeone.

Rather than relying on unclear terms like “informal”, in this chapter I will try to pinpoint the meaning of *Hi* in simple and clear words, starting from how *Hi* is used.

3.2 How *Hi* is used

The first thing to say about *Hi* is that it is used both in spoken and in written/digital language only at the beginning of an interaction. In my body of data, *Hi* is used in exchanges between people who have different kinds of relationship. In examples (1) and (2), *Hi* is combined with first names and is used to address someone whom the speaker knows more or less well:

- (1) ‘**Hi, Geoff.** Sorry to hear about you and Cath. How’re you doing?’

(Julian Barnes, *Pulse*, 2011:93)

(2) **Hi David**, good to see you mate.

(Australian National Corpus, S1B-044(A):227)

In example (3), *Hi* is used in combination with *honey* to address someone whom the speaker knows very well:

(3) The flat was dark when Tara pushed open the front door. '**Hi honey**, I'm home,' she said bitterly.

(Wordbanks brbooks)

There are also examples of *Hi* in combination with the nouns *Mrs.* and *Professor* to address someone whom the speaker does not know well:

(4) **Hi, Mrs Andersen**. I just wanted to introduce my deputy, Police Chief Reid Bennett.

(Wordbanks, usbooks)

(5) **Hi Professor**,

I'm working on the second assignment at the moment and I would like to know if you could please suggest any sources I could look at in terms of respectable references.

John Smith

(e-mail sent by an Australian-born student to a lecturer)

The combination *Hi Professor* occurring in (5),⁵ an example from Australian English, is particularly interesting from a semantic point of view, for reasons to be discussed in 3.3.4. Whether or not lecturers at Australian universities are happy to be addressed in this way by students is an open question, however it is noticeable that such a combination is attested in this variety of English. In general, the examples are consistent with Duranti's (1986) suggestion that the combinability options of *Hi* in e-mails are basically the same as those of *Hi* in oral interactions.

Apart from being used in combination with nouns, *Hi* is also used on its own, both to address someone whom the speaker knows well (example 8), and someone whom the speaker does not

⁵ Two more examples of this combination are presented in Appendix A, examples (6) and (7).

know at all, as in (9a-d), where *Hi* is said to someone whom the speaker has met for the first time and to a perfect stranger in service encounters:

- (8) PENNY: **Hi**, just came by to see if you could use one of these.

(David Williamson, *Money and Friends*, 1997:36)

- (9) a. “Hi, Cass. Hi, Dominic.” She kissed Cassie and Dominic and, honing in on Jason, repeated, “**Hi, I'm Cecily**”.

(Wordbanks, brbooks)

- b. (male server, female customer)

S: **Hi**!

C: how are you doin'?

S: good, yourself?

C: Alright. I would like a half a pound of the lemon pepper chicken breast.

(example taken from Félix-Brasdefer 2015:90)

- c. C: **Hi**, can I have a pound of your, ah Cajun turkey, please?

S: how would you like that sliced?

(example taken from Félix-Brasdefer 2015:90)

- d. S: **Hi**, how are you sir?

C: Not bad, can I get a pound of the bone-in ham?

(example taken from Félix-Brasdefer 2015:124)

The examples suggest that the relationship between the interactants is not a determinant factor for the use of *Hi*. However, the fact that *Hi* does not occur in combination with certain nouns (e.g. *Hi, Excellency, *Hi, Your Honour, *Hi, Your Majesty, *Hi, Mother (to a nun), *Hi, driver) suggests that there are certain addressees for whom the meaning of *Hi* is not felt to be suitable. It seems plausible to hypothesise that there is a specific semantic component in the meaning of *Hi* which clashes with the meaning of nouns like *Excellency* and *Your Honour*. I will discuss this and other components in the next section.

3.3 The interactional meaning of *Hi*

The first component which I posit captures the idea that *Hi* is “something good” which is said to the addressee at the beginning of an interaction. I have already explained the component ‘I want to say something good to you now’ in the previous chapter, therefore I will not discuss it again here. This component is important for the meaning of *Hi*, but is not a distinctive one. The point is that speakers can choose among various “good things” to say to the addressee at the beginning of an interaction (e.g. *Hello*, *Good morning*), therefore it is necessary to identify the other components of the interactional meaning of *Hi* which justify its use over other greetings.

Hi is used under specific situational circumstances, and my hypothesis is that the prototypical scenario in which it is used is part of the cognitive scenario inherent in its interactional meaning. This idea that *Hi* is ritualised in certain situational circumstances can be captured with a component ‘I want to say it because I want to do something like people often do when it is like this: ...’. The prime LIKE in this component captures the idea of ritualised linguistic behaviour, whereas the phrasing ‘like this’ introduces the components which capture the prototypical scenario of *Hi*.

I have identified three prototypical situations for *Hi*. The first is that the speaker can see the interlocutor somewhere, at least for a short time. Visual contact between the interactants is important for oral interactions, because it signals engagement with the interlocutor, but is not essential for e-mail exchanges. However, I suggest that to be able to see the interlocutor is an important conceptual reference point for *Hi* in e-mails, too. The posited component which introduces the prototypical scenario of *Hi* does not state that there must be visual contact between the interactants; it states that *Hi* is used when one wants to speak to someone *like* one could speak under particular situational circumstances which include visual contact. The second is that the speaker can say something to the interlocutor; in some cases, it may be

possible to see someone somewhere for a short time but not to have the chance of saying something to this person, for example when this person is already engaged in conversation with someone else or when the circumstances simply do not allow one to say something to this person during this time (e.g. in church during a mass or at a conference). The third is that *Hi*, differently from the Italian *Ciao*, can be said only at the beginning of an exchange. However, differently from *Ciao*, *Hi* can be repeated a number of times to the same interlocutor on the same day, as example (10) illustrates:

- (10) But I don't think...oh, **hi again...**' Jack Morland reappeared, wiping his hands in a piece of paint-soaked rag which Posy thought probably made the hand washing superfluous.

(Wordbanks, brbooks)

These three situational circumstances can be captured with three semantic components: 'people can see someone somewhere for some time', 'they can say something to this someone during this time' and 'they couldn't say something to this someone before'.

Another factor which determines the choice of *Hi* over *Hello* or *Good morning* is its length, and more precisely the time frame in which it is uttered. Compared to *Hello*, *Hi* is shorter and compared to *Good morning* it is much shorter, which means that *Hi* is can be perceived as something which can be uttered in a very short time. To capture this idea, I will posit a semantic component 'I want to say it in a very short time'. This component explains why *Hi* is sometimes chosen when a speaker is in haste and cannot say many things to the addressee, as in (11):

- (11) Oh before I go <M01/> Yeah. <F02/>erm **can I just say hi to my husband.**
He should be on the road.

(Wordbanks, brspok)

The presence of *just* in this example is consistent with the hypothesis that the woman wants to say "something good" to her husband, but does not have time to say more. Although in the same situation she could also have said "can I just say *hello*", the meaning expressed would be

different for two reasons: (i) *Hello* is longer than *Hi* (it has two syllables and more phonological segments than *Hi*) and therefore cannot be said in a *very* short time; (ii) *Hello* can be repeated a number of times in the same exchange (e.g. *Hello! Hello!*), whereas *Hi* cannot be repeated or reduplicated like *bye bye* or the Italian *ciao ciao* (next chapter). Repetition and reduplication require a certain amount of time, which has to be neither too long nor too short, and *Hi* appears to be too short to be repeated or reduplicated. The impossibility of being repeated, too, supports the hypothesis that the interactional meaning of *Hi* includes a semantic component ‘I want to say it in a very short time’.

The last component to be posited for the interactional meaning of *Hi* captures the speaker’s professed way of thinking about the addressee. In the dictionary definitions of *Hi* presented in 3.1, it is stated that *Hi* is usually said to people whom the speaker knows. Taking this into account, it could be hypothesised that the attitude expressed by *Hi* is “when I say this to you, I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. However, such a component would be inconsistent with cases in which *Hi* is said to people whom the speaker does not know well or not at all. To produce an explication for the invariant meaning of *Hi*, it is necessary to posit a semantic component which is consistent with all the contexts of use, and a component stating how well the speaker professes to know the addressee does not seem plausible for the semantic invariant.

Rather than the relationship between the interactants, the combinability options of *Hi* give good clues to what the expressed attitude is. The impossibility of combining with nouns like *Excellency*, *Your Honour* and *Vice-Chancellor* suggests that the attitude expressed by *Hi* is “when I say this to you, I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, the interactional meaning of nouns like *Vice-Chancellor* (e.g. *Doctor*, *Boss*) used to address people includes a semantic component “when I say this to you, I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone above me’”. The perceived inappropriateness of

Hi in combination with these nouns can be explained hypothesising a semantic clash between two opposite attitudes, “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’” on the one hand, and “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone above me’” on the other. It is true that in my body of data the combination *Hi Professor* is attested, and *Professor*, too, expresses the attitude “when I say this, I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone above me’”, being used in exchanges between people who have a construed relationship of inequality in a workplace (students-lecturers, more in Chapter 5). However, the combination *Hi Professor* does not undermine the proposed hypothesis for *Hi*; it merely suggests that the students who use this combination use *Professor* in a different meaning which does not include the way of thinking ‘this someone is someone above me’, and therefore does not create a clash between expressed attitudes. This difference in meaning could be due to a number of factors, including age, cultural change and, obviously, idiosyncratic variation. Moreover, the proposed component for *Hi* does not state that this is how the speaker *always* thinks about the addressee, but that this is the professed way of thinking linked to the time of the interaction, as specified by ‘when I say it’.

The semantic components posited so far are integrated in the following explication:

Hi (John, Mr. Forman, %Professor, *Vice-Chancellor)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now

[B] WHY I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it because I want to do something

like people often do when it is like this:

they can see someone somewhere for a short time

they can say something to this someone during this time

they couldn't say something to this someone for some time before

[C] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it in a very short time

[D] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say it, I think about you like this: “this someone is someone like me”

The reader might ask why these components and not others have been posited. In line with what various scholars have asserted (e.g. Searle 1959), it could be suggested that *Hi* means something like “I am acknowledging your presence”. However, it would be necessary to specify what is meant by ‘*acknowledging* someone’. In NSM terms, this message could be paraphrased as ‘I know that you are here’ or ‘I can see you’, but this would not account for all the situations in which *Hi* is used and not used. Clearly, there are no such messages conveyed in *Hi* used at the beginning of an e-mail or in other asynchronous communicative events like the message of an answering machine. In these cases, the speaker cannot see the interlocutor and neither can say ‘I know that you are here’.

Likewise, it could be suggested that it needs to be specified in the explication that *Hi* includes an expectation of reply. It is certainly true that there is a usage tendency whereby people reply with the same word or phrase which they have received. However, I share Duranti’s view that it is not always completely possible to predict what the interlocutor will say (1997:70). Moreover, utterances like *Hello everyone* said to a class do not expect any verbal reply. Relatedly, I have come across recorded messages starting with “*Hi, this is Sarah speaking. I’m unable to answer your call right now...*”, but not recorded messages starting with “*How are you?*”, which is usually followed by a reply. In this respect, there seems to be a semantic difference between *Hi* and *How are you?*

It could also be asked for which variety of English the above explication is valid. The mainstream varieties reflected in the data analysed in my study are British, American and Australian, and evidence from all of these suggests that, in spite of differences in use, the meaning of *Hi* is the same in all three varieties. Some linguists would probably consider this a theoretical misconception, given the great diversity which characterises different Englishes. In fact, however, I am not denying that varieties are heterogeneous or that *Hi* is used differently

by different speakers. My analysis, though, is not aimed at studying how *Hi* is used in different varieties, but at pinpointing its invariant meaning across varieties of English, and so far I have found no evidence of a difference in the interactional meaning of *Hi* across varieties. Moreover, it is an important principle in semantics not to posit polysemy if evidence permits the analyst to propose a single definition which could predict and be consistent with all contexts of use:

One assumes to begin with there is but a single meaning, and attempts to state it in a clear and predictive fashion, in the form of a translatable reductive paraphrase. Only if persistent efforts to do this fail is polysemy posited.
(Goddard 2008:132)

It could be suggested that *Hi* also expresses something like ‘when I say this, I feel something good’. This is because in many cases *Hi* is said “cheering” and “smiling”, as in the following examples:

- (12) **“Hi,”** I said **cheerily**. ‘How was your afternoon?’
(Wordbanks, brbooks)
- (13) She turned to greet him **with a dazzling smile**. **“Hi!** Isn't this great?”
(Wordbanks, brbooks)

However, there are also cases in which *Hi* is said while being “startled”, “nervous” and even when apologising for something (examples 14, 15 and 16 in Appendix A), as well as examples of *Hi* said without any expression of feelings at all on the part of the speaker:

- (17) He unzipped his black jacket and flung it on a chair. **'Hi, Ma,'** he **said mechanically** and then realized that his grandmother was also present.
(COCA, fiction)
- (18) She took the phone and said, **Hi, Mom**. She didn't cry or anything. **She almost didn't show any feelings at all**, just went on saying like yeah and no and so on while I guess her mom told her various stuff.
(COCA, fiction)

Significantly, in all these examples *Hi* is always accompanied by an adverb which specifies how it is said. This suggests that too much depends on the tone in which *Hi* is said to posit a

component ‘when I say this, I feel something good towards you’ for the invariant meaning. In addition to that, differently from the Italian *ciao bello/a!*, which always expresses the speaker’s good feelings towards the addressee, in English a combination *hi, beautiful!* is not attested.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the interactional meaning of the English greeting *Hi* and I have presented a semantic explications. I have posited a number of semantic components starting from how *Hi* is used both in oral interactions and in e-mails. An important element emerged from the analysis is that the interactional meaning of *Hi* remains stable across combinations with different forms of address; that is, the interactional meaning does not change depending on the accompanying form of address, whether it be *John* or *Mr. Smith*, and the semantic contribution of *Hi* to the meaning of the combination is the same in all cases. Having analysed the interactional meaning of *Hi*, in the next chapter I will analyse the meaning of the Italian *Ciao* and will show that greetings in different languages can differ considerably in both use and in meaning.

Chapter 4. The interactional meaning of *Ciao* and its variants

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the interactional meaning of the Italian greeting *Ciao* is analysed. In Italian, *Ciao* performs at the same time the function of greeting and leave-taking phrase, and this double function makes it by far the most frequently used salutation.⁶ In spite of its high frequency, however, *Ciao* is not a jolly salutation to be used in any context, but can be used only under certain situational circumstances which will be discussed in this chapter. In *The Italians* (2015), the English writer John Hooper warns speakers of English against overusing *Ciao* to avoid sounding too “familiar”:

One of the most common mistakes made by foreigners who arrive in Italy, convinced that they are among carefree, genial Latins, is to go around saying ‘Ciao’ to everyone. *But Ciao is the equivalent of ‘Hi’ in English*, and while in America you might be able to say ‘Hi’ to someone you do not know well, in Italy you do not. *Ciao* broadly corresponds to the familiar *tu*. [...] Use *Ciao* too freely and you will sooner or later be brought up sharp with a *Salve* or even an icy *Buongiorno* or *Buonasera*. Used in this way, they are linguistic equivalents of cold water. They say: ‘You are over-stepping the mark, I am not your friend. So don’t treat me as if I were.’

(*The Italians*, 2015:188, emphasis added)

Although Hooper is right in identifying the relationship with the interlocutor as a key factor for the use of *Ciao*, I object to the claim that *Ciao* is semantically equivalent to the English *Hi*, and in fact, I will show that by associating *Ciao* with *Hi* speakers of English cannot learn how to use it correctly. As I will show, the meanings of *Hi* and *Ciao* share some semantic components, but there are some additional components in the meaning of *Ciao* which are not

⁶ In the CORIS-CODIS corpus, *Ciao* occurs more frequently than any other salutation: *Ciao* 660 tokens (both as “greeting” and as “leave-taking phrase”), *Salve* (roughly, ‘Hello’) 285 tokens, *Buongiorno* (‘Good morning’) 201 tokens, *Arrivederci* (‘See you’) 253 tokens.

part of the meaning of *Hi*. In order to have a clear picture of the interactional meaning of *Ciao*, it is necessary first of all to look at how it is used.

4.2 How *Ciao* is used

Examples (1) to (5) illustrate *Ciao* in its double function of interaction-opener and interaction-closer in oral interactions and e-mails:

- (1) *"Oh, **ciao, mamma**", la salutò Laura. "Credevo che **fossi fuori**."*
"Oh, **ciao, mum**", Laura greeted her. "I thought **you (TU)** were out."
(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)
- (2) *Alla fine Amedeo telefonò: "**Ciao Marisa**, sono Amedeo." "Oh. **ciao Amedeo...come stai?**"*
In the end Amedeo phoned: "**Ciao Marisa**, this is Amedeo" "Oh, **ciao Amedeo...how are you (TU)?**"
(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)
- (3) *«Vengo alle otto e mezza? «Alle otto e mezza è perfetto. Allora a dopo, grazie». «**A dopo, ciao**». La conversazione era finita ma io rimasi con il telefono in mano, a guardarlo.*

"Shall I come at 8:30?" "8:30 is perfect. See you later, than, thanks." "See you later, **ciao.**" **The conversation was over**, but I remained with the phone in my hand, staring at it.
(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)
- (4) *Si alza, la guarda in faccia, e con voce decisa fa: - Allora **ciao eh, ci vediamo dopo**.*
He/She stands up, looks at her face, and with a resolute tone says: "**Ciao, then, see you (TU) later**".
(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)
- (5) ***Ciao!***
*Io sto per uscire ora, approfitto per visitare la biblioteca e la zona lì attorno che **tu** hai già visto, così non **ti** costringo a rivedere le stesse cose. [...]*
Ciao!

Ciao!
I'm about to go out now, I'll take advantage of this free time to visit the library and the area around there which **you (TU)** have already visited, so I won't force **you (TU)** to see the same things again. [...]
Ciao!
(personal e-mail)

Two elements emerge from the examples: (i) in no case *Ciao* is combined with the LEI pronominal address form, but always with TU, which suggests that LEI is semantically incompatible with *Ciao*; (ii) in all the examples *Ciao* is said to people whom the speaker knows well, in combination with a kinship term in (1), with first names in (2) and on its own in (3), (4) and (5). These elements suggest that *Ciao* is only used in exchanges between people who know each other well, but this is not the case. As Hooper writes, *Ciao* is normally not said to perfect strangers, but can be used in combination with TU by two young people who meet for the first time, as in (6):

(6) *Improvvisamente si avvicinò la dolce ragazza del mio primo amore. [...] Mi trovai in uno stato d'animo ove prendere l'iniziativa, dire: "ciao ti posso conoscere? Sei carina!"*

Suddenly, the sweet girl who once was **my first love** approached. [...] I found myself in such a state of mind to take the initiative and say: “**Ciao**, can I make **your (TU)** acquaintance? **You (TU)**’re cute!”

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

Ciao in combination with TU can also be used by young shop assistants to address young customers. Although I have not found any corpus or literary example of *Ciao, ti serve una mano?* (‘*Ciao*, can I help you?’ in the TU form), it is not uncommon to hear this utterance in Italian shops. All the speakers whom I consulted commented that they have never heard a young shop assistant address an adult customer with *Ciao* plus TU. In both the cases just mentioned, it is the perceived age similarity between the interactants that encourages to use *Ciao* and not other greetings; similar age is likely to reflect similar life experiences and also similar social position, and this encourages the expression of the attitude “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’” in discourse. As I will discuss in the next section, this attitude is expressed not only by the TU pronominal address form, but is also inherent in the interactional meaning of *Ciao*.

Apart from first names and kinship terms, there are only a few other nominal terms of address with which *Ciao* can combine, those which are compatible with TU: terms like *caro/a* and *tesoro* (roughly, ‘dear’/‘honey’, example (7) in Appendix A), the term *compagno/a* (roughly, ‘fellow’) used by members of the communist party to address each other (examples 8a and 8b in Appendix A), and the address noun *Maestra* used by primary school kids to address their female teacher (example 9 in Appendix A, also discussed in Chapter 6). Combinations with forms of address which are incompatible with TU are impossible, for example **ciao Signore/a*,⁷ **ciao Professore/Professoressa*, **ciao Dottore/Dottoressa*, **ciao Padre* (‘Father’ said to a priest) and **ciao cameriere/a* (‘waiter’/‘waitress’). These impossible combinations are fundamental when teaching the pragmatics of Italian as a foreign language. In her discussion of the Italian pragmatic competence of some Australian students, Diane Musumeci (1991:441) highlighted how these students often inappropriately write **Ciao Professoressa* to their teacher in an e-mail.

4.3 The interactional meaning of *Ciao*

Drawing on the examples presented so far, the first semantic component which I posit for the interactional meaning of *Ciao* is ‘I want to say something good to you now’, the same posited for *Hi*. The difference with *Hi* is that *Ciao* is “something good” said both at the beginning and at the end of an interaction. *Ciao*, too, like *Hi*, is set into a prototypical scenario which in the explication can be captured as the reason why people say it. There are both similarities and differences with the prototypical scenario of *Hi*. One similarity is that, prototypically, to say *Ciao* one has to be able to see someone somewhere at least for a short time, except for phone conversations and e-mails. However, I would argue that it is necessary to include this

⁷ *Ciao Signore/Signora* is well attested in service encounters in southern regional varieties of Italian.

situational circumstance in the prototypical scenario of *Ciao*, because it is an important conceptual reference point for other uses of *Ciao* and its variants (section 4.4). Another similarity with *Hi* is that to say *Ciao* one has to be able to say something to the interlocutor at the time of speaking, a possibility which may be limited by the situation, as already mentioned in Chapter 3.

Differently from *Hi*, *Ciao* can be used both at the beginning and at the end of an interaction. The two different functions of greeting and leave-taking can be distinguished looking at the expressions accompanying *Ciao* in the examples: at the beginning of an exchange *Ciao* is often followed by *come stai?* (roughly, ‘how are you?’)⁸ as in (2), whereas at the end it often comes with *ci vediamo dopo* (‘see you later’), as in (3) and (4). Finally, unlike *Hi*, *Ciao* cannot be repeated two or more times to the same addressee on the same day (cf. *Hi* again vs**Ciao di nuovo*). To capture this aspect, I will posit a component ‘they couldn’t say it to this someone on that day before’ in the section of the explication where the prototypical scenario of *Ciao* is portrayed.

In Italian, too, the way in which “something good” is said at the beginning or at the end of an interaction is a distinctive feature among competing greetings. The time frame in which the salutation is uttered is determinant for the choice between *Ciao*, *Buongiorno* or *Arrivederci*. *Ciao* is the shortest of the three considering the number of syllables and of phonological segments, and its shortness makes it suitable for situations in which one wants to signal haste and impatience to end a conversation:

- (10) "***Ciao mamma, ciao papi... Ecco le chiavi di casa...Le piante le ho annaffiate due volte...Sì, sto bene, ciao...dai mamma che c'ho fretta, me lo dici domani, dai che devo andare, ch'è mezzora che sto qui! ...Ciao, sí ciao, io scappo eh?***
Ciao mummy, ciao daddy...here are the home keys...I have watered the plants twice...Yes, I'm fine, ciao...come on mum, I'm in a hurry, we can talk

⁸ Differently from *How are you?* in Australian English, in Italian *Ciao* always implies an expectation of sincere reply about one's state of being.

about it tomorrow, come on **I have to rush**, I've been here for half an hour!...**Ciao, yeah ciao, gotta go, ok?**

(CORIS/CODIS, narrative)

(11) "*Scusa ciao devo andare è arrivato il capo in ufficio*"

"**Sorry ciao I have to go**, my boss has arrived in the office"

(CORIS/CODIS, narrative)

Arrivederci or *Buongiorno* do not signal impatience, because they are way too long. For the same reason, *Ciao* is the only salutation in Italian which can be reduplicated as *ciao ciao* (see 4.4.3, cf. *Hi Hi). On the basis of these elements, I will posit a semantic component 'I want to say it in a short time' for the interactional meaning of *Ciao*.

It could be asked if a component 'I want to say it in a very short time' would not be more plausible. The reason why the phrasing 'very short time' would not be suitable for the semantic invariant is that *Ciao* can also occur in the variant *cia'*, in which the second syllable is elided. As pointed out by Gualdo and Telve (2011:29), *cia'*, too, is usually said very quickly and is repeated (e.g. *cia'*, *cia'*, *cia'*) by people talking on the phone to signal their impatience to end the interaction. Although this form is relatively new and still considered characteristic of spoken language only (ibidem), its presence needs to be acknowledged. Because *cia'* is shorter than *Ciao*, for the invariant meaning of *Ciao* I will posit a component 'I want to say it in a short time'.

The examples analysed suggest that *Ciao* is said prototypically to people whom one knows well and only in first-time exchanges to people whom one does not know. The fact that *Ciao* is also said to people whom one does not know, but always in combination with TU, suggests that its meaning includes a particular expressed attitude, that of professing to think about the addressee as one can think about people whom one knows well. As I will discuss in Chapter 11, in first-time exchanges in Italy people normally address one another with LEI to express the attitude "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". The use of *Ciao* and

TU in first-time exchanges signals the intention to relate to the addressee as one would relate to friends or relatives, and this attitude is more likely to be expressed if there is a perceived age similarity. Thus, for the invariant meaning of *Ciao* I will posit a semantic component ‘when I say this to you, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’, which is consistent with all the contexts in which *Ciao* is used and explains the incompatibility with LEI.

The incompatibility with LEI and with forms which take LEI (e.g. *Professore*) is also explained if we hypothesise that the invariant meaning of *Ciao* includes another semantic component: “when I say this to you, I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”. This component would explain why *Ciao* cannot be used in exchanges between people who have a construed relationship of inequality within an institution, for example employee-boss, student-lecturer and patient-doctor. A combination *Ciao Professoressa* said by a student to a lecturer would be seen as culturally inappropriate not only because the student would profess to think about the lecturer like they think about people whom they know well, but also because the student would appear to be claiming “sameness” in position with the lecturer. Some speakers would probably object to a component “when I say this to you, I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’” for the invariant meaning of *Ciao* because *Ciao* can be also said to children:

- (12) «*Ciao, Alice.*» *La bambina si voltò distrattamente per vedere chi fosse l'uomo che l'aveva appena chiamata per nome. «Ciao» Poi si concentrò sul cane alle spalle dell'ospite.*

(Donato Carrisi, *L'ipotesi del male*, 2013)

‘**Hello, Alice.**’ The **girl** turned distractedly to see who the **man** was who had just called her by name. ‘Hello’, she said, then looked at the dog standing behind the visitor.

(*The Vanished Ones*, English translation by Howard Curtis, 2014)

However, I am not proposing that an adult saying *Ciao* to a child actually thinks about the child ‘this someone is someone like me’, that this is how an adult person professes to think

about the child during the interaction. All the adult speakers whom I consulted commented that they could not imagine themselves using a different greeting to a child. Of course, an adult could start talking to a child without using any salutation.

Another plausible component of the interactional meaning of *Ciao* emerging from the examples is ‘when I say this, I feel something good towards you’. I have considered the same hypothesis in the previous chapter for *Hi*, but since English speakers often specify with an adverb if *Hi* is said *cheerfully* or *coldly* I have come to the conclusion that the invariant meaning of *Hi* does not contain such a component. By contrast, evidence for Italian suggests that such a component is inherent in the invariant meaning of *Ciao* and that an adverb is necessary to specify when *Ciao* is *not* used to express some good feelings towards the addressee, as in (13):

- (13) *Le ha guardate con **indifferenza** e gli ha detto con altrettanto trasporto **un ciao distaccato**.*

He/She looked at them with **indifference** and with the same attitude said to them **an indifferent ciao**.

(CORIS/CODIS, narrative)

Significantly, the examples in which *Ciao* does not appear to express the speaker’s good feelings towards the addressee are less frequent in the CORIS-CODIS corpus; on average, there is only one instance every fifteen sentences of *Ciao* being said dismissively. Moreover, *Ciao* is normally not combined with offensive or swear words (e.g. **ciao stupido*, **ciao cretino*) unless jocularly, but with words like *tesoro* (‘honey’), *amore* (‘love’) and with *bello/bella*, which clearly express the speaker’s good or very good feelings towards the addressee:

- (14) Luigi Tenco, *Ciao Amore Ciao* (song, 1967)
Ciao amore, **Ciao, my love**
ciao amore, ciao amore ciao. Ciao, my love, ciao, my love ciao

Severgnini, too, in his book links *Ciao* to an expression of good feelings towards the addressee which can come across as “too intimate” to the ears of those who are not used to its tone (typically, non-native speakers of Italian):

One [Italian] insurance company invites listeners to ring its call centre and hints that you have to say ‘Ciao, baby’ to the operator. Try saying ‘Ciao, baby’ next time you ring your insurer’s customer service line. The reaction could be interesting.

(Beppe Severgnini, *La bella figura*, 2007)

Further evidence for the presence of a semantic component ‘when I say this, I feel something good towards you’ is found in public messages of condolences for people who have died. In these cases, *Ciao* is combined with a first name and is used in its leave-taking function. One such case is *Ciao Karol* (2011), the title of a collection of letters written in many different languages by people from all over the world (including many children) to Pope Wojtyla after his death in 2005. It needs to be clarified that the posited component is not meant to capture the speaker’s permanent feelings towards the addressee, but the feelings expressed at the time of the interaction, as specified by the phrasing ‘when I say this’.

The explication which I propose for the interactional meaning of *Ciao* is the following:

*Ciao (mamma, Gianni, tesoro, Maestra, *Professoressa, *Signor Rossi)*

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now

[B] WHY I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it because I want to do something

like people often do when it is like this:

they can see someone somewhere for a short time

they can say something to this someone during this time

they couldn't say this to this someone on that day before

[C] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it in a short time

[D] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say it, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well at the same time I think about you like this: “this someone is someone like me”

[E] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY IT
when I say this, I feel something good towards you

This explication includes an additional section [E] capturing the good feelings expressed towards the addressee which is not part of the explication for *Hi*.

4.4 Two variants of *Ciao*

In its leave-taking use *Ciao* has two variants: in one case, it is used in combination with the phrase *Va bene* to form the variant *va be' /vabbè ciao*; in another case, it is reduplicated as *ciao ciao*. I will discuss each variant in separate subsections.

4.4.1 The phrase 'va bene' and the meaning of 'vabbè ciao'

Before analysing the meaning of *va be' ciao*, it is necessary to discuss the meaning of the phrase *va bene*. *Va bene* has two meanings: in one sense, it literally means 'it goes well' and is used to indicate the positive outcome of a situation in line with the speaker's expectations:

- (15) ***Se tutto va bene, tu sarai fuori di qui prima che io cerchi ancora di te.***
If all goes well, you will be out of here before I look for you again.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

- (16) ***È andato bene il tuo fine settimana?***
Did your weekend go well?

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

In NSM terms, this first meaning of *va bene* can be paraphrased as follows:

***Va bene*₁**
it is like this: something happens as I want
I think like this about it: "this is good"

Va bene is also used to reply to someone's previous statement to indicate that one thinks that something is good or that one agrees with that statement (roughly, 'alright'):

- (17) "Oppure preferisci che te lo scaldi un po'?" "
 "No, no, **va bene così**" rispose Michele.
 "Or would you prefer it warmed up a little bit?"
 "No, **no it's fine like this**" replied Michele.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

- (18) *D'altra parte la razionalità del suo amico ebbe ben presto ragione dei suoi dubbi e cedette. "OK, **va bene**, faremo così".*
 On the other hand his/her friend's rationality soon confirmed his/her doubts and he/she gave in. "Ok, **alright**, let's do it this way".

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

- (19) *Me lo può dire lei cosa c'è scritto. - La legga! - ripeté la voce. - E **va bene**, se devo.*
 You (LEI) can tell me what's written there. – Read (LEI form) it! – the voice repeated. – **Alright**, if I have to.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

When indicating agreement, *va bene* can also be said in a resigned or concessive tone to signal that one could not but agree or act in a certain way, as in (21). The peculiarity of examples (17) to (19) is that *va bene* marks the end of the conversation; after the speaker has agreed on something, there is no need for the interactants to say more. This interaction-closing function performed by *va bene* distinguishes this meaning of *va bene*, which I will label as *va bene*₂, from the meaning of *va bene*₁ simply used to say that something 'is going well', which is not necessarily used at the end of an interaction. The idea that none of the interactants is expect to say more after *va bene*₂ can be captured with two components, 'you can not-say more about it now' and 'I can not-say more about it now':

*Va bene*₂

I say: "this is good"

you can not say more about it now

I can not say more about it now

Of the two meanings of *va bene*, it is *va bene*₂ that combines with *Ciao*. In this combination, *va bene*₂ occurs in the contracted form *va be'* or in the one-word *vabbè*:

- (20) “*Mi spiace Rita, non ho proprio idea di chi sia questa Roberta...*” “**Vabbè ciao!**”

“I’m sorry Rita, I really have no idea of who this Roberta is... **Alright, ciao!**”

(Romano Visalli, *I disillusi*, 2003, my translation)

- (21) “**Va benissimo**, d’accordo...*Fai come vuoi. Pensa anche a tua madre.*”
 “*Si. Nel frattempo accennale qualcosa tu. Fra qualche giorno passo a casa e ne parlo anche con lei.*”
 “*Si si, come no!? Vabbè ciao.*”

“**Alright, very well...**Do as you (TU) wish. Think (TU form) about your mother, too.

“I will. You (TU) mention something to her in the meantime. In a few days I’ll come home and talk to her myself.”

“Yeah, yeah, sure... **Alright, ciao.**”

(Gaetano Lestingi, *La polvere prima del vento*, 2011)

The semantic compatibility of *vabbè* and *ciao* is given by three elements: (i) both *ciao* and *vabbe'* are used at the end of a conversation; (ii) both *vabbe'* and *ciao* can be used in exchanges with people whom the speaker knows well, as the presence of the TU form indicates; (iii) *vabbe'* is, like *ciao*, “something good” which is said at the end of a conversation to make it smooth and avoid clashes. In comparison to the full form *va bene*₂, *vabbè* conveys a sense of impatience to end the conversation; if *va bene*₂ signals that there is *no need* to say more, *va be'* signals that *one does not want* to add anything else. On the basis of this hypothesis, the semantic contribution of *vabbè* to *vabbè ciao* can be explicated as follows:

Va be'/vabbè

I say: “this is good”

I don’t want to say more about it now

4.4.2 *Ciao ciao and reduplication in Italian*

Another variant of *Ciao* commonly used in Italian is the reduplicated form *ciao ciao*, illustrated by the following examples:

- (22) *Ciao ciao, saluta mamma, ciao ciao.*
Say (TU) **ciao ciao** to mummy, **ciao ciao**.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

- (23) *"Va bene", continuo a gridare, "accompagnami fino al taxi e poi fammi **ciao ciao** con la manina".*

"Alright", I keep shouting, "come (TU) with me to the taxi and then wave (TU) **ciao ciao** with your little hand".

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

- (24) *Poi ricominciava l'attesa, sgridando la domestica, provando i vestiti e i soprabiti dalla sarta, girando per i negozi; poi di nuovo il letto, e poi **ciao ciao**, ci vediamo fra due giorni.*

Then the waiting started again, telling the housemaid off, going to the tailor to try on clothes and coats, going shopping; then bedtime again and then **ciao ciao**, see you in two days.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

In (22) and (23) *ciao ciao* is intended to be said by children to their parents, whereas in (24) by a parent to a child. *Ciao ciao* differs from *ciao* in three respects: (i) it can only be used at the end of a conversation; (ii) it is used only when the speaker knows the addressee very well; (iii) it is a reduplicated form, and reduplication brings its own semantic contribution to the meaning of the salutation.

Italian reduplication has been discussed by various scholars, notably Dressler and Barbaresi (1994) and Wierzbicka (2003), and has been distinguished from repetition. Since both repetition and reduplication are important syntactic and pragmatic devices which affect the meaning of a linguistic item, a discussion of the differences between the two is necessary to understand in what way *ciao ciao* is semantically different from *Ciao*. First of all, repeated

forms are prosodically different from reduplicated forms. Repeated forms have two primary stresses of equal weight and are separated by a pause, orthographically indicated by a comma. By contrast, reduplicated forms are single prosodic units with one primary and one secondary stress, the primary one being on the second word. Repetition and reduplication also differ functionally. Wierzbicka has suggested that one function of repetition is to express urgency, “as if the speaker was trying to cut short the interlocutor’s speech” (2003:261); this is exactly the case in examples (10) and (11) on the basis of which I have posited the component ‘I want to say it in a short time’. Reduplication, by contrast, cannot express urgency because it requires a certain amount of time.

Most importantly for the present discussion, repetition and reduplication differ semantically. As pointed out by Wierzbicka (*ibidem*), repetition involves two separate speech acts, whereas reduplication involves only one, i.e. there is only one ‘I say’ component in the meaning of reduplicated forms. Wierzbicka related this semantic difference between repetition and reduplication to the prosodic difference between the two, suggesting that “the prosodic unity of the reduplicated utterance mirrors [...] its illocutionary unit, and this unity is reflected in the proposed semantic representation” (2003:264). The key semantic difference between repetition and reduplication is that reduplication implies an expression of good feelings towards the interlocutor, whereas repetition does not. Dressler and Barbaresi (1994, chapter 4) indicated child-centred speech situations as possible domains for reduplication, adding that reduplication is often accompanied by a “cute” tone. Along similar lines, Wierzbicka (2003:264) suggested specifically in relation to Italian that both repetition and reduplication are used to highlight the sincerity of the good feelings expressed towards the interlocutor. If this hypothesis is applied to *Ciao*, it is possible to explain why *Ciao* said only once can be said in a dismissive tone as in (13), whereas *ciao ciao* could never sound dismissive, because “a cold or hostile tone is

incompatible with the semantic component encoded in the repetition as such” (Wierzbicka, *ibidem*).

Drawing on these ideas, I hypothesise that the interactional meaning of *ciao ciao* includes not only a component ‘I feel something good towards you’, but also a component ‘this is true, I want you to know this’, which captures the sincerity of the good feelings expressed by reduplication. At the same time, it is necessary to pinpoint the semantic component of the meaning of *ciao ciao* which makes it suitable for parent-child talk. I suggest that this component is ‘I want to say it another time because I want to say it like people often say it to children’, which directly associates reduplication with the intention of engaging in so-called ‘child talk’ (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994).

All the semantic components posited for the meaning of *ciao ciao* are integrated in the following explication:

ciao ciao

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU

I want to say something good to you now

[B] WHY I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it because I want to do something

like people often do when it is like this:

they can see someone for a short time

they can say something to this someone during this time

they can't say something to this someone after this

[C] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I say it another time because I want to say it like people often say it to children [m]

[D] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say this, I think about you like this: “I know this someone very well”

at the same time I think about you like this: “this someone is someone like me”

[E] HOW I FEEL WHEN I SAY IT

when I say this, I feel something good towards you

this is true, I want you to know it

This explication differs from that proposed for *Ciao* in four respects. First of all, section [B] includes the component ‘they can’t say something to this someone after this’, which captures the fact that *ciao ciao* can only be said at the end of conversations, whereas for the explication for *Ciao* includes the component ‘they couldn’t say it to this someone before on that day’. Secondly, section [C] of the explication of *ciao ciao* includes the semantic contribution of the reduplication, which is absent in *ciao*. It needs to be specified that the component ‘I say it another time because I want to say it like people often say it to children’ is intended to capture the attitude expressed by an adult speaker, as it would not be suitable for speakers who are children. The third difference is in section [D], which contains a component “when I say this, I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”, whereas the component posited for the meaning of *Ciao* is ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’. The fourth difference is in section [E], where the component capturing the good feelings expressed is complemented by another component capturing the sincerity of these feelings.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the interactional meaning of *Ciao* and I have highlighted the differences with the meanings of *Hi*. *Ciao* differs from *Hi* not only because it has the double function of greeting and leave-taking phrase, but also because it expresses a different interactional meaning. I have suggested that the meaning of *Ciao* includes a component ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’, which is not part of the meaning of *Hi*, and a component “when I say it, I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’, which is shared only with *Hi*. Moreover, the explication of *Ciao* contains a section [E] which is not part of the explications proposed for *Hi*.

I have also analysed the meaning of two variants of *ciao* as a leave-taking phrase: *vabbè ciao* and *ciao ciao*. The differences in meaning between *ciao* and these two variants are that *vabbè ciao* includes the semantic contribution of the phrase *va bene*, whereas *ciao ciao* includes the semantic contribution of reduplication. I have suggested that the addition of *vabbè* gives to *ciao* a sense of urgency to end the interaction and signals the intention not to say more. The contribution of reduplication in *ciao ciao* lies in an expression of good feelings towards the addressee characteristic of child-centred talk and in a profession of sincerity of these feelings.

The main aim of the analysis made in this and in the previous chapter was to show the striking differences in both use and meaning between greetings in two different languages. Such differences are often overlooked by Europeanists, who often take for granted that greetings in different languages are semantically and pragmatically identical and therefore also overlook the risks of miscommunication in intercultural interactions which can arise from differences in greetings. Perhaps even more problematic for intercultural communication are differences in nominal terms of address, to which I turn in the next two chapters.

Chapter 5. “*Sorry, Boss*”: An unrecognised category of English nouns used to address people

5.1 Introduction

Having discussed greetings as forms of address, in this chapter I move to the analysis of a specific category of English nouns used to address people which has not been previously recognised. The analysis of these nouns results from the exigency to provide a plausible and convincing explanation to a number of intriguing puzzles: in English there is a wide range of nouns used to refer to people, but not all are used to address people; why, for example, in a company an employee can address his/her superior as *Boss*, but cannot address the director of that company as **Director*? And why can a university professor be addressed simply as *Professor*, whereas a lecturer cannot be addressed as **Dr.* without a surname?

So far, none of the scholars who have discussed English nouns used as forms of address has tried to explain these differences in use between different nouns. Clyne et al. (2009) have written that “nominal address forms in English are a particularly heterogeneous group, with a range of terms whose use varies according to factors such as domain, relationship between speaker and addressee, and various speaker characteristics such as age and sex” (18). However relevant, variables such as age or gender do not explain the differences in use of address nouns like those just mentioned. It seems clear that the differences in use between *Boss* and **Director* and between *Professor* and **Dr.* are semantic in nature. Regrettably, hardly ever are semantic differences accurately examined or clearly highlighted in studies on English nouns used to address people.

In most categorisations of English address nouns, the classification is based exclusively on typological criteria, with little or no attention to their semantic properties. Leech (1999), for

example, divides English nouns used to address people into seven categories: (i) “endearments” (e.g. *darling*, *sweetie*); (ii) family terms (e.g. *mummy*); (iii) familiarisers (e.g. *mate*); (iv) familiarised first names (e.g. *Jackie*); (v) first names in full (e.g. *Jacqueline*); (vi) title and surname (e.g. *Mrs. Jones*); (vii) honorifics (e.g. *sir/madam*). Quite surprisingly, Leech does not mention any of the so-called “professional titles” used in English as forms of address (e.g. *Professor*). The classifications proposed by Braun (1988) and Dunkling (1990) are broader, but still with no account of semantic differences:⁹

Table 3. English address nouns as classified by Braun (1988) and Dunkling (1990)

First names (Braun and Dunkling)	<i>John, Mary</i>
“Generic forms of address” (Braun) or “social titles” (Dunkling)	<i>Mr., Mrs., Ms., sir, madam</i>
Religious titles (Braun and Dunkling)	<i>Father, Mother, Vicar</i>
Military terms (Braun and Dunkling)	<i>Sergeant, Captain</i>
Occupational terms (Braun) or “neutral terms of address” (Dunkling)	<i>Waiter, Waitress, Driver</i>
Titles (Braun and Dunkling)	<i>Doctor, Professor, Count</i>
Terms denoting particular qualities of the addressee (Braun)	<i>Your Honour, His Excellency</i>
Kinship terms (Braun and Dunkling)	<i>Mum, Dad, Granma</i>
Terms of endearment (Braun)	<i>Darling, Love, Honey</i>

Dunkling did point out that in English not all nouns used to refer to people who exercise particular professions are used to address the person doing that job, but did not try to explain why this is the case:

What is curious about the English-speaking countries, perhaps, is the *arbitrary nature* of the professional title system. A medical or academic doctor is identified by that term, but adults, at least, do not address a teacher as ‘Teacher’, as would be the case in many countries. Nor do we address Architect Smith, Engineer Brown, Company Director Jones in the way that logic would indicate.

(n.p., emphasis added)

⁹ Not all English nominal terms of address listed by Braun and Dunkling are reported in this table, but only some terms are given as examples for each category.

In contrast with Dunkling, I argue that address practices in English are not “arbitrary”; speakers do not learn to use forms of address item by item, but follow particular semantic “rules” which are English specific and are informed by Anglo-specific cultural scripts. These “rules” are tacit, in that speakers follow them without being consciously aware of them. Both the repertoire of nouns which can be used as forms of address and their use vary from language to language because different linguacultures encourage the expression of different meanings in interaction. In 5.3, I will discuss a glaring example of two English nouns, *Doctor* and *director*, the former used and the latter not used as a form of address, which will show how the meanings which are or are not expressed in an interaction are informed by cultural values.

In an attempt to solve the puzzles of *Boss*/**Director* and *Professor*/**Dr.*, I have identified a small group of English nouns which, by virtue of specific usage and semantic characteristics, can be clearly distinguished from other nouns used as forms of address in a separate category. The nouns are six: *Doctor*, *Nurse*, *Professor*, *Coach*, *Chef* and *Boss*. As far as evidence suggests, these six nouns share the same syntactic and semantic properties, which I will discuss in the next sections. From a sociolinguistic point of view, it can be expected that these nouns are used differently as forms of address in different varieties of English. However interesting, I did not investigate the differences in use of these nouns across varieties, neither synchronically nor diachronically, because the present analysis is strictly semantic in nature. I am going to propose a hypothesis on the semantics of these six nouns based on the analysis of specific instances of use in specific varieties of English.

First of all, I will discuss the usage characteristics of these six nouns, focusing on their syntax and on the situational context in which they are used. Secondly, I will show how the usage characteristics reflect the semantics of these nouns and will justify one by one the semantic components which I posit for their interactional meaning. I will start from the

meaning of *Doctor*, because this noun is the clearest case to illustrate the properties of the category which I posit and therefore can serve as a conceptual reference point for the other five nouns. Then, I will discuss the meaning of *Nurse*, *Professor* and *Boss* in separate sections. For reasons of space, I cannot discuss in detail *Coach* and *Chef*, but I will explain how these two nouns fit within this category in the next two sections.

5.2 Usage characteristics of the nouns of the unrecognised category

5.2.1 Syntactic and combinatorial properties

All the nouns which can be used as forms of address in English differ in the syntactic construction in which they are used and in their combinatorial options. Some nouns are only used with a following first name (e.g. *Father John* used to address a priest) or a following surname (e.g. *Dr.* used to address an academic or *Mr./Mrs.*). By contrast, other nouns are used as forms of address only without a surname, for example *sir* and *Boss*. The combinatorial differences between *Dr.* and *Boss* are summarised in the following minimal pairs:

- i. *Good morning, Dr. Robertson* vs **Good morning, Dr.*
- ii. *Good morning, Boss* vs **Good morning, Boss Robertson*
- iii. *Good morning, Dr. Robertson* vs *Good morning, Boss*

Moreover, some nouns can be used as forms of address both with and without an accompanying surname, e.g. *Good morning, Professor* vs. *Good morning, Professor Brown*. The purpose of this chapter is to show that nouns which, as forms of address, have different combinatorial options differ in interactional meaning, too, and therefore need to be grouped in

separate categories. One of the reasons why the six nouns *Doctor*, *Nurse*, *Professor*, *Coach*, *Chef* and *Boss* can be grouped together is that they share the same syntactic property: they can be used as forms of address in a simple syntactic construction consisting of the noun only, possibly preceded by a short utterance (e.g. *Thank you/I'm sorry*), but without a following surname:

- (1) "I've. . .I've done it, **Professor**," he choked. [...] "Thank you, Hagrid," said Professor McGonagall, standing up at once and turning to look at the group around Bill's bed.
(J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, 2005)
- (2) ALI: Hello there, my name is Ali Sharif. I'm the Intensive Care Consultant who's looking after your mother...
KATIE: Could you tell us what's happening, **Doctor**?
(David Williamson, *At any cost?*, 2011)
- (3) During the time when I was a probationer student nurse in Reading, I was working on a male medical ward. I carried out simple duties such as washing the locker tops, and was at the bedside of a man who was very ill. He grabbed my wrist, and with fierce intensity barked: "Have I got a growth, **Nurse**?"
(Jennifer Worth, *In the midst of life*, 2010)
- (4) Wright was at the stadium, filing a feeble protest. He seemed dazed, literally turning in circles, when I found him. Stan was near 50, heavy, jowly, with large ears and sad eyes so full of tears that the next blink was sure to start a deluge. '**Coach**,' I said, 'I'm awfully sorry about what happened.'
(Wordbanks, *usbooks*)
- (5) BOBBY: Sorry I'm late, **Boss**. Old Norm caught me in the corridor.
(David Williamson, *The Department*, 1975)
- (6) Yann, the young French waiter who was famously scolded and humiliated in the first episode of *Boiling Point* for wearing a blue plaster on his finger - 'you're smart, you're immaculate, and a fucking blue plaster!'- comes over. 'Yann, how many dirty magazines did I find in your flat?' 'None, really, **Chef**,' says Yann, whose blush rapidly shoots up his neck while I, too, cringe with embarrassment.
(Wordbanks, *brnews*)

Doctor and *Professor* can also be followed by a surname, but as I will discuss, in this case they express a different interactional meaning and therefore are polysemous. It could be asked why nouns like *sir/madam* or *Minister/Senator*, which as forms of address can also be used by themselves in a short utterance, are not included in the same category as *Doctor* and *Boss*. The

reason is that *Doctor* (used by itself) and *Boss* differ from *sir* and *Senator* in the situational context in which they are used, which I will discuss in the next section. My hypothesis is that this difference reflects a difference in meaning and, in turn, in categorisation.

5.2.2 *The situational context of use*

The second reason why the six nouns *Doctor*, *Nurse*, *Professor*, *Coach*, *Chef* and *Boss* can be grouped together in a separate category is that they are used in the same situational context, which is based on two factors: ‘place’ and ‘inequality of role’. Firstly, all the six nouns in this small category are used as forms of address within the context of a specific place or institution, outside of which they are either not used or, in the case of *Doctor* and *Professor*, do not express the same interactional meaning (see 5.3 and 5.4). In the case of *sir/madam* or even kinship nouns like *dad/mum* and *Father/Mother*, which are also used by themselves as forms of address, ‘place’ is not a relevant situational factor because these nouns are not restricted to one particular situation.¹⁰

Secondly, the recipient of *Doctor* is someone who, in a specific place (the hospital), can be seen by the speaker (the patient or a nurse) as being ‘someone above me’ and ‘above many other people in this place’ (security guards and other staff). In the same way, the recipients of *Nurse*, *Professor*, *Boss*, *Coach* and *Chef* can be seen as being people above the speaker in a specific place (e.g. the university, a company, a sports club, a restaurant’s kitchen). Essentially, the situational context in which these six nouns are used as forms of address is such that the speaker has a construed relationship of inequality with the addressee in the place where they interact.

¹⁰ Kinship nouns are limited to the more general situational context ‘family’, outside of which they do not express the same meaning (e.g. *Father John* said to a priest).

The same kind of relationship between the interactants does not characterise the situations in which *dad*, *sir* or *Senator* are used, and this difference in relationship affects the speaker's professed way of thinking about the addressee which is inherent in the interactional meaning of *Doctor* and the other five nouns. It is plausible to assume that the idea "I think about you like this: 'this someone is someone above me'" is also inherent in the meaning of *sir* as said by a shop assistant to a customer in British or American English; however, *sir* does not also express the idea 'this someone is someone above many people in this place'.

Essentially, it is the combination of two situational factors, 'place' and 'relational inequality', plus specific syntactic properties, which distinguishes the interactional meaning of the six nouns *Doctor*, *Nurse*, *Professor*, *Coach*, *Chef* and *Boss* from the interactional meaning of other nouns used as forms of address in English. I will present my hypothesis on the meaning of these nouns in the next section, starting from *Doctor* used by itself.

5.3 The interactional meaning of *Doctor* as a prototype of the category

The interactional meaning of *Doctor* used by itself consists in a particular professed way of thinking about the addressee. My hypothesis is that this includes two different cognitive scenarios which can be captured in NSM as 'how I think about you when I say this' and 'how I don't think about you when I say this'. The cognitive scenario 'how I think about you when I say this' includes an idea of the addressee as one of the people working in a place of one kind and as someone above many other people in that place, the speaker being one of these people.

It can be captured as follows:

[B] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

"there are many people in this place,

I am one of these people, this someone is one of these people

this someone does some things in this place, I don't do the same things in this place

this someone is someone above many people in this place"

The component ‘this someone does some things in this place, I don’t do the same things in this place’ is specifically meant to capture the difference in role between speaker (patient or nurse) and addressee (the doctor), not between the addressee and other people in the same place; it does not state ‘other people in this place do not do the same things’, because in a hospital there are many doctors. Moreover, at least in Australia two doctors working in the same hospital do not address one another as *Doctor*, but by first name (Chapter 12); therefore, the component ‘this someone does some things in this place, I don’t do the same things in this place’ would not be consistent with the relationship between two colleagues doctors. My hypothesis is that there has to be a difference in role between speaker and addressee for *Doctor* to be used by itself as a form of address.

In addition to these components, I posit two other components for the cognitive scenario ‘how I think about you when I say this’ inherent in the meaning of *Doctor* used by itself as a form of address. Considering that ‘doctor’ is a “caring” profession, I propose that the speaker sees in the addressee a greater potential for doing good things for other people in the hospital than other people who work there. This means being able to help patients and care for them. In the play *At Any Cost?* (2011) by the Australian playwright David Williamson, which is about euthanasia and the psychological struggle to decide whether or not to end someone’s life, the dialogues illustrate very well the doctor’s potential to do good things for many people in the hospital. All the relatives of the dying patient address Dr. Ali Sharif as *Doctor* without surname:

(7) ALI: Hello there, my name is Ali Sharif. I’m the Intensive Care Consultant who’s looking after your mother...

KATIE: Could you tell us what’s happening, **Doctor**?

(8) ALI: You’ve been caring for her?

DES: Yes, but **Doctor**, none of this is relevant. She’s in here now, she’s desperately ill. [...] **Doctor**, she’s not a vegetable. [...] Family was everything to her. **Doctor**, if you could see her smile...

(9) ALI: I’m going to do my very best to get her back where she was, Mr. Watson.

Be assured.

MEGAN: Thanks, **Doctor**.

Significantly, in the play the husband of the patient, Des, does not address Dr. Sharif as *Doctor* until the moment when he has to convince the doctor to let his wife continue to live. *Doctor* appears to play a major role in such a critical moment; it is used by Des to acknowledge Dr. Sharif's greater potential (compared to the other people in the hospital) to do something good for his wife, in this case to let her live. The fact that Dr. Sharif himself in (9) assures Des that he will do anything he can to help his wife reflects his potential to do good things for the patient like no-one else in the hospital. This second part of the cognitive scenario can be captured as follows:

[C] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU AT THE SAME TIME

at the same time, when I say this to you I think about you like this:

“this someone can do some good things for other people in this place
other people in this place can't do the same”

The idea ‘this someone can do some good things for other people in this place’ gives *Doctor* by itself a somewhat “paternalistic” tone which is not part of the meaning of *Dr.* plus surname and explains why in English certain nouns cannot not be used by themselves as forms of address, for example **Director*. Like *Doctor*, the semantics of *director* as a term of reference suggests the idea “I think about this someone like this: ‘this someone is someone above many people in a place of one kind’”; yet, in English there is no form of address **Director* comparable to the Italian *Direttore* used by itself to address the director of a company or of a newspaper (next chapter).

Unlike *Doctor*, the meaning of the English *director* does not also include a component “I think about you like this: ‘this someone can do some good things for other people in this place, other people in this place cannot do the same’”. This difference in meaning between *Doctor* and *director* suggests that in English-speaking countries the mere fact of being seen as someone

above many people in a place, as the semantics of *director* suggests, is not sufficient to justify the use of a particular noun by itself to address the interlocutor (e.g. **Good morning, Director*). Unlike in Italian culture (next Chapter), it appears that in Anglo cultures to be seen as someone above many people in a place is not *per se* a culturally relevant factor which could encourage the expression of the meaning “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone above many people in a place of one kind’” with one word to address the interlocutor.

The point is that different cultural values encourage the expression of different meanings in one or more words used as forms of address. The syntactic properties of nouns used as forms of address, in turn, reflect their semantics (cf. Wierzbicka 1988); the possibility of using a given noun as a form of address by itself (e.g. *Doctor*) or with an obligatory surname (e.g. *Dr. Brown* used to address an academic) depends on the (combination of) meanings which the context of interaction requires to express. Thus, by analysing the interactional meaning of different nouns used as forms of address it is possible to make sense of the hidden cultural values and semantic “rules” which govern their use.

For the cognitive scenario ‘how I don’t think about you when I say this’, I will posit a component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” on the basis of the fact that *Doctor* can combine with a surname but not with a first name (**Doctor Paul*). This component is the most plausible one for the invariant meaning, because it excludes that the interactants profess to know each other *very well* (in which case first-name address would be used), and does not state that the interactants profess not to know each other at all either.

At the same time, this component explains the semantic difference between *Doctor* by itself and *Dr. Brown*. The component “when I say this to you, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” clashes with the semantics of surnames, ‘I know what this someone’s surname [m] is’. A *Dr.* plus surname combination merely suggests the idea ‘I know who this someone is’, but not ‘I know this someone’ (well or less well). My hypothesis is that when

patients address a doctor as *Doctor* by itself, as in Williamson's play, they are not "identifying" the addressee, but are using a noun to address someone whom they think they do not know very well. It follows from this that *Doctor* is polysemous; when it is used without a surname it expresses a different interactional meaning from *Dr.* plus surname, and one of the differences lies precisely in how the speaker purports to relate to the addressee.

In sum, I propose the following explication for the interactional meaning of *Doctor* by itself as a form of address:

Thanks, *Doctor* (*Coach, Chef, Boss...*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now

[B] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

"there are many people in this place,

I am one of these people, this someone is one of these people

this someone does some things in this place, I don't do the same things in this place

this someone is someone above other people in this place"

[C] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU AT THE SAME TIME

at the same time, when I say this to you I think about you like this:

"this someone can do some good things for other people in this place

other people in this place can't do the same"

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone well"

5.4 Nurse

The noun *Nurse* as a form of address fits within the proposed category because it matches the syntactic and situational criteria for using *Doctor* by itself. Syntactically, it is used in short utterances and without a following surname. Situationally, it is used in a specific place by people who do not do the same things as the nurse in the hospital and who can be seen as being "below" the nurse (patients). However, the following examples from British and American

English illustrate that in these varieties *Nurse* can also be used by a doctor, someone above a nurse in the hospital rank, to address a nurse:

- (10) The **doctor** shook his head. 'So in answer to your question, **Nurse**, yes, God help him, he'll live.'
- (Wordbanks, brbooks)
- (11) The **doctor** motioned to a woman in green scrubs drinking something from a Styrofoam cup. He said, "**Nurse**, take this patient to room nine. Prep her and get the hose."
- (COCA, us fiction)
- (12) KUMAR (CONT'D) First, we need to clear his C-spine. I want stat x-rays of the chest and abdomen. Give me two large bore IVs and start a ringers lactate push. **Nurse**, we need 2 units of O neg on board.
- (COCA, us fiction)
- (13) "Sorry," the **doctor** mumbled as he sprayed something on her hands. "**Nurse**," he called.
- (COCA, us fiction)

In cases like these, *Nurse* does not express the same interactional meaning as when used by patients to address a nurse, because the component "I think about you like this: 'this someone is someone above many people in a place, I am one of these people'" does not apply to *Nurse* when the speaker is a doctor.

Further examples illustrate that *Nurse* is also consistent with the idea 'this someone can do some good things for other people in this place'. The emotional reaction of the patient portrayed in (3) is particularly suggestive of this; the fact that the patient grabs the nurse's wrist and desperately asks if he has contracted cancer indicates that he knows that the nurse can help him. In calling her *Nurse*, the patient acknowledges the nurse's potential to do good things for him. The same applies to (14), an example from Irish English, where it is explicitly stated both that the man is "seeking assurances that there are no complications" from the nurse, and that the nurse suggests to the man what to do:

- (14) Mr. Hilditch is certain that conclusions have already been reached in the waiting room. Twice he has approached the staid receptionist, apologising for doing so, seeking assurances that there are no complications. On both occasions she suggested he should

go for a walk, or simply go home and return later, which is the more usual thing. ‘If you don’t mind, **Nurse**’ he replied, the same words each time, ‘I’d prefer to be near my girlfriend.’

(William Trevor, *Felicia’s Journey*, 1994)

In this example, the man’s words reflect not only the construed inequality of roles between patients (or patients’ relatives) and nurses in the hospital, which gives nurses some “decisional power” over patients, but also the patients’ awareness that nurses can do some good things for them in the hospital.

Finally, like *Doctor*, *Nurse* cannot combine with a first name, and this suggests that its meaning includes a semantic component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone very well’”. Thus, the same explication proposed for *Doctor* can be used to explicate the interactional meaning of *Nurse*.

5.5 *Professor*: a case of double polysemy

If both syntax and situational context of use are relevant to the interactional meaning of *Doctor* and *Nurse*, these factors are even more relevant to the interactional meaning of *Professor*. *Professor* is polysemous in two ways: it expresses different meanings depending on whether it is used on its own or in combination with a surname, and also on whether it is used inside or outside the university context. Excellent examples of *Professor* used by itself can be found in so-called “campus novels”, for example J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* (1999). When the protagonist Professor Lurie receives a phone call from the father of one of his students, he is addressed first as *Professor Lurie* and then only as *Professor*:

- (15) Barely an hour later a telephone call is switched through to his office.
“**Professor Lurie**? Have a moment to talk? My name is Isaacs, I’m calling from George. My daughter is in your class, you know, Melanie”.

“Yes”. “**Professor**, I wonder if you can help us. Melanie [...] wants to give up her studies and get a job. [...] I wonder if I can ask, **Professor**, can you have a chat with her, talk some sense into her?”

(J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*, 1999)

From a semantic point of view, the absence of the surname the second and third time Mr. Isaacs addresses Lurie is significant, because the message ‘I know what this someone’s surname is’ is not conveyed. Noticeably, Mr. Isaacs addresses Lurie as *Professor Lurie* only the first time he talks to him; after that, the surname disappears and *Professor* is used by itself. I suggest that the *Professor Lurie* combination is used to identify the addressee and call him with the “title” which he deserves as an academic. That is, *Professor Lurie* is a way of saying something good *about* the addressee with a word of one kind (more in the next chapter). The second and third time, by contrast, *Professor* is used by itself because, having mentioned the professor’s surname once, Mr. Isaacs does not need to identify the addressee anymore.

There is a difference in professed way of thinking about the addressee between *Professor* and *Professor Lurie*. The way of thinking inherent in the meaning of *Professor* by itself is influenced by the situational context, the university, and by the relationship between students and teacher in that context. In calling Lurie *Professor* without surname, it is as if Mr. Isaacs identified himself with his daughter and with the relationship which she has with her professor. By contrast, the way of thinking inherent in the meaning of *Professor Lurie* does not reflect any relationship between speaker and addressee in a specific place. It simply suggests the idea ‘this someone is a professor, I know this’ (see the explication below).

The construed bottom-up relationship between students and professors at university also justifies why the teacher addressed as *Professor* by itself can be seen by students as someone who can do some good things for them like no other people in that place. Helping and guiding students in their studies is the natural duty of teachers, which no other people at university can perform. In this sense, it seems plausible to hypothesise that *Professor*, too, when used by itself,

shares the “paternalistic” tone of *Doctor* and *Nurse*, whereas the same tone does not characterise *Professor* plus surname.

Polysemy also applies to *Professor* by itself. In J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* saga, in most cases Harry addresses his teachers as *Professor* without a surname, as in (16) and (17) from *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005):

- (16) Seized with an immediate desire to reveal himself, Harry pulled off the cloak with a flourish. “Good evening, **Professor**.” “Merlin’s beard, Harry, you made me jump” said Slughorn, stopping dead in his tracks and looking wary.
- (17) He corked the bottle with a trembling hand and then passed it across the table to Harry. “Thank you very much, **Professor**.” “You’re a good boy” said Professor Slughorn, tears trickling down his fat cheeks into his walrus mustache.

Professor in *Harry Potter* is an example of *Professor* belonging to the category of six which I posit, because the interactants do things in the same place where they have different roles. Furthermore, inequality of roles is limited to the school of magic and is not extended to people who hold the same position in the school; in the book series, *Professor* is never used in exchanges between teachers, who address each other by first name:

- (17) (Professor Slughorn to Professor Snape)
 - a. “Stop skulking and come and join us, **Severus!**” hiccupped Slughorn happily.
 - b. “Oh, now, **Severus**,” said Slughorn, hiccuping again, “it’s Christmas, don’t be too hard”

(J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, 2005)

A different case is *Professor* as used in Dan Brown’s novel *Angels & Demons* (2000). Here, the protagonists are respectively a professor and a scientist who work in completely different places. In various cases, Vittoria, the scientist, addresses Professor Robert Langdon as *Professor* by itself:

- (18) She put her hands on her hips and surveyed the enormous space. Then she looked at Langdon. “So, **Professor**, what’s the name of this Galileo thing we’re looking for?”
- (19) Vittoria shook her head. “Forget it, **Professor**. No time to play scribe. Mickey’s ticking.”

The relationship between Vittoria and Robert is different from the relationship between Harry and his teachers, because it is not limited to a specific place. Consequently, the meaning of *Professor* as used by Vittoria to address Langdon does not include the way of thinking ‘this someone is one of many people in this place, I am one of these people’. Rather, *Professor* by itself as used by Vittoria is a “professional title”, a way of expressing, with one word, the idea that one thinks something good about the addressee because of the particular, prestigious job which they do (more in the next chapter). For the sake of clarity, I will distinguish *Professor*₂ used in *Angels & Demons* from *Professor*₁ used in Harry Potter and in *Disgrace*. The meaning of *Professor*₂ can be explicated as follows:

*Thanks, Professor*₂

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good about you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is not someone like many other people’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

because of this, they can feel something good about this someone”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don’t think about you like this:

“I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me”

The main idea captured in this explication is that the addressee is seen as being someone not like many other people because of the job which they do. The speaker also acknowledges that people can know some good things about the addressee because of this job. The components portraying the cognitive scenario ‘how I don’t think about you when I say this’ capture the fact

that the speaker and the addressee do completely different jobs and that *Professor*₂ cannot be combined with a first name.

5.6 *Boss*

Boss, too, belongs to the category of six which I posit because the professed way of thinking about the addressee is influenced by the same two situational factors which influence the meaning of the other nouns included in this category. Firstly, *Boss* is used only within the context of a specific institution, outside of which the recipient of *Boss* is not addressed with this noun. Secondly, *Boss* is used in exchanges between employees and their superiors, that is between people who, in a specific place, have a construed inequality of roles. For these reasons, the meaning of *Boss*, too, includes the component “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone above many other people in this place, I am one of these people’”. In (20), an example from American English, *Boss* is used by a group of pilots to address their captain:

- (20) "**Good morning, Boss,**" they replied in unison, leaning over the most recent aerial photo of the airport, which they had memorized, seeing all the landmarks and their orientation to the runway.

(Wordbanks, usbooks)

Evidence from Australian English illustrates that in this variety *Boss* can compete with first-name address in exchanges between dependents and superiors. In David Williamson's play *The Department* (1975), academic staff from the same department meet to discuss the subject preferences for the second semester; Robby, the head of department, is addressed as *Boss* by two different younger members of the staff with lower positions:

- (21) a. BOBBY: Sorry I'm late, **Boss**. Old Norm caught me in the corridor.
 b. HANS: Sorry, **Boss**. We got here early and no one was around.

However, before being addressed as *Boss*, Robby is addressed by two other younger dependants by first name:

- (22) a. PETER (age: 28): I've been trying to suggest, **Robby**, that it might not have been anymore.
- (23) b. HANS (age: 36): Don't be a *bastard*, **Robby**. Let the lady stay.

This suggests that in Australia a dependent can address his/her boss by first name in spite of the inequality of roles which they have in the working place (more in Chapter 12). Noticeably, only in two cases the characters of *The Department* switch from *Robby* to *Boss*; this suggests that they normally prefer to address their boss by first name, and that *Boss* is used humorously in other cases.

As a term of reference, *Boss* never sounds humorous; it is perfectly possible to say 'Oh, I really hate my boss' without conveying any humour (in fact, an angry tone is incompatible with humour). This entails that the meaning of *Boss* as a form of address includes some additional semantic components which are not part of its meaning as a form of reference and which make it sound humorous in some contexts. My hypothesis is that the humour is related precisely to the idea of the addressee as someone who can do some good things for other people in a place because this person is someone above many people in that place. The "paternalistic" tone which, I hypothesise, is inherent in the meaning of *Doctor* and *Professor* is perhaps even stronger in *Boss*, which is ideal if an employee wants to ingratiate themselves with their superior, but sounds just humorous in other cases, at least in Australian English. This is because in Australia there are specific cultural scripts which discourage the expression of a "paternalistic" way of thinking about someone in discourse, as I will discuss in Chapter 12.

Although in Australian English *Boss* can compete with first-name address, there is no evidence for *Boss* combined with first names (and in no other variety of English). This means that *Boss* and first names express two clashing attitudes, "when I say this to you, I don't think

about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” and ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’ (Chapter 12). The expressed attitude is another reason why *Boss* can sound humorous and “paternalistic” if it is used instead of first-name address; with *Boss*, the speaker would purport to think about the addressee as ‘someone above me’ and as someone whom they do not know well.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the interactional meaning of a small category of English nouns used as forms of address which share the same syntactic and semantic properties, and I have proposed that these nouns constitute a specific category of forms of address previously unrecognised. I have hypothesised that the interactional meaning of these nouns is influenced by two complementary situational factors: one is ‘place’ of interaction and the other is the construed inequality of roles between the interactants within that place, the addressee being seen as someone above the speaker. Another point made in my analysis is that two of these nouns, *Doctor* and *Professor*, are polysemous because they express different interactional meanings depending on whether or not they are used in combination with a surname and on the context of use. Further analysis may lead to the identification of another specific category in which seemingly incompatible nouns used as forms of address may be grouped together.

Chapter 6. ‘*Prego, Signore*’: The cultural semantics of Italian titles

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the interactional meaning of three categories of “titles”¹¹ in Italian. Also discussed are the cultural salience of titles in Italian society and the differences in use and meaning between titles in Italian and in English identified through an analysis of various English translations of Italian literary texts in which titles occur.

There is, to this day, no accurate and comprehensive classification of Italian titles. In the limited literature on the topic available, Italian titles are typically included in the overarching category of *appellatives* (from the Latin *appellare*, ‘to call’), particular nouns used to address people. In *Garzanti Linguistica*, titles are defined as “appellatives given to someone for their grade, education, the activity which they do or for particular merits”.¹² The *Treccani* encyclopaedia includes titles in the sub-category of *allocutive appellatives*, emphasising the role of the accompanying second person address pronoun:

Titles used to address people or to attract their attention in situations of direct interaction. As far as the referent is concerned, the interlocutor is always a second person, singular or plural; yet, the verbal person actually used in the interaction depends on the social hierarchies underlying the specific context, which may require or accept the use of the polite *lei* or *voi*.

(*Enciclopedia dell’italiano Treccani*, 2011:90, my translation)

In *Treccani*, allocutive appellatives are distinguished into three major categories: kinship nouns (e.g. *mamma*, *papà*, *nonna*, which are not titles and are not discussed in this chapter), “generic titles” (*Signore*, *Signora*, *Signorina*, *Signori*, *Don* and *Donna*) and “professional titles”

¹¹ Inverted commas are used here to question the use of “title” as a clear and definite label. The author’s position is in line with Braun’s (1988:10) idea that “there is no unanimity as to what should be classified as a ‘title’”. Throughout the chapter inverted commas are not used anymore.

¹² <http://www.garzantilinguistica.it/ricerca/?q=titolo> (my translation).

(e.g. *Avvocato* ('Lawyer'), *Architetto* ('Architect')). A broader categorisation is proposed by Sabatini (1985, 1987), whose category of "occupational titles" includes not only nouns used to address people exercising particular professions like *Notaio/Notaia* ('male/female Notary'), *Avvocato*, *Architetto*, but also nouns used to address people holding top positions in an institution like *Direttore/Direttrice* ('male/female director'), *Preside* ('Headmaster'), *Presidente* and *Rettore/Rettrice* ('male/female university Chancellor'), as well as military nouns like *marescialla* ("female Inspector") *capitana* and *comandante*.

The problem with these categorisations is that different kinds of titles are grouped in the same category exclusively on the basis of the addressees for whom they are used, assuming that they are all used in the same way and that their interactional meaning is the same. In this way, a title like *Avvocato* is put on the same level as a title like *Direttore* simply because both are, so to speak, titles for people exercising particular jobs. However, as I will show, there are important differences in both use and meaning between these two kinds of titles.

As I have done for English titles in the previous chapter, I propose for Italian titles a more accurate categorisation based on strictly semantic criteria, grouping together titles which express the same interactional meaning. Drawing on the classification proposed in *Treccani*, in my analysis I distinguish three different categories of titles: (i) "generic titles", used to address various people (including strangers) in a variety of contexts, (ii) "professional titles", used to address people exercising particular professions linked with a recognised educational achievement; (iii) titles for people holding top positions in an institution. Obviously, the list of titles discussed in this chapter is by no means exhaustive; for reasons of space, I could not discuss titles for religious people (*Padre*, *Madre*, *Reverendo*, *Eccellenza*, *Santità*), titles for aristocrats (*Conte/Contessa*, *Duca/Duchessa*, *Marchese/Marchesa*), titles for police officers (*Commissario*, *Ispettore*, *Capitano*) and other titles like *Eccellenza*, *Onorevole* and *Ministro*.

6.2 Italian “generic titles”

The titles *Signore*, *Signora*, *Signorina* and *Signori* can be defined as “generic” because they are used to address different people in a variety of situations. Generic titles share two important syntactic properties: (i) they cannot be used in combination with *Ciao* (except for *Ciao Signorina* said by an adult to “flatter” a female child); (ii) they cannot be combined with TU pronominal address, except for *Signore* used to address God (see 6.2.2). Combinations with a surname or with a title vary for each noun. The different syntactic properties of these titles reflect important differences in meaning. I will start from the feminine *Signora*, because its meaning can be used as a conceptual reference point for the analysis of all the other generic titles.

6.2.1 *Signora*

Signora is used either on its own or in combination with a first name, a surname or another title to address any married woman or any woman above a certain age (approximately 40 years old), as the following examples illustrate:

- (1) *"Buongiorno, signora. Sono il direttore." "Il dottor Zeri?" Ricordava il cognome che le aveva detto l'impiegato. "Per servirla, signora." "Mi scusi se la disturbo", si accorse che la voce era affievolita dall'emozione. "Forse il Suo collaboratore le ha già accennato." "Mi dica, signora." "Mio marito è venuto in banca ieri mattina, vero?" Provava, quando mentiva dicendo "mio marito", una sorta di orgoglio malinconico. "Sì, signora." "Mi può dire verso che ora, più o meno." "Presto, signora, poco dopo l'apertura." Lei chiese, con un certo imbarazzo: "E per fare quale operazione?" "Mi dispiace, signora, ma questo non posso dirlo".*

“Good morning, *signora*. I am the director.” “Are you Dr. Zeri?” She remembered the surname that the clerk had told her. “At Your service, *signora*.” “Excuse me if I disturb You”, she noticed that her voice was weakened by nervousness. “Maybe Your colleague has already referred to you.” “Tell me, *signora*”. “My husband came to the bank yesterday morning, didn’t he?” She felt, when she lied saying “my husband” a kind of nostalgic pride. “Yes, *signora*.” “Can You tell me at what time, approximately?”

“Early, *signora*, shortly after we opened.” “She asked, somewhat embarrassed: “And to do what?” “I’m sorry, *signora*, I cannot say that.”

(Giuseppe Pontiggia, *La grande sera*, 1989, my translation)

- (2) “*Piacere, io sono Maria, la nuova amministratrice condominiale.*”
“*Il piacere è mio, signora Maria. Io sono Tina Polidoro, del primo piano.*”

“Nice to meet you, I’m Maria, the new administrator of this condominium.”
“My pleasure, Signora Maria. I’m Tina Polidoro, I live on the first floor.”

(Chiara Gamberale, *Le luci nelle case degli altri*, 2010, my translation)

- (3) *Squilla il telefono. «È per te, la signora Persichetti...» dice un intimo porgendo il microfono al vedovo. «Signora Persichetti, che sorpresa, come sta?» grida il vedovo, tutto festoso. Poi si rifà mesto. «Sì, poverina...Povera Bettina mia... Grazie, signora... Ma certo, mi venga a trovare!...*

The phone rings. “It’s for you, it’s *signora Persichetti*...” says a close friend and passes the phone to the widower. “*Signora Persichetti, what a surprise*, how are You?” says loud the widower joyfully. Then he becomes sad again. “Yes, poor her...Poor Bettina...Thank you, *signora*...Sure, please come and see me!”

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

- (4) *Signora ministra, impari qualcosa dal calvario di mio padre.*

Signora ministra, learn something from my father’s calvary.

(<http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/signora-ministra-impari-qualcosa-calvario-mio-padre-1314948.html>, accessed 6/10/2016)

At first sight, the examples may suggest that there are two distinct meanings, one for *Signora* used on its own to address someone whom the speaker does not know and another one for *Signora* used in combination to address someone whom the speaker knows, but not well. However, in (3) the same woman is first addressed with a *Signora* plus surname combination and then simply as *Signora*, the relationship between the speakers remaining unchanged. This indicates that *Signora* on its own can also be used to address someone whom the speaker does not know well. Speaking from personal experience as a native speaker, I have often heard the phrase “*Salve, signora*” (roughly, ‘Hello, *Signora*’) said by a man to his mother-in-law. Noticeably, in (1) and (3) *Signora* is repeated several times to the same addressee in the same exchange; this suggests the presence of a cultural script which encourages speakers to repeat a

title several times in different turns when they want to say many things to someone. This script will be discussed in chapter 11.

On the basis of examples such as these, my hypothesis is that the interactional meaning of *Signora* consists of a professed way of thinking about the addressee which can be captured with three semantic components. The first captures the relationship construed with the addressee at the time of the interaction; since *Signora* can be used to address both a stranger and someone whom the speaker does not know well, I posit for the invariant meaning a semantic component “when I say this to you, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. The second component captures the idea of the addressee as someone who belongs to a specific category of people. Considering that in Italian two nouns can be used to address a woman, *Signora* and *Signorina*, I propose that the choice between the two is determined by the idea of the kind of female interlocutor that the speaker wants to express. In the case of *Signora*, the speaker identifies the addressee as a woman of a certain age who is probably married, characteristics which exclude the use of *Signorina*, as I will discuss in 6.2.3.

These characteristics can be captured with a composite component consisting of three ideas: ‘this someone is someone of one kind’, ‘someone of this kind is a woman’ and ‘someone of this kind can be someone’s wife’. The third component captures the speaker’s idea of the addressee as a “distinguished” member of society, as the etymology of the word suggests (from the Latin *senior(a)*, something like ‘mistress’, ‘matron’). To capture this, I posit another composite component ‘I think about you like this: ‘people can know some good things about this someone’” and ‘people can feel something good towards this someone because of this’. The phrasing is purposely not in first person (‘I know’/‘I feel’) because if the woman addressed as *Signora* is a stranger (as in 1), the speaker does not know anything about her, therefore cannot say ‘I know some good things about you’, but at least acknowledges that ‘people’ can know some “good things” about this woman. A component phrased in first person would not

be consistent with all the cases in which this noun is used, for example when addressing a stranger. In sum, the interactional meaning of *Signora* can be explicated as follows:

Buongiorno, *Signora* (on its own, *Signora Persichetti, Signora Direttrice, Signora Maria*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is someone of one kind

someone of this kind is a woman [m]

someone of this kind can be someone’s wife [m]’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

people can feel something good towards this someone because of this”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

The first component states that *Signora* is used to say “something good” to the addressee in the context of a short utterance, that is in combination with a short expression, in this case a greeting. It could be suggested that it should be specified in the explication that *Signora* is never used to address a child. On the one hand, this is already specified in the component ‘this someone is a woman’; on the other, a married girl would still be addressed as *Signora* in Italy, and some native speakers might find that this phrasing is not fully appropriate for someone who is not yet considered as a *donna* (‘woman’), but still as a *ragazza* (roughly, ‘girl’). I suggest that even when the recipient of *Signora* is a girl the professed way of thinking is ‘this someone is a woman’, i.e. a “mature” person, not a child, and so far no counter-evidence for this hypothesis has emerged.

6.2.2 *Signore*

Signore, used to address a male adult, is not simply the masculine counterpart of *Signora*, because it expresses two different meanings depending on whether it is used on its own or in

combination. *Signore* on its own is only used to address men whom the speaker does not know, as the following examples illustrate:

(5) *USCERE: Scusi, signor Commendatore!*

IL CAPOCOMICO: Che altro c'è?

USCERE: Ci sono qua certi signori, che chiedono di lei.

IL CAPOCOMICO: Chi sono lor signori? Che cosa vogliono?

IL PADRE: Siamo qua in cerca di un autore.

IL CAPOCOMICO: Di una autore? Che autore?

IL PADRE: D'uno qualunque, signore.

IL CAPOCOMICO: Ma qui non c'è nessun autore, perché non abbiamo in prova nessuna commedia nuova.

FIGLIASTRA: Tanto meglio, tanto meglio, allora, signore! Potremmo essere noi la lor commedia nuova!

IL PADRE: Già, ma se non c'è l'autore! Tranne che non voglia esser lei...

IL CAPOCOMICO: Lor signori vogliono scherzare?

DOOR-KEEPER: Excuse me, **sir** (☹)...

MANAGER: Eh? What is it?

DOOR-KEEPER: These people are asking for you, **sir**.

MANAGER: Who are you, please (☹)? What do you want?

THE FATHER: As a matter of fact...we have come here in search of an author...

MANAGER: An author? What author?

THE FATHER: Any author, **sir**.

MANAGER: But there's no author here. We're not rehearsing a new piece.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER: So much the better, so much the better! (☹) We can be your new piece!

THE FATHER: Yes, but if the author isn't here...unless you would be willing...

MANAGER: You (☹) are trying to be funny.

(Luigi Pirandello, *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*, 1921 | *Six characters in search of an author*, translated by John Linstrum, 1979)

(6) *Oggi mi hanno invitato in questa scuola per raccontare ai bambini questa storia lontana. "Salutate il signore che è venuto a trovarci", dice la maestra alla classe. Tutti obbediscono e si leva un "Buongiorno signore" pronunciato in coro.*

Today I was invited to this school to tell the children this story from far away. "Say good morning to the *signore* who has come to visit us", says the teacher to the class. Everyone obeys and a "Good morning, *signore*" pronounced in choir arises.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

Similarly, in Tim Parks' *Italian Ways* (2014), the author reports several exchanges in which *Signore* on its own is used in service encounters taking place at train stations in Italy. In (7) and (8), *Signore* is used on its own by a member of the railway staff to address a male passenger, i.e. a perfect stranger:

- (7) At the main station in Milan a member of the railway staff has now been given the task of vetting those who stand in the line at the Sportello Veloce. “What train are you getting, **signore**? When does it leave?”
- (8) “Please, please, Signor Capotreno” – a man with a pink tie comes panting along the platform – “let me get on the train”. The Capotreno shakes his head. “This is a reservation-only train, **signore**”.

The examples are consistent with Mazzoleni’s observation that *Signore* on its own is not used in the same way as *Signora* and *Signorina* used on their own (1995:400). This is because, according to Mazzoleni, *Signore* on its own can only be used to address strangers, whereas *Signora* and *Signorina* on their own can also be used to address someone whom the speaker knows, but not well. For example, *Salve Signora/Signorina* (“Hello, *Signora/Signorina*”) can be said to someone whom the speaker does not know well, whereas *Salve Signore* cannot be used in the same situation. Several speakers whom I consulted agreed that such a difference exists and commented that they do not address a member of their family (e.g. their father-in-law) or a close friend as *Signore* (without a surname), because by doing this they would profess to treat the addressee as a stranger.

A different case is that of *Signore* by itself used to address God in combination with TU (e.g. *Benedetto sei tu, Signore*, ‘Blessed are you, Lord’), because the TU address form expresses the attitude ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’ (Chapter 12). *Signore* used to address men, by contrast, is combined with LEI, which expresses the attitude “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” (Chapter 11). Therefore, *Signore* in combination with TU expresses a different meaning from *Signore* combined with LEI and needs to be analysed separately, but for reasons of space it cannot be discussed here.

In combination, *Signore* takes the form *Signor*, however *Signore* and *Signor* are generally perceived as the same word with the same meaning by Italians, the phonetic difference being hardly noticed. *Signor* can combine with a first name, a surname or a professional title to

address a male adult whom the speaker does not know well, as the following examples illustrate:

- (9) a. «*Grazie, **signor Toscano**. Quindi nel registro del suo albergo ci sarebbero tutti i dati di quest'uomo?*»

Thank you very much, **Mr. Toscano**. So presumably all the information on this man is at the hotel desk?

- b. «*Non si disturbi, **signor questore**, guardi, con un certo sforzo proverò ad alzarmi e venire io da lei.*»

'No, don't bother, **sir**. You see...with a little effort I can try to get up and come to your office.'

(Andrea Camilleri, *L'età del dubbio*, 2008 | *The age of doubt*, translated by Stephen Sartarelli, 2012)

- (10) *Il dottore disse: «**Signor Mario**, ho l'onore di chiederle la mano di sua figlia Rosetta! Quando compirà quindici anni ci sposeremo».*

The doctor said: «**Signor Mario**, I have the honour of asking You the hand of Your daughter Rosetta! When she turns fifteen, we will get married».

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

Whatever combines with *Signore* indicates that the speaker knows some things about the addressee (at least who the addressee is and, in cases like *signor questore*, the kind of job which the addressee does), which means that the expressed attitude is different from that of *Signore* on its own. To distinguish the two meanings I will use the labels *Signore₁* and *Signore₂*. There are three differences between the two meanings. The first is that for *Signore₁* a component "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone'" needs to be posited, whereas for *Signore₂* the component has to be "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". The second is the difference between the impersonal character of *Signore₁*, reflected in the fact that it can be said to any adult man whom one does not know, and the personal character of *Signore₂*, which is used for a specific addressee. To capture this difference I will posit for the meaning of *Signore₁* a complementary component 'like they can know some good things about many other men' in addition to 'people can now know some good things about this man'.

The third difference is the semantic component “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is not someone like many other men’” which, I hypothesise, is inherent in the meaning of *Signore*₂ but not in the meaning of *Signore*₁. I posit this component for the meaning of *Signore*₂ on the basis of the comparison with the simple surname-address *Rossi!* or *Toscano!*, which is a separate address variant. In the waiting room of a hospital, for example, an adult male patient invited to come forward is not addressed as *Signor Rossi*, but simply as *Rossi*. Similarly, a male student at secondary school and at university is simply addressed as *Rossi*, and it would be bizarre if a teacher addressed him as *Signor Rossi*. Simple surname-address indicates that I know the surname of the addressee and that I do not know this person well, as stated by the following explication:

***Rossi!* (surname address)**

I want to say something to you now

when I say this to you, I think about you like this: “I know what this someone’s surname [m] is”

I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

The fact that in Italian surname-address can occur with or without *Signore* suggests that *Signore* is not added to address any male addressee: the conditions are (i) that the addressee be an adult and (ii) that the addressee be seen, in some ways, “distinguished”, so to speak, from many other men. In Italian, the expression ‘*sei un signore*’ (which has a different, though related meaning) expresses the idea of “distinguished person” comparable to the English ‘you are a gentleman’, which is why I propose that one of the differences between the interactional meanings of *Rossi* and *Signor Rossi* is that the latter includes a semantic component “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is not someone like many other men’” reflecting the semantic contribution of *Signore*₂ to this combination.

The differences between the meanings of *Signore*₁ and *Signore*₂ are captured in the following explications:

Prego, *Signore*₁ (on its own, *TU except to address God)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this: ‘this someone is a man [m]”

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone,

like they can know some good things about many other men [m]

people can feel something good towards this someone because of this”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone”

Buongiorno, *Signor*₂ *Rossi* (*Signor questore*, *Ciao, *TU)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is a man [m]

this someone is not someone like many other men [m]’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

people can feel something good towards this someone because of this”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

Another important difference between the meanings of *Rossi!* and *Signor Rossi* is that the first semantic component of *Rossi!* states ‘I want to say something to you now’, whereas the first component of *Signor Rossi* states ‘I want to say something *good* to you now’. For *Signore*, too, it could be suggested that a semantic component capturing the fact that this title is not used to address children should be included in the explication. Once again, a component “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is not a child’” would be redundant as there is already a component “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is a man’”.

6.2.3 *Signorina*

Signorina is used to address a female child, a young woman or an unmarried woman. It is used both by male and female speakers, but it is not used by children and is not used reciprocally by two young women. It is also used to address a young waitress, but in this case the title expresses a different interactional meaning which for reasons of space cannot be discussed here. *Signorina* can be used either on its own or in combination with a first name or surname, whereas combinations with professional titles are not attested. The matching pronominal address form is LEI. The only case in which *signorina* can take TU and compatible forms (e.g. *Ciao*) is when men use it flatteringly to address a female child, as in (17).

In the following extracts from novels, *signorina* is used by itself by men to address young women whom they do not know. In the first example, a teacher addresses a student,¹³ in the second example an inspector addresses a secretary and in the third example a priest addresses a young woman. Noticeably, in all cases there is a substantial age gap between the interactants:

- (11) *Il professore di italiano mi trattò come se anche il suono della mia voce lo infastidisse: lei, signorina, più che scrivere argomentando, scrive sfarfallando; vedo, signorina, che si butta con spericolatezza su questioni di cui ignora del tutto i problemi di impostazione critica.*

The professor of Italian treated me as if even the sound of my voice annoyed him: **signorina**, rather than validated by arguments, **your** (LEI) writing is full of non-sense; I see, **signorina**, that **you** (LEI) fearlessly discuss questions ignoring completely the related problems of critical approach.

(Elena Ferrante, *Storia del nuovo cognome*, 2012, my translation)

- (12) *La conversazione tra la Piras e le segretaria della Gallardo Costruzioni è surreale, per certi versi. La donna, ostinatamente, si rifiuta di dare ogni informazione sull'ingegnere capo [...] A un certo punto, rendendosi conto della situazione di stallo, l'ispettore ha un'idea e sottrae il telefono al magistrato. "Salve, signorina. Sono l'ispettore Lojacono della polizia. Mi rendo conto delle esigenze di riservatezza, ha ragione..."*

The conversation between Piras and the **secretary** of Gallardo Constructors Group is surreal, in some ways. The woman obstinately refuses to disclose any information on

¹³ This novel is set in the 1960s.

the chief engineer [...] Realising that the situation was stalemate, the inspector had an idea and took the phone from the magistrate's hands.

"Hello, **signorina**. This is Police Inspector Lojacono. I acknowledge the need for privacy, **you (LEI)** are right..."

(Maurizio De Giovanni, *Il metodo del coccodrillo*, 2012, my translation)

- (13) "Prete o non prete, è un vecchio bavoso e non avrà mai il coraggio delle sue azioni. L'altro giorno mi ha pure detto: **signorina**, quando **può** dovremmo parlare, **lei** ha bisogno di conforto spirituale..."

"Priest or not, he is a dirty old man who will never have the courage of his convictions. The other day he even told me: **signorina**, we should talk when **you (LEI)**'re free, **you (LEI)** need spiritual support..."

(Maurizio De Giovanni, *Il metodo del coccodrillo*, 2012, my translation)

In the following examples, *signorina* is combined with a surname or a first name. In the first case, when the surname is used, an inspector addresses an old lady whom he does not know and who explicitly asks to be addressed as *signorina*, not *signora*; in the second case, two men first address two sisters whom they do not know well, both young and unmarried, as *signorine* and then address one of the two as *signorina* plus first name; in the third case, a woman addresses a young girl living in the same block as her whom she meets for the first time:

- (14) «Io mi chiamo Assunta Baeri» attaccò la **vecchia** «e risulta dal documento che lei appartiene alla polizia» [...]»
«**Signora**, io...»
«**Signorina**»
«**Signorina Baeri**, sono venuto a disturbarla per parlare della **signorina Giuliana Di Stefano**. Questo appartamento era suo?»

"My name is Assunta Baeri", **the old lady began**, "and your ID says that you're with the police". [...]

"**Mrs. Baeri**, I –"

"**Miss Baeri**"

"**Miss Baeri**, I'm sorry to disturb you, but I came to talk to you about Giuliana Di Stefano. This used to be her flat, didn't it"

(Andrea Camilleri, *La gita a Tindari*, 2000, translated by Stephen Sartarelli)

- (15) Un carrozzino si fermò al cancello. «C'è nessuno?» sentii chiamare. Erano due ufficiali di Nizza che avevo già visto una volta sul terrazzo con loro. Stetti nascosto dietro il portico, zitto. «C'è nessuno? **signorine!**» gridavano. «**Signorina Irene!**» Il cane si mise a abbaiare, io zitto.

A small carriage stopped in front of the gate. “Is there anyone here?” I heard someone calling out. They were two officers from Nice whom I had already seen once on the balcony with them. I stayed hidden behind the porch, quiet. “Is there anyone here? **Signorine!**” they were calling out. “**Signorina Irene!**” The dog started barking, I stayed quiet.

(Cesare Pavese, *La luna e i falò*, 1950, my translation)

- (16) “*Piacere, io sono Maria, la nuova amministratrice condominiale.*”
 “*Il piacere è mio, signora Maria. Io sono Tina Polidoro, del primo piano.*”
 “*Oh, la prego: mi dia del tu e non mi chiami signora. Non sono sposata, ci mancherebbe altro. Ho ventidue anni, non mi dica che ne dimostro di più, la prego...Forse è colpa di questo orrendo tubino grigio con queste schifose spalline di gommapiuma...non piace nemmeno a me: ma sa com'è, signora Polidoro, già mi ritengo strafortunata ad aver ottenuto questo lavoro...*” [...] “*...signorina Maria?*”
 “*Solo Maria, la prego signora Polidoro. Mi dica.*”
- “Nice to meet you, I’m Maria, the new administrator of this condominium.”
 “My pleasure, Signora Maria. I’m Tina Polidoro, I live on the first floor.”
 “Oh, I beg you (LEI): give (LEI form) me the TU and don’t call (LEI form) me signora. I’m not married, so there’s no reason. I’m twenty-two, and don’t tell (LEI form) me I look older, I beg you (LEI)...Maybe it’s because of this horrible grey stealth dress which has these ugly foam rubber epaulettes...I don’t like it either: but you (LEI) know, signora Polidoro, I already consider myself really lucky to have found this job...” [...] “*...signorina Maria?*”
 “Just Maria, I beg you (LEI) signora Polidoro. Tell (LEI form) me.”

(Chiara Gamberale, *Le luci nelle case degli altri*, 2010, my translation)

In (17), a man addresses a female child as *signorina* in combination with TU. This is a way of flattering the child, because the speaker expresses the attitude of thinking about the child as a young girl, i.e. as someone older than she really is, and as a young girl who knows “good manners” and behaves in a girl-appropriate way:

- (17) *Ciao - aveva detto con indifferenza. Non avevo risposto, ricambiando però il suo sorriso, come se tra noi ci fosse un'intesa . - Come **ti** chiami, **signorina**?*

- Ciao – he said indifferently. I didn’t reply, but smiled back, as if there were an unspoken agreement between us. – What is **your** (TU) name, **signorina**?
 (CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

Example (16) is particularly significant because it illustrates very well how *Signora* and *Signorina* are used in conversations between people who have just met. In this extract, both

Signora and *Signorina* are combined with a first name and the same person, Maria, is first addressed as *Signora Maria* and then as *Signorina Maria* as soon as the speaker learns that she is unmarried and still very young. The most interesting aspect of this exchange is the way the speakers negotiate the use of these forms of address as well as the use of LEI and TU (more in Chapter 11).

Before discussing the interactional meaning of *signorina*, it might be worth spending some words on how Italian women perceive this title. In an article recently published by the *Accademia della Crusca* (2017),¹⁴ the most famous research institute on Italian language, D'Achille states that the use of *signorina* in both spoken and written language has decreased substantially over the last seventy years, in favour of a broader use of *Signora* in its place. According to the author, the decrease in use reflects a recent change in middle-aged women's attitude towards *signorina*: while some appreciate being addressed with this title, other women do not because they find it either old-fashioned or offensive. Specifically, women with high professional status (e.g. lawyers, magistrates, politicians) take offense because *signorina* to them expresses the idea of someone young and naïve, immature or inexperienced. Essentially, the title gives them less respect than they think they deserve (cf. Suomela-Härmä et al. 2013). Unmarried middle-aged (and older) women do not like *signorina* because to them the title emphasises in a negative way the fact that they are not married, i.e. they see it as synonymous of *vecchia zitella* ('old spinster', cf. Imperato 2013).

However, in a previous article (2015) D'Achille had pointed out that a possible abolition of *signorina* is unlikely and in fact the idea "raises perplexity in young women who do not appreciate, given their age, being addressed as *signora*" (56, my translation). This observation is consistent with the results of a recent study on Italian women's perceptions of *signora* and *signorina* conducted by Bresin (2015), which seem to contradict the assumption that *signorina*

¹⁴ <http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/lingua-italiana/consulenza-linguistica/domande-risposte/signora-signorina>, published March 2017.

is falling out of use. About 40% of the women who participated in Bresin's study commented 'it makes me feel old' to the question 'if they call me *signora*', whereas for the question 'if they call me *signorina*' the comment was either 'it makes no difference' (above 40%) or 'I like it' (just below 40%). Age has emerged as a crucial factor in Bresin's study: the results for *signorina* indicate that about 50% of women in the 41-73 age group commented 'it makes no difference', whereas 45% of women in the 18-30 age group commented 'I like it'. Only 25% of women in the 41-73 age group commented 'I don't like it', and the figure plummets to 18% for women in the 18-30 age group. Bresin concludes that of all the meanings typically associated with *signorina* in the literature (unmarried, young, discriminatory and old-fashioned), "all are confirmed except the discriminatory and obsolete connotations of *signorina*". She adds that "*signorina* is the most widely preferred term of address among women up to 40 years of age" and that, in general, "there is no hard and fast rule, the context is very important as is subjectivity".

In sum, it seems quite early and perhaps even unjustified to talk about a disappearance of *signorina*. Italian women's attitudes towards this title are important, and so far considerable differences have emerged among age groups. Perceptions on usage are important, especially when teaching *signorina* as a form of address in Italian L2 classes; however, the addressee's perceptions on use are irrelevant to the analysis of the interactional meaning expressed by the speaker. Furthermore, some speakers' perceptions on a form of address do not affect the use of that form by other speakers. Whether she likes it or not, in Italy a female university student will always be addressed by her lecturer as *signorina*, as there is no other available form for the speaker.

There are differences in use between *Signorina* and *Signora* which reflect important differences in meaning. One concerns the kind of addressee: both *Signora* and *Signorina* are used to address female interlocutors, but the range of women addressed as *Signorina* is much

more restricted, therefore the cognitive scenario inherent in the meaning expressed is different from that of *Signora*. For *Signorina*, too, I will posit a composite component ‘when I say this I think about you like this: ...’ consisting of four ideas: ‘this someone is someone of one kind’, ‘someone can be someone of this kind if this someone is a woman’, ‘someone can be someone of this kind if this someone can be a woman after some time’ (which captures the fact that the addressee can be a *bambina*, a female child, or a *ragazza*, a “girl”), and ‘someone can’t be someone of this kind if this someone is someone’s wife’ capturing the fact that *Signorina* is used to address unmarried women.

A second difference between *signora* and *signorina* is related to the diminutive *–ina*. In Dressler and Barbaresi (1994, Chapter 3) Italian diminutives are described as ways of expressing “affection” towards the speaker. The fact that *Signorina* is often used to flatter a young girl or female child suggests that the diminutive *–ina* does contribute semantically, and I suggest that the contribution consists in the expression of some good feelings towards the addressee. This can be captured with a component ‘people can feel something good towards someone of this kind’. In this case, too, the component is not phrased in first person (‘I feel’) because this phrasing would be inconsistent with the fact that *signorina* is not used reciprocally by two girls or two unmarried women. The assumption is that a girl or an unmarried woman would not express some good feelings towards someone of the same “kind”. Therefore, it seems more plausible to posit a component phrased in terms of ‘people’ for the meaning of *signorina*.

Finally, the examples indicate that *Signorina* can be used to address women whom the speaker does not know well, or not at all. For this reason, I will posit a semantic component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” for the invariant meaning. All the posited components are integrated in the following explication:

Prego, *Signorina* (on its own, *Maria, Donghì*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is someone of one kind

someone can be someone of this kind if this someone is a woman [m]

someone can be someone of this kind if this someone

can be a woman [m] after some time

someone can’t be someone of this kind if this someone is someone’s wife [m]

people can feel something good towards someone of this kind’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

people can feel something good towards this someone because of this”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

6.2.4 *Signori*

There are both similarities and differences between the plural *Signori* and the singular *Signore*.

Like *Signore*, the plural *Signori* is used to address both people whom one does not know well

and people whom one does not know at all. Differently from *Signore*, *Signori* can be used both

as plural masculine and gender-neutrally to address a mixed audience. This means that *Signori*

is polysemous and I distinguish three different meanings with the labels *Signori*₁, *Signori*₂ and

*Signori*₃.

*Signori*₁ is used gender-neutrally to address a married couple in combination with the husband’s surname:

- (18) *A Giorgio e Cinzia, per quanto sgraziata fosse, quella voce parve quella di un Angelo; non se lo fecero dire una seconda volta e si ritrovarono in pochi minuti dinanzi la camera del Primario. – Signori Masina, è incredibile...ma abbiamo trovato finalmente il donatore compatibile!*

To Giorgio and Cinzia, however ungraceful that voice may be, it sounded like that of an angel; they did not need to be told twice and in a few minutes they found themselves in front of the Head’s room. – **Signori Masina**, it’s incredible...but we have finally found a compatible donator!

The peculiarity is that a plural masculine title is used to address both a man and a woman. To address a married couple in English, one would have to use two nouns which are clearly distinguished in gender (e.g. *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*) or one could refer to the couple as *the Smiths*. The interactional meaning of *Signori*₁ can be explicated as follows:

Prego, *Signori*₁ (*Signori Masina*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO TWO PEOPLE NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to two people at the same time
I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about these two people like this:

‘these two people are not people of the same kind
one of the two is a man [m], the other is a woman [m]
this woman is this man’s wife [m]’

at the same time, I think like this about these two people:

‘people can know some good things about these two people’”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT THESE PEOPLE WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think like this about these two people: “I know these people well”

*Signori*₂ is used gender-neutrally to address a mixed group. The mixed group addressed as *Signori* can consist of either people whom the speaker does not know well or people whom the speaker does not know at all. In (17), a ticket inspector uses *Signori* to address the passengers of a train, a group of people which includes both men and women whom he does not know:

(19) *Proprio in quel momento la porta dello scompartimento si aprì bruscamente ed entrò il gran controllore. – Signori, il biglietto, prego. –*

In that very moment the compartment’s door opened brusquely and the great ticket inspector entered. – Tickets, please, **signori** -

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

In other cases *Signori*₂ can be used by a judge in court or by the convener of a conference to call everyone to order, e.g. “*Signori, silenzio!*” (“*Signori, silence!*”). In this case, the addressees are people whom the speaker does not know well. To capture the semantic invariant,

I will posit a component “I don’t think like this about these people: ‘I know these people well’”

for the meaning of *Signori*₂, which can be explicated as follows:

Prego, *Signori*₂ (used to address a mixed audience)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO SOME PEOPLE NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to some people at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think like this about these people: ‘these people are not people of the same kind’

at the same time, I think like this about these people:

‘people can know some good things about these people’”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT THESE PEOPLE WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think like this about these people: “I know these people well”

*Signori*₃ is the exact plural counterpart of *Signore*₁, i.e. the title used to address a group of male adults whom the speaker does not know. *Signori*₃ typically occurs in the fixed phrase *Signore e Signori* (comparable to the English *Ladies and Gentlemen*), and its meaning can be explicated as follows:

Buonasera, *Signori*₃ (e.g. *Signore e Signori*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO SOME PEOPLE NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to some people at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think like this about these people: ‘these people are people of one kind, they are all men [m]’

at the same time, I think like this about these people:

‘people can know some good things about these people’”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT THESE PEOPLE WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think like this about these people: “I know these people”

6.3 Professional titles

In Italian, a good number of nouns are used to address people who exercise particular, prestigious professions linked with a degree: *Professore/Professoressa* for male and female teachers from middle school onwards, *Dottore/Dottoressa* for male and female medical doctors, *Avvocato* for lawyers, *Ingegnere* for engineers, *Ragioniere* for accountants, *Architetto* for

architects, *Notaio* for notaries and *Maestro* for a male musician. Of these, only *Dottore* and *Professore* have a feminine counterpart, whereas all the other nouns are used gender-neutrally as forms of address despite being syntactically masculine (e.g. *Salve Avvocato* said to a lawyer who is a woman).¹⁵ Furthermore, the titles *Dottore* and *Professore* are polysemous: there is a *Dottore*₁ used to address medical doctors, and a *Dottore*₂ used to address *uomini di legge*, “law people” like magistrates and high-rank police officers;¹⁶ there is also a *Professore*₁ used to address teachers and a *Professore*₂ used to address doctors who are Heads of Departments in a hospital (*primari*) and also lecturers in medicine. The polysemy results from a difference in the professed way of thinking about the addressee inherent in the interactional meanings, to be discussed in 6.3.3 and 6.3.4. All professional titles share the same syntactic and semantic properties to be discussed in the next two sub-sections.

6.3.1 Syntactic properties of Italian professional titles

Italian professional titles used as forms of address have two major syntactic properties: the first concerns the combinability options and the second is the possibility of being repeated a few times in the same exchange to address the same person. In relation to the first property, in most cases professional titles are used as forms of address on their own, but can also be combined with a surname and rarely with *signore/signora*. However, they cannot be combined with the TU address form and with linguistic items which take TU, for example *Ciao* and first-name address, with the exception of *Maestra* (see 6.3.5):

- (20) *Mentre aspettavamo le parole del medico, mio padre ha rotto il silenzio.*
«Dottore, vorrei che fosse molto sincero, voglio sapere la verità, senza mezze parole.»

¹⁵ Further discussion in section 6.6. Some speakers commented that *Maestra* is sometimes used to address female musicians. For a full criticism of the predominance of the masculine gender in Italian titles see Sabatini (1984, 1987).

¹⁶ There is also a *Dottore*₃ used to address any graduated person, which for reasons of space cannot be discussed here. The broad use of *Dottore* has generated the popular saying “*In Italia siamo tutti dottori*” (‘in Italy we are all *dottori*’, Treccani 2011:91).

As we waited for the doctor to say something to us, my father broke the silence.
 «**Dottore**, please be (LEI form) very sincere, I want to know the truth and with nothing left unsaid.»

(Fabio Volo, *Il tempo che vorrei*, 2009, my translation)

- (21) “**Avvocato Vallucci**, buongiorno! Come mai da queste parti?” si sentì ad un tratto chiamare.
 Alex alzò lo sguardo e riconobbe un suo cliente: “Ah, è lei, **ragionier Manni**...come va?”
 “Bene, grazie...posso offrirle qualcosa, **avvocato**?”
 “Grazie **ragioniere**, ho già ordinato.”

“**Avvocato Vallucci**, good morning! How come are you here?” he suddenly heard himself being called.

Alex raised his eyes and recognised one of his clients: “Ah it is you (LEI), **Ragionier Manni**...how are you?” (lit. how is it going?)

“Fine, thank you...may I offer you (LEI) anything, **Avvocato**?”

“Thanks, **Ragioniere**, I’ve already ordered.”

(Salvatore Brandanu, *Paese*, 2014, my translation)

- (22) “Ecco, **signor avvocato**,” riprese il Piccirilli, dando un’ingollatina. “Abbiamo ricevuto una citazione.”
 “Assassinio, **signor avvocato**” proruppe di nuovo la moglie.

“Well, **signor lawyer**” continued Piccirilli, swallowing a bit. “We have been asked to appear in court.”

“Murder, **signor lawyer**” bursted again his wife.

(Luigi Pirandello, *La casa del Granella*, 1905, my translation)

Examples like (20) are quite old and in general there is very little evidence for combinations with *signore/signora* in literary texts of the last one-hundred years. This suggests that this kind of combination is not used in current Italian, and this hypothesis is consistent with the comments of the speakers whom I consulted, who did not report using or hearing combinations like *Signor Dottore/Signora Dottoressa*.

Example (19) illustrates the second syntactic property of professional titles, the possibility of being repeated a few times in the same exchange to address the same person, also illustrated by (21):

- (23) GIACOMINO: Non mi tocchi! Non mi s’accosti, **professore**! Lei mi sta facendo soffrire una pena d’inferno! [...]
 TOTI: Ma perché, che hai?

GIACOMINO: *Vuol sapere che ho? Glielo dico subito. Mi sono fidanzato, **professore**. Ha capito? Mi sono fidanzato.*

TOTI: *Fi...fidan...fidanzato?*

GIACOMINO: *Sì! E dunque basta! Basta per sempre, **professore**! Capirà che ora non posso più vederla qua, comportare la sua presenza in casa mia.*

TOTI: *Mi...mi cacci via?*

GIACOMINO: *No, no...ma se ne vada...è bene che lei...che lei se ne vada, **professore**.*

GIACOMINO: Don't (LEI form) touch me! Don't (LEI form) come close to me, **professore**! You (LEI) are making me go through hell suffering! [...]

TOTI: But why, what's wrong with you?

GIACOMINO: You want to know what's wrong with me? I'll tell you straight away. I am engaged, **professore**. Do you (LEI) understand? I am engaged.

TOTI: En...engaged?

GIACOMINO: Exactly! And so that's enough! Enough forever, **professore**! You (LEI) will understand that now I cannot see you (LEI) again here, I can't bear your presence in my house.

TOTI: Are...are you sending me away?

GIACOMINO: No, no...but please leave (LEI form)...you(LEI)'d better...you (LEI)'d better leave, **professore**.

(Luigi Pirandello, *Pensaci Giacomino!*, 1916, my translation)

As with generic titles, this property suggests a cultural script which encourages speakers to repeat the title with which they address the interlocutor several times in the same exchange. This script will be discussed in Chapter 11.

6.3.2 *The semantics of Italian professional titles*

Semantically, Italian professional titles can be interpreted as ways of saying something good to the addressee with one word of one kind. This something good consists in a professed way of thinking about the addressee which includes two different cognitive scenarios: 'how I think about you when I say this' and 'how I don't think about you when I say this'. The first part of the cognitive scenario, 'how I think about you', includes, first of all, some good things which the speaker knows about the interlocutor: the fact that the addressee does a job which requires a deep knowledge of a specific subject and which not many people can do, and the fact that this job is prestigious and earns the addressee a good position in society.

This second element is important, because it distinguishes nouns like *Avvocato* from nouns like *infermiera* ('nurse').¹⁷ Arguably, a nurse, too, is someone with specialised expertise who does a job which many people cannot do. The difference between a nurse and a lawyer is that in Italian society the job of the nurse is not regarded as prestigious as that of a lawyer, and therefore does not generate in the speaker's mind the same image of the addressee as that of a lawyer. Essentially, there are no "good things" which people can know about the *infermiera* because of the job which she does. The fact that *Avvocato* can be preceded by *signor* whereas the combination *signora infermiera* is not attested supports this hypothesis; the meaning of *signora* includes the component "I think about you like this: 'people can know some good things about this someone'" (see 6.2.1) and the fact that *infermiera* does not combine with *signora* suggests that there is incompatibility of meanings due precisely to this semantic component.

A number of components can be posited to capture the scenario 'how I think about you when I say this'. A first plausible component is 'this someone is not someone like many other people', which captures the idea that the addressee is a "distinguished" person because of the job which they do. Two other components specify in what way this person is 'not like many other people': 'this someone can do things of some kinds, not many other people can do these things' and 'this someone knows many things of some kinds, not many people know these things'. In addition to these, the components 'people can know some good things about this someone' and 'people can think something good about this someone because of this' can be posited to capture the speaker's acknowledgement of the addressee's position in society.

The cognitive scenario 'how I don't think about you when I say this' captures the way in which the speaker purports to relate to the addressee during the interaction by calling him/her *Avvocato* or *Professoressa*. To know some good things about the addressee does not mean that

¹⁷ This noun is not discussed here.

the speaker knows the addressee well. In fact, in Italian one would not address a close friend or a relative as *Avvocato*, even though one knows that this person is a lawyer. Moreover, the fact that all professional titles with the exception of *Maestra* are incompatible with TU and with first-name address suggests that they are semantically incompatible with the expressed attitude ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’ (Chapter 12). By contrast, compatibility with LEI suggests that the attitude expressed in the semantic invariant of professional titles is “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”.

Another key element emerging from the examples is the difference in position or role between the interactants. A bottom-up relationship between speaker and addressee characterises examples (18), (20) and (21), whereas in (19) the interactants are different people doing completely different jobs. These differences suggest the presence of another component in the interactional meaning: “I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”. However, this would imply that, for example, two doctors can address each other as *Dottore*, and this case needs qualifying. The doctors among the speakers whom I consulted commented that they do not address a colleague who works in the same hospital and whom they know well as *Dottore*, but they go for *collega* (‘colleague’) or first name in combination with TU. They would only call a colleague *Dottore* if they do not know the interlocutor well and if the addressee specialises in a different area from their own one. Similarly, the teachers whom I consulted commented that they do not address a colleague working in the same institution as *Professore*, whereas they would go for *Professore* if the interlocutor were someone with more working experience or more publications whom they do not know well. Interestingly, many teachers commented that they still address their former school teachers as *Professore*; this practice can be explained assuming that in this case the speaker puts themselves in the position of ‘student’ when interacting with the former teacher, and this kind of relationship supports the expressed attitude ‘I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone

is someone like me””. Two lawyers can address each other as *Avvocato* when they represent different positions in court, accuse and defence. In this sense, there is a difference between them.

Taking these elements into account, I posit a composite component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me’” for the invariant meaning of Italian professional titles used as forms of address. This component captures one composite expressed attitude, not two separate ones, because a component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’” would totally exclude that two people doing the same job could address each other with a professional title, and this is not the case. The proposed component, by contrast, allows two colleagues to use a title to address one another and captures the tone that a speaker might want to express towards a colleague.

In addition to the semantic properties already mentioned, there is another one emerging from the examples which is fundamental for cross-linguistic comparison: the irrelevance of the contextual factor of ‘place’, in contrast with the English titles analysed in the previous chapter. In (19), two people address each other as *Avvocato* and *Ragioniere* in a café and in (21) the student calls his teacher *Professore* at home, not at school. These examples suggest that, unlike in Australian English for example, the attitude expressed by Italian professional titles is not limited to the context of a specific institution, but reflects how the speaker professes to think about the addressee in general.

In sum, all the proposed semantic components are integrated in the following explication:

Buongiorno, *Avvocato* (*Dottore*₁, *Professore*₁, *Ingegnere*, *Architetto*, *Notaio*, *Maestro*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is not someone like many other people

this someone can do things of some kinds, not many other people can do these things

this someone knows many things about things of some kinds,

not many people know these things’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

'people can know some good things about this someone
because of this, they can think something good about this someone''

[B] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like this:

"I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me"

6.3.3 *Professore₂ for medical doctors*

Professore₂ used to address a doctor is formally, syntactically and semantically different from *Professore₁* for teachers. *Professore₂* is only used on its own and therefore can never be used in the shortened form *Professor*, which *Professore₁* takes when followed by a surname for phonetic reasons (e.g. *Professor Rossi*). *Professore₂* is used in exchanges between people who have different roles within the hospital, e.g. a patient or a doctor addressing a *primario*, a Head of Department. It can also be used by someone outside the hospital context, for example a journalist interviewing a head of department in a hospital. In most cases, a doctor addressed as *Professore* is also a lecturer in medicine, which is why the form of address for teachers and lecturers is used for this kind of doctor. In (22), an extract from a play by Dario Fo, *Professore* is said by one of the characters, a politician, to a surgeon:

(24) "Entri qui, in sala operatoria, proprio in un momento delicato...mentre mi infilano aghi e capelli nel cranio..."

Interviene il professore: "Non si preoccupi, presidente, anzi, se si crea una situazione per cui lei è portato a distrarsi dal clima operatorio, è meglio. E lei, signore, cominci con lo svelarci la sua identità."

"**Professore**, è meglio che lei non lo sappia. Sarei più tranquillo."

"You (TU) enter here, in the surgery, at such a risky moment...while they are inserting needles and hair in my skull..."

The doctor speaks: "Don't worry (LEI form), presidente, it is better if there is a situation in which you (LEI) can get distracted from the operation. And you (LEI), signore, start (LEI form) by revealing your identity."

"**Professore**, it would be better if you (LEI) didn't know it. I'd feel more at ease."

(Dario Fo, *L'apocalisse rimandata*, 2008, my translation)

The differences between *Professore₁*, used to address teachers, and *Professore₂*, used to address doctors, are two: (i) *Professore₂* is never used in combination with a surname; *Professore₂* is only used non-reciprocally and expresses the idea that the addressee is seen as being someone above other doctors in the hospital. The professed way of thinking can be captured with a composite component ‘I think about you like this: ...’ which includes the components ‘this someone is someone of one kind’ and ‘people of this kind can do many good things for other people in a place of one kind’, and another component ‘this someone is someone above many people of this kind in this place’.

In addition, considering that *Dottore₁* and *Professore₂* compete as forms of address for medical doctors, I suggest that there is also a difference in tone between the two nouns which needs to be captured. On the view of many native speakers, there is a nuance of “superiority” and “importance” in *Professore₂*, related to the fact that the doctor addressed as *Professore* is a renowned doctor who does things which other doctors cannot do. This difference can be captured with the same components posited for *Dottore₁* without the prime CAN: ‘people know some good things about this someone’ and ‘people think something good towards this someone’. In sum, the interactional meaning of *Professore₂* can be explicated as follows:

Buongiorno, *Professore₂* (for medical doctors)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is someone of one kind

people of this kind can do many good things for other people in a place of one kind

this someone is someone above many people of this kind in this place”

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people know some good things about this someone

because of this, they think something good towards this someone”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

6.3.4 *Dottore₂ for police officers and magistrates*

Dottore₂ used to address high-rank police officers and magistrates is often mentioned in dictionaries, but it has never been clearly distinguished from *Dottore₁* used to address medical doctors, and this has created the wrong assumption that the nouns used to address police officers is the same as that used to address doctors.¹⁸ In fact, *Dottore₂* presents the same formal and syntactic differences which distinguish *Professore₁* from *Professore₂*; *Dottore₂* is only used on its own and cannot take the form *Dottor* which *Dottore₁* takes when followed by a surname (e.g. *Dottor Rossi*). The semantic difference with *Dottore₁* lies in the professed way of thinking about the addressee; unlike *Dottore₁*, *Dottore₂* is only used non-reciprocally in exchanges between people who have a bottom-up relationship, because the addressee is above the speaker in the police rank. In (23) *Dottore₂* is used by an inspector to address his superior, a superintendent:

- (25) QUESTORE: Certo che ha frainteso...Lasci parlare me, commissario...
 COMMISSARIO: Sì, scusi, **dottore**...
- SUPERINTENDENT: Of course you've got it wrong...Leave that to me, Inspector...*
INSPECTOR: Certainly, sorry, sir...
(Dario Fo, *Morte accidentale di un anarchico*, 1970 |
Accidental death of an anarchist, translated by Alan Cumming and Tim Supple, 1991)

In (24), *Dottore₂* is used by a low rank police officer to address an inspector:

- (26) “Ah **dottori dottori!** Ah **dottori!**” *Sapiva che cosa significava la lamintevoli*
 litanìa.
 “Ha chiamato il questore?”
 “Sissì, ora ora telefonò”. [...]
 “Dici a Fazio di venire subito da me. Ah, senti, attrovasti cosa sul Kimberley
 Process?”
 “Sissì, **dottori**, ora ci lo stampo”.

¹⁸ The *Treccani* encyclopaedia, for example, mentions a special use of *Dottore* for “*uomini di legge*” (“law men”), but without clarifying how this is different from *Dottore* used to address medical doctors (<http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/dottore/>).

“Ahh, **Chief, Chief!** Ahh, **Chief!**” Montalbano knew what this plaintive litany meant.

“Did the commissioner call?”

“Yessir, ’e did, jess now, by tiliphone” [...]

“Tell Fazio to come to my office at once. And, by the way, did you find anything about the Kimberley Process?”

“Yessir, I did, **Chief**, I’ll prinn it up straightaways.”

(Andrea Camilleri, *L’età del dubbio*, 2008 | *The age of doubt*, translated by Stephen Sartarelli, 2012)

In the English translations of these texts, *Dottore*₂ has been rendered respectively as sir in (23) and as Chief in (24); these two as well as other translation solutions will be discussed in detail in 6.5. The examples show that the recipient of *Dottore*₂ is only not only ‘someone above many people in a place of one kind’, but ‘someone above me’ taking the perspective of the speaker. Thus, the interactional meaning of *Dottore*₂ can be explicated as follows:

Scusi, *Dottore*₂

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is someone of one kind

people of this kind are above many other people, I am one of these other people

because of this, this someone is someone above me’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘because this someone is someone of this kind,

people can think something good about this someone”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

6.3.5 *Maestra*

The title discussed in this section is not the feminine counterpart of *Maestro* used to address a male musician, but is the noun used to address a female primary school teacher. As far as combinability options are concerned, *Maestra* can be used either on its own or in combination with a first name, but not with a surname (**Maestra Rossi*). Furthermore, *Maestra* is the only

professional title which can combine with both TU and LEI address forms. This is because *Maestra* can be used in two different kinds of exchange: in pupil-teacher exchanges *Maestra* is used by the pupil in combination with TU and compatible forms, whereas in parent-teacher exchanges *Maestra* is used by the parent in combination with LEI and forms which take LEI:

- (27) «*Ciao! Maestra, posso telefornarti quando voglio, vero? Non disturbo mica?*»
 «*Ciao! Maestra, I can phone you (TU) when I want, right? I don't disturb, do I?*»

(Pasqua Onorino e Myriam Spinazzola, *Aspettatemi...sto arrivando!*, 2007)

- (28) - *Senta, signora maestra...Per carità, le dica...le dica che rinunzii all'idea di...di far la maestra...* -

- Listen (LEI form), **signora maestra**...For God's sake, tell (LEI form) her...Tell (LEI form) her to give up this idea...this idea of becoming a teacher... -

(Luigi Pirandello, *L'esclusa*, 1908, my translation)

The possibility of combining with both TU and LEI has implications for the interactional meaning of *Maestra*. Depending on who the speaker is, *Maestra* could reflect a very close relationship or a less close relationship between the interactants. Consequently, a semantic component capturing how well the speaker professes to know the addressee cannot be part of the invariant meaning. Two usage factors are relevant to the interactional meaning of *Maestra*. The first is that in no case *Maestra* is used reciprocally between two teachers. The second is that a female teacher is normally not addressed as *Maestra* outside the scholastic environment. This implies that, unlike the other professional titles discussed so far, the contextual factor of *place* is relevant to *Maestra*.

My hypothesis is that the cognitive scenario of *Maestra* consists of an idea of the addressee as a woman, and of an idea of this woman as someone who belongs to a specific category of people, that of 'teachers'. The scenario can be captured with a composite component 'I think about you like this: ...' which includes three components: 'this someone is a woman', 'this someone is someone of one kind', and 'someone of this kind is a teacher' (using 'teacher' as a

semantic molecule, cf. Chapter 2). In sum, the interactional meaning of *Maestra* can be explicated as follows:

Grazie, *Maestra*

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time
I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is a woman [m]

this someone is someone of one kind

someone of this kind is a teacher [m]’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

people can think something good towards this someone because of this”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone very well”

6.4 Nouns used to address people holding top positions in an institution

Another category which I posit is that of nouns used to address people who hold top positions in an institution: *Direttore/Direttrice* for the person holding the position of director, *Presidente* for the person holding the position of president, *Preside* for headmaster,¹⁹ *Rettore* for university chancellor, *Sindaco/Sindaca* for male/female mayor and *Ministro/Ministra* for male/female minister. It should be said that the feminine *Sindaca* and *Ministra* (as forms of address) are relatively recent developments reflecting the growing number of women who have held the positions of mayor and minister in Italy over the last few years. Although the number of nouns is not very big, nouns used to address people holding top positions in an institution represent an important part of the repertoire of “titles” available to Italian speakers and are also culturally salient (see 6.6).

¹⁹ Until a few years ago, *Preside* was also used to address the Head of faculty in a university.

As discussed in Chapter 5, in English *director* is not used to address the person holding that position, and this is not just linguistically, but also culturally significant. The Italian *Direttore*, by contrast, is used for both reference and address, and as a form of address it is used very broadly for various kinds of directors (of a newspaper, a company, a firm, a bank, a post office, a supermarket). Moreover, as I will show in the next subsection, *Direttore* as a form of address is expected in exchanges between people who have a certain kind of relationship; any absence of this noun could negatively affect the relationship between the interactants, because it would imply the non-expression of a certain meaning encouraged by the underlying cultural values which affect relationships with people holding top positions in an institution.

Not only do nouns like *Direttore* and *Sindaca* suggest that in Italian culture to be someone above many people in a place is regarded as good, but also that it is good to say something good to the person holding a top position in an institution with a word which expresses how I think about this person. The syntactic and semantic characteristics of Italian nouns used to address people holding top positions in an institution will be discussed in separate sub-sections.

6.4.1 Syntactic characteristics of titles for top positions

Italian titles for top positions occur in short utterances, with or without an accompanying greeting. Like professional titles, titles for top positions can be used either on their own or in combination with a surname or *signore*. The matching pronominal address form is LEI and therefore these nouns cannot combine with any form which is incompatible with LEI (e.g. *Ciao* and first-name address). In (27) and (28) the nouns *Sindaca* and *Direttore* are used on their own, whereas in (29) *Direttore* is combined with *signore*:

- (29) **Sindaca**, a Roma c'è ancora Mafia Capitale?
 Sindaca, is Mafia Capitale still in Rome?

(interview to Virginia Raggi, Mayor of Rome, 1/10/2016,
<http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/premium/articoli/a-roma-fanno-sparire-i-faldoni-io-voglio-intorno-gente-fidata/>)

- (30) *Era Clarissa. Il Direttore la chiamava mentalmente "la ficcanaso" perché pareva che niente le sfuggisse e finché non era arrivata a capo di un problema non mollava. - Buongiorno **Direttore**. Se cerca Corinne, è già arrivata; basta che bussi!*

It was Clarissa. The Director used to call her “the snooper” in his thoughts because it seemed like she always knew about all and never gave up before working out the solution to a problem. – Good morning, **Direttore**. If you (LEI) are looking for Corinne, she is already here. You (LEI) only need to knock!

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

- (31) *TOTI: Sono vecchio, **signor Direttore**, e in casa darei troppo fastidio: lei m'intende! Non ne parliamo più.
DIRETTORE: Mi dispiace, professore, ma io debbo ancora parlargliene.*

TOTI: I'm old, **signor Direttore**, and I would be too much of a nuisance if I stayed at home: you (LEI) understand me! Let's not talk about it anymore!

DIRECTOR: I am sorry, Professore, but I still need to discuss this with you.

(Luigi Pirandello, *Pensaci Giacomino!*, 1916, my translation)

In (30), *Ministra* is first used in combination with a surname and then on its own:

- (32) *Ho ancora un'ultima domanda, **Ministra Boschi**. [...] Ma mi scusi, **Ministra**, il fatto che Renzi ultimamente si faccia vedere sempre con la moglie Agnese fa parte di una strategia di “operazione simpatia”?*

I have one last question, **Ministra Boschi**. [...] But excuse me (LEI form), **Ministra**, are Renzi's latest public appearances with his wife Agnese part of a strategy of “operation appeal”?

(interview to Minister Maria Elena Boschi, 8/11/2016,
http://www.adnkronos.com/fatti/politica/2016/11/08/gruber-boschi-sorrise-tra-lei-agnese-erano-sinceri-ministra-siamo-venute-bene-foto_FghrVWTP3YIkDTtdeFhxSK.html?refresh_ce)

6.4.2 The semantics of Italian “titles” for top positions

From a semantic point of view, Italian nouns used to address people holding top positions in an institution can be interpreted as ways of saying “something good” to the addressee with a word of one kind. This “something good” is a professed way of thinking about the addressee: the speaker professes to think about the addressee as someone above many people in a place

of one kind and as someone about whom people can know some good things and can think something good because of this top position. If, for example, a journalist did not address his/her boss as *Direttore*, as in (28), the speaker would not recognize the fact that this person is someone above many people in that place; this could come across as presumptuous, as if the journalist were trying to put themselves in the same position as the director.

Differently from professional titles, the contextual factor of *place* is relevant to the interactional meaning of nouns used to address people holding top positions in Italian, however in a different way from how the meaning of English nouns used to address people who have particular roles in a place (e.g. *Professor*) is affected by this factor. In Italian, unlike in British and Australian English, nouns used to address people holding top positions are not limited to exchanges between people who work in the same place and do not necessarily reflect a construed relationship of inequality in a workplace between speaker and addressee. This is the case in (28) and (29), where *Direttore* is used by two speakers who, in a specific place, have a lower position than the addressee, who has the top position (respectively, a journalist addressing the director of a newspaper and a teacher addressing the school's principal).

By contrast, in (27) and (30) the interactants are not people working in the same place; the speakers are two journalists who address someone holding the top position in a place which is not the same working place as theirs. Similarly, when the director of a newspaper is interviewed by a journalist from another newspaper, he is still addressed as *Direttore* by the journalist and in this case the speaker is *not* someone from the same workplace as the addressee.

Thus, the addressee need not be necessarily the speaker's superior in a workplace to be addressed with a title; someone outside that workplace can acknowledge the addressee's top position with a word of one kind in various situations of interaction. This suggests, in turn, that the professed way of thinking inherent in the meaning of noun used to address the interlocutor reflects the permanent way of thinking about the addressee, not the way of thinking expressed

at the time of a specific interaction. This hypothesis is consistent with evidence from personal diaries and journals written in first person (examples 31 and 32 in Appendix A) in which the writer refers to different people using the noun with which he/she would address these people in conversation (e.g. *vidi il Direttore e la Direttrice*, I saw the *Direttore* and the *Direttrice*). This suggests that the writer does not just use the noun to address these people in a specific context, but he/she identifies these people through the noun (i.e. they think “this person is a *Direttore*”). Thus, I propose another composite component for the cognitive scenario: “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone above many other people in a place of one kind, there are no other people above this someone in this place’”. At the same time, I propose another component “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is not someone like many other people’” to capture the idea that the addressee can be seen as being “distinguished” because of their role.

There is another element emerging from the examples which needs to be taken into consideration. In all the examples, the interactants are people who do different jobs or have different positions in the same working place (journalist-mayor, journalist-director, teacher-director and journalist-teacher). Significantly, the native speakers whom I consulted who had first-hand experience with nouns like *Direttore* and *Presidente* used as forms of address commented that two people holding the top position in different institutions do not address each other with any of the nouns discussed, e.g. two directors of different journals do not address one another as *Direttore*.²⁰ This comment suggests that the cognitive scenario of the invariant meaning also includes a component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”.

²⁰ The speakers whom I consulted commented that two directors address each other with TU and first name, and may only use *Direttore* to address one another jocularly.

Finally, the fact that nouns used to address people holding top positions cannot combine with TU and with first-name address, and on the other hand the fact that they combine with LEI, suggests that the invariant meaning also includes a semantic component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. This component is also consistent with the fact that in Italian one would not address one’s brother or a close friend as *Direttore*. The two attitudes just mentioned, capturing the cognitive scenario ‘how I don’t think about you’, can be integrated in one composite component “when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me, I know this someone well’”. In sum, the interactional meaning of Italian titles for top positions in an institution can be explicated as follows:

Buongiorno, *Direttore* (*Direttrice, Preside, Presidente, Sindaco/a, Rettore, Ministro/a*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is not someone like many other people

this someone is someone above many people in a place of one kind

there are no other people above this someone in this place’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

because of this, they can think something good about this someone”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don’t think about you like this:

“I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me”

6.5 Italian “titles” in English translations

The semantic and cultural differences between Italian and English nouns used to address people can be further appreciated considering how Italian nouns used as forms of address are translated into English. Bearing in mind that English does not have the same number of nouns which can be used as forms of address as Italian, it should not surprise that in most English translations of Italian novels and plays the nouns used as forms of address are often omitted because of the

lack of an exact equivalent (cf. *Avvocato*, vs *Lawyer; Good morning, *Director vs *Buongiorno*, *Direttore*). In other cases, the Italian noun is rendered in English translations with a noun which is semantically quite different.

One of the most difficult tasks for an Italian-to-English translator is how to render the “generic titles” *Signore*, *Signora*, *Signorina* and *Signori*. Different translators opt for different solutions; some simply omit the Italian noun in the English text, whereas others translate *Signore* and *Signora* with *Sir* and *Madam* or with *Mr./Mrs.* which are all but equivalent in meaning. In (11), *Signorina* used in the original text is simply omitted in the English translation. In (5), the combination *signor Commendatore* in line 1 gets “lost” because *Commendatore* is omitted and *Signore* is rendered with *Sir*. The same applies to *Signore* in line 7, whereas *Signore* in line 9 is omitted. The case of *Signori* is even more interesting. In line 3 of the Italian text, *Signori* is used to refer to some people arriving, whereas in the English text they are simply addressed as “people”, but then a *Sir* which does not appear in the original Italian text is added at the end of the sentence.

There are three differences between *Signore/Signora* and *Sir/Madam*: (i) in Italian, *Signore* can be followed by a first name (e.g. *Signor Mario*), a surname (e.g. *Signor Rossi*) or a title (e.g. *Signor Avvocato*; *signor Direttore*), whereas in English *Sir* cannot be followed by a surname or by a title (**Sir Brown*, **Sir Doctor*); (ii) in Italian *Signore* can be used for reference if combined with a demonstrative (e.g. *questo signore*, ‘this *signore*’), whereas in English it is not possible to say **this sir*; (iii) the contexts of use. At least in British and Australian English, *Sir* used in service encounters reflects a construed bottom-up relationship between the interactants, because the speaker puts themselves in a “position of “service” to the addressee. I present here the explication proposed by Wierzbicka (2015) for the interactional meaning of *Sir*:

(Your bag), *Sir*. (Wierzbicka 2015)

I can think about you like this now:

“in this place, at this time, this someone is someone above me
if this someone wants me to do some things
I want to do these things because of this”

Although there are some contexts in which *Signore* does imply, contextually, a construed bottom-up relationship between the interactants, *Signore* is also used (among other cases) to attract the attention of a passer-by to ask for information (e.g. *Scusi, signore*, “Excuse me, *Signore*”), in which case the expressed attitude is not one of “service” and the speaker does not put themselves in a “lower” position to the addressee. Another important context in which *Sir* and *Signore* differ is the way God is addressed: in Italian God is addressed as *Signore*, whereas in English God is not addressed as *Sir*, but as *Lord*.

The differences between *Signore/Signora* and *Mr./Mrs.*, too, are significant. Both *Signore* and *Mr.* can be combined with a surname; however, in Italian *Signore* and *Signora* can also be combined with a first name (e.g. *Signor Mario, Signora Clara*) whereas **Mr. Charles* and **Mrs. Clare* are impossible combinations in English. In addition to that, *Mr.* and *Mrs.* can only occur with a following surname and never on their own, which means that they cannot be used to address strangers, whereas in Italian it is perfectly possible to use *Signore* and *Signora* on their own to address someone whom the speaker does not know.

Translation problems also arise with professional titles and titles for top positions. In the following example, *Avvocato* and *Notaio* are simply translated as *sir*, because English does not have equivalent nouns which can be used to address people:

- (33) a. *LO SCRIVANO: Si accomodi qua, signor Notaio.*
CLERK: Make yourself comfortable in here, **sir**.

b. *LA SIGNORA CONTENTO: Povero Notaio, voi l'amavate veramente!*
BELLAVITA: Senza il ragazzo io morirei, signor avvocato! Sto morendo io,
signor avvocato, sto morendo di crepacuore, abbandonato così da tutti, senza
sapere perché!

MRS. CONTENTO: **Poor Denora**, you really did love her!

BELLAVITA: I'd die without the boy, **sir**! I'm dying now (☹), dying of a broken heart, abandoned by everyone and I don't know why!

(Luigi Pirandello, *Bellavita*, 1928, translated by William Murray, 1970)

Notaio has been replaced in English with the surname of the notary, which does not appear in the original text. In addition, in the original text *signor avvocato* is said twice, whereas in the English text only the first instance is rendered as *Sir* and the second one is completely omitted. As I will discuss in Chapter 11, this solution does not capture an important Italian cultural script which encourages speakers to repeat a title many times in the same exchange.

In (23) and (24) *Dottore*₂ is translated respectively as *sir* and *Chief*. The semantic differences between *Dottore*₂ and *Chief* cannot be discussed in detail here for reasons of space; it will suffice to say that while *Chief* expresses the way of thinking 'this someone is someone above many people in this place, I am one of these people', it does not also express the idea 'people can think some good things about this someone', associated with the idea that the addressee is 'someone of one kind' (section 6.3.4).

Likewise, in Pirandello's *Six characters in search of an author* the prompter talks to the manager of the play addressing him as *Direttore*, for which there is no equivalent noun used as form of address in English. In the English text, the combination *signor Direttore* is rendered simply as *Sir*:

(34) *IL SUGGERITORE: Scusi, **signor Direttore**, permette che mi ripari col cupolino?
Tira una certa aria!*

PROMPTER: Pardon, **sir** (☹). May I get into my box? There's a bit of a draught.

6.6 The cultural salience of titles in Italy

In *Italian Ways* (2014), the English writer Tim Parks points out how important it is in Italy to address someone with a title in ordinary conversations:

The barman in the small street bar has the privileged feeling of being at the centre of a community. He loves to know all his customers' names and, better still, their jobs. He loves to give you a flattering title as you walk through the door, and to call it out loud right across the bar so that everybody will hear. 'Salve, Professore!' all three barmen cry when I walk into the bar near the university. In this way everybody present knows who they are rubbing elbows with. 'Buon giorno, Prof', says the quieter barman on Via Gustavo Modena near where I sometimes stay the night. How he knows I'm a professor I have no idea. They call to other customers, too. 'Buon giorno, Dottore! Salve, Ragioniere! Ciao Capo!' Someone is filling in his lottery card, 'Play eleven, Dottore' calls the barman. 'The number of the month of the dead always brings good luck'. 'Not for a cardiologist!' the man replies. Everybody laughs. 'Sciocchezze, Dottore!' Their voices are a pleasant mix of respect and light irony.

(*Italian Ways*, 2014:54-55)

Similarly, in *The Italians* (2015) John Hooper provides a general account of Italian titles which could help cultural outsiders get a good idea of how these nouns are used and of their socio-cultural functions:

Other cultures, of course, have their way of *marking social boundaries*. [...] But Italy, like Germany, is also keen on placing additional *signposts along these boundaries, in the form of titles*. These are not just for use on business cards. An *ingegnere, avvocato* or *architetto* will expect to be addressed as such by all and sundry. But the same is also true of a *ragioniere* or *geometra*, even though a university degree is not required for entry into either of their professions. Anyone who has a degree qualifies to be addressed as *Dottore* – a term that is used *scrupulously for journalists, medical doctors and, more surprisingly perhaps, senior police officers*. If you are not a graduate, and neither a *ragioniere* or *geometra*, you can always aspire to one day being addressed as *Presidente*. [...] So, if you think of yourself as belonging to the professional classes, chair the parent-teacher association or at least make a habit of wearing a collar and tie, *you will start to feel slightly offended if, after the first few visits, the staff at your local bar continue to address you as merely Signore or Signora*. [...] Once firmly established as a *dottore* or *dottoressa*, you will be in position for the next big leap. Every so often when *the need arises for you to be flattered, you may be elevated temporarily to the rank of professore or professoressa*."

(*The Italians*, 2015:188-189, emphasis added)

In this extract Hooper describes Italian titles as "markers of social boundaries". The suggestion that Italian titles somehow reflect the social differences characteristic of Italian

society echoes the observations of some scholars and clashes with those of others. Barański and West (2001 eds.), for example, talked about the “hierarchical” nature of Italian society during the Fascist years:

The idea of doing away with parliamentary mediation and compromise, of creating a strong authoritarian state bent on imposing national unity through a hierarchical and highly disciplined society [...] had become increasingly appealing to some sectors of the establishment. Fascism then became the successful solution to Italy’s post-war crisis. (51)

By contrast, Caprara et al. (2011:39) write that “Italian culture emphasises egalitarianism and intellectual autonomy, but not hierarchy and dependence-affiliation” (my translation). Along similar lines, Moliterno (2002:170) writes that “deference towards the powerful is always conservative, demeaning and anti-egalitarian”, although later in the book he adds that “[in Italy] during the expansion of the 1980s income distribution deteriorated, thereby ending a thirty-year period of slow but steady movement towards a more egalitarian society” (269).

Such divergent opinions indicate that the question of whether Italian culture is more “hierarchical” or more “egalitarian” is still open to debate. A different question is whether or not Italian titles are linguistic devices used by speakers to mark social differences in discourse. Alinei (2002) suggested that the proliferation of titles in Italian is related to the anti-bourgeoisie polemic during the Fascist era which represented the hallmark of the cultural revolution which took place in Italy during those years and had implications for language use. In his view, the imposed new class distinctions implied that people from different social classes had to speak differently, and this favoured the ubiquitous use of titles (5-6). He also suggested that the idea of “simulation” underlies the use of titles in Italy, i.e. an excessive importance is given to the façade and social etiquette rather than to one’s real essence (10).

Taking Alinei’s observations into account, the idea that in Italian titles are an example of linguistic expression of class distinctions, it could be suggested that the way titles are used now is different from the way they were used seventy years ago, given that society has changed a

lot ever since. However, in my view a change from a society which encourages social differences to a society which discourages them, as suggested by Caprara and Moliterno, would have caused the disappearance of some titles as forms of address. On the contrary, over the years only a few titles have fallen out of use, whereas the large majority of them is not only still used very frequently, but is also obligatory and expected in specific exchanges. Generally speaking, the large repertoire of titles used as forms of address in Italian suggests that there is a cultural assumption whereby it is important to differentiate between people in many ways, for example on the basis of their job, position or social class, and this is done by addressing people with a title. This point will be discussed in detail in Chapter 11.

Finally, it is worth spending a few words on the predominance of the masculine form among Italian professional titles.²¹ *Dottoressa*, *Professoressa*, *Maestra* and *infermiera* are the only feminine forms of address used, whereas **Ingegnera* or **Avvocatessa* are not used as forms of address. The fact that for most professions a masculine form of address is used gender-neutrally (e.g. *Avvocato*, *Preside*, *Presidente*, *Capitano*) suggests that Italian society is still predominately man-oriented. The very few well-established feminine forms of address reflect a stereotyped view of professions like nurse or teacher which in Italy are typically exercised by women. It is possible that new feminine forms of address will begin to be used as the social rise of women occupying important positions continues. In this respect, the recent cases of *Sindaca* and *Ministra* discussed in 6.4.1 are very interesting as they reflect an on-going cultural change with implications for language use. Speakers are still uncertain as to how to address a female minister or mayor; some are resistant to change and insist that the masculine form continue to be used gender-neutrally, whereas others have already started to use these new forms consistently (e.g. journalists and opinionists). In general, the fact that speakers feel the need to

²¹ There are, of course, other feminine forms of address like *Suora/Sorella*, *Madre*, *Contessa*, *Marchesa*, *Duchessa*, *Principessa*.

use the most appropriate form of address does anything but confirm the cultural salience of titles in Italy, which is unlikely to decrease in the future.

6.7 Conclusion

To sum up, the aim of the analysis made in this chapter was twofold: to propose a precise categorisation of Italian titles based on strictly semantic criteria and to analyse the interactional meaning expressed by three different categories of titles in Italian by pinpointing the speaker's professed way of thinking about the addressee. It is necessary to categorise the many other titles available in Italian following the same semantic criteria, so that other titles can be added to the categories already identified and new categories may need to be posited.

Furthermore, the analysis presented in this chapter is based on one specific approach and is focused on an area which still requires further investigation. While so far I have found no counter-evidence disconfirming any of the proposed semantic components, further analysis may lead to new and different hypotheses about the interactional meaning of Italian titles, and the explications may need to be adjusted. In general, the analysis has stressed the importance of titles as major linguistic and cultural tools in Italy. Such a large and diverse repertoire suggests that there are a number of different cultural scripts guiding Italian speakers in their interactions with different people in different contexts. These cultural scripts will be discussed in Chapter 11.

Chapter 7. Interactional meanings in letters and e-mails (1): the meaning of *Dear* as an opening salutation in English

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a semantic analysis of the opening salutation *Dear* used in letters and e-mails in English. *Dear* is often considered as an empty, “formal” word both by many native speakers and in the pragmatics literature on letter writing. The opening salutation *Dear Sir* in business letters, for example, is described by Vergaro (2002:1219) as “formal address” and by Bean (1916) as “meaningless”, because “the two terms are contradictory. We do not address as ‘dear’ those with whom we have no better acquaintance than ‘Sir’” (52). The aim of the present analysis is to show that *Dear* is not a meaningless word, but conveys a precise interactional meaning which remains stable in various combinations.

The starting point in trying to pinpoint the meaning of *Dear* is the fact that in both letters and e-mails it competes with other opening salutations. In Chapter 3, we have seen that *Hi* is also used as opening salutations in written interactions, apart from being used as greetings in conversations. In addition, there is also the option of no salutation (\emptyset), which is a separate address variant. Thus, speakers of English have at their disposal at least four options from which to choose (*Dear*, *Hello*, *Hi* and \emptyset), and any choice is intentional in that it reflects, to a certain extent, an awareness of one or more differences between the options available. The need arises for the linguist to identify the criterion according to which speakers distinguish the four options when making their choice. It could be suggested that the choice depends on who the recipient is, on the tone which the sender wants to convey and on the degree of “(in)formality” of each salutation. For example, it could be argued that *Hi* is “informal”

whereas *Dear* is “formal”, considering that the two are not used in the same combinations, e.g. *Dear customer(s)* vs **Hi customer(s)*.

The fact that *Hi* is not used in combination with *customer(s)* in public announcements suggests that, unlike *Dear*, it is not felt to be suitable for notices to customers. However, as I see it, the perceived inappropriateness of *Hi* in this context is not a matter of difference in “(in)formality” between *Hi* and *Dear*, but a matter of semantic clash. As discussed in Chapter 3, the clash between *Hi* and *customers* lies in the semantic component “when I say this, I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”, which I have posited for the interactional meaning of *Hi*. This expressed attitude would put on the same level the people providing a service (staff) and the people receiving the service (customers). Moreover, if the “formal”/“informal” distinction were so neat, the two salutations could not be used in the same combinations. In fact, *Dear* and *Hi* compete in combination with first-name address, e.g. *Hi John* and *Dear John*. On what basis would *Dear John* be “formal” and *Hi John* “informal” in a letter to a close friend?

I suggest that the difference between *Dear* and competing salutations is not at the pragmatic, but at the semantic level; speakers choose *Dear* because they find its meaning appropriate for certain contexts, in which *Hi*, *Hello* or (\emptyset) are not felt to be suitable. This presupposes that *Dear*, too, has an interactional meaning. If *Dear* were semantically empty, what would be the point of using it at all? One might as well opt for no salutation (\emptyset). However, as I will show, both *Dear Alice* and *Alice* can be written to the same recipient, and the difference between the two options is first of all a matter of semantics. What is the difference in meaning between *Dear Alice* and *Alice*? Obviously, there is also individual variation to consider, as not all speakers may have all four variants in their active repertoire²² of opening salutations. Idiosyncratic variation, however, does not invalidate the semantic question of what the

²² “Active” here is used to indicate the salutations which are used apart from being known, where “passive” means only known, but not used.

invariant meaning expressed by *Dear* is and of what the difference between *Dear John*, *Hi John* and *John* is from the perspective of the recipient.

The question of the meaning of *Dear* arises already at dictionary level. In most dictionaries *Dear* is listed in the same entry as the adjective *dear*, with no attempt at distinguishing its meaning from that of the adjective, but without an attempt at defining its meaning:

- *Dear* in the Cambridge online dictionary of English:
adjective
 - (a) liked very much
 - (b) expensive
 - (c) *used at the beginning of a letter , before the name of the person you are writing to*

- *Dear* in the Collins online English dictionary:
adjective
 - (a) beloved; precious
 - (b) *used in conventional forms of address preceding a title or name, as in Dear Sir or my dear Mr Smith*
 - (c) appealing or pretty (what a dear little ring!)

Reading these entries, one may get the impression that the opening salutation *Dear* is simply the adjective *dear* used in letters. If this were the case, an explanation of why *dear* and not other adjectives is used as an opening salutations would be helpful, but is not provided in these entries. Evidently, there must be something in the meaning of the adjective *dear* which makes it suitable for letter and e-mail writing. Taking the above entries into consideration, it could be suggested that *dear* suits this context because it conveys the message ‘I feel something good towards you’ to the recipient. However, in chapter 8 of the book *Letter writing as a social practice* (2000), in which the authors report the observations of young children writing letters, one of the key questions raised by the kids is “*Why do we put ‘Dear...’ when we are writing to someone we hate or despise?*” (143, emphasis added). Quite rightly, this question emphasises that in English *Dear* can be used to write even to people for whom one does not feel something good. The meaning of *Dear* is clearly related to the meaning of the adjective *dear*; however, to

write *Dear John* is not exactly the same as saying “*John is dear to me*”. To try to identify the differences between the two meanings, it is necessary to have a clear idea of the meaning of the adjective *dear* first.

7.2 The meaning of the adjective *dear*

To analyse the meaning of the adjective *dear* it is necessary to look at its collocational range. For the purposes of this present discussion, I will focus on the nouns which can be used in a phrase of the form *a dear someone*. The following examples from Wordbanks illustrate that in this phrase *dear* collocates with a limited range of nouns (*child, girl, boy, man, woman, friend*) and with specific adjectives (*sweet, pretty, little*):

- (1) It's **a dear little girl**, her mother is very poor and she grows them...
- (2) You're **a dear boy**. A good boy.
- (3) You always were such **a dear child**, so **pretty** and **sweet**.
- (4) John French? He's **a dear, dear man** but you don't have to do the rounds of the other studios.
- (5) The porter told me Rose Taylor died last night! “I found her this morning.” “She was **a dear sweet woman!**”
- (6) “Mrs Cavendish is **a dear friend** of mine,” Rose had explained. “She's been good to me, and I owe it to her.

Considering these examples, I propose that the meaning of *dear* consists of two semantic components. First, in talking to or about a particular person the speaker expresses some good feelings towards the person in question, as the adjectives *pretty, sweet* and *little* suggest. The expressed attitude can be captured with a component ‘I feel something good towards this someone’. Second, these good feelings are expressed towards someone “special”. One can have many friends, but one would describe only some of them as *dear friends*. The idea is that in describing someone as *a dear friend* the speaker selects one “special” person from the whole group of friends to imply that they do not feel the same good feelings towards many other

friends. This idea can be captured with a component ‘I don’t feel something like this towards many other people’.

This hypothesis is also based on the fact that in English the collocational range of *dear* is not only limited, but also very specific in that it identifies people with specific characteristics (a sweet woman, a pretty girl). A more general collocation like *a dear person* appears to be very rare or not used in English.²³ This suggests that in English *dear* is not used to describe *any* person, but only some special people towards whom one feels something good. Thus, I suggest that the first component should be complemented by the phrasing ‘like people often feel towards someone like this’, where ‘someone like this’ is meant to capture the idea of ‘little girl’ or ‘sweet woman’, i.e. people with certain specifiable characteristics or qualities. Thus, the meaning of *dear* in the phrase *a dear little girl* can be explicated as follows:

She is a *dear little girl*

I feel something good towards this someone
 like people often feel towards someone like this
I don’t feel something like this towards many other people

In collocation with *friend*, the meaning of which is broader and does not denote a kind of person, the meaning of *dear* can be explicated as follows:

He is a *dear friend*

I feel something good towards this someone
 like people often feel towards some other people
I don’t feel something like this towards many other people

The idea common to both explications is that the good feelings expressed are the kind of good feelings which one would expressed towards some, not many people. The specificity of the meaning of *dear* can be appreciated considering different adjectives with similar collocational ranges. The adjective *important*, for example, can occur in almost the same

²³ There are only three hits in Wordbanks. In Italian, by contrast, the collocation *una cara persona* is used frequently (next Chapter).

syntactic constructions as *dear*, but cannot be used to replace *dear* in exactly the same contexts. Like *dear*, *important* can be used in a noun phrase of the type *an important someone*. In the following examples from COCA, the noun *friend* collocates with *important*:

- (7) Princess Marie Bonaparte, who had been his analysand and became an **important friend** and benefactor, seldom arrived from Paris without a prime piece.
- (8) Pakistan is an **important friend** and ally for the United States.
- (9) In his fight, according to a memo quoting McDonnell, he had an **important friend**.
- (10) You know you're my **most important friend**, Harley. My birthday party wouldn't be a birthday party without you.

In (7) and (10), *important* is used to acknowledge that the person in question is famous and respected in society. However, only (10) indicates that the speaker also feels something good towards this person. In (8) and (9), *important* is used in the sense of ‘necessary’ or ‘fundamental’, a sense which is not part of the meaning of *dear*. Although in (10) *most important* could be replaced with *dearest*, it would not be possible to replace *important* with *dear* in the other examples, because the sense of ‘necessity’ would be lost. Moreover, unlike *dear*, *important* can be used to describe something that people do, e.g. *decision* and *role*, terms which are not combinable with *dear*.

It can be concluded that the meaning of *important* is broader than the meaning of *dear*. This is reflected both in the wider collocational range of *important* and in the frequency of the above phrases. In Wordbanks, the occurrences of *an important someone* are almost six times as those of *a dear someone*. This supports the hypothesis that *dear* is limited to some “special” people, as the posited component ‘I don’t feel something like this towards many other people, like people often feel towards someone like this’ states. Once the key features of the meaning of the adjective *dear* are identified, it is possible to determine how the meaning of *Dear* as an opening salutation is related to it, and to highlight the differences between the two words.

7.3 The interactional meaning of the opening salutation *Dear*

A good starting point to determine the meaning of the opening salutation *Dear* is to compare it with the no-salutation variant (\emptyset). The following minimal pairs illustrate both options:

- (11) a. **Dear Colleagues,**
 The Australian Academy of the Humanities was approached by...
- b. **Colleagues,**
 I'm pleased to announce ANU alumna Professor (name+surname) has
 been appointed Dean of the ANU College of xxx
- (12) a. **Dear Alice,**
 Thanks a lot. And thanks for the pleasant dinner last Monday...
 Best wishes
 (first name)
- b. **Alice,**
 A pleasure.
 (first name)

The difference between a and b in these pairs is that in b no opening salutation has been used by the sender. If *Dear* were semantically empty, there would be no difference in meaning between a, where *Dear* is used, and b, where it is not used. This is clearly not the case, if only because there is an extra word in (11a) and (12a) which carries its own semantic contribution, a contribution which is absent in (11b) and (12b). The same applies to public announcements and letters in which *Dear* does and does not occur:

- (13) **Dear customer,**
 Please find enclosed your current bill which is now due for payment.
 (Wordbanks, brephem)
- (14) **Toowong customers,**
 please note lifts 3 and 4 are currently out of service at the station. If you require
 assistance please call xxx.
 (<https://twitter.com/QueenslandRail/status/491774255076356096>)

Noticeably, in (13) the recipient is asked to do something which would be good for the sender (to pay a bill), whereas in (14) the recipient is simply given notice of something, which,

presumably, is also good for this person to know. Similarly, the passengers of a flight are usually addressed as *Passengers*, not as *Dear passengers* and they, too, are simply notified of something which is good for them to know. In light of the examples, two questions need to be answered: (i) what is the difference in meaning between the competing forms *Dear* and \emptyset ?; (ii) does the absence of *Dear*, i.e. \emptyset , reflect the intention not to express a certain meaning and, by inference, can the presence of *Dear* in (13), by virtue of its meaning, be expected to increase the recipient's willingness to comply with the sender's request?

Both questions can be answered if we try to pinpoint the interactional meaning of *Dear*. I suggest that it consists of two semantic components: 'I want to say something good to you now' and "I say: 'I feel something good towards you'". The first component captures the idea that *Dear* is "something good" which is said to the recipient(s) of a letter or of a public announcement before saying other things. My assumption is that, just as greetings are used to say "something good" to the hearer before other things in an oral interaction, the expression of the meaning 'I want to say something good to you now' in writing or in an announcement is encouraged by specific cultural conventions (basically, 'it is good if I say something good to this someone before other things').

The second component portrays a profession of good feelings towards the recipient on the part of the sender. This component captures the connection between the meanings of the adjective *dear* and of *Dear* as an opening salutation, but at the same time it distinguishes the two meanings. The component which I have posited for the meaning of the adjective *dear* is 'I feel something good towards you', whereas the component posited for *Dear* as an opening salutation states "I say: 'I feel something good towards you'". This difference in phrasing captures the idea that with *Dear* the good feelings expressed towards the recipient are what the speaker *says* and are linked to the time of writing, whereas in sentences like *John is dear to me*

the good feelings expressed are the speaker's good feelings actually felt for the person in question. Moreover, these feelings are not presented as restricted to any particular moment.

This hypothesis is based on the fact that *Dear* can be combined with various forms of address which express different ways of thinking about the addressee:

- (15) January 26, 2009
Dear Paul,
You seem to treat sports as a mainly aesthetic affair, and the pleasures of sports spectatorship as mainly aesthetic pleasures. [...]
All the best
John
(Paul Auster & J.M. Coetzee, *Here and Now*, 2013:40)
- (16) Michelle, 38, came back to her Mazda MX5 convertible to find the warden had replaced the permit with a note. It read: "**Dear Mrs. Walker**, your badge is in the police station. That's how easy it was to take."
(Wordbanks, sunnnnow)
- (17) Twain got fed up with answering these letters so he had a form letter printed which read: **DEAR SIR**, Thank you very much for your letter and photograph.
(Wordbanks, brbooks)
- (18) **Dear customer,**
Please find enclosed your current bill which is now due for payment.
(Wordbanks, brephem)

The forms of address *John* and *Mrs. Walker* indicate that the sender professes to think about the recipient 'I know this someone' (Chapter 12), whereas both *sir* and *customer* express the way of thinking 'I don't know this someone' (Chapters 6 and 8). The fact that *Dear* is compatible with all these forms of address indicates that its use is not affected by the relationship between the interactants, and therefore that the invariant meaning does not include a semantic component which states how well the sender professes to know the recipient. However, it could be argued that the recipient is determinant for the good feelings expressed, because to write *Dear John* to a dear friend is different from writing *Dear sir* to a perfect stranger towards whom one does not feel something good. This would mean that for some

combinations, e.g. *Dear Mum*, *Dear love*, a component ‘I feel something good towards you’ should be posited, whereas for combinations like *Dear sir* or *Dear customer* a component “I say: ‘I feel something good towards you’” should be posited. Consequently, it would be necessary to produce two separate explications for *Dear*₁ and *Dear*₂ which would differ in only one semantic component. The point is that it is impossible to determine whether or not the good feelings expressed towards the recipient are always genuine, and it would be unjustified to assume a priori that this is always the case in specific combinations, e.g. *Dear Mum*. Rather than positing polysemy on the basis of a single component, it is better to produce, if possible, a unitary explication which captures the invariant meaning of *Dear* compatible with all the contexts in which it is used. In this case, this is possible if we posit a component “I say: ‘I feel something good towards you’”, which is compatible with all the cases in which *Dear* is used. To say that one feels something good towards someone is quite different from *feeling* something good towards someone, and this difference, captured by the posited component, explains why *Dear* can also be written to someone for whom one does not feel something good.

In sum, the interactional meaning of *Dear* can be explicated as follows:

***Dear* (Alice, Colleagues)**

I want to say some things to you now in writing [m]
 before I say these things I want to say something good to you now,
 like people often say when they want to say some things to someone in writing [m]
 I say: “I feel something good towards you”

The component ‘like people often say...’ captures the conventional nature of that “something good” which is said to the recipient.

7.4 Comparing the meaning of *Dear* with the meaning of (ø)

In examples (11) to (14) we have seen that *Dear* and (ø) can compete, therefore (ø) must be analysed as a separate address variant with its own interactional meaning. To pinpoint the

meaning of the variant (\emptyset) it will be good to consider once again the minimal pair *Dear Alice* vs *Alice* in (12). In *Alice*, the meanings ‘I want to say something good to you now’ and ‘I say: ‘I feel something good towards you’” expressed by *Dear* are missing, and my hypothesis is that these meanings are purposely not expressed. The idea is that the absence of an opening salutation reflects a precise choice on the part of the sender not to express a certain meaning, in this case the meaning of *Dear*. In other words, I propose that (\emptyset) should be analysed as an “unconventional” address variant, a deliberate choice not to express the meaning of *Dear* as people often do when they follow the conventions of letter writing.

This choice could depend on various circumstances; one is when there is a close relationship between the interactants, when there is no need to be “conventional”. In fact, in an exchange of letters or e-mails between close friends in which (\emptyset) is the usual option *Dear* could sound cold or could seem to convey a hostile or disapproving attitude. This is usually the case in letters of complaint or reprimand; the following example is a letter of complaint written to several members of the Australian Government in which *Dear* is not used to address the recipients:²⁴

- (19) **To:**
 The *Hon.* Scott Morrison MP, Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
 The *Hon.* Tony Abbott MP, Prime Minister of Australia
 We, the undersigned, **express our dismay** at the rejection of the Skilled (Residence) Visa application of the Kabir family by the Australian Government Migration Review Tribunal and ask that you intervene and reverse this decision.
 Sincerely,
 [names]

Although the e-mail includes other conventional linguistic formulae like the closing salutation *Sincerely* (Chapter 9), it is the absence of *Dear* that is most significant, in my view. The meaning expressed by *Dear* is incompatible with the critical tone of the letter. I suggest

²⁴ <http://www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/minister-scott-morrison-don-t-deny-residency-to-the-kabir-family-because-their-son-has-autism>. Accessed July 2014.

that *Dear* was purposely omitted to avoid expressing the meanings ‘I want to say something good to you now’ and “I say: ‘I feel something good towards you’”, which would have clashed with the “dismay” expressed in the letter. The same applies to examples (20) and (21) in Appendix A, two letters of reprimand, one with *Dear* and one without *Dear*. Arguably, of the two reprimands (21) sounds much colder and more severe in tone because of the absence of *Dear*. Another case is the announcement to passengers on a flight or at an airport. As in the case of *customers*, *passengers* without *Dear* is usually said when the content of the announcement is a mere delivery of information, whereas *Dear passengers* is more likely when passengers are asked to do something:

- (22) **Good afternoon passengers.** This is the pre-boarding announcement for flight 89B to Rome. We are now inviting those passengers with small children, and any passengers requiring special assistance, to begin boarding at this time. Please have your boarding pass and identification ready. Regular boarding will begin in approximately ten minutes time. Thank you.

(<https://www.englishclub.com/english-for-work/airline-announcements.htm>)

- (23) **Dear passengers,**
Please pay attention that due to the closure of Antalya Airport Terminal 2 for international flights starting from 20/10/16 00:01 local time all international flights will be operated at Terminal 1.

(http://www.windrose.aero/eng/about/news_windrose/110238.html)

I suggest that the use of *Dear* is a linguistic strategy to increase the passengers’ (or the customers’) willingness to comply with the request. As previously mentioned, customers and passengers are people for who, things are done by other people, not those who do things, and the use of *Dear* by the service providers is a way of kindly asking them to do something. In sum, I propose the following explication for the meaning of the variant (ø):

Alice, Colleagues (no opening salutation ø)

I want to say some things to you now

I don't want to say something good to you before I say these things,

like people often say when they say some things to someone in writing [m]

7.5 Conclusion

To sum up, in this chapter I have questioned the assumption that *Dear* is devoid of meaning and I have suggested that it expresses a specific meaning which consists of two semantic components: ‘I want to say something good to you now before I say other things’ and ‘I say: ‘I feel something good towards you’’. I have also discussed the semantic relation with the adjective *dear*, from which the salutation derives, highlighting the differences in meaning between the two. I have also argued that the meaning of *Dear* does not change depending on the combination in which it occurs, but it is possible to capture the semantic invariant which is compatible with all the contexts in which *Dear* is used. The possibility of combining *Dear* with different forms of address suggests that its interactional meaning is felt to be appropriate for different kinds of interlocutors, and that whether or not to use it depends on the sender’s personal preferences as well as on the circumstances of the exchange. In some cases, *Dear* can compete with the variant (\emptyset), which I see as a way of purposely not expressing the meaning of *Dear*, as it would clash with the context of the exchange. The semantics of *Dear* can be appreciated more in cross-cultural perspective, and in the next chapter I will discuss the differences between *Dear* and the Italian opening salutations *Caro/a*, *Gentile* and *Egregio*.

Chapter 8. Interactional meanings in letters and e-mails (2): the meanings of the Italian opening salutations *Caro/a*, *Gentile* and *Egregio*

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a semantic analysis of the opening salutations *Caro/a* (roughly, ‘dear’), *Gentile* (roughly, ‘kind’) and *Egregio* (‘eminent’, ‘distinguished’) used in letters and e-mails in Italian. In comparison with English, in Italian the choice of the opening salutation is less free, because there are precise and ritualised patterns of usage for each salutation which are related to two factors: the relationship between sender and recipient and the combinability options. Differently from the English *Dear*, which can be used to write to various people (including perfect strangers) and can be combined with various nominal forms of address (e.g. *John*, *Mr. Smith*, *Sir*), the Italian *Caro/a*, *Gentile* and *Egregio* are used for different recipients and allow different kinds of combinations, illustrated in Table 4:

Table 4. Combinability options of Italian opening salutations.

Salutation	Nominal address	Pronominal address
<i>Caro/Cara</i>	Gianni/Maria	Tu
	Nonno/nonna	Tu
	Collega	Tu/Lei
	Direttore/Professore	Lei
	Signore/Signora (Rossi)	Lei
	Lettore/lettrice	Lei
	Ragazzi, giovani, colleghi, alunni, studenti, bambini	Voi (plural)
<i>Cari</i>		
<i>Gentile</i>	Gianni/Maria	Lei
	Direttore	Lei
	Signor/Signora Rossi	Lei
	Cliente	
<i>Egregio</i>	Direttore/Presidente	Lei
	Signor Rossi	Lei
	Signor Mario	Lei

As the Table shows, the only combinability options shared by all three salutations are with the “generic titles” *Signore/Signora* (with or without a surname) and with “professional titles” like *Direttore*. Apart from these two, the three salutations have specific combinability options: for example, only *Caro/a* can be used with kinship terms (*nonno/nonna*, ‘grandfather/grandmother’), *Egregio* cannot be used with bare first names and only *Gentile* can be used with *cliente* (‘customer’).

The differences in nominal address combinability are certainly pragmatically relevant, but are not semantically relevant. From the semantic point of view, it is the difference in pronominal address that is relevant. In Italian, it is above all the address pronoun that reflects the sender’s professed way of thinking about the addressee, and that allows the analyst to determine the semantic difference between combinations with the same nominal form of address in which two opening salutations compete, e.g. *Caro Gianni* (+ TU) vs. *Gentile Gianni* (+ LEI). *Caro/a* is the only salutation which can combine with both TU and LEI, whereas *Gentile* and *Egregio* can only take LEI.²⁵ However, in the case of *Caro/a* TU and LEI do not compete, as they are used in combination with different nominal forms of address, as Table 5 shows (more in 8.3). The only case in which the three salutations compete is in combination with *Signore* or a “title” like *Direttore* plus LEI, as there are three options: *Caro direttore* + LEI, *Gentile Direttore* + LEI and *Egregio Direttore* + LEI. In this case, the difference in interactional meaning lies in the so-called *dictum* of the salutation, that is the semantic component capturing the content of the message conveyed to the recipient (cf. Wierzbicka 1987:18; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014:159), and in the way the sender purports to relate to the recipient during the interaction.

Each salutation will be discussed in separate sections; the data analysed include corpus and literary examples, personal e-mails and the letters written by Aldo Moro, the former Italian

²⁵ See 8.5 for some exceptional cases.

Prime Minister who was kidnapped and killed by the *Brigate Rosse* criminal organization in 1978, during his days of captivity.

8.2 The meaning of the adjective *caro/a*

Before analysing the meaning of *Caro/a* as an opening salutation, I will analyse the meaning of the adjective *caro/a* from which the salutation derives. As with *dear*, a good way of pinpointing the meaning of *caro/a* is to look at the range of personal nouns which can collocate with it. The range of possible collocates is much broader than that of *dear* in English; the following examples illustrate only some of these:

- (1) *Non c'è molto da dire, davvero. È **un caro ragazzo**. È fantastico, se vuoi la mia opinione.*

There's really not much to say. He's **a caro boy**. He's fantastic, if you want my opinion.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

- (2) *Tutto ciò che avrei raccontato non era capitato a me, ma a Gabriella, **una mia cara amica**.*

Anything that I would have told did not happen to me, but to Gabriella, **a cara friend of mine**.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

- (3) *Sino a che, dopo qualche mese di contrasti, minacce, proposte e controproposte, una sera, mentre passeggiavo per il corso fui avvicinato da **un caro collega** avvocato...*

That was until when, after months of contrasts, threats, proposals and counter-proposals, I was approached one evening while I was strolling along the high street by **a caro colleague of mine**, also a lawyer...

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

Examples (4) to (6) in Appendix A illustrate other possible collocates: *zietta* ('auntie'), *compagno* ('fellow') and *figliolo* ('little boy'). Significantly, the range of possible collocates of *caro/a* is not restricted to nouns denoting particular kinds of people with precise characteristics, as is the case for *dear* (e.g. *a dear sweet girl*, *a dear little boy*). The diminutives

in *zietta* and *figliolo* are comparable to the English *little*, however in Italian *caro/a* can combine with generic nouns like *collega* as in (3) and with the very generic *persona* ('person'), as in (7) and (8):

(7) *Ho una buona vicina, una cara persona, una nonna.*

I have a good neighbour, **a cara person**, a grandmother.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

(8) *Questo sentimento l'ho provato spesso ed è orrendo. Quando hai nostalgia di una cara persona ti senti un po' vuota dentro.*

I've often felt like this and it's horrible. When you miss **a cara persona** you feel a bit empty inside.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

In English, collocations as generic as **a dear person* are very rare if at all attested. Moreover, in Italian *caro* is used in combination with the noun *saluto/i* (roughly, 'greetings') in the closing salutations *cari saluti* ('cari greetings') and *un caro saluto* ('one *caro* greeting'), whereas in English, interestingly, the adjective *warm* is used in closing salutations, not *dear* (cf. *warm regards*, but not **dear regards*, more in Chapters 9 and 10).

The collocational range of *caro/a*, compared to that of *dear*, indicates that its meaning is different and broader than the meaning of *dear*. The examples suggest that, like the meaning of *dear*, the meaning of *caro/a* includes an expression of good feelings towards the person in question, complemented by the idea that one does not feel something like this towards many other people, because this person is somehow "special". Thus, for the meaning of *caro/a*, too, I will posit the semantic components 'I feel something good towards this someone' and 'I don't feel something like this towards many other people'. The component 'I feel something good towards this someone' is also compatible with the semantics of the diminutives which can collocate with *caro/a*, as diminutives, too, express the idea 'I feel something good towards this someone' (Wierzbicka 1992; Dressler and Barbaresi 1994).

Differently from *dear*, I will not also posit a component ‘like people often feel towards someone like this’ for the meaning of *caro/a*, because the phrasing ‘someone like this’ is intended to capture the idea of people with particular characteristics or qualities, and this is not the case for *caro/a*, as evidence suggests. Such a component would be incompatible with the generic *persona* with which *caro/a* collocates. In sum, the meaning of *caro/a* can be explicated as follows:

un *caro* ragazzo (una *cara* persona)

I feel something good towards this someone

I don't feel something like this towards many other people

8.3 How *Caro/a* as an opening salutation is used

The interactional meaning of *Caro/a* as an opening salutation can be pinpointed looking at how it is used, distinguishing the combinations with different pronominal address forms used in different cases.

8.3.1 Caro/a plus TU

As Table 5 illustrates, *Caro/a* can be used to write both to people whom one knows well and people whom one does not know well or not at all. In the first case, *Caro/a* always takes the TU form and is used with first names, kinship terms and sometimes with a surname, as in the following examples:

(9) *A Tullio Ancora (recapitata il 29 aprile)*

Caro Tullio,

*[...]Quel che dico, e che **tu** dovresti sviluppare di urgenza e con il garbo che non **ti** manca*

[...]

To Tullio Ancora (delivered on April 29th)

Caro Tullio,

[...] What I am saying, and what **you (TU)** should urgently do with **your (TU)** politeness...
(Aldo Moro, *Lettere dalla prigionia*, 1978, my translation)

- (10) *A Benigno Zaccagnini (recapitata il 24 aprile)*

Caro Zaccagnini,

ancora una volta, come qualche giorno fa m'indirizzo a te con animo profondamente commosso per la crescente drammaticità della situazione. [...]

To Benigno Zaccagnini (delivered on April 24th)

Caro Zaccagnini,

once again, as I have done a few days ago I am writing to **you (TU)** with deeply moved spirit for the increasing severity of the situation. [...]

(Aldo Moro, *Lettere dalla prigionia*, 1978, my translation)

- (11) ***Cara nonna**, oggi **ti** ho già mandato una cartolina, ma prima di andare a dormire devo assolutamente raccontarti una cosa!*

Cara grandmother, I've already sent **you (TU)** a letter today, but before going to sleep there is something that I must absolutely tell **you (TU)**!

(Christine Nöstlinger, *Cara nonna, la tua Susi*, 1995, my translation)

In combination with TU *Caro/a* does not compete with *Gentile* and *Egregio*, because these two salutations are incompatible with TU; in letters to parents and relatives, in particular, *Gentile* and *Egregio* would just sound ridiculous, because they express, as I will discuss, the idea “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone (well)’” (cf. **Gentile nonna*). The same applies to letters to other kinds of “parents”: children writing to Father Christmas write *Caro Babbo Natale* and would never write **Gentile* or **Egregio Babbo Natale*; a letter to a priest reads *Caro Don Mario*, not **Egregio Don Mario*; a letter to God naturally starts with *Caro Dio* plus TU, as God is always addressed with TU in Italian:

- (12) ***Caro Dio**, oggi è Leo che **ti** scrive, perché io non ci riesco. Ma anche se mi sento così debole voglio dirti che non ho paura, perché so che mi **prenderai** tra le **tue** braccia e mi **cullerai** come una bambina appena nata.*

Caro God, today Leo writes to **you (TU)**, because I feel too bad to write. But even though I feel so weak I want to tell **you (TU)** that I am not afraid, because I know that **you (TU)** will take me in **your (TU)** arms and will cuddle me like a new-born baby.

(Alessandro D’Avenia, *Bianca come il latte, rossa come il sangue*, 2010, my translation)

Caro/a plus TU is not restricted to people whom the sender knows, but is also used in letters to people whom the sender does not know, for example letters to a colleague:

- (13) ***Cara collega, caro collega,***
*con questa breve lettera vorrei destare la **tua** curiosità sulla Matematica Ricreativa.*

Cara colleague, Caro colleague,

I am writing this short letter to stimulate **your** (TU) curiosity about Recreational Mathematics.

(<http://utenti.quipo.it/base5/scuola/introscuola1.htm>)

It needs to be mentioned that *Caro collega* can also be combined with LEI; in a first-time letter to a colleague, the choice between TU and LEI is up to the sender, who chooses how to relate to the recipient in the interaction: with TU, the expressed attitude is ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’, whereas LEI expresses the attitude “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” (cf. Wierzbicka 2017; Chapter 11). The examples indicate that the use of *Caro/a* plus TU is independent of the relationship between sender and recipient and of the frequency of exchanges between the two; *Caro/a* plus TU can be used when writing to someone for the first time and the recipient need not be someone whom the sender knows.

8.3.2 *Caro/a plus LEI*

Caro/a plus LEI is used only when the recipient is someone whom the sender does not know well or not at all. In combination with LEI, *Caro/a* competes with *Gentile* and *Egregio*; the question is, then, what meaning the sender expresses by using *Caro/a* instead of *Gentile* or *Egregio* and keeping the LEI form, especially in exchanges in which *Gentile* or *Egregio* would normally be expected. As discussed in Chapter 6, a typical case is *Gentile Professore* plus LEI in an e-mail from a university student to a lecturer. In the following example, however, a man writes to his former teacher after many years and uses *Caro*, not *Gentile*, plus LEI:

- (14) *Caro Professore, quanti anni sono passati. Vi sono cose che però non passano, tra queste l'amicizia. Come credo **avrà** immaginato sono cresciuto...*

Caro Professore, so many years have passed. There are things, however, that do not pass, friendship is one of these. As **you (LEI)** may imagine, I have grown up...

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

Drawing on my personal experience as a university student in Italy, I would say that the switch from *Gentile Professore* to *Caro Professore* can occur only when the student has known the teacher for some years and only if the relationship between the two is no longer that of 'student-teacher'. The change in relationship, however, does not also imply a shift from LEI to TU address; *Professore* plus LEI remains, which means that the attitude expressed is still "when I say this to you, I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'" and "I don't think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'" (Chapter 11). At the same time, I suggest that there is an attempt on the part of the sender (the former student) to establish a gradually closer relationship with the recipient (the former teacher) by writing *Caro* instead of *Gentile*.

Another interesting case is *Caro* plus LEI in the following letter to a Minister, where *Gentile* or *Egregio* plus LEI would be expected:

- (15) *'Caro ministro Poletti, forse all'estero non l'avrebbero mai assunta'*

'Dear minister Poletti, maybe in a foreign country **you (LEI)** would never have been employed'

(<http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2016/12/21/caro-ministro-poletti-forse-allestero-non-lavrebbero-mai-assunta/3274489/>)

In this case, the use of *Caro/a* does not reflect an attempt on the part of the sender to establish a closer relationship with the recipient. Noticeably, this is a letter of criticism to the Minister, and there would be a semantic clash between the critical tone of the letter and the *dictum* of *Gentile* "I say: I think about you like this: 'people can know some good things about this

someone” (section 8.5). The LEI address form remains to express the idea “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”, but the switch from *Gentile* to *Caro* has an effect comparable to \emptyset (no salutation) used in *Dear*’s place in English in letters of reprimand and rebuke (Chapter 7). The semantic strategy adopted in Italian is the same as in English: a different variant available in the repertoire of opening salutations is used to express a different meaning from the expected, conventional one. Further examples of *Caro/a* plus LEI are *Cara lettrice* and *Caro signore* in (16) and (17) in Appendix A, where the recipients are both people whom the sender does not know.

8.3.3 The plural *Cari* and *Care*

The plural forms *Cari* (masculine) and *Care* (feminine) are used when there is more than one recipient. The gender of the salutation depends on the recipient, but the masculine is used gender-neutrally when there are a male and a female recipient. *Cari* and *Care* can be used to write both to people whom the sender knows and to people whom the sender does not know. The pronominal address form is always the plural VOI (not to be confused with the singular VOI, see Chapter 11). In (18) the recipients of *Cari* are the sender’s parents:

(18) ***Cari mamma e papà***, siamo tutti in buona salute, abbronzati da questo sole canadese.

Cari mum and dad, we are all well, suntanned by this Canadian sun.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

In letters to parents and relatives, *Cari/e* has no competing forms; **Gentili mamma e papà* or even *Egredi mamma e papà* just sound odd for the reasons mentioned in 8.3.1. In letters to other people whom the sender knows, *Cari/e* can compete with *Gentili* or *Egredi* (the plural of *Gentile* and *Egredo*), although the tone conveyed with each salutation is quite different. Examples (19) and (20) in Appendix A are two letters written by people who hold the top

position in different institutions to a group of colleagues, opened respectively with *Gentili colleghi* and *Cari colleghi*. In (19), the sender is simply giving notice to his colleagues of the activities made throughout a given period of time, whereas in (20) the senders mention personal experiences, the sharing of positive achievements and even include their personal good wishes to the recipients and their families. Undoubtedly, (20) sounds much “warmer” than (19), and the point is that the opening salutation used in each case is in line with the content of the letter. While *Gentili* is in line with the mere delivery of information of (19), *Cari* contributes to the “warm” tone of (20). The difference in tone is, first of all, a matter of *dictum*: with *Cari* there is an expression of good feelings towards the recipient which is not part of the *dictum* of *Gentile* (see 8.5). Secondly, there is a difference in the way the sender purports to relate to the recipient; with *Cari*, I suggest that the sender professes to think about the recipient as people whom he/she knows well, whereas with *Gentili* the expressed attitude is “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. I will expand on these hypotheses in the next section and in 8.5. Crucially, there would be no such difference in tone in English, as both (19) and (20) would start with *Dear colleagues*.

In letters to people whom the sender does not know, *Cari/e* may or may not compete with *Gentili*, depending on who the recipients are. In cases like *Cari lettori*, written by the editor of a newspaper/magazine to the readers, there would be the same differences in tone with *Gentili lettori* previously mentioned. If the recipients are young people, *Cari* is the only acceptable option. When, for example, the Pope addresses the young in his messages he says *Cari ragazzi* or *Cari giovani*,²⁶ because there is no other way of expressing certain meanings, essentially an expression of good feelings towards them and a professed way of thinking about them as people whom he knows well. None of these meanings would be conveyed with *Gentili giovani*, which, on the contrary, would sound cold.

²⁶ https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2016/july/documents/papa-francesco_20160730_polonia-veglia-giovani.html.

8.4 The interactional meaning of *Caro/a* as an opening salutation

Drawing on the elements emerged from the analysis of the use of *Caro/a* and on the comparison with the use of *Gentile* and *Egregio*, I hypothesise that the interactional meaning of *Caro/a* consists of three semantic components. The first captures the idea that *Caro/a* is “something good” that people say in writing before saying other things because it is good to do so, i.e. because this is encouraged by the cultural conventions of letter writing. The second captures the content of this “something good”, i.e. the content of what is said by the sender which in the NSM literature is called *dictum*. I suggest that the *dictum* of *Caro/a* is “I say: ‘I feel something good towards you, I don’t feel something like this towards many other people’”, a component which captures the connection with the meaning of the adjective *caro/a*. It is important to emphasise that the posited component states that the good feelings expressed are what the sender *says*, not what the sender *feels*, because there are cases like (15) in which *Caro/a* is used to criticise the recipient. The third captures the way the sender purports to relate to the recipient during the interaction and is based on the combinability options of *Caro/a* discussed in the previous section.

The combinations with different address pronouns suggest that *Caro/a* is compatible with two opposite expressed attitudes: one the one hand, “I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” for combinations with TU, and on the other “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” for combinations with LEI. It is necessary, then, to identify the semantic invariant, and I suggest that this is ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’. There are two reasons why, in my view, this is the most plausible component for the semantic invariant. The first is that this component permits to distinguish between cases in which *Caro/a* competes with *Gentile*, e.g. *Caro Professore* vs *Gentile*

Professore; Cari colleghi vs *Gentili colleghi*. Particularly when the recipient is someone whom the sender does not know (e.g. in commercial letters and money-chasing letters, cf. Vergaro 2002; 2005), the use of *Caro/a* plus LEI, instead of *Gentile* plus LEI (e.g. *Caro lettore*) reflects the intention on the part of the sender to relate to the recipient as to a person whom he/she knows well, which, together with an expression of good feelings towards the recipient, is a strategy to appeal to and ingratiate the recipient. The second is that this component tallies well with the *dictum*; an expression of good feelings is natural towards people whom one knows well, and the fact that *Gentile* and *Egregio* are not used for friends and family members, and do not contain an expression of good feelings in their *dictum*, supports the hypothesis that *Caro/a* is used to profess to think about the recipient as one would think about people whom one knows well. In cases like *Caro Ministro*, the component ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’ is consistent with the critical tone of the context, because it is a way of reducing the social gap between sender and recipient.

In sum, the interactional meaning of *Caro/a* can be explicated as follows:

Caro Tullio (cara nonna, caro signore, caro professore, cara lettrice)

I want to say some things to you now in writing [m]

before I say these things, I want to say something good to you

I say: “I feel something good towards you, I don’t feel something like this towards many other people”

when I say this, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well

Comparing this explication with that proposed for *Dear* in the previous Chapter, it is possible to notice that there is an additional component in the explication of *Caro/a*; differently from English, where pronominal address is not relevant to the meaning of opening salutations, the fact that in Italian *Caro/a* is the only opening salutation which can combine with the TU address form has to be accounted for in the semantic explication.

8.5 Use and meaning of *Gentile*

The opening salutation *Gentile* (roughly, ‘kind’, also used in the superlative form *Gentilissimo/a*) is used in combination with LEI and specific nominal forms of address in letters to people whom the sender does not know well or not at all. It can precede a professional title like *Professore* or *Professoressa* in an e-mail by a university student to a lecturer:

- (21) ***Gentile Professoressa Rossi,***
sono la laureanda della Prof.ssa Bianchi. Le scrivo per chiederLe se posso
consegnarLe una copia della tesi il 14 luglio durante il Suo ricevimento. [...]
La ringrazio
Cordiali saluti
Laura Ricci

Gentile Professoressa Rossi,
I am Professor Bianchi’s student. I am writing to ask **you (LEI)** if I can give **you (LEI)**
a copy of my thesis on July 14th during **your (LEI)** office hours. [...]
Thank **you (LEI)**
Cordiali saluti
Laura Ricci

(e-mail collected at the University of Naples L’Orientale, July 2014)

It can also precede *Signore/Signora*, with or without a surname (examples 22 and 23 in Appendix A), and even first names (example 24 in Appendix A). In this last case, however, it is important to specify that the sender simply knows the first name of the recipient, but does not know the recipient, otherwise the pronominal address form used would be TU and the opening salutation would be *Caro*. *Gentile* is not used to write to close friends and family members, and therefore it is not found in combination with kinship terms (**Gentile nonna*). In addition to e-mails to lecturers, a typical case in which *Gentile* is used is (25) in Appendix A, a letter to the director of a newspaper from a reader where *Gentile* precedes the address noun *Direttore*.

Remaining within the context of letters to newspapers, I have come across an interesting case in which *Gentile* can combine with both TU and LEI: *Gentile lettore*, used in letters from newspaper staff to readers like the following ones:

- (26) ***Gentile lettore, puoi** manifestare liberamente la **tua** opinione ma **ricorda** che la pubblicazione dei commenti è sospesa dalle 22 alle 7 [...]*

Gentile reader, you (TU) may express **your (TU)** opinion freely, but **remember (TU form)** that comments are not published from 22 to 7 [...]

(www.ilfattoquotidiano.it)

- (27) ***Gentile lettore, innanzi tutto complimenti per la tenace determinazione con la quale hai affrontato e affronti la tua "sfida".***

Gentile reader, first of all congratulations on the bold determination with which **you (TU)** have faced and **are (TU form)** facing **your (TU)** “challenge”.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, ephemera)

- (28) ***Gentile lettore, abbiamo inoltrato la sua segnalazione al dodicesimo gruppo della polizia municipale.***

Gentile reader, we have forwarded **your (LEI)** report to the twelfth group of municipal police.

(CORIS-CODIS, MON2011_13)

It is interesting to see *Gentile* combined with TU in (26) and (27) where LEI would normally be expected, considering that the names of the recipients are not specified and that the recipients are people whom the sender does not know. The question is what effect the use of *Gentile* plus TU in a letter to a stranger has, especially in comparison with the competing forms *Caro lettore* plus TU and *Gentile lettore* plus LEI. I suggest that *Gentile lettore* plus TU can be interpreted as the expression of a particular, composite attitude: on the one hand, *Gentile* expresses the attitude “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”; on the other, using TU the sender also expresses the attitude ‘I want to think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’. As I see it, from a pragmatic point of view *Gentile lettore* plus TU lies in the middle of a scale of “approachability” to readers, with *Gentile lettore* plus LEI at the “least approachable” end and *Caro lettore* plus TU at the “most approachable” end, given

that there is also an expression of good feelings towards the reader with *Caro*. *Lettore* is the not only noun which I was able to find in combination with *Gentile* and TU in a commercial letter to an anonymous recipient (e.g. *Gentile amico/a* plus TU²⁷); the idea is that the use of other nouns used in this particular combination can be interpreted along the same lines as *Gentile lettore*.

Significantly, in Italian *Gentile* is the only opening salutation used in public notices to customers: *Gentile/i cliente/i*. The fact that in Italian *cliente* is combined with *Gentile* and not combined with *Caro*, whereas in English customers are addressed with *Dear*, suggests not only that in Italian the meaning of *Caro* is not considered suitable for notices to customers, whereas that of *Gentile* is, but also confirms that *Caro/a* and *Dear* are semantically different. In addition to that, in English *Dear* can be omitted before *customers* (e.g. “*Customers, please note that...*”), whereas in Italian it is not possible to omit *Gentile* before *Cliente*. This implies that in Italian the context of notices to customers requires *cliente* to be always preceded by “something good”, which is *Gentile* and never *Caro* or *Egregio*.

To pinpoint the interactional meaning of *Gentile* it is necessary to posit semantic components which can explain why *Gentile* is suitable for exchanges between students and lecturers (*Gentile Professoressa*) and for exchanges with people whom one does not know well or not at all (*Gentile signore, Gentile cliente*). A good starting point is the *dictum* of *Gentile*, which is related to the meaning of the adjective *gentile*. The *Treccani* dictionary provides the following definitions for *gentile*:²⁸

- (a) *Nobile di nascita, d'origine*. (born noble, with noble origins)
- (b) *Di persona che, nel trattare con altri, ha modi garbati, affabili, cortesi*.
(Said of someone who treats other people with polite, affable and courteous manners)

²⁷ www.libera.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeAttachment.php/L/IT/D/D.../P/.../E/pdf.

²⁸ <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/gentile1/>.

The mentioning of qualities like “kindness”, “politeness” and even “nobility”, suggests that someone *gentile* is, in NSM terms, someone about whom ‘people can think some good things’. Thus, the component which I propose for the *dictum* of *Gentile* is “I say: ‘I think about you like this: ‘people can think some good things about this someone’”.

As for the expressed attitude, the contexts of use and the combinability options of *Gentile* indicate that this salutation is incompatible with the expressed attitude ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’, even when it combines with first names or with TU. The TU form brings its own semantic contribution to a combination of meanings, but does not affect the semantics of *Gentile*. By contrast, there is compatibility in all contexts of use with the attitude “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”.

Thus, I propose the following explication for the interactional meaning of *Gentile*:

***Gentile* (Professore, cliente, Alessandro, *nonna)**

I want to say some things to you now in writing [m]

before I say these things I want to say something good to you,

like people often say when they want to say some things to someone in writing [m]

I say: “I think about you like this: ‘people can think some good things about this someone’”

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”

8.6 Use and meaning of *Egregio*

Egregio (‘distinguished’, ‘eminent’) is even more restricted in use than *Gentile*, because it is only used in combination with LEI and with professional titles, which may or may not be preceded by *Signore*, or with *Signore* by itself in letters to people whom the sender does not know well or not at all. It is usually reserved for male recipients, and only very few examples of *Egregia* are attested in the CORIS-CODIS corpus. In no case *Egregio* can be combined with

TU and with bare first names (**Egregio Giorgio*) or kinship terms (**Egregio papà*); first names may be used, but always preceded by *Signore*, e.g. *Egregio Signor Mario*.

The contexts of use of *Egregio* are similar, but not identical to those of *Gentile*; for example, *Egregio Professore* is not used by students in e-mails to a lecturer; it may be used by someone external to the university who writes to a professor. Like *Gentile*, *Egregio* can be found in letters to the director of a newspaper, as in (29):

(29) ***Egregio Direttore,***

Forse è un problema di proporzioni ed anche noi nel nostro piccolo contribuiamo ad alimentare il marciume. [...]

Distinti saluti,

(first name and surname)

Egregio Direttore,

Perhaps it is a matter of proportions and we, too, despite our little power, contribute to enlarge this badness. [...]

Distinti saluti

(first name and surname)

(Letter to the editor of *Libero*, 17/8/2015)

Another typical use of *Egregio* is a letter to representatives of the institutions, like the Prime Minister or the President of the Republic, where the collocation *Egregio Presidente* is used (example 30 in the Appendix). Other typical “titles” which collocate with *Egregio* are *Dottore* and *Professore*. The necessity of being followed by *Signore* or by a professional title indicates that *Egregio* is reserved for eminent, distinguished people whom the sender does not know. This is, after all, the meaning of the adjective *egregio*, from which the salutation derives:²⁹

Che esce dall'ordinario, che ha pregi singolari, insigne, eccellente. Si adopera specialmente negli indirizzi e nelle intestazioni delle lettere, con significato generico. È preferibile riservarlo a persona di sesso maschile.

Extraordinary, with special merits, eminent, excellent. Used especially in address and in the headings of letters, with a generic meaning. It is preferable to reserve it for male addressees.

²⁹ <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/egregio/>. Etymologically, the word means ‘out of the herd’, therefore someone who distinguishes themselves from other people.

An “outstanding” or “distinguished” person is, in NSM terms, ‘someone not like many other people’ and someone about whom ‘people think some good things’. In fact, to distinguish *Egregio* from *Gentile*, a component ‘people can think some *very good* things about this someone’ can be posited for *Egregio*, as *Egregio* is one level above *Gentile* in the scale of Italian opening salutations. I suggest that these two ideas make up the *dictum* of *Egregio*, which can be paraphrased as: “I say: I think about you like this: ‘people can think some very good things about this someone, not many people are like this someone’”.

Taking this into account, the combinability options of *Egregio* can be explained in terms of precise semantic rules, which can be clearly stated in NSM. As discussed in Chapter 6, the idea “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is not someone like many other people’” is part of the meaning of Italian professional titles. Essentially, *Egregio* matches and reinforces the way of thinking expressed by the “title”, and therefore could not be combined with forms of address which do not express the same idea, e.g. first names. By itself, a first name is not sufficient, therefore if one wants to address the recipient of a letter as *Egregio* the least one can do to “elevate” the recipient is to add *Signore*.

In sum, the interactional meaning of *Egregio* can be explicated as follows:

***Egregio* (Direttore, Signore, *Gianni, *nonno)**

I want to say some things to you now in writing [m]

before I say these things I want to say something good to you,

like people sometimes say when they want to say some things to someone in writing [m]

I say: “I think about you like this:

people can think some very good things about this someone

not many people are like this someone”

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”

There is an intentional difference in the phrasing of the second component between the explication of *Gentile* and that of *Egregio*: to capture the fact that *Egregio* is much more

restricted in use than *Gentile*, ‘sometimes’ has been used instead of ‘often’ in the second component.

Perhaps more than *Gentile*, the Italian *Egregio* represents a novelty for many cultural outsiders and often a challenge for translators. In the English translation of the following extract from the novel *Sostiene Pereira* (1999) by Tabucchi, the combination *Egregio dottor Pereira* (as well as the LEI form) is “lost”:

- (31) ***Egregio dottor Pereira**, purtroppo sto attraversando un period infausto. Avrei bisogno di parlare con lei, è urgente, ma preferisco non passare dalla redazione.*

Dear Dr. Pereira, unfortunately I am going through a tricky period. I urgently need to talk to you but I’d rather not come to the office.

(Antonio Tabucchi, *Sostiene Pereira*, 1999 | *Pereira maintains*, translated by Patrick Creagh, 2010)

The translator could not use anything but *Dear*, given that there is no equivalent for *Egregio* in English. Both the lack of an English equivalent and the presence of *Egregio* in Italian are culturally rooted. The expression of certain meanings is encouraged in certain cultural worlds but not in others, and as I see it the meanings expressed by *Egregio* reflect Italian society and its cultural values. The use of a specific salutation expressing the meaning “I think about you like this: ‘people can think some very good things about this someone, not many people are like this someone’” reflects the need to distinguish between people in Italian culture, particularly through language. The underlying cultural assumption is that it is good to be someone not like many other people and someone about whom people can think some very good things, and if my interlocutor is such a person I have to acknowledge this in language. By contrast, the absence of an expression comparable to *Egregio* in English suggests that the expression of meanings which hint at social differences is heavily discouraged in Anglo culture, and this is the case particularly in “egalitarian” Australia (Chapter 13).

8.7 Conclusion

The analysis of the interactional meanings of *Caro/a*, *Gentile* and *Egregio* has highlighted a complex system of meanings expressed in Italian at the beginning of letters and e-mails, as well as important differences with the meanings expressed in English in this context. Of the three opening salutations, *Caro/a* is the one used most broadly and the one with the broadest range of combinable forms of address. As I will show in Chapter 12, there are specific closing salutations which match each of these opening salutations.

The analysis of the meaning of *Caro/a* has highlighted important differences with the meaning of the English *Dear*. The two salutations are similar because both express the message “I say: ‘I feel something good towards you’”. However, in Italian *Caro/a* competes with another salutation, *Gentile*, and can be combined with both TU and LEI address forms, whereas in English *Dear* does not have specific combinatorial options. This means that *Dear* is broader in meaning than *Caro/a* and that the two are anything but equivalent.

The lack of competing forms for *Dear* also means that there is no English equivalent for the Italian *Gentile* and *Egregio*. The absence of an English equivalent for these two salutations suggests that the interactional meanings expressed by *Gentile* and *Egregio* are not encouraged in English, and this is another case of important difference in cultural assumptions guiding the linguistic behaviour of English and Italian speakers.

Chapter 9. Interactional meanings in letters and e-mails (3): closing salutations in English

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the interactional meaning of various closing salutations used in letters and e-mails in English. The salutations are divided into three categories: the first includes salutations expressing “good wishes”, the second includes salutations expressing “regards”, and the third includes adverbial salutations.

The data represent three varieties of English (British, Australian and American) and are taken from three sources: a language corpus, personal e-mails and the book *Here and now* (2013), a collection of letters exchanged between the two novelists Paul Auster and John M. Coetzee. In addition, the analysis is supported by the comments of twelve native speakers of different varieties of English to an informal survey, in which they had to indicate which closing salutations they had recently used in e-mails to different people and which ones they had not used. The survey was conducted to have a better idea of the contexts in which a given salutation is not used, a factor which helps distinguish salutations in terms of both use and meaning. In the absence of other evidence, the survey has proved itself an invaluable source of negative material, in spite of the small number of respondents. It is important to mention that there is a significant age gap between the respondents, most of them being in their sixties and seventies, and some below forty. The results show that, apart from idiosyncratic variation, age is a determinant factor for the differences in use of closing salutations.

Differences in use, however, do not impede the analysis of the invariant meaning of a closing salutation, i.e. the meaning expressed by a salutation in all contexts of use independently of the user. It is the recipient who ultimately ascribes meaning to the salutation, and the semantic

interpretation of the salutation made by the recipient may not necessarily correspond to how the sender intended to use it. After all, there is no way for the recipient to determine exactly how the sender intended to use the salutation, especially when the sender is unknown or purposely left unspecified. From the point of view of the recipient, what is called *dictum* in NSM literature (i.e. the content of the message conveyed) and the attitude expressed by the sender can be analysed, so that the semantic differences between different closing salutations can be clearly captured through NSM.

9.2 Semantic characteristics of closing salutations

In books and manuals on English letter and e-mail writing, the reader usually finds various comments on the form and the function of closing salutations, but very little is said about their meaning. For example, in the book *How to Write Letters* (formerly *The Book of Letters*, 1922]) by Mary Owens Crowther closing salutations are discussed as “complimentary closes”. It is stated that “the complimentary close follows the body of the letter, about two or three spaces below it”, and that “the wording may vary according to the degree of cordiality or friendship” (28). Although all closing salutations perform the same function of saying “something good” to the recipient of a letter/e-mail after having written other things, they are not formally identical and are not used in the same way, as I will show. The point made in this chapter is that differences in form and use reflect differences in meaning, which is why some closing salutations are seen as being more “cordial” or more “friendly” than others, to use Crowther’s terms. Differences in the meaning of closing salutations are not discussed by Crowther, and are often dismissed by native speakers, too, to the extent that some consider all closing salutations

purely conventional, meaningless expressions. Commenting on the use of closing salutations in e-mails, an American journalist has recently written in an article:³⁰

“Ever since the 18th century, the English speaking have been busy pruning away all ornament of expression”, wrote Emily Post, the foremother of etiquette, in 1922. “Leaving us nothing but an abrupt ‘Yours truly’”. The trend has extended into digital communication. Fearful of coming off as too smug or affectionate, *we’ve been bullied into using empty words.*

(emphasis added)

In my view, even though an expression is conventional or related to “linguistic etiquette”, it far from being meaningless. In fact, in my view it is precisely the meaning of a salutation which makes it conventional; the ritualised use of an expression in a context implies that the meaning of that expression is considered suitable for that context. Without a meaning, there would be no convention. Moreover, if closing salutations were semantically empty, they could all be used equally in any context, which is not the case. The results of the survey which I conducted clearly indicate that some closing salutations are not used in particular contexts for particular recipients. For example, one of the respondents, a university lecturer and a native speaker of British English, commented that they do not write *Yours* to a colleague whom they see every day, and that they do not write *Regards* to students. The non-use of a closing salutation in a context suggests, as I see it, that its meaning is not felt to be suitable for that context by those who avoid using it; not only does this disconfirm that closing salutations are meaningless, but it also helps formulate hypotheses about the differences in meaning between different closing salutations.

That closing salutations have a meaning can be acknowledged simply by analysing the semantics of the single lexical constituents. As with speech acts, in closing salutations, too, there is a message conveyed to the addressee. The content of the speaker’s message is called *dictum* in the NSM literature on speech acts (cf. Wierzbicka 1987:18; Goddard and Wierzbicka

³⁰ <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-02/the-best-e-mail-signature-is-actually-the-worst>.

2014:159) and is captured in semantic explications with the frame ‘I say: ...’, as I have shown in the previous Chapters. In most cases, the *dictum* corresponds to the literal meaning of the lexical constituents; in the case of *Best wishes*, for example, the content of the message conveyed can be paraphrased as “I say: ‘I want many very good things to happen to you’”, with ‘very’ capturing the semantic contribution of *Best* and ‘I want many good things to happen to you’ capturing the contribution of *wishes* (more in the next section). However, in several other cases the *dictum* is not compositional, i.e. not the sum of the meanings of the lexical constituents. This is the case for *All the best*, as I will discuss in 9.3.2. Just as in speech acts “the extent to which the dictum is specified by the speech act verb differs from verb to verb” (Wierzbicka 1987:18), so the extent to which the *dictum* of a closing salutation is specified by the meaning of its lexical constituents varies from salutation to salutation.

In addition to the *dictum*, the interactional meaning of closing salutations also includes an expressed attitude; this is particularly important for contrastive purposes, because it distinguishes closing salutations with similar or identical *dicta*, e.g. *Best wishes* and *Best*. To capture the interactional meaning of closing salutations, I will produce semantic explications with a specific template which consists of three or four sections: section [A], named ‘what I want to say to you now’, portrays the prototypical scenario in which all closing salutations are used:

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW
 I want to say something good to you now,
 like people often say when it is like this:
 they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
 at some point [moment] they think like this:
 “I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

Because this scenario is the same for all closing salutations, section [A] of all the explications presented in this chapter remains unvaried. Section [B], named ‘what I say’, captures the *dictum*. The sections which follow vary depending on the salutation explicated; in some cases, section

[C] captures the expressed attitude, whereas in other cases it captures either how the message is conveyed by the sender ('how I want to say it') or the feelings expressed towards the addressee. In the explications with a section [D], this section captures the expressed attitude.

9.3 Closing salutations expressing “good wishes”

The largest group of closing salutations in English comprises salutations expressing “good wishes”. The meanings expressed are similar, but not identical, variation depending on the lexical constituents and, in specific cases, resulting from a process of lexical reduction or expansion from a so-called *derivational base* (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014). I will start from *Best wishes* because it is the most frequent salutation in Wordbanks,³¹ and because it can be considered as the derivational base, so to speak, of all other closing salutations expressing “good wishes”.

9.3.1 From ‘Best wishes’ to ‘Best’

Best wishes is used both in letters to people whom the sender knows and people whom the sender does not know. When the name of the recipient is specified, *Best wishes* can be combined with different forms of address: in example (1) the recipient is addressed by first name, whereas in example (2) as *Mr.* plus surname:

(1) September 11, 2008

Dear **Paul**,

“The best and most lasting friendships are based on admiration”, you write. [...]

Best wishes

John

(Paul Auster & J.M. Coetzee, *Here and Now*, 2013:13)

(2) Dear **Mr. Farese**,

I'm reading your file...

³¹ There are 480 hits of *Best wishes* in Wordbanks, more than for any other closing salutation.

Best wishes,
(first name and surname)

In example (3), the recipient is addressed as ‘*customer*’ without the name being specified:

- (3) Dear **Customer**,
You will find enclosed a copy of “The Rag”, Ragdale Hall's newsletter, of which this is the very first issue. [...]
Best Wishes
(name and surname)
Managing Director
- (Collins Wordbanks, brephem)

In (1) and (2) *Best wishes* is combined with forms of address which express opposite attitudes: first-name address expresses the attitude ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’ (Chapter 12), whereas *Mr.* plus surname expresses the attitude “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” (Wierzbicka 2015, chapter 12). This suggests that *Best wishes* is compatible with both these attitudes. However, none of the respondents to the survey who are lecturers reported using *Best wishes* in an e-mail to a student whom they know well, for example a student whom they are supervising. Many commented that they use *Best wishes* in e-mails to prospective graduate students asking to be supervised, students whom they do not know at all. Noticeably, in his letters to Auster, Coetzee used *Best wishes* only once, in one of the earliest letters. The fact that Coetzee stopped using *Best wishes* in the next letters suggests that he felt that this salutation was not suitable anymore once correspondence between the two had become more frequent and the two got to know each other better. Taking the native speakers’ comments and the frequency of *Best wishes* in *Here and Now* into account, I propose that the invariant meaning of *Best wishes* includes a component “when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone very well’”. The attitude “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” would exclude first names, and “I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” would be incompatible

with *Mr.* plus surname. The expressed attitude “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone very well’” is compatible with all contexts of use of *Best wishes* and therefore is the most plausible hypothesis for the semantic invariant.

The other component of the meaning of *Best wishes* is the *dictum*, which can be pinpointed analysing the lexical constituents: the semantic contribution of *wishes* can be paraphrased as ‘I want many good things to happen to you’; the constituent *Best*, in turn, indicates that these wishes are not just ‘good’, but ‘very good’. In sum, the *dictum* of *Best wishes* can be captured with a component “I say: ‘I want many very good things to happen to you’”. Having pinpointed both the expressed attitude and the dictum, the explication for the meaning of *Best wishes* only needs to be complemented by the scenario captured in section [A] presented in the previous section:

Best wishes

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

“I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “I want many very good things to happen to you”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone very well”

There are some contexts in which *Best wishes* competes with the salutation *Best*, for example in combination with first names, as in (4):

(4) 23/6/2015

Dear Gian Marco,

That’s fine of course. I could come over this afternoon - let me know when would suit you?

I’m just across the road so it won’t take me long to come over.

Best

(first name)

The question is what implications the reduction from two lexical constituents (*best* and *wishes*) to one (*best*) has for the interactional meaning. Before analysing the meaning of *Best*, it is necessary to discuss how it is used. The respondents to the survey expressed opposite comments. All the middle-aged respondents see *Best* as a relatively recent development. One of them, a native speaker of Australian English, commented: “*best* to my mind is a recent e-mail development, so I associate it with the trendier of my friends and colleagues (younger or those who deal with a lot of email traffic, and perhaps social media etc.)”. By contrast, two older respondents (also native speakers of Australian English) commented that in their life “no one has yet used this abbreviation” and that they find it “very annoying” and “too short”. The fact that the older respondents are either unfamiliar with *Best* or do not accept it suggests that this salutation is, in all likelihood, the result of an ongoing generational change in language use.

My body of data includes e-mails signed with *Best* written by speakers of British English (example 4) and Australian English (examples 5a and 5b in Appendix A), but no example for American English. However, the results of an unscientific survey conducted by an American journalist indicate that about 75% of the respondents used *Best* in e-mails, which indicates that *Best* is used, to some extent, in American English, too.³² Apart from mentioning the percentage of use, the journalist also made some comments on the meaning of *Best* which I report here:

It’s time to stop using ‘best’. The most succinct of e-mail signoffs, it seems harmless enough, appropriate for anyone with whom you might communicate. ‘Best’ is safe, inoffensive. It’s also become completely and unnecessarily ubiquitous. [...] *The problem with ‘best’ is that it doesn’t signal anything at all.* (emphasis added)

The points made in the article are reiterated by the journalist in a face-to-face discussion with two colleagues: “You can continue using ‘Best’, but it’s just meaningless, and empty, and can come off as “short”...and you don’t have to do it, just free yourself from ‘Best’”.³³ As

³² <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-02/the-best-e-mail-signature-is-actually-the-worst>, last accessed 30/7/2015.

³³ Video available on the webpage.

against this, I would argue that even though *Best* is a reduced form it is not meaningless, considering that even those speakers who claim, at first, that there is no difference between *Best* and *Best wishes* eventually admit that to some people they only use one but not the other.

One point made by the journalist which is consistent with the comments of the respondents is that *Best* often “comes off as short”. I suggest that the choice of a lexically reduced expression is motivated; those speakers who have in their repertoire of closing salutations both *Best* and *Best wishes* choose *Best* when they want to convey the same message as *Best wishes*, but in one word only. Lexical reduction is the semantic strategy to achieve this, and as such it is part of the cognitive scenario inherent in the interactional meaning of *Best*. The way of thinking associated with the lexical reduction can be captured with a component “I think like this: ‘I can say it to this someone with one word’”.

It could be asked if it would not be better to posit a component ‘I don’t want to say more’ or ‘I want to say less’. To ‘say less’, however, is not the reason for the lexical reduction. The *dictum* of *Best* can be paraphrased as ‘I want very good things to happen to you’, the absence of *wishes* being captured by not positing the prime VERY in the component. It could also be asked if a component ‘I can say it to this someone in a very short time’ could be posited, by analogy with the explications for *Hi* and *Ciao* presented in Chapters 3 and 4. However, since closing salutations are used in written language, which is asynchronous and does not permit simultaneity of interaction, a component stating that one wants to ‘say something in a short time’ or ‘for some time’ would be inappropriate.

In addition to lexical reduction, the meaning of *Best* differs from the meaning of *Best wishes* in three other respects. First, it is significant that in my body of data *Best* is used only in e-mails, never in letters, in which the recipient is addressed by first name; this suggests that, unlike *Best wishes*, *Best* is only compatible with first-name address and therefore the attitude expressed is “I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”.

Second, the collected e-mails are consistent with the respondents' comments in indicating the frequency of e-mail exchanges as a determinant factor for *Best*. Noticeably, both (5a) and (5b) in the Appendix were written by the same person to the same recipient on the same day, and both were signed off with *Best* plus first name. High frequency of exchange is compatible with the lexical reduction; the more frequent the e-mail exchanges with the same person, the less time is spent saying "something good" to the addressee at the end of the e-mail, and the more likely the use of a shortened expression. High frequency of exchange, too, is part of the cognitive scenario of *Best*; the way of thinking associated with high frequency of exchange can be captured with a component "I think about you like this: 'I can often say things to this someone, this someone can often say things to me'", which is not part of the meaning of *Best wishes*.

Third, several native speakers who use *Best* commented that they never use it in e-mails to their superior at work, however frequently they write to this person. Similarly, the respondents to my survey who are students commented that they do not write *Best* to their lecturers and supervisors. This suggests that there is an expressed attitude in the interactional meaning of *Best* which is not felt to be suitable for exchanges with one's superiors in an institution. I suggest that this expressed attitude is "I think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'", and this component, too, is not part of the meaning of *Best wishes*.

In sum, the interactional meaning of *Best* can be explicated as follows:

Best

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I want very good things to happen to you"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like this:

"I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me

I can often say things to this someone, this someone can often say things to me

because of this, I can say this to this someone with one word"

The process of lexical reduction which I have discussed in this section is investigated from a synchronic perspective, not diachronic. Although it is true that historically *Best wishes* is the derivational base and that *Best* came later, the meaning of *Best* does not evolve historically from that of *Best wishes*. In current English the two salutations coexist, and in some contexts they compete (e.g. in combination with first names), therefore they have to be analysed separately without assuming a diachronic semantic relation.

9.3.2 'All the best' and 'All best'

Best is also a constituent in the closing salutations *All the best* and *All best*. In this pair, too, as I will show, there is a semantic relation of derivational base (*All the best*) and reduced form (*All best*). For this reason, I will first analyse the meaning of *All the best*. The differences between *All the best* and *Best wishes* lie both in the *dictum* and in the expressed attitude. The differences in the *dictum* are due to the presence of the lexical constituent *all*, which is not part of *Best wishes*. *All* contributes to the *dictum* of *All the best* in two ways. First of all, it indicates that the sender wants to say more than just *Best wishes*, an idea which can be captured with a component 'I want to say more'. Secondly, it contributes by adding meaning to the *dictum* of *Best* discussed in the previous section. Being a semantic prime, the meaning of ALL is intuitively clear, and can be combined with the meaning of *Best* in a composite component 'I know that many things will happen to you after this, I want all these things to be very good'.

The differences in expressed attitude between *All the best* and *Best wishes* can be identified looking at how *All the best* is used. The respondents to my survey commented that they have

recently written *All the best* to someone with whom they did not expect to be in contact again for some time, whereas (in)frequency of contact is irrelevant to *Best wishes*. The respondents' comment is consistent with the dates in which two letters signed off with *All the best* were written by Coetzee to Auster:

(6) January 26, 2009

Dear Paul,

You seem to treat sports as a mainly aesthetic affair, and the pleasures of sports spectatorship as mainly aesthetic pleasures. [...]

All the best

John

(Paul Auster & J.M. Coetzee, *Here and Now*, 2013:40)

(7) April 6, 2009

Dear Paul,

Before you tell me what you think of the pleasures of competition, I have a preemptive comment to make. [...]

All the best

John

(Paul Auster & J.M. Coetzee, *Here and Now*, 2013:52)

Noticeably, there is a three-month gap between the first and the second letter, with only two other letters written by Coetzee in between, signed with different salutations (*Yours ever* and *All good wishes*). The same time lapse characterises examples (8) and (9) in Appendix A, two personal e-mails. In all cases, the three-month gap supports the hypothesis that the first time *All the best* was used the senders did not expect to write again to that person soon. If this hypothesis is taken into consideration, infrequency of contact becomes an important factor for the use of *All the best*, and suggests, in turn, that the interactional meaning includes a semantic component “when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I can say more to this someone after a short time’”.

The difference in expressed attitude between *All the best* and *Best wishes* is also reflected in the way the recipient is addressed. In my body of data, the recipients of *All the best* are addressed either by first name or as *all* (*Dear all* in example (10) in Appendix A), but I have

found no example in which the recipient of *All the best* is addressed as *Sir/Madam* or as *Mr./Mrs.* plus surname, forms of address which are found in e-mails signed off with *Best wishes*. This suggests that *All the best* is incompatible with the expressed attitude “when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”, whereas it is compatible with the attitude “I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. However, taking the infrequency of contact into account it seems implausible to posit such a component for the semantic invariant. A component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone very well’” is more plausible, because it is both compatible with first names and does not state that all the people with whom one is not in very frequent contact are people about whom one would profess to think ‘I know this someone well’.

In sum, the interactional meaning of *All the best* can be explicated as follows:

All the best

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

“I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “I want many very good things to happen to you”

I want to say more

I want to say:

“I know that many things will happen to you after this, I want all these things to be very good”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this:

“I know this someone very well, I can say more to this someone after a short time”

It is important to specify that the professed way of thinking portrayed in [D] is a composite expressed attitude, not a single one. Having explicated *All the best*, it is now possible to see in what way *All best* differs from it.

Interestingly, some of the older respondents commented that they either did not think that anyone would write *All best* or that this phrase “is not proper English” because of the “missing” article, whereas no such comment was made by any of the younger respondents. Evidently, *All best*, too, reflects a generational change in language use, and its interactional meaning is likely to be more congenial to younger than older speakers. The only examples of *All best* in letters which I was able to find are two letters included in *Here and Now*:

- (11) November 22, 2009
Dear John,
This, from the sports sections of today’s *Sunday Times*, which might amuse you (on the heels of your last letter) especially the statement: “the future of the game is in the numbers”. [...]
All best
Paul
(Paul Auster & J.M. Coetzee, *Here and now*, 2013:109)

- (12) February 23, 2010
Dear John,
For reasons I can’t quite grasp (possibly because you are so far away and our meetings are so infrequent), I often find myself wanting to *give you things*. [...]
All best,
Paul
(Paul Auster & J.M. Coetzee, *Here and now*, 2013:132)

Both letters are sent by Auster to Coetzee, whereas in his replies Coetzee does not use *All best* like Auster, but *All the best*, and it seems plausible to assume that this difference is also related to their age difference (in addition to individual preferences). *All best* is also used in e-mails, as (13) and (14) illustrate:

- (13) Ciao Gian Marco,
I don't know if you've already read this essay, below, by Paola Totaro, on growing up Italian in Australia? ...
All best,
Alice
- (14) Dear Gian Marco (if I may),
Just a very brief message to apologise for my slowness in replying to your message, and to let you know that I'll be in touch with a proper answer in the next few days. ...
All best, Kathryn

The senders of both (13) and (14) are middle-aged native speakers, the first one of Australian English and the second one of British English, and are both lecturers. (13) is an exchange between colleagues, whereas (14) is a first-time exchange (as ‘if I may’ indicates) between a lecturer and a student. Noticeably, both in the letters and in the e-mails first names were used by the senders to address the recipients and to sign off.

At first glance, it may seem that *All best* is basically identical in meaning to *All the best*. The absence of *the* does not change the *dictum*, however the lexical reduction suggests that there is a difference in how the sender professes to think about the recipient between *All the best* and *All best*. The absence of *the* can be interpreted in a similar way to the reduction from *Best wishes* to *Best*, i.e. as an indication of the construed close relationship between the interactants. My hypothesis is that the absence of *the* is motivated by the way of thinking ‘I want to say it to this someone with not many words’ (as opposed to ‘I can say it with one word’ in *Best*); the idea is that with *All best* the sender wants to speak in a less conventional way, not like one could say ‘I want very many good things to happen to you’ to many other people on other occasions. This implies, in turn, that the sender feels that the recipient of *All best* is someone to whom they can say something ‘with not many words’, and therefore that the sender professes to think about the recipient ‘I know this someone well’. This does not mean that it is necessary to know the recipient well to use *All best*, as (14), a first-time exchange, confirms. The component “I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” captures an expressed attitude, in line with the fact that in all examples the recipients of *All best* are only addressed by first name.

Thus, the interactional meaning of *All best* can be explicated as follows:

All best

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I want many very good things to happen to you"

I want to say more

I want to say:

"I know that many things will happen to you after this, I want all these things to be very good"

[C] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like this:

"I know this someone well

because of this, I can say this to this someone with not many words"

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I can say more to this someone after a short time"

9.3.3 *Warmest wishes and the semantics of 'warm'*

The last closing salutation which I discuss in this section is *Warmest wishes*, used by Coetzee in some of his letters to Auster:

(15) September 4, 2010

Dear Paul,

Dorothy and I leave for France this week [...]

Warmest wishes

John

(Paul Auster & J.M. Coetzee, *Here and now*, 2013:183)

(16) November 29, 2010

Dear Paul,

"Two inches forward, one inch back" – that's the phrase you use to describe social progress in your country [...]

Warmest wishes

John

(Paul Auster & J.M. Coetzee, *Here and now*, 2013:203)

The semantic contribution of *wishes* is 'I want many good things to happen to you', but in this case there is no *best*, therefore the meaning is not 'I want many *very* good things to happen to you'. Furthermore, the *dictum* of *Warmest wishes* includes an additional component of "good

feelings” which is not part of the meaning of the salutations analysed so far. This component reflects the semantic contribution of *warmest*, and to determine what the contribution is it is necessary to discuss the meaning of the adjective *warm* first.

In English, the adjective *warm* occurs in collocation with nouns denoting personal good feelings towards someone, e.g. *warm appraisal*, *warm empathy* and *warm affection*. It is significant that in English it is *warm* which is used in these collocations and not a similar adjective like *hot*, *fiery* or *ardent*. The Russian adjective used in these collocations, for example, is not the equivalent of *warm*. In her discussion of the Russian *gorjačij* (roughly, ‘hot’), Wierzbicka (2009) notes that there are two different adjectives in Russian for the ‘hot temperature of a place’ and the ‘hot temperature of an object’, and that the adjective used to talk about feelings is the ‘hot’ of objects, not the ‘hot’ of places. In English, by contrast, there is no lexical distinction between the temperature of places and the temperature of substances, and so *warm* collocates both with nouns for substances (e.g. *warm milk*) and with nouns belonging to the semantic field of feelings.³⁴ This suggests, according to Wierzbicka, that the metaphor of ‘physical heat’ is important in Russian, whereas the metaphor of ‘physical warmth’ is salient in English:

The range of possible English collocations with *warm* suggests that the underlying image is that of someone feeling warm – as people can feel near fire (but not *too* near). Thus, the addressee of a warm greeting can bask, as it were, in the “warmth” emanating from the speaker when uttering that greeting. [...] *Warm* refers to interpersonal relations, as it refers to the kind of atmosphere which the speaker (or actor) is creating for someone else.
(2009:431, emphasis in original)

In line with Wierzbicka, I suggest that the person writing *Warmest wishes* “emanates” their warmth to the recipient by expressing their good feelings towards this person. In this respect,

³⁴ A similar difference is found in Italian, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

there is an important difference in intensity between the adjectives *good* and *warm*, which can be appreciated considering the following pair of examples:

- (17) "There was some **nastiness** between us then; I can't deny that," he said. "But I've got nothing but **good feelings** for Alex now - and **I wish him all the best** in his battle against cancer. The **ill-feeling** we once had has long gone."
(Wordbanks, brregnews)

- (18) "I **loved** Michael, and I still have **warm feelings** toward him," she said, smiling.
(Wordbanks, usnews)

While in both examples the speakers are talking about their personal “good feelings” towards someone, there is a difference in the intensity of the feelings expressed. In (17), the speaker is simply expressing some “good hopes” that the other person will succeed in their fight against cancer. Moreover, the speaker’s *good feelings* are opposed to the previously felt “nastiness” and “ill-feeling”. By contrast, in (18) the speaker’s *warm feelings* for her former husband are associated with the *love* she felt for him before. This means that her *warm feelings* are more than just *good*, they are *very good*. The difference in the degree of intensity of the feelings expressed can be captured with the following minimal pair:

I have *good feelings* toward him
I feel something good towards this someone

I have *warm feelings* toward him
I feel something very good towards this someone

Thus, I suggest that *Warmest wishes* conveys not only the message ‘I want many good things to happen to you’, but also ‘when I say this, I feel something very good towards you’, with the phrasing ‘when I say this’ specifying that the very good feelings expressed are linked to the time of the interaction. However, by itself this component is not sufficient to capture the attitude expressed by *warmest*, because the adjective *warm* is in the superlative form. I propose that the semantic contribution of the superlative form can be captured with a component ‘I

don't feel something like this towards very many other people', the idea being that *Warmest* indicates that the addressee is someone "special" for the speaker, someone towards whom the speaker feels something very good like towards a few other people.

The professed way of thinking about the addressee can be pinpointed considering how the recipient is addressed. In the two letters from *Here and Now*, the recipient is addressed by first name, which suggests that the expressed attitude is 'I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well'. However, in example (19) in Appendix A the recipient is addressed as *Mr.* plus surname, a combination which expresses the attitude "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". Since the examples indicate that *Warmest wishes* can be combined both with first names and with *Mr.*, it is necessary to posit for the invariant meaning a component which is compatible with both these forms of address, and a plausible one is "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone very well'".

All the posited components are integrated in the following explication:

Warmest wishes

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I want many good things to happen to you"

[C] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I feel something very good towards you,

I don't feel something like this towards very many other people

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone very well"

9.4 Closing salutations expressing “regards”

A small number of closing salutations in English expresses the sender’s “regards” to the recipient. In addition to the simple salutation *Regards*, in this section I analyse the interactional meaning of two composite salutations in which the word *regards* is preceded by an adjective: *Best regards*, and *Kind regards*.

9.4.1 From the word ‘regard’ to the closing salutation ‘Regards’

The Collins dictionary of English lists four different meanings of the word *regard*:³⁵

1. a gaze, look;
2. attention (e.g. *he spends with no regard to his bank balance*);
3. esteem, affection or respect;
4. reference, relation or connection (esp. in the phrases *with/in regard to*)

Of these, I will focus on the meaning ‘esteem’~‘respect’, as this is the meaning to which, I suggest, *Regards* as a closing salutation is related. In the sense of ‘esteem’~‘respect’, *regard* is used in a number of fixed phrases, in particular *to hold someone in high/low regard* and *to send one’s regards to someone*. At first sight, it may seem that the meaning of *regard* in both these fixed phrases is based on the primes THINK, FEEL, VERY and GOOD combined in two semantic components: ‘I think something very good about this someone’ and ‘I feel something good towards this someone because of this’. In fact, however, the meaning of *to hold someone in high/low regard* is different from that of *to send one’s regards to someone*.

³⁵ <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/regard?showCookiePolicy=true>, last accessed 30/7/2015.

The expression *to hold someone in high/low regard* can mean to have a very good or a bad opinion of a person, whereas the opposition between *very good* and *bad* does not characterise *to send one's regards to someone*, which always means 'I think something very good about this someone', 'I feel something good towards this someone because of this'. The prime VERY in the component 'I think something very good about this someone' does not capture the semantic contribution of *high* as in *high regard*, but the fact that there is no negative counterpart for *to send one's regards to someone* (**to send one's disregard to someone*). The reason is that the expression *to send one's regards to someone* is only used to say "something good" to someone, usually because one knows some good things about this person (e.g. their skills, achievements, personality). I suggest that the semantic components of the meaning of *to send one's regards to someone* correspond to the *dictum* of the closing salutation *Regards*. When *Regards* is preceded by an adjective, the *dictum* is different because it includes the semantic contribution of the adjective, but for the *dictum* of *Regards* as a simple salutation the following paraphrase can be proposed:

I say: "I think something very good about you, I feel something good towards you because of this"

The interactional meaning of *Regards* and related salutations also includes an expressed attitude, which can be pinpointed analysing various examples and also considering the comments of the respondents to the survey which I compiled. The following are two e-mails which I received respectively from a librarian and from a member of the administration staff at university:

(20) Hello Gian Marco,
I have placed a request xxx on your behalf. ...
Regards
Martha

(21) Hello Gian Marco,
Here it is - I didn't have one so it took a bit more time to organise it. ...

Regards,
John

In both e-mails, first names are used by the sender to address the recipient and to sign off; this suggests that *Regards* is semantically compatible with the expressed attitude ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’. In the following letter, by contrast, the recipient of *Regards* is addressed as *supporter* and the name is not specified:

(22) **Dear Symphony Hall Supporter**

As we are approaching our first anniversary I would like to take this opportunity of telling you about a new service which we are offering to individual and corporate supporters of Symphony Hall, Symphony Hall Supper Club.

Regards

(first name and surname)

(Wordbanks, brephem)

The absence of any name and the full signature at the end of the letter suggest that the sender does not know the recipient, and that *Regards* is also compatible with the expressed attitude ‘I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’’. On the basis of these examples, it could be argued that there is a clash between opposite attitudes. The comments of the respondents to the survey have helped clarify what the expressed attitude in the invariant meaning of *Regards* is. The respondents who are lecturers commented that they have written *Regards* to a student who asked them to act as their supervisor or to a member of the university staff whose position is not superior to theirs (e.g. administration staff). However, they commented that they have not written *Regards* to a PhD student whom they are supervising, to a colleague who is also a friend, to a close friend or to a family member. The respondents who are students commented that they have written *Regards* to their supervisor and to members of the administration staff, but none of them wrote *Regards* to a fellow student. These comments suggest that the meaning of *Regards* is felt to be suitable for writing both to people whom one knows well and to people whom one does not know well. However, there is no evidence for

Regards used to write to people whom one knows *very* well, for example close friends or family members. Therefore, I propose that the expressed attitude of *Regards* is “when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone very well’”.

The respondents’ comments also suggest that the meaning of *Regards* is not felt to be suitable for exchanges with people who have the same position as the sender within an institution (i.e. fellow students), but is felt to be suitable for exchanges with people with whom the speaker has a construed relationship of inequality in an institution (e.g. administration staff and lecturers, students and lecturers). This suggests that the expressed attitude of *Regards* also includes a semantic component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”.

It needs to be said that some lecturers among the respondents commented that they write *Regards* to other lecturers, and also that I have found examples in which *Regards* is used in an e-mails to a friend (23 in Appendix A), and to family members (24 in Appendix A, where the sender writes to his in-laws). In light of these examples, it could be asked why one would want to express the attitudes “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone very well’” and “I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’” to a friend or a family member. There are three reasons why, I would argue, these cases do not invalidate the proposed semantic components.

The first is that the proposed component captures one composite expressed attitude, not two separate ones; the component states that by writing *Regards* one does not profess to think about the addressee ‘I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me’, therefore it is not that if an example suggests compatibility with one idea but not with the other one the proposed component has to be invalidated.

The second is that lecturers can have different roles within the same institution, and colleagues can have different relationships with one another; there may be some colleagues to

whom a lecturer might not want to express the attitude “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”, and this would explain why the lecturer would want to write *Regards* to these colleagues. This is, again, a matter of individual preferences and, in any case, the attitude expressed with *Regards* does not reflect the actual relationship with the addressee, but the relationship construed with the addressee at the time of the interaction. In addition to that, it is a matter of different tones which one might use on different occasions to write to the same person. Different tones can be compatible with the same relationship, including friends and family members.

The third is that the component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’” is not meant to capture an attitude of “deference”, but is consistent with the *dictum*. In a relationship, “respect” can be mutual, whereas “deference” is asymmetrical. Students who write *Regards* to their lecturer express something like “respect” towards them, but not “deference”. This “respect” makes *Regards* sound a bit “formal”, and there are some people with whom one prefers to be more “formal” in written exchanges, especially if one has not been in contact with them for a while.

The following explication integrates the *dictum* of *Regards* previously explicated, the expressed attitude and the prototypical scenario common to all closing salutations:

Regards

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

“I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “I think something very good about you, I feel something good towards you because of this”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this:

“I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me”

9.4.2 From *Regards* to *Best regards*

The first variant of *Regards* which I discuss is the salutation *Best regards*, illustrated by examples (25) and (26):

(25) Many thanks Gian Marco, much appreciated.

Best regards,
(first name)

(26) Dear Mr. Farese

Thank you so much for the invitation.

I would have loved to attend this event but unfortunately I am taking classes and running a concert exactly at that time.

Best regards
(first name)

In (25) the recipient is addressed by first name, whereas in (26) as *Mr.* plus surname. These combinations suggest that *Best regards*, too, is compatible with opposite expressed attitudes. Once again, the respondents' comments have proven themselves essential to pinpoint the semantic invariant. The respondents who are lecturers, in particular, commented that they have used *Best regards* in e-mails to students whom they do not know (for example students who asked them to act as their supervisor), and also to colleagues who are not their friends. In addition, they have reported using *Best regards* in e-mails to members of the university staff who hold higher positions than them, for example the Dean. By contrast, they have not reported writing *Best regards* to a close friend, a family member or a colleague whom they see every day. These comments suggest that the attitude expressed with *Best regards* is the same as that expressed with *Regards*: "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me'".

The key difference between *Regards* and *Best regards* lies in the *dictum*. In the case of *Best wishes* and related salutations, I have suggested that the semantic contribution of *Best* lies in

an increase of the intensity of the “good wishes” expressed from ‘good’ to ‘very good’. In the case of *Best regards*, my hypothesis is that *Best* does not simply increase the intensity of the “good thinking” and of the “good feelings” expressed by *Regards*, but is added to say more than *Regards* and convey a new, different message. Essentially, I analyse *Best regards* as the result of a process of lexical expansion from *Regards*, comparable to the addition of *All* to *Best wishes* to form *All the best*. The strategy of lexical expansion can be captured with a component ‘I want to say more’. To capture the new message expressed through the addition of *Best*, I propose the component ‘I don’t think like this about very many people’. The component captures the idea that the addressee is a “special” person and that *Best regards* is reserved for people whom one considers as particularly worthy of esteem and appreciation. Indeed, the expression of this idea makes *Best regards* more “personal” than *Regards*, because the speaker is making a personal comment on the addressee which is absent in *Regards*. In sum, the interactional meaning of *Best regards* can be explicated as follows:

Best regards

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
 like people often say when it is like this:
 they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
 at some point [moment] they think like this:
 “I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “I think something very good about you, I feel something good towards you because of this”
 I want to say more
 I want to say: “I don’t think like this about very many people”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this:
 “I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me”

9.4.3 *Kind regards and the semantics of ‘kind’*

Another commonly used salutation is *Kind regards*. In my body of data, this salutation occurs in both letters and e-mails sent either to a specific person or to multiple recipients. In examples

(27) and (28), two personal e-mails, the recipient is addressed by first name. (27) is an exchange between a librarian and a university student, and (28) is an exchange between a tour operator and a customer:

(27) Dear Mark,
Thank you for your email. [...]
If you have any further enquiries, please don't hesitate to contact us.
Kind regards,
(first name and surname)

(28) Hi John,
Thanks for your call today!
Let me know if you would like to book, I am happy to assist you.
Kind regards,
(first name and surname)

In (29) the headmaster of a school writes to the students' parents, whom he addresses as *parents*; in (30) the recipient is the director of a newspaper, addressed as *Sir*:

(29) Dear Parents
A Car Boot Sale is to be held on Saturday 24 September in the School Playgrounds.
[...]
Kind regards
(first name and surname)

(Wordbanks, brephem)

(30) Letter 28 June 2002 From Sir Richard Branson
Sir, I am very disappointed with Sir Michael Bishop's comments about Virgin Atlantic's, and my own, approach to UK-US open skies (Business, June 22). [...]
Kind regards,
Richard Branson

(Wordbanks, times)

All these combinations suggest that *Kind regards* is compatible both with the expressed attitude "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'" and with 'I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well'. In this case, too, a component "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone very well'" captures the semantic invariant.

Furthermore, in all the examples there is a difference in roles between the interactants. This suggests that the meaning of *Kind regards* is felt to be suitable for exchanges between people who have different roles in an institution, which leads to the hypothesis that the meaning of *Kind regards* also includes a semantic component “when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”. Both the components proposed to capture the expressed attitude are consistent with the results of the survey; *Kind regards* is reported to be used frequently in exchanges between lecturers and administration staff, but never in exchanges between fellow students, colleagues, close friends and family members.

As far as the *dictum* is concerned, it is necessary to pinpoint the semantic contribution of *kind*. The adjective *kind* was analysed by Travis (1997), who wrote that “*kind* refers to character traits that are realised in interpersonal relationships. They refer to an attitude one takes to other people, or the way one thinks about others when interacting with them” (134). Travis suggested that to perform an *act of kindness* means to do something good for someone because one thinks in a certain way, and she posited four semantic components to capture the way of thinking characteristic of a *kind* person.

The first component is ‘I don’t want other people to feel something bad’. The focus on other people’s feelings is, according to Travis, an important characteristic of the *kind* person, and an important element of distinction from similar concepts in other languages.³⁶ The second component is ‘I want to do something good for other people if I can’. Travis emphasised the importance of the prime WANT for the meaning of *kind*, because in her view an *act of kindness* never implies coercion, but is performed spontaneously and willingly. She set the example of bus drivers helping passengers load bags onto the bus; helping passengers is not part of drivers’ duties, but is something that a driver could decide to do for passengers willingly. Significantly, “actions of people with whom one is in a close relationship are not usually described as *kind*”

³⁶ See, for example, Wierzbicka (2011) for a discussion of the difference between *kindness* and the Polish *dobroć*.

(138); a sentence like *parents are kind to their children* does not sound plausible in English, because the parent-child relationship naturally implies obligations and duties. As against this, the expression *it was very kind of you* includes an acknowledgement of someone's willingness to perform the act. Likewise, the expressions *would you be so kind as* and *would you be kind enough to* do not express an expectation that the person asked to do something will do it if they do not want.

The third component is 'I know that I can not-do it, I want to do it', which captures the idea that the person performing an *act of kindness* is aware that this is not something that they have to do. This component reinforces the idea 'I want to do it' which, in Travis' view, characterises the meaning of *kind*. The forth component is 'this something good is not a very big thing', which captures the idea that an *act of kindness* is something which is relatively easy to do and does not require a great amount of effort. Arguably, if someone did something "very big" for someone else (for example donating one million dollars), this person would not be described as *kind*, but as *generous*. The explication proposed by Travis for the meaning if *kind* is presented here in an adapted version:

Mary is *kind* (adapted from Travis 1997:139)

this someone often thinks like this about people:

"I don't want this someone to feel something bad
I want to do something good for this someone if I can
this something good is not a very big thing
I know that I can not-do it, I want to do it"

this someone often does something good for people because this someone thinks like this

Of the components posited by Travis, I suggest that the component 'I want to do something good for this someone if I can' represents the semantic contribution of *kind* to the *dictum* of *Kind regards*. Noticeably, in all the examples presented with the exception of (30) the senders are people who, by virtue of their job or role in an institution, can do "something good" for other people. In (27) the librarian writes to the student "please don't hesitate to contact us",

and in (28) the tour operator writes to the customer “I am happy to assist you”; in both cases, the senders signal to the recipients their “availability” and intention to do something good for them. In (29), the sender is the school’s headmaster, someone whose duties include doing many good things for both students and parents. Taking these elements into account, I propose that in writing *Kind regards* these people put themselves in a position of “service” to the addressee, and the component ‘I want to do something good for this someone if I can’ captures this expressed attitude.

It needs to be added that the job of the people who wrote *Kind regards* in (27), (28) and (29) allows them to do good things not for someone in particular, but for many people. Therefore, I suggest that *kind* in *Kind regards* expresses an attitude of “service” towards many people, not only towards the specific recipient of a letter or e-mail. This means that the component posited by Travis for the meaning of *kind* has to be rephrased to ‘I want to do some good things for *people like you*, if I can’ for *Kind regards*.

In sum, I propose the following explication for the interactional meaning of *Kind regards*:

Kind regards

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

“I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “I think something very good about you, I feel something good towards you because of this

I want to do some good things for people like you if I can”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this:

“I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me”

9.5 Adverbial closing salutations

The last group of closing salutations which I analyse is that of the adverbial salutations *Sincerely* and *Yours sincerely*. Even though it is not adverbial, I will also discuss the salutation *Yours* in this section to show the semantic relation with *Yours sincerely*. In my analysis I distinguish simple adverbial salutations, with only one lexical constituent, from complex adverbial salutation, with two lexical constituents. This distinction is helpful to capture not only the different number of lexical constituents, but also the semantic relation between these salutations. My hypothesis is that the complex salutation *Yours sincerely* functions as derivational base of the simple salutations *Yours* and *Sincerely*, and not that *Yours sincerely* results from a lexical expansion from either *Yours* or *Sincerely*. To show this, I will discuss first of all the meaning of *Yours sincerely*, and then I will show how the meanings of *Yours* and *Sincerely* are related to it.

9.5.1 *Yours sincerely*

The closing salutation *Yours sincerely* is used in business letters and e-mails to people whom the sender does not know well or not at all. Therefore, it cannot be combined with first-name address and with opening salutations other than *Dear*. None of the respondents to the survey reported using *Yours sincerely* in a personal letter or e-mail to a close friend, a colleague, a fellow student or a family member. In most cases, the sender simply knows who the recipient is and may or may not specify the recipient's name at the beginning of the letter/e-mail.

According to the 'S and S don't go together' rule,³⁷ *Yours sincerely* should not be used if the recipient is addressed as *Sir* (or *Madam*); that is, it should not be used when the name of

³⁷ <https://www.englishtrackers.com/english-blog/cover-letters-salutation-tone/>.

the recipient is not specified. However, example (31) in the Appendix, a letter to the director of a newspaper from a reader, illustrates that it is perfectly possible to have *Yours sincerely* when the recipient is addressed as *Sir*.

If the recipient's name is specified, the form of address is typically *Mr./Mrs.* plus surname (alternatively, a professional title plus surname), as in (32):

- (32) **Dear Miss Peabody,**
I enclose a letter of condolence for the Bishop. Please could you see that it is passed unopened to him.
Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN AYSGARTH
- (Wordbanks, brbooks)

If the recipient's name is not specified, apart from *Sir/Madam* the recipient can be addressed with various kinds of "anonymous" nominal terms. For instance, in (33) the recipient is addressed as *lady*, and in (34) with a generic *Teacher*:

- (33) **My lady,**
I don't even know what I wrote because I didn't keep a copy but it's okay that you didn't reply. [...]
Yours sincerely
Adam Henry
- (Ian McEwan, *The Children Act*, 2014:142)
- (34) **Dear Teacher,**
I hope you have been keeping well.
The xxx School would like to know whether you are still available to teach Italian part-time in 2016. [...]
Yours sincerely,
(first name and surname)
- (personal e-mail)

The combinability options of *Yours sincerely* suggest that it is semantically incompatible with the expressed attitudes "when I say this, I think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'", whereas in all cases there is compatibility with the expressed attitude "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". Thus, I will posit this semantic component for the semantic invariant.

To pinpoint the *dictum* of *Yours sincerely* it is necessary to analyse the respective semantic contribution of the two lexical constituents: *yours* and *sincerely*. The pronoun *yours* suggests the idea of ‘giving oneself to the other person’ or ‘belonging to the other person’ (as in *I’m yours*); in other words, it signals one’s availability to do some things for another person if this person asks. This idea can be captured with a component ‘if you want me to do some things, I want to do these things if I can’. It could be asked why this component states ‘some things’ and not ‘something good for you’. The reason is that such a phrasing would convey the wrong idea that one is ready to do anything that the other person asks (which could include, for example, stealing); this is unlikely to correspond to the expressed attitude, especially considering that the recipient is, in most cases, someone whom the sender does not know. The semantic prime YOU in the meaning of *yours* is important, because it distinguishes the meaning of *Yours sincerely* from that of *Sincerely*, in which there is no YOU (see 9.6.3). Arguably, a component containing the prime YOU is more “personal” than a component without YOU, because it says something to a specific addressee, not to an unspecified “anyone”.

To pinpoint the semantic contribution of *sincerely* it is necessary to analyse the meaning of the adjective *sincere* and of the noun *sincerity* first. The concept of *sincerity* has been discussed first by Goddard (2001) and then by Wierzbicka (2002) in her comparative analysis with the Russian *iskrennost’*. Goddard has pointed out that most dictionary definitions focus exclusively on the component ‘I say it as I think’ of the meaning of *sincerity*, without mentioning that people only speak of *sincerity* in relation to speech acts, particularly those which are seen in a positive light. Speakers of English can *thank*, *apologise*, *praise*, *admire* or *doubt sincerely*, whereas collocations like *sincerely threaten* and *sincerely despise* are not possible (2001:669). In examples (35) and (36) in the Appendix, *sincerely* occurs in collocation with the speech-act verbs *believe* and *hope*. Goddard has added that *sincerity* is a matter of “self-expression”,

because often the subject of the speech act is in first-person (*I* or *we*), “in which case the sentence amounts to a profession of attitude, intention or belief by the speaker” (670).

The relation of *sincerely* with speech acts and not with actions becomes more evident if one considers the opposite, *insincerely*, which, as pointed out by Goddard, “cannot be used except with speech-act verbs or expressive verbs” (ibidem). The phrases *say insincerely* or *smile insincerely* are perfectly possible, whereas one cannot **want insincerely* or have **an insincere hope* or * *an insincere belief*. According to Goddard, this is because “what is sincere or insincere is not the hope (admiration, belief, etc.) itself, but the expression of that hope” (ibidem). The relation with acts of saying is grounded in the belief that it is good to say things *sincerely*, because in doing so one meets social expectations and creates a good impression on people. As Wierzbicka has written,

The English word *sincere* (and its derivatives) is used only with reference to situations when one says something expected and socially approved, to counteract the suspicion that what one says is therefore not true. It implicitly acknowledges the existence of social conventions and affirms the truth of what was said on a particular occasion against the common knowledge that things of this kind are often said without being true.

(2002:26)

Therefore, semantically *sincerity* is very much related to the prime TRUE and to the idea that it is good to say things which are not feigned, pretended or dissimulated. Here I present an adapted version of the semantic explication of *sincerely* proposed by Goddard:

I *sincerely* hope so (adapted from Goddard 2001:671)

when I say this, I say it as I think

I know that some people can think about me like this now:

“this someone says it like this because this someone thinks like this:

‘it is good if I say things like this’”

I don’t say it like this because I think like this

I say it like this because it is true

it is good if people can say things as they think, I know this

Of the semantic components posited by Goddard, I suggest that the first component, ‘when I say this, I say it as I think’, represents the semantic contribution of *sincerely* to the *dictum* of *Yours sincerely*. In sum, the *dictum* of *Yours sincerely* can be captured with two semantic components: ‘if you want me to do some things, I want to do these things if I can’, which captures the contribution of *yours*, and ‘when I say this, I say it as I think’, which captures the contribution of *sincerely*.

It could be suggested that *Yours sincerely* is the sum of the meanings of *Yours* and *Sincerely* as simple adverbial salutations. However, *Yours* and *Sincerely* are not used to write to the same people to whom one writes *Yours sincerely*, as I will discuss in the next sections. This suggests that the relationship construed with the recipients of *Yours* and of *Sincerely* is different from the relationship construed with the recipient of *Yours sincerely*, and therefore that there is a difference in expressed attitude between these salutations. If *Yours sincerely* were the sum of the meanings of *Yours* plus *Sincerely*, it would be possible to use this salutation in all the contexts in which both *Yours* and *Sincerely* as simple salutations are used, and this is not the case, as I will show. Therefore, the *dictum* of *Yours sincerely* has to be analysed as a *semantic unicum*, a single unit of meaning consisting of two semantic components which express the key ideas ‘you’ and ‘as I think’.

I propose the following explication for the interactional meaning of *Yours sincerely*:

Yours sincerely

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

“I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “if you want me to do some things, I want to do these things if I can”

at the same time, I say: “when I say this, I say it as I think”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

9.5.2 *Yours*

Like *Yours sincerely*, *Yours* can occur in letters where the recipient's name may or may not be specified. Unlike *Yours sincerely*, it can be used to write both to people whom the sender does not know well and to people whom the sender knows well or very well. In (37) and (38), the recipients are addressed respectively as *Sir* and *reader*, with no name being specified:

- (37) Letter 15 March 2002
Sir,
Your correspondents (March 14) show a total misunderstanding of Glenys Kinnock's light-hearted remarks about the lives of real women in relation to Delia Smith. [...]
Yours,
(first name and surname)
(Collins Wordbanks, times)
- (38) Dear **Reader,**
There is a newspaper that scratches where people itch, and I am its editor. [...]
Please give us a try, I think you will be glad you did. **Yours,** <MX/> Editor
(Collins Wordbanks, brephem)

These examples clearly indicate that the sender does not know the addressee and that *Yours* is compatible with the expressed attitude “when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. In (39), also signed off with *Yours*, the recipient's name is specified, and the use of *Mrs.* plus surname indicates that the expressed attitude is “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” (Chapter 12):

- (39) My dear **Mrs. Emerson,**
You can continue to refuse my invitations, but in the small world of Cairo society you can't avoid me altogether. [...]
Yours,
Margaret
(Wordbanks, brbooks)

The recipient's name is specified in letters to people whom the sender knows well or very well, such as friends, family members and lovers. In (40), the sender writes to a friend whom

he addresses by first name, and in (41) the recipient of *Yours* is the wife of a man whom he addresses as *love*:

- (40) 8 September 1968
Dear David,
Well I certainly meant it - I felt absolutely useless at the run through but Nicholas & Clement were marvellous & you kept telling me it was all right and I actually got thro"it ! [...] See you then. **Yours, Kenneth**
(Wordbanks, brbooks)

- (41) **My dearest Love,**
As I cannot bear to be away from you the whole day, & as it is now nearly four o'ck, I send this letter by a messenger to beg that you will call for me at the Carlton, where I shall remain until past five, so that we may be together a little.
[...]
Yours, Dis.
(Wordbanks, brbooks)

Thus, *Yours* also appears to be compatible with the expressed attitude “when I say this, I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. On the basis of these examples, it could be suggested that depending on who the addressee is *Yours* expresses two opposite attitudes: “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” and “I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. As it cannot be that the meaning of an expression includes two clashing expressed attitudes, it is necessary to determine the semantic invariant.

Regrettably, in this case the respondents’ comments were less helpful; none of the respondents used *Yours* and only a few of them received e-mails signed with *Yours* from colleagues who are also friends or from close friends. Since the available evidence suggests that *Yours* can be used to write both to people whom one knows well and people whom one does not know well, my hypothesis is that a component stating how well the sender professes to know the recipient is not part of the interactional meaning of *Yours*. The professed way of thinking about the addressee must be a different idea, which can be expressed both to people whom one knows well and people whom one does not know well. A good way of pinpointing

this idea is to analyse the *dictum* of *Yours*, as the expressed attitude is consistent with the message conveyed to the recipient.

As previously mentioned, the semantic contribution of *yours* is ‘if you want me to do some things, I want to do these things if I can’. The difference with the *dictum* of *Yours sincerely* is that in *Yours* the idea ‘I say this as I think, I want you to know it’ is not expressed, and I suggest that this is because this idea is not felt to be suitable for exchanges with close friends, to whom one does not need to specify that things are being said “sincerely”. Without *sincerely* the *dictum* is more “personal”, because the element ‘you’ is prominent. The idea ‘if you want me to do some things, I want to do these things if I can’ is also compatible with recipients whom the sender does not know well, because it can indicate an attitude of “deference”. “Deference”, however, implies not only being ready to do something for another person if this person asks, but also feeling something good towards this person. Thus, I will also posit a semantic ‘I feel something good towards you’ for the *dictum* of *Yours*, which is compatible both with recipients who are close friends and with the attitude expressed towards recipients whom the sender does not know well.

The question is, at this point, to whom one would want to say ‘if you want me to do some things, I want to do these things if I can’ and ‘I feel something good towards you’. My hypothesis is that one would not express these ideas to anyone, but only to certain people whom one regards as “special”, either by virtue of the close relationship one has with them, or by virtue of particular merits of these people (their social position, their prestigious job, etc.). In other words, this means to think about certain people not like one thinks about many other people. Thus, I suggest that the meaning of *Yours* includes a component ‘when I say this, I don’t think about you like I can think about many other people’. Obviously, this is an expressed attitude, which is independent of the real relationship between sender and recipient and fits

well with all the contexts in which *Yours* is used. In sum, I propose the following explication for the interactional meaning of *Yours*:

Yours

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I feel something good towards you
if you want me to do some things, I want to do these things if I can"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like I can think about many other people

Looking at this explication, one can see that *Yours sincerely* cannot be an expansion from *Yours*, because the two salutations express different attitudes which are suitable for different recipients.

9.5.3 *Sincerely*

Like *Yours sincerely*, *Sincerely* is used in business and commercial letters sent to people whom the sender does not know well or not at all. It is not used in personal letters to friends and family members, and very rarely it is found in combination with first-name address. The name of the recipient may or may not be specified; if it is specified, the recipient is typically addressed as *Mr./Mrs.* (or a professional title) plus surname or *Sir*, as in (42):

- (42) Letter 01 January 2002
Sir,
It has been suggested that the West sends envoys to countries with large numbers of Muslims to advise them that we are not anti-Muslim. [...]
Sincerely,
(first name and surname)

(Collins Wordbanks, times)

In (43), the recipient is someone whom the sender does not know and is addressed with an anonymous *friend*:

- (43) Dear Friend and Neighbor,
A chance in life, a childhood without fear, a sense of self-worth, social skills,
and the inner strength to say NO to anything or substance that abuses one's
health. [...]
Sincerely,
(first name and surname)

(Collins Wordbanks, usephem)

There are two other noticeable facts to mention: one is that *Sincerely* is never used in the exchange of letters between Coetzee and Auster, and the second is that *Sincerely* is frequently used in letters which give notification or information to the addressee, but no events or facts concerning the interactants' personal lives are ever mentioned. Taking these elements into account, I suggest that the interactional meaning of *Sincerely* includes a semantic component "when I say this, I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". This component suits both cases in which the name of the recipient is specified and cases like (43), where it is not.

While in *Yours* the idea 'when I say this to you, I say as I think' is not expressed, in *Sincerely* this is the only message conveyed. What is missing in *Sincerely* is the element 'you', which makes *Sincerely* sound quite "impersonal", the kind of "good thing" which one could say to many other people at other times. This idea can be captured with a component 'I want to say something good to you like I can say something good like this to many other people at other times'. In the explication which I propose below, this component is included in a section named 'how I want to say it':

Sincerely

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU

I want to say something good to you at this moment

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment], they think like this:

"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it to you like I can say something like this to many other people at other times

[C] WHAT I SAY

I say: "when I say something to you I say it as I think"

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone well"

9.6 Conclusion

The semantic analysis of various English closing salutations proposed in this chapter has highlighted two main characteristics of their interactional meaning:

- i. closing salutations are ways of saying "something good" to the recipient of a letter or an e-mail after one has written other things;
- ii. the interactional meaning of closing salutations consists of an expressed attitude and of a *dictum*, a "message" conveyed to the addressee based on the semantic contribution of the lexical constituents.

On the basis of the *dictum*, I have distinguished three groups of closing salutations: salutations expressing "good wishes", salutations expressing "regards" and adverbial salutations.

The most important point discussed in my analysis is that some closing salutations are semantically related. I have argued that the salutations *Best wishes*, *All the best*, *Regards* and *Yours sincerely* function as derivational bases of other salutations, which are either lexically reduced or lexically expanded from these. The interactional meaning of the reduced and

expanded salutations differs from the meaning of the respective derivational base with respect to the *dictum* and to the expressed attitude. The meaning of the expanded salutations includes a semantic component ‘I want to say more’. In no case the meaning of the reduced salutations includes a component ‘I want to say less’, but either a component ‘I want to say it with one word’ or ‘I want to say it with not many words’. With the exception of *Sincerely*, the possibility of saying “something good” with fewer words implies that the speaker is trying to construe a closer relationship with the recipient. The link between lexical reduction and a closer relationship with the addressee is a consistent element in all the reduced salutations except *Sincerely*, which, on the contrary, sounds more “impersonal” without the element ‘you’ brought by *Yours*.

The two processes of lexical reduction and lexical expansion have also led to a discussion of the semantic property of compositionality. I have argued that the semantics of the *dictum* of lexically reduced and expanded salutations should not be analysed as the sum of the meanings of the single lexical constituents, *Yours sincerely* being a clear example of non-compositional *dictum*.

In the specific case of adverbial salutations, I have also distinguished simple from complex salutations. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this distinction is helpful to capture the differences in the interactional meanings of Italian closing salutations, too.

Chapter 10. Interactional meanings in letters and e-mails (4): closing salutations in Italian

10.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the interactional meaning of various *formule di chiusura* in Italian ('closing phrases', as defined in the *Treccani* encyclopaedia). Italian has a large repertoire of closing salutations used in letters and e-mails, and in the majority of them the word *saluto* is the main lexical constituent. In most salutations this word occurs in the plural form *saluti*, either on its own or preceded by an adjective. In other salutations the word is used in the singular, for example *un caro saluto* ('one *caro saluto*'). In addition to the salutations containing *saluto* or *saluti*, the adverbial salutation *Cordialmente* ('Cordially'), is also discussed in this chapter, and finally, the expressions *A presto* ('See you soon') and *Un bacio* ('A kiss') are discussed in the last two sections.

As with English closing salutations, Italian salutations, too, are distinguished between simple and complex salutations in the present analysis; in specific cases, the same distinction between derivational base and derived forms made for English closing salutations will be made for Italian closing salutations to capture their semantic relation. The analysis presented here is based on numerous examples taken from corpus, literature, personal e-mails and from a set of collected e-mails sent by a small group of Italian university students to their lecturer.³⁸ The body of data also includes the letters written by Aldo Moro in 1978, already introduced in Chapter 8. In addition to these data, the analysis is based on the responses given by numerous native speakers of Italian to a small survey in which they were asked to indicate which closing

³⁸ The e-mails were collected at the Orientale University of Naples in July 2014.

salutations they had used and which ones they had not used in letters and e-mails to different people.

10.2 The cultural semantics of the word *saluto/i* and the meaning of *Saluti da ~*

The fact that the word *saluto/i* is a lexical constituent in numerous closing salutations suggests that the meaning of this word is particularly suitable for saying “something good” to the addressee at the end of a letter or an e-mail. The noun *saluto* is related to the verb *salutare* (roughly, to ‘greet someone’). Unlike the English *salute*, which denotes an act realised only through a gesture,³⁹ the Italian *salutare* denotes an act which can be realised through words, gestures or by personally visiting someone at their place. In this last case, *salutare* is used in combination with verbs of movement like *passare*, *andare* or *venire*, as examples (1a) and (1b) illustrate:

- (1) a. *Se ho un minuto di tempo, **passo a salutarti** dopo cena.*
*If I have a minute, I’ll **come and salutare** you (TU) after dinner.*
- b. *È a Roma già da una settimana e **non è ancora venuto a salutarmi**.*
*He’s been in Rome for a week now and he **has not come to salutare to me** yet.*

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

As far as the collocational range of *saluti* is concerned, in Italian one can “send” (*inviare*, *mandare*), “leave” (*lasciare*) or “address” (*rivolgere*) one’s *saluti* to someone in various circumstances, both orally and in writing. For example, at the end of a conversation one could ask the interlocutor to “bring” (*portare*) one’s *saluti* to someone else; alternatively, someone could write in a postcard *saluti da Roma* (comparable to the English “greetings from Rome”).

³⁹ In English *salute* refers to the gesture made to pay respect to someone of a higher rank in a military organisation. (Cambridge online dictionary, http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/essential-british-english/salute_2, accessed 25/8/2015).

In relation to “sending” or “bringing” someone’s *saluti* to someone else, there is a difference with the English expression *to send one’s regards to someone* which is both semantic and cultural in nature. In the previous chapter, I have proposed that the meaning of the English expression *to send one’s regards to someone* consists of two semantic components: ‘I think something very good about you’ and ‘I feel something good towards you because of this’. In Italian, the expression *portare* (alternatively *lasciare, mandare*) *i saluti a qualcuno* does not express the idea ‘I think something very good about you’. The semantics of *saluto/i* has to do with social relationships and with the management of rapport. Example (2) not only illustrates that a *saluto* is expected in social interactions, but also emphasises an important cultural aspect of the act of *salutare*, that of *ricambiare il saluto*, of “returning” the *saluto*:

- (2) *Prima di andarsene Sara lo aveva salutato solo con la mano. Lui, che a qual punto aveva capito, ha guardato me per sapere se poteva rispondere al saluto. Gli ho chiesto Non la saluti?, e lui ha detto un Ciao affrettato, che si è richiuso subito, non è arrivato nemmeno a toccare il resto della faccia.*

Before going Sara had only waved at him. Having realised the situation, he looked at me to know if he could **return the saluto**. I asked him ‘**Won’t you say goodbye to her?**’ (lit. **salutare**), and he uttered a hasty Ciao, which closed again immediately, it did not even get to touch the rest of his face.

(Andrea Bajani, *Ogni promessa*, 2010:17, my translation)

Examples (3) and (4) illustrate that in social interactions people almost automatically “return” the *saluto*. Example (4), in particular, suggests that there is a cultural assumption whereby it is bad not to “return” the *saluto*, and that when this happens people feel that there is something wrong in the natural course of the exchange:

- (3) - *Buongiorno, - disse Firmino. - Il vecchietto interruppe il suo lavoro e lo guardò. Ricambiò il saluto.*

- Good morning, - said Firminio. – The old man stopped working and looked at him. **He reciprocated the saluto.**

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

- (4) *Si tolse rispettosamente il basco, e ai due amici **non restò che alzarsi a propria volta e ricambiare il saluto.***

When he respectfully took off his beret **the two friends could not but stand up too and reciprocate the saluto.**

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

On the basis of these examples, I suggest that the reason why the mutual exchange of *saluti* appears to be so important in Italian culture is that the meaning of *saluti* includes a semantic component ‘I say: “I feel something good towards you”’. This hypothesis is consistent with the idea that it is important to return the *saluto*; if someone has conveyed the message “I say: ‘I feel something good towards you’” to me, it is good if I reciprocate conveying the same message. By contrast, there is no cultural assumption in Anglo culture encouraging people to “return the *regards*” received from someone else; the idea ‘I think something very good you’ is too subjective to be expressed somewhat loosely just to follow a socio-linguistic convention. Further evidence for this component comes from another culturally salient expression, *levare/togliere il saluto a qualcuno* (lit. “to deprive someone of the *saluto*”), which means to deliberately choose not to greet someone anymore to express one’s rancour or disapproval of this person. Examples (5) and (6) illustrate that people take offence at being “deprived” of the *saluto*, and interpret this act not just as a breach of interactional conventions, but as a sign of hostility and willingness to end a friendly relationship:

- (5) *Sono anni che **non si salutano più.***

They **have not “said Hello”** to each other in years.

(Enciclopedia Treccani, <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/salutare2/>)

- (6) *Ma soprattutto era disperata perché certamente la signora Lucrezia Gardenigo non solo avrebbe fatto ritirare la nipotina dalla sua classe, ma le avrebbe **tolto il saluto** e avrebbe convinto le migliori famiglie della città a tenere le loro figlie alla larga da quella pazza manesca di Argia Sforza.*

But most of all she was desperate because surely signora Lucrezia Gardenigo would not only take her grand daughter out of class, but would also **“deprived her of the saluto”**

and would convince the best families in the city to keep their daughters away from that crazy, violent Argia Sforza.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

If the word *saluto/i* conveys a particular message, the question is what is said when writing *Saluti da Roma*. Considering that someone writing in a postcard *Saluti da Roma* writes it when being far away from the person to whom they are writing, my hypothesis is that in addition to “I say: ‘I feel something good towards you’” the sender expresses two other ideas: the first is that at that time, in Rome, he/she is thinking about the addressee; the second is that he/she wants to say “something good” to the addressee of the kind that many people say to someone if they have not met this person for a while. In sum, I propose the following explication for the interactional meaning of *Saluti da Roma*:

Saluti da Roma

I say: “I’m thinking about you now
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
like people want to say something good to someone
if they don’t see this someone for some time”

10.3 The interactional meaning of *Saluti* as a closing salutation

To pinpoint the interactional meaning of the closing salutation *Saluti*, it will be good to start looking at how it is used. In (7), a letter sent to the director of a newspaper by a reader, the recipient of *Saluti* is someone whom the sender does not know:

- (7) *Se lei ci riesce, **gentile direttore**, vuol dire che io, dopo trentacinque anni di onorata attività forense in Sicilia, non ho capito nulla della mafia e nulla delle debolezze umane tra le quali, ovviamente c'è il desiderio di un uomo di volere guardare una bella donna come la Zeta - Jones.*

Saluti

(first name and surname)

If you (LEI) can do it, **gentile direttore**, it means that I, after thirty-five years of honoured forensic activity in Sicily, have not understood anything about mafia and about human

weaknesses among which, obviously, there is a man's desire to look at a fair woman like Zeta-Jones.

Saluti

(first name and surname)

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

The use of the opening salutation *Gentile*, of the "title" *Direttore* and of the LEI form indicates that *Saluti* is compatible with the expressed attitude is "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". By contrast, in (8) the sender writes to his colleagues, people whom he knows well and addresses as *Cari/e*, and signs off writing *saluti a tutti*:

- (8) **Care** colleghe, **cari** colleghi, qui di seguito in copia, oltre che in allegato, vi invio il nostro ultimo volantino nazionale che è una piccola riflessione sul cambio della guardia avvenuto al Ministero dell'Università. [...] A voi la lettura e **saluti a tutti**.
(first name and surname)

Cari and **care** colleagues, I am copying and attaching to the present our latest national leaflet which is a small reflection on the "Changing of the Guard" occurred at the Minister of Education. [...] Enjoy the reading and **saluti to all**.

(first name and surname)

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

The fact that *Saluti* is used to write both to people whom one does not know well and people whom one knows well indicates that the range of possible recipients of this closing salutation is wide. This does not mean, however, that *Saluti* can be used to write to anyone, or that it expresses two opposite attitudes depending on who the recipient is. It is necessary to pinpoint the attitude expressed in the invariant meaning, and the respondents' comments have helped posit a plausible semantic component which appears to fit all the contexts of use of *Saluti*. Almost all the respondents reported having recently written *Saluti* to a colleague or to a friend, but not to a close friend, to a relative or to their superior at work. Taking these comments into account, I suggest that the attitude expressed in invariant meaning of *Saluti* is "when I say this, I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone very well'". This component does not exclude that the recipient of *Saluti* can be someone whom the sender does not know well and

at the same time does not state that the sender knows the recipient well. All the respondents also commented that they have recently written *Saluti* to someone whom they have not met for a long time. This comment supports the hypothesis that *Saluti* is used to write to people with whom one is not in frequent contact. This idea can be captured with a component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I can often say things to this someone’”.

Integrating the expressed attitude with the *dictum* discussed in the previous section, the interactional meaning of *Saluti* can be explicated as follows:

***Saluti* (as a closing salutation)**

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
 like people often say when it is like this:
 they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
 at some point [moment] they think like this:
 “I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “I’m thinking about you now,
 when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
 at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
 like people want to say something good to other people
 if they don’t see these people for some time”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this:
 “I know this someone very well, I can often say things to this someone”

Having explicated the meaning of *Saluti*, I wish to make another point related to its semantic characteristics. I propose that *Saluti* can be considered as the derivational base of all related salutations, both those with the singular *saluto* and those in which *saluti* is preceded by an adjective. This hypothesis is based on two elements. The first is that as a simple salutation *Saluti* is semantically self-sufficient. When an adjective is added, the interactional meaning is different because both the *dictum* and the expressed attitude are different, as I will discuss in the next sections. The second is that *Saluti* in the plural occurs in more closing salutations than the singular *saluto*. This suggests that to sign off sending one’s *saluti* (in the plural) is the

“standard” form, and that the “twist” from plural to singular is used to express a different meaning (see 10.7). Moreover, this “twist” from plural to singular appears to be a relatively recent development which reflects a generational change in language use. Most of the younger speakers whom I consulted commented that they write *Un caro saluto* rather than *Cari saluti* (which appears to be going out of use). The semantic relation between *Saluti* and derived closing salutations will be discussed in the next sections.

10.4 *Distinti saluti*

In composite closing salutations, the word *saluti* can be preceded by a number of different adjectives, so as to obtain different *dicta*. In relation to this, the journalist Beppe Severgnini has commented that:

Nelle lettere brillano attributi banali. [...] I saluti [sono] immutabilmente cordiali. O distinti, che è peggio. Voglia gradire i miei più distinti saluti. E chi li distingue, i vostri saluti, se li presentate nella maniera più blanda e prevedibile che esista?

Letters sparkle with **banal attributes**. [...] The saluti [are] immutably ‘**cordiali**’. Or ‘**distinti**’, which is worse. “Please appreciate my most ‘distinti saluti’”. And who is going to “distinguish” your ‘saluti’, **if you present them in the blindest and most predictable manner that exists?**”

(Beppe Severgnini, *L'italiano. Lezioni semiserie*, 2007, my translation)

The position taken here is that however “formulaic” the *dictum* is, it is far from being semantically empty or “banal”, but expresses a specific interactional meaning and conveys a specific tone. As Severgnini writes, one of these adjectives is *distinto* (‘distinguished’). *Distinti saluti* is prototypically used to write to a person whom one does not know in combination with the LEI address form and with a professional title, with or without an accompanying surname. The matching opening salutation can be either *Egregio* or *Gentile*, but never *Caro/a*. In no case *Distinti saluti* can be combined with the TU address form and with first-name address. It is used

very often in business, commercial and legal letters and conveys the kind of conventional tone characteristic of exchanges between people who do not know each other. *Distinti saluti* can also be used in personal letters to people whom one does not know or not well, especially in first-time exchanges. The following examples are respectively a letter from a reader to the director of a newspaper, an e-mail from a student to a lecturer and a letter from the secretary of a diplomatic office to a citizen:

(9) *Egregio Direttore,*

Forse è un problema di proporzioni ed anche noi nel nostro piccolo contribuiamo ad alimentare il marciume. [...]

Distinti saluti,

(first name and surname)

Egregio Direttore,

Perhaps it is a matter of proportions and we, too, despite our little power, contribute to support this badness. [...]

Distinti saluti

(first name and surname)

(Letter to the director of *Libero*, 17/8/2015)

(10) *Gentilissima Professoressa Rossi,*

[...]

Attendo una Sua cordiale risposta.

Distinti saluti

(first name, surname, student number)

Gentilissima Professoressa Rossi,

[...]

I look forward to your (LEI) cordial reply.

Distinti saluti

(first name, surname, student number)

(11) *Gentile Dottor Farese,*

trasmettiamo in allegato una lettera firmata dal Consigliere Diplomatico Aggiunto del Signor Presidente della Repubblica.

Distinti saluti,

La Segreteria dell'Ufficio Affari Diplomatici

Gentile Dr. Farese,

please find attached a letter signed by the Assistant Diplomatic Councillor of the President of the Republic.

Distinti saluti

The Secretary of Diplomatic Affairs Office

Noticeably, *Distinti saluti* is never used by Aldo Moro in his letters, and I suggest that this is because all the recipients of his letters were people whom he knew (some better than others, but he knew them all), and therefore he did not feel that the meaning expressed by *Distinti saluti* was suitable for his addressees. The perceived unsuitability of *Distinti saluti* for exchanges with people whom one knows can be explained if we hypothesise that the invariant meaning includes a semantic component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone’”.

Furthermore, the respondents to the survey commented that they have recently written *Distinti saluti* to their superior. This suggests that this salutation is felt to be suitable for exchanges with people with whom the sender has a construed relationship of inequality in a workplace, or with people who have different roles from the sender. This aspect is evident in the examples, as in all three cases the sender and the recipient have different. The perceived suitability of *Distinti saluti* for exchanges between people who have different roles or positions can be explained if we hypothesise that the invariant meaning also includes a semantic component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”.

The interactional meaning of *Distinti saluti* also includes the semantic contribution of the adjective *Distinti*, which characterises the *dictum*. In Italian the adjective *distinto* is used to mark the difference between things, to separate them because of their different qualities or characteristics, e.g. *il vocabolo ha due distinti significati* (“the word has two separate/different meanings”). Alternatively, *distinto* is used to describe one single item implying that this is clearly different from other items in the same category; for example, *un colore distinto* and *un suono distinto* are respectively a colour and a sound which are clearly different from other ones. By extension, *distinto* is used to describe a personal quality, not an innate one or a quality which someone has developed over the years, but a quality which is ascribed to someone. More

precisely, *distinto* refers to the qualities of “refinement” and “courtesy” which are ascribed to noble people and which “distinguish” them from other people. In this sense, *distinto* collocates with nouns like *signore/signora*, *gentiluomo* (‘gentleman’) and *famiglia* (*una famiglia distinta*, ‘a distinguished family’). Essentially, *distinto* indicates someone who, because of their manners, behaviour, education and style, is like a “noble”, “distinguished” person (example (12) in Appendix A). In NSM terms, someone who is *distinto* can be described as someone who is ‘not like many people’ and someone about whom ‘people can know some very good things’ and ‘can think some very good things’. The two components ‘people can know some very good things about this someone’ and ‘people can think something about this someone because of this’ represent the semantic contribution of the adjective *distinto* to the *dictum* of *Distinti saluti*.

In sum, the interactional meaning of *Distinti saluti* can be explicated as follows:

Distinti saluti

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
 like people often say when it is like this:
 they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
 at some point [moment] they think like this:
 “I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “I am thinking about you now
 when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
 at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
 like people want to say something good to other people
 if they don’t see these people for some time”

at the same time, I say:

 “people can know some very good things about this someone
 people can think something very good about this someone”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this:
 “I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me”

10.5 The meaning of closing salutations with the adjective *cordiale*

Another variant of *Saluti* is *Cordiali saluti*, formed with the adjective *cordiale* ('cordial') which also contributes to the meaning of the adverbial salutation *Cordialmente* ('Cordially'). I will discuss each salutation in separate sections.

10.5.1 *Cordiali saluti*

Cordiali saluti is used in exchanges between people who do not know each other well and who have different roles or positions. It is typically used in combination with LEI and *Gentile* and with a professional title, which may or may not be followed by a surname. In (13) and (14), respectively an exchange between a lecturer and a diplomat and an e-mail from a student to a lecturer, the recipients of *Cordiali saluti* are addressed with LEI and with a professional title:

(13) ***Gentile Dottore,***

La ringrazio per l'invito e il materiale allegato. Le farò sapere sulla mia partecipazione, al tempo stesso assicuro divulgazione dell'informazione.

Cordiali saluti

(first name and surname)

Gentile Dottore,

Thank you (LEI) for the invitation and for the attached material. I will let you (LEI) know if I can attend, and at the same time I ensure that the information will be spread.

Cordiali saluti

(first name and surname)

(14) ***Gentile Professoressa (surname),***

sono la laureanda della Prof.ssa (surname). Le scrivo per chiederLe se posso consegnarLe una copia della tesi il 14 luglio durante il Suo ricevimento. [...]

La ringrazio

Cordiali saluti

(first name and surname)

Gentile Professoressa (surname),

I am Professor (surname)'s student. I am writing to ask **you (LEI)** if I can give **you (LEI)** a copy of my thesis on July 14th during **your (LEI)** office hours. [...]

Thank **you** (LEI)
Cordiali saluti
(first name and surname)

Cordiali saluti is the typical closing salutation used by university students in e-mails to lecturers. The suitability of this salutation for this context can be explained if we hypothesise that the interactional meaning includes two key semantic components: “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” and “I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”. Both components are consistent with the LEI form, with *Gentile* and with the professional titles in the examples, and the second one, in particular, captures the difference in roles between sender and recipient which characterises the exchanges analysed.

Example (15), one of three letters that Aldo Moro wrote to Benigno Zaccagnini, the then secretary of the *Democrazia Cristiana* party, apparently undermines this hypothesis because in this letter the recipient of *Cordiali saluti* is addressed with the TU form, and TU is incompatible with the two semantic components proposed:

(15) *A Benigno Zaccagnini (recapitata il 24 aprile)*

Caro Zaccagnini,
*ancora una volta, come qualche giorno fa m'indirizzo a **te** con animo profondamente commosso per la crescente drammaticità della situazione. Siamo quasi all'ora zero: mancano più secondi che minuti. [...]*
Cordiali saluti
Aldo Moro

To Benigno Zaccagnini (delivered on April 24th)

Caro Zaccagnini,
once again, as I have done a few days ago I am writing to **you** (TU) with my spirit deeply moved for the increasing severity of the situation. We have almost reached the zero hour: seconds rather than minutes are left. [...]
Cordiali saluti
Aldo Moro

However, I would argue that the presence of the TU form does not invalidate the proposed hypothesis, because TU has its own interactional meaning which needs to be distinguished from the meaning of *Cordiali saluti*. I interpret *Cordiali saluti* plus TU as a sum of meanings which

in most contexts are incompatible, but if combined express a particular attitude. I suggest that the presence of TU reduces the gap in the relationship between sender and addressee and communicates to the addressee that one does not want to think about this person like one can think about other people to whom one can write *Cordiali saluti* (i.e. people whom one does not know well).

Significantly, before April 24th Moro had written two other letters to Zaccagnini, and each letter is signed with a different closing salutation. Before *Cordiali saluti* in the April 24th letter, Moro had signed off the letter delivered on April 20th with *Cordialmente* and the letter delivered on April 4th with *Affettuosi saluti*. The use of different closing salutations in letters to the same person is semantically relevant; it indicates that the sender, Moro, had various salutations in his repertoire and that he could choose which attitude to express by using different closing salutations in different letters. This change in expressed attitude is consistent with the dates of the letters; I suggest that Moro changed the closing salutations he used as he realised that his previous two requests for help had been ignored by Zaccagnini and that his time was about to end, as he wrote in (15). As I will discuss in 10.6.1, the regression from *Affettuosi saluti* to *Cordialmente* and then to *Cordiali saluti* reflects a radical change in the nature of the good feelings expressed towards the addressee, which in *Cordiali saluti* are what the sender *says*, whereas in *Affettuosi saluti* are what the sender *feels*. That is, I suggest that as time passed by and his condition worsened Moro chose to relate less and less closely to Zaccagnini, although he kept using TU and *Caro* in all his letters.

As far as the *dictum* of *Cordiali saluti* is concerned, it is necessary to pinpoint the semantic contribution of the adjective *cordiale*. In the definition provided by *Treccani*,⁴⁰ it is stated that *cordiale* means ‘that comes from the heart’ (from the Latin *cor-cordis* = heart, cf. Italian *cuore*, *cardiaco*), something which is therefore “deeply felt” and “spontaneous”. However, if we

⁴⁰ <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/cordiale1/>.

consider the collocational range and the contexts in which *cordiale* is used, we can see that there is no spontaneity in the good feelings expressed. The collocational range of *cordiale* includes the words *accoglienza* ('welcome'), *incontro* ('encounter'), *relazioni* ('relationships'), *ringraziamenti* ('thanksgivings'), *parole* ('words'), *colloquio* ('talk'), *augurio* ('wish'), *conversazione* ('conversation') and obviously *saluti*, all words which denote situations or speech acts related to interpersonal relationships and to the adherence to the "form" or "good manners" in social encounters. For example, in Italian an encounter between two politicians or a handshake can be described as *cordiale*. Therefore, *cordiale* does denote a display of "good feelings" towards another person, but these good feelings are far from being spontaneous, because they are expressed only to show one's "good disposition" towards the interlocutor in a social encounter to maintain rapport. Significantly, the nouns collocating with *cordiale* also collocate with *amichevole* ('friendly'), another adjective which denotes the way of projecting oneself to other people in interpersonal relationships. In (16) in Appendix A both *cordiali* and *amichevoli* are combined with *rapporti* ('relationships'), and it is noticeable that the maintenance of *armonia* ('harmony') in the working context is mentioned.

This lack of spontaneity in the good feelings expressed by *cordiale* can be noted comparing *cordiale* with another adjective, *gentile* ('kind'), in collocation with *parole* ('words'), examples (17) and (18) in Appendix A. In (17) the collocation *cordiali parole* is used in the context of an official speech, suggesting that the words are prepared and have a ceremonial nature; by contrast, *gentili parole* in (18) denotes a spontaneous and authentic expression of good feelings towards the person in question. Significantly, the collocations **conversazione gentile*, **rapporti gentili* or **gentili saluti* are impossible in Italian. Thus, I will posit a semantic component "I say: 'I feel something good towards you'" to capture the *dictum* of *Cordiali saluti*.

In sum, I propose the following explication for the interactional meaning of *Cordiali saluti*:

Cordiali saluti

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I am thinking about you now
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you now,
like people want to say something good to other people
if they don't see these people for some time"

at the same time, I say: "I feel something good towards you"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say this, I don't think about you like this:
"I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me"

10.5.2 *Cordialmente*

In my body of data *Cordialmente* occurs in combination with different forms of address.

Examples (19) and (20) are part of an e-mails exchange between a doctor and a medical student.

In (19), the patient is addressed by the doctor by first name in combination with LEI (a combination to be discussed in the next Chapter), and the opening salutation used is *Gentile*.

In (20), the doctor is addressed as *Dottoressa* in combination with LEI, and in this case, too, the opening salutation used is *Gentile*:

(19) ***Gentile*** *Enrica*,

la ringrazio del suo messaggio e mi scuso per il ritardo della risposta. [...]

Spero di poterle essere stata un po' di aiuto.

Buon lavoro!

Cordialmente,

(first name and surname)

Gentile *Enrica*,

thank **you (LEI)** for **your (LEI)** message and apologies for the late reply. [...]

I hope I could be of some help to **you (LEI)**.

I wish you “Buon lavoro” (lit. “work well”)

Cordialmente

(first name and surname)

(20) **Gentile Dottoressa** (surname),

innanzitutto vorrei ringraziarla per aver dedicato attenzione alla mia e-mail e per aver risposto così "abbondantemente". [...]

Cordialmente

(first name and surname)

Gentile Dottoressa (surname)

first of all I would like to thank **you (LEI)** for the time you dedicated to my e-mail and for replying so “abundantly”. [...]

Cordialmente

(first name and surname)

In the following letter written by Aldo Moro to the then Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti the recipient of *Cordialmente* is addressed as *Presidente* in combination with TU, and the opening salutation used is *Caro*:

(21) A Giulio Andreotti (recapitata il 29 aprile)

Caro Presidente,

*so bene che ormai il problema, nelle sue massime componenti, è nelle **tue** mani e **tu** ne **porti** altissima responsabilità. [...]*

*Grazie e **cordialmente tuo***

Aldo Moro

To Giulio Andreotti (delivered on April 29th)

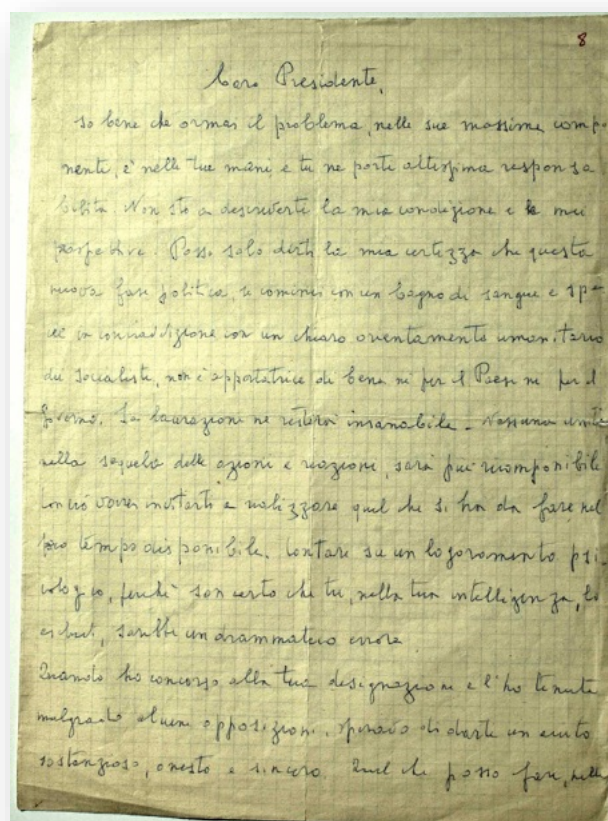
Caro Presidente,

I know well that now the problem, in its most important components, lies in **your (TU)** hands and that **you (TU)** are largely responsible for it. [...]

Thank you and **cordialmente yours (TU)**

Aldo Moro

Figure 1. Letter written by Aldo Moro to Giulio Andreotti.



The forms of address combining with *Cordialmente* in these examples express different attitudes: “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” and ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’. Compatibility with these two opposite attitudes can be explained if we hypothesise that the invariant meaning of *Cordialmente* includes a semantic component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone very well’”. This component is consistent with the comments of the respondents, who reported that they have not written *Cordialmente* to people whom they do not know, but also not to a close friend, to a relative and to a colleague who is also a friend.⁴¹

The prime VERY in the posited component represents an important difference with the phrasing of the component posited for the expressed attitude of *Cordiali saluti*, where VERY is

⁴¹ None of the younger respondents used this salutation.

absent (“I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone *well*’”). It captures the idea that the relationship with the recipient of *Cordialmente* is a bit closer than that with the recipient of *Cordiali saluti*. It seems plausible to hypothesise that there is a difference in expressed attitude between *Cordiali saluti* and *Cordialmente* because of the absence of *Saluti* in the *dictum* of *Cordialmente*. The fact that *saluti* is not a lexical constituent in *Cordialmente* has implications not only for the *dictum*, but also for the expressed attitude, as the two are related. Without *Saluti* the meaning ‘I want to say something good to you now like people want to say something good to other people if they don’t see these people for some time’ is not expressed. The tone of *Cordialmente*, therefore, is less “conventional” than that of *Cordiali saluti*. As I see it, the absence of *saluti* suggests that the sender does not think about the recipient as one of the many people to whom they could write *Cordiali saluti* and therefore that the sender is trying to establish a closer relationship with the recipient. At the generic level, *Cordialmente* is no less “conventional” than *Cordiali saluti*, but the fact that the two closing salutations can compete requires an analysis of the semantic differences between the two.

There is another difference between *Cordiali saluti* and *Cordialmente*, the fact that *cordialmente* is syntactically an adverb, and as such it specifies how the speaker purports to say things to the addressee. To capture the adverbial nature of *cordialmente* I will posit the same semantic component ‘I want you to know it’, which is meant to emphasise the expression of good feelings on the part of the sender. In Italian the adverb *cordialmente* collocates with various speech act verbs, including *dire* (‘say’), *parlare* (‘speak’), *rispondere* (‘reply’), *ringraziare* (‘thank’) and obviously *salutare*, but also with verbs denoting actions in social encounters, such as *accogliere* and *ricevere* (both meaning, roughly, to ‘welcome’ someone). In (22), *cordialmente* is combined with the verb *dire*:

(22) - *Caro il mio giovanotto, - disse cordialmente Donna Rosa, - venga a prendere un caffè con me, non riesco mai a vederla.*

My dear young boy, - **said cordially** Donna Rosa, - come (LEI form) and have a coffee with me, I never get to see you (LEI).

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

Considering that the range of verbs collocating with *cordialmente* is related to the nouns collocating with *cordiale* listed in the previous section, I suggest that *Cordialmente*, too, denotes an expression of good feelings. In this case, the good feelings expressed represent the way in which the speaker professes to say things to the addressee; that is, to say or do things *cordialmente* means to say or do things showing that one feels something good towards the hearer, and this is done for the sake of “good manners” and to reinforce the relationship with the addressee. In NSM terms, the meaning of *cordialmente* as exemplified in (22) can be explicated as follows:

Disse *cordialmente* (Donna Rosa)

Donna Rosa said it like someone can say something good to someone else
if this someone wants to say something like this to this other someone at the same time:
“I feel something good towards you now, I want you to know it”

It could be asked why the prime GOOD has been added after SOMETHING in the first component. The reason is that whatever is said *cordialmente* has to be something good, and not something bad or neutral; for example, sentences like **Sta piovendo – disse cordialmente* (“It’s raining- she said *cordialmente*”) or insults like **Sei un idiota – disse cordialmente* (“You’re an idiot – she said *cordialmente*”) sound bizarre. Drawing on this explication, I propose that the *dictum* of the closing salutation *Cordialmente* is “I say: ‘I feel something good towards you, I want you to know it’”.

The respondents to the survey also indicated as recipients of *Cordialmente* people who are their superiors at work and people with whom they have not been in contact for some time. The infrequency of contact is a factor which has not emerged from the comments on *Cordiali saluti*; this suggests that for speakers who have both *Cordiali saluti* and *Cordialmente* in their

repertoire this is a distinctive factor between the two. To capture this factor, I will posit a semantic component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I can often say things to this someone’” for the interactional meaning of *Cordialmente*.

All the proposed semantic components for the interactional meaning of *Cordialmente* as a closing salutation are integrated in the following explication:

***Cordialmente* (as a closing salutation)**

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
“I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “when I say this to you I feel something good towards you, I want you to know it”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this:
“I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me
I can often say things to this someone”

10.6 *Affettuosi saluti and the semantics of ‘affettuoso’*

Another adjective which can modify *saluti* in a closing salutation is *affettuoso* (roughly, ‘affectionate’, ‘loving’), forming the salutation *Affettuosi saluti*. *Affettuosi saluti* is the closing salutation which Aldo Moro used most to sign off his letters. Two of his letters signed off with this closing salutation are analysed in this section. One is the first letter which he wrote to Benigno Zaccagnini, in which he addressed the recipient by surname in combination with TU, and used the opening salutation *Caro*. The second is the letter which Moro wrote to Nicola Rana, one of his two closest collaborators:

(23) *A Benigno Zaccagnini (recapitata il 4 aprile)*
Caro Zaccagnini,

scrivo a **te**, intendendo rivolgermi a Piccoli, Bartolomei, Galloni, Gaspari, Fanfani, Andreotti e Cossiga ai quali tutti **vorrai** leggere la lettera e con i quali tutti **vorrai** assumere le responsabilità, che sono ad un tempo individuali e collettive. [...]

Affettuosi saluti

Aldo Moro

To Benigno Zaccagnini (delivered on April 4th)

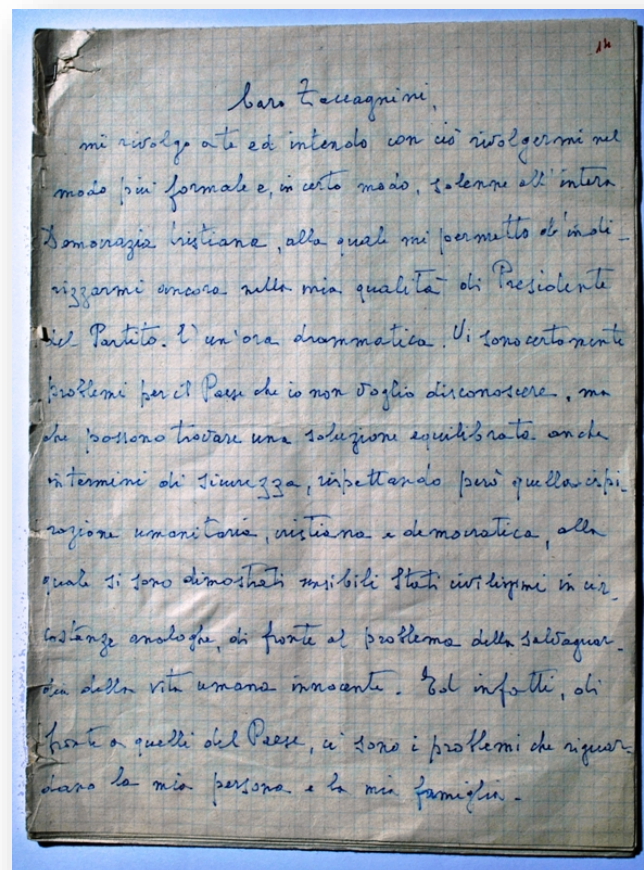
Caro Zaccagnini,

I am writing to **you (TU)** intending to write, at the same time, to Piccoli, Bartolomei, Galloni, Gaspari, Fanfani, Andreotti and Cossiga, to whom **you (TU)** shall want to read this letter and with whom **you (TU)** shall take the responsibilities, which are at the same time individual and collective. [...]

Affettuosi saluti

Aldo Moro

Figure 2. Letter written by Aldo Moro to Benigno Zaccagnini.



(24) A Nicola Rana (recapitata il 29 marzo)

Carissimo Rana

Le rivolgo il più affettuoso pensiero e **La** ringrazio tanto per quel che **ha fatto e fa** a sostegno della mia famiglia e mio. [...]

Grazie tante e i più **affettuosi saluti**.

Suo Aldo Moro

To Nicola Rana (delivered on March 29th)

Carissimo Rana

I send to **you (LEI)** my most affectionate thought and I thank **you (LEI)** very much for what **you (LEI)** have done and still do to support my family and me. [...]

Many thanks and my most **affettuosi saluti**.

Yours (LEI) Aldo Moro

In these two letters different forms of address are used. In the first letter, the recipient is addressed with TU and *Caro*, whereas in the second letter the recipient is addressed with *Carissimo* and LEI. The compatibility with forms of address expressing different, and in fact opposite attitudes suggests that the invariant meaning of *Affettuosi saluti* includes a semantic component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone very well’”. This component is consistent with both letters written by Moro and also with the respondents’ comments. The respondents reported using *Affettuosi saluti* in letters to friends, to colleagues who are also friends and to friends with whom they have not been in touch for a while. By contrast, in no case *Affettuosi saluti* has been reported in exchanges with one’s superior, with dependents, with a close relative and with a stranger. The comments suggest that the meaning of *Affettuosi saluti* is felt to be suitable for exchanges with people whom one knows well (mostly friends), but not very well, and the posited component is intended to capture this. As with *Cordialmente*, the presence of VERY in the component which captures the expressed attitude of *Affettuosi saluti* represents an important difference with the attitude expressed by *Cordiali saluti* or *Distinti saluti* (which also have *saluti* as a lexical constituent) and suggests a closer relationship with the recipient than that with the recipients of *Cordiali saluti* or *Distinti saluti*.

The expressed attitude of *Affettuosi saluti* is also consistent with the *dictum*. To have a clear idea of what is said to the addressee with *Affettuosi saluti*, it is necessary to analyse the meaning of the adjective *affettuoso* and pinpoint its semantic contribution. A good starting point is to

analyse the differences between *affettuoso* and *cordiale*, as both adjectives can collocate with *saluti*. Very often the two adjectives are considered identical in meaning, because they have a similar collocational range and because they both denote an expression of very good feelings towards the addressee. However, a passage from the 1982 End of the Year speech given by the then President of the Italian Republic Sandro Pertini clearly illustrates that the two adjectives do not mean the same:

(25) *Voglio rivolgere un mio **saluto cordiale, affettuoso** alle forze armate.*

I want to send my **cordiale, affettuoso saluto** to the armed forces.

(Sandro Pertini, *Discorso di fine anno*, 1982)

The very fact that President Pertini used at the same time both *cordiale* and *affettuoso* in combination with *saluto* in the same sentence indicates that he wanted to express two different meanings. In light of this, the question is what the semantic differences between these two adjectives are. The first and most important difference is that *affettuoso* is an emotion term, whereas *cordiale* is not. One can *sentire/provare affetto per qualcuno* (feel *affetto* towards someone), but one cannot **provare cordialità per qualcuno*; likewise, it is possible to *reprimere il proprio affetto* ('repress one's *affetto*'), but one cannot **reprimere la propria cordialità*.

The second difference lies in the prepositions licensed by each adjective. In Italian, it is possible to say both *essere affettuoso con qualcuno* ('to be *affettuoso* with someone') and *essere cordiali con qualcuno* ('to be *cordiale* with qualcuno'), whereas one can *mostrare affetto per qualcuno* ('to show *affetto* for/towards someone'), but not **mostrare cordialità per qualcuno* (*'to show *cordialità* for/towards someone'). The reason is that in Italian the preposition *per* is licensed by emotion terms, whereas the preposition *con* collocates with words denoting interpersonal relationships. In the phrase '*essere* + adjective + *con*', the

adjective denotes the behaviour of a person in a social encounter, as example (26) in Appendix A illustrates. For this reason, *con* is compatible with both *affetto* and *cordialità*, whereas *per* is only compatible with the emotion term *affetto*.

A third, perhaps more glaring difference between *cordiale* and *affettuoso* concerns the opposites of each adjective: while *affettuoso* can have *freddo* ('cold') or *insensibile* ('insensitive') as opposites, the opposite of *cordiale* is *sgarbato* or *scortese* ('impolite', 'rude'). This difference clearly indicates that *affettuoso* is about personal feelings, whereas the latter is about "manners".

A fourth difference concerns the collocational range of each adjective. Although a number of terms can collocate with both adjectives (for example *saluto*, *ringraziamento* ('thanksgiving') and *parole* ('words')), nouns denoting an expression of feelings can only collocate with *affettuoso*. For example, nouns referring to the physical display of good feelings towards another person such as *bacio* ('kiss') and *abbraccio* ('hug'), but also nouns which denote an auditory or visual expression of good feelings like *voce* ('voice') and *risata* ('laughter') only collocate with *affettuoso*. Furthermore, only *affettuoso* can collocate with the nouns *nomignolo/soprannome* ('nickname') and *caricatura* ('caricature'), which denote a jocular expression of feelings. As for nouns denoting interpersonal relationships, those belonging to the sphere of public social encounters collocate with *cordiale*, for example *colloquio* ('talk') or *incontro* ('meeting'), whereas nouns referring to closer, more personal relationships can only collocate with *affettuoso*, e.g. the collocation *legame affettuoso* ('*affettuoso* bond', example (27) in Appendix A). Significantly, speakers of Italian do not talk about having a **legame cordiale* (**cordiale* bond) with family members.

Having discussed the differences between the adjectives *affettuoso* and *cordiale*, I will spend a few words discussing the semantics of *affetto* as an emotion term. In particular, I will discuss the reasons why I suggest that *affetto* denotes an expression of *very good* feelings rather

than just *good*. The Treccani dictionary defines *affetto* as an “intense sentiment, although less intense than *amore* (love)”,⁴² what is not clear in this definition is how “intense” *affetto* is. A good way of trying to determine this is to compare *affetto* with another noun, *simpatia* (roughly ‘liking, fondness of someone’, very different from the English *sympathetic*). Although both nouns denote an expression of good feelings towards someone, these feelings are different in intensity. Prototypically, one expresses *simpatia* for someone when one enjoys the company of this person, because this person is funny and a good companion. For example, if I say *Maria mi è simpatica* (‘Maria is *simpatica* to me’, not to be confused with the English *sympathetic*, cf. Gladkova 2010b) I mean that I feel something good when I am with Maria and that I feel something good towards her, but no more than ‘good’. I do not mean that I “love” her or that I “care very much” for her. The meaning of *Maria mi è simpatica* can be explicated as follows:

Maria mi è simpatica

when I am with this someone I feel something good
 I feel something good towards this someone
 I want to be with this someone many times if I can

By contrast, when one talks about the *affetto* which one feels towards a family member, a friend and even one’s pet, one means ‘I feel something very good towards this someone’. The “affection” felt for pets, in particular, is very personal and intense, and in Italian it sounds just ridiculous to say **questo cane mi è simpatico* (‘this dog is *simpatico* to me’). This hypothesis also appears to find confirmation in the frequency and in the collocational range of the adjective *simpatico* in comparison with those of *affettuoso*. In CORIS-CODIS the frequency of *simpatico* is twice as much as that of *affettuoso*, which means that *simpatico* has a wider collocational range and is used in a larger number of contexts than *simpatico*. Therefore, it has a broader meaning. I suggest that this is because *simpatico* simply denotes some *good* feelings which can

⁴² <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/affetto2/>.

be expressed towards various people, whereas *affettuoso* is more restricted because there are fewer people towards whom one feels something *very good*. On the basis of this hypothesis, I propose the following explication for *affettuoso* as exemplified in (26) in the Appendix:

Lui è sempre stato *affettuoso* con me

when this someone is with me this someone often says some good things to me
like someone can say some good things to someone else when it is like this:
this someone feels something very good towards this other someone
this someone wants this other someone to know it

That the meaning of *simpatico* is broader than the meaning of *affettuoso* is visible from the two explications presented; the explication of *simpatico* is shorter because its meaning is broader, whereas the explication of *affettuoso* is longer because its meaning is more specific. Differently from the meaning of *cordiale* explicated in 10.5.1, the prime SAY is not part of any of the posited components for the meaning of *affettuoso*, because in *affettuoso* the very good feelings expressed are not part of what the speaker *says*, but represent what the speaker genuinely *feels*. Accordingly, the prime SAY will not occur in the component capturing the semantic contribution of *affettuoso* to the *dictum* of *Affettuosi saluti*.

Going back to the letters written by Moro, now it is possible to understand more clearly the difference in expressed attitude between the letters which he signed off with *Cordiali saluti* and *Cordialmente* and those which he signed off with *Affettuosi saluti*. After the letter he wrote to Zaccagnini on April 4th, signed off with *Affettuosi saluti* (example 23), Moro wrote two other letters to Zaccagnini, but signed off with *Cordialmente* and then with *Cordiali saluti*, signalling in this way a drastic change in expressed attitude from ‘when I say this, I feel something very good towards you’ to “I say: ‘I feel something good towards you’”.

All the semantic components posited for the meaning of *Affettuosi saluti* are integrated in the following explication:

Affettuosi saluti

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY TO YOU

I say: "I am thinking about you now
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you now,
like people want to say something good to other people
when they don't see these people for some time"

[C] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I feel something very good towards you

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone very well"

10.7 From plural to singular: the meaning of the closing salutations containing *saluto*

As anticipated in 10.3, in Italian there are also closing salutations containing the word *saluto* in the singular. Like *Saluti*, the singular form *saluto* can either occur in the simple salutation *Un saluto* or in the composite salutation *Un caro saluto* ('one *caro saluto*'), in which the word is modified by the adjectives *caro*. As far as use is concerned, closing salutations containing the singular *saluto* appear to be a relatively recent development in Italian. It is significant, for example, that almost all the examples that I have found are e-mails and not letters, and also that no closing salutation with the singular *saluto* was used by Aldo Moro back in 1978.

As far as the interactional meaning is concerned, the shift from the plural *saluti*, the derivational base, to the singular *saluto*, the derived form, changes both the *dictum* and the expressed attitude of *saluti*. This implies that the relationship with the recipient of *un saluto* and *un caro saluto* is different from the relationship with the recipient of *saluti* and related

salutations. Furthermore, *Un caro saluto* is not in a semantic relation of ‘lexical expansion-derivational base’ with *Un saluto*; as I will discuss, *Un caro saluto* does not say “more” than *Un saluto*, but expresses a different meaning. I will discuss the salutations with *saluto* in separate subsections.

10.7.1 From ‘Saluti’ to ‘Un saluto’

The closing salutation *Un saluto* expresses a complex interactional meaning which consists of no fewer than five different sections. Before discussing the semantics of *Un saluto* and the differences with *Saluti*, it will be good to start looking at how it is used. In my body of data *Un saluto* occurs in three different kinds of exchanges: an exchange between two colleagues working in different institutions, an exchange between a lecturer and a student and an exchange between advice-seeker and advisor taken from an online blog:⁴³

(28) *Cara Grazia,*
Grazie mille!
Partecipo molto volentieri all'incontro – lei è effettivamente famosissima!
Per un caffè assolutamente sì, fammi sapere quando puoi.
Un saluto
Maria

Cara Grazia
Thank you very much!
I am very happy to attend the event (lit. I will attend the event very willingly) – she is indeed very famous!
As for catching up on coffee, absolutely yes, let (TU form) me know when you (TU) can.
Un saluto
Maria

(29) *Caro Gian Marco,*
auguri di buon anno.
Ti preparo volentieri la lettera e potresti venire a ritirarla martedì mattina.
Un saluto
Giulia Rossi

⁴³ <http://www.zanichellibenvenuti.it/wordpress/?p=3596>, last accessed 18/9/2015.

Caro Gian Marco,
best wishes of a Happy New Year.
I am happy to prepare you (TU) the letter and you (TU) could come and take it on
Tuesday morning.
Un saluto
Giulia Rossi

(30) *Caro Ludovico,*
purtroppo non posso aiutarti non sapendo nè di cosa si tratta nè che taglio tu vuoi
dare a questi inviti. Ti consiglio di prendere spunto da altri inviti del genere per poi
poterlo personalizzare.
Un saluto
Prof. Anna

Caro Ludovico,
unfortunately I cannot help you (TU) without knowing what this is about or what kind
of register you (TU) wish to use in these invitations. I suggest that you (TU) draw on
other invitations of the same kind and then personalise them.
Un saluto
Prof. Anna

Noticeably, all three examples exhibit the same three formal characteristics: (i) the use of the TU form; (ii) the use of first-name address; (iii) the use of *Caro/a*. As all these formal elements express the same attitude ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’, therefore I hypothesise that *Un saluto* is compatible with this expressed attitude, and with it only. In none of the examples which I was able to collect *Un saluto* is used in combination with LEI and with forms which take LEI, which suggests that the two forms are semantically incompatible. Considering that the sender of (30) had not written to the recipient before, the straightforward use of TU, *Caro* and first-name address is significant, because it indicates that the sender expressed the attitude of thinking about the addressee as she can think about people whom she knows well, although she does not know the recipient at all. Likewise, it needs to be mentioned that by the time (29) was written the lecturer and I had already known each other for three years. In previous e-mails, the same lecturer had signed off with *Cordialmente*, and the change from *Cordialmente* to *Un saluto* signals a substantial change in

expressed attitude from “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone very well’” to ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’.

There is another element in common to the examples: the element of “condescendence” reflected in some of the words used by the senders. Noticeably, the word *volentieri* (roughly, ‘willingly’, ‘being happy to do something’) occurs both in (28) and in (29), which are totally unrelated. In these cases, this *volentieri* has a condescending tone; it is as if the sender put themselves in the position of someone who can do some good things for the addressee, and specifically someone who is “happy to do” what the addressee has asked or proposed. In addition to *volentieri*, another linguistic element supporting this hypothesis is the presence of bare imperatives in the TU form (which is prototypically used among close friends and family members) and of pseudo-imperatives in all the e-mails. In (28) the sender writes *fammi sapere* (‘let me know’); in (29), the lecturer advises a precise time to come and collect the letter; in (30) the advisor literally puts herself in the position of teacher by signing off as *Prof. Anna*, and also emphasises her role of someone who knows more than the recipient and therefore can tell him what to do by writing *non posso aiutarti* (‘I cannot help you’) and *ti consiglio* (‘I advise you’). This condescending tone can be captured with a semantic component “when I say this, I think about you like this: ‘I know that someone like me can do some good things for people like this someone’”.

The two components posited for the expressed attitude are based not only on the examples, but also on the comments of the respondents to the survey. None of the respondents who used *Un saluto* wrote it to a stranger, to their superior or to a dependent. This seems to confirm that *Un saluto* expresses the attitude of thinking about the recipient like one can think about people whom one knows well. The perceived inappropriateness of *Un saluto* in e-mails sent to one’s superior, in particular, can be explained precisely considering that one would be professing to think about this person like one thinks about people one knows well, and because one would

express the attitude of putting oneself in the same position as the superior, two counter-cultural ways of relating to one's superior in Italy (Chapter 6, next chapter). All the respondents who used *Un saluto* also commented that they have recently written it to people with whom they are not in frequent contact. This suggests that the invariant meaning also includes a component "I don't think about you like this: 'I can often say things to this someone'".

The most significant component of the interactional meaning of *Un saluto* is the "twist" from the plural *saluti* to the singular *saluto*. I propose that the shift from plural to singular signals that one intends to send one special *saluto* instead of the many *saluti* which one could send to many other people on many other occasions. By doing this, the sender signals that they see the recipient as someone "special", that they want to treat the recipient differently from how they would treat many other people. In a way, the sender is less "conventional" by saying "one good thing" instead of "many good things" (*saluti* in the plural) to the recipient, and communicates the intention to construe a close relationship. To capture this "twist" I will posit two semantic components: 'I want to say it not like I can say something like this to many people at many times' and 'because of this, I want to say one good thing to you, not many things'.

Finally, I hypothesise that the shift from plural to singular slightly changes the *dictum* of *Un saluto* from that of *Saluti*. The difference lies in the "momentariness" of the act of thinking about the recipient; the singular suggests that the sender's thinking about the recipient is more momentary than the thought associated with the plural *Saluti*. This difference can be captured changing the phrasing of one component in the *dictum* from "I'm thinking about you now" to "I'm thinking about you at this moment".

In sum, I propose the following explication for the interactional meaning of *Un saluto*:

Un saluto

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it not like I can say something like this to many people at many times
because of this, I want to say one good thing to you, not many things

[C] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I am thinking about you at this moment
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
like people want to say something good to other people
if they don't see these people for some time"

[D] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well
at the same time, I think about you like this:
"I know that someone like me can do some good things for people like this someone"

[E] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I can often say things to this someone"

10.7.2 From '*Saluti*' to '*Un caro saluto*'

Historically, *Un caro saluto* derives from the plural form *Cari saluti*, which used to be much more frequent in the past, but appears to have gone almost out of use now and therefore is not analysed in this chapter.⁴⁴ Synchronically, *Un caro saluto* has to be considered as a derived form of *Saluti* resulting from two modifications: a "twist" from plural to singular, and the addition of the adjective *caro*, which brings its semantic contribution to the *dictum*.

In Chapter 8, I have suggested that the meaning of *caro* consists of two semantic components: 'I feel something good towards this someone' and 'I don't feel something like

⁴⁴ Significantly, there are only 16 hits of *Cari saluti* in CORIS-CODIS.

this towards many other people'. Accordingly, I propose that the semantic contribution of *caro* to the *dictum* of *Un caro saluto* is 'when I say this, I feel something good towards you, I don't feel something like this towards many other people'. The presence of an additional expression of good feelings towards the addressee in the meaning conveyed implies that the relationship with the recipient of *Un caro saluto* is different, and to a certain extent closer, than the relationship with recipients of *Un saluto*. This difference can be acknowledged looking at examples of *Un caro saluto*.

Example (31) is an e-mail which I received from the same lecturer who wrote (29) about three years later. The forms of address used are the same as in (29), the only difference being the closing salutation used:

(31) *Caro Gian Marco,*
Salutami Rita Bianchi, che è molto brava e professionale.
Un caro saluto
Giulia Rossi

Caro Gian Marco,
Send (TU form) my *saluti* to Rita Bianchi, who is very good and professional.
Un caro saluto
Giulia Rossi

By changing the closing salutation from *Un saluto* to *Un caro saluto* the lecturer expressed a different meaning, and I suggest that this is because the relationship between us had changed in the meantime. By the time (31) was written, I was not this lecturer's student anymore and we were also very far away. It is somewhat odd for a lecturer to convey the message 'I feel something good towards you, I don't feel something like this towards many other people' to a student, but once the relationship is not lecturer-student anymore it is more than legitimate for the lecturer to express their personal good feelings towards a former student. The progression from *Cordialmente*, which the lecturer used in their initial exchanges, to the more personal *Un*

saluto and finally to *Un caro saluto* clearly indicates a change in expressed attitude and a stronger and stronger bond.

Like *Un saluto*, *Un caro saluto* appears to be semantically incompatible with the LEI form, or at least not prototypical. No example of *Un caro saluto* in combination with LEI is attested in my body of data. Conversely, the presence of first-name address, of *Caro*, of the TU form and the fact that the sender has signed off by first name suggest that *Un caro saluto* is compatible with the expressed attitude ‘when I say this to you, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’. Significantly, this expressed attitude is compatible also with cases in which the TU form is not used, for example when *Un caro saluto* is used for multiple recipients as in (32):

(32) ***Carissimi,***

ho pensato di sintetizzare alcuni punti discussi nelle recenti riunioni e condividere gli ultimi sviluppi della programmazione culturale [...]

Un caro saluto

Anna

Carissimi,

I have decided to synthesise some of the points discussed at the recent meetings and share the latest developments of the cultural program [...]

Un caro saluto

Anna

It should be said that the sender is not in frequent contact with all the recipients, and the e-mail is also sent to people who did not attend the meetings about which the sender talks in the e-mail. The attitude expressed with *Carissimi* is ‘I think about you like I can think about people if I know these people very well’ and also ‘I feel something very good towards you, I don’t feel something like this towards many people’. The use of *Un caro saluto* in combination with *Carissimi* supports the hypothesis that the invariant meaning includes a component ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’.

The comments made by the respondents to the survey also support this hypothesis. The respondents who use *Un caro saluto* do not write it to someone whom they do not know or to their superior, but also not to a close friend or to a family member. The perceived inappropriateness for superiors and strangers can be explained precisely because the expressed attitude ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’ would contrast with this kind of relationship. At the same time, the perceived inappropriateness for close friends and next of kin suggests that *Un caro saluto* is not suitable for exchanges with people whom one knows very well.

In sum, I propose the following explication for the interactional meaning of *Un caro saluto*:

Un caro saluto

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
“I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it not like I can say something like this to many people at many times
because of this, I want to say one good thing to you, not many things

[C] WHAT I SAY

I say: “I’m thinking about you at this moment
when I think about you I feel something good towards you,
at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
like people want to say something good to other people
if they don’t see these people for some time”

[D] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I feel something good towards you
I don’t feel something like this towards many other people

[E] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well

[F] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I can often say things to this someone”

10.8 *A presto*

There are two main differences between the closing salutations containing the word *saluto/i* and *A presto*. The first is that *A presto* is an expression typically used in oral conversations which is transferred to written language, whereas *Cordiali saluti* or *Un caro saluto* are not used in spoken language. Although there are a few examples of *A presto* used at the end of letters in CORIS-CODIS, this expression is typically used in e-mails and quick notes, which tend to resemble more oral communication in style. The second difference lies in the professed way of thinking about the addressee. I have suggested that closing salutations containing *saluti* express the attitude “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” (or “very well” depending on the salutation), whereas the formal characteristics of the letters and e-mails in which *A presto* is used suggest that the expressed attitude is “when I say this, I think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”.

Example (33) is an e-mail taken from an exchange between colleagues:

(33) ***Ciao caro!***

Ti ringrazio tantissimo per l'invito per domani sera, ma purtroppo non potrò unirmi a voi [...]

Sarà per un'altra volta!

A presto,

Ale

Ciao “darling”!

Thank **you (TU)** very much for inviting me tomorrow evening, but unfortunately I won’t be able to join you all. [...]

We’ll have to meet next time.

A presto,

Ale

Three formal characteristics are particularly significant in this e-mail: (i) the use of TU; (ii) the use of *caro* as an attitudinal term of address for the recipient; (iii) the use of the shortened form of the sender’s first name to sign off the e-mail. The same formal characteristics are found

in (34), another e-mail taken from an exchange between colleagues. Differently from (33), in (34) the sender has not signed off with a shortened form of their first name, but still it is significant that a first name has been used both to sign off and to address the recipient:

(34) *Cara Teresa,*

*La persona con cui sono in contatto per questo è [name and e-mail address] ma vedo che anche **tu** eri in copia allo scambio di mail su questo soggetto ed altro.*

***Non la sollecitare** ora, caso mai **ti** dico, grazie.*

A presto

Maria

Cara Teresa,

The person with whom I am in contact about this matter is [name and e-mail address] but I can see **you** (TU) too were copied in the e-mail which concerned this and other topics.

Don't urge (TU form) her now, I will ask **you** (TU) in case, thanks.

A presto

Maria

The use of *Cara*, of TU and of first-name address might suggest that these are the prototypical formal characteristics of e-mails signed off with *A presto*. However, there are also examples of *A presto* in combination with LEI and with forms of address other than first names, as in (35):

(35) *Pereira entrò in casa e collocò le compere nella ghiacciaia. Monteiro Rossi dormiva.*

*Pereira gli lasciò un biglietto. «Ci sono uova al prosciutto o crocchette di baccalà da riscaldare, le **può** riscaldare in padella ma con poco olio, altrimenti diventano una pappa, faccia un buon pranzo e stia tranquillo, io ritorno alla fine del pomeriggio, parlerò con Marta, **a presto**, Pereira.»*

(Antonio Tabucchi, *Sostiene Pereira*, 1994)

Pereira went home and put his purchases in the ice-chest. Monteiro Rossi was still asleep. Pereira left him a note: 'There's ham and eggs of fishcakes to heat up, **you** heat them in a frying-pan with only a little oil, otherwise they go to a mush, have a good lunch and don't worry, I'll be back late afternoon, I'll speak to Marta, **see you later**, Pereira.'

(*Pereira Maintains*, English translation by Patrick Creagh, 2010)

In the note that Pereira leaves to Rossi, he uses LEI (which gets "lost" in the English translation) and signs off with his surname and with *A presto*. It may seem, at first glance, that

Pereira expresses clashing attitudes. However, I would argue that there is no semantic incompatibility between *A presto* and LEL. The combination of forms which express opposite attitudes is in itself a way of expressing an attitude, in this case that of acknowledging that one does not know the addressee well, but at the same time indicating that one thinks that the relationship with the addressee can potentially become closer.

As far as the *dictum* of *A presto* is concerned, I suggest that this is based on three semantic primes: the first is A SHORT TIME inherent in the adverb *presto* ('soon', 'quickly'), the second is BE WITH SOMEONE and the third is KNOW. More specifically, I suggest that the *dictum* of *A presto* is: 'I will be with you after a short time, I know this'. The prime KNOW is important because without it the message would be incomplete. The idea is that, having considered the circumstances and being aware that there is a possibility of meeting relatively soon, the sender communicates this to the recipient after having written other things. In relation to this, it is necessary to specify that, although the expectation of meeting the addressee soon is included in the *dictum*, *A presto* is not used exclusively to write to people with whom one is in frequent contact. This can be the case, however all the respondents to the survey commented that they have recently written *A presto* even to people with whom they had not been in touch for a while and were about to meet again soon. For this reason, I will not posit a component "when I say this, I think about you like this: 'I can often say things to this someone'" for the invariant meaning of *A presto*.

In addition to that, almost all the respondents commented that they do not write *A presto* to someone whom they do not know and to their superior, and some of them also excluded their dependents. I suggest that the reason for the perceived inappropriateness of *A presto* in e-mails sent to one's superior (and sometimes to one's dependents) is semantic. The reason is that it is not felt to be appropriate to convey the idea 'I will see you in a short time' to one's boss as if one could control one's boss' schedule and could decide when to meet them.

In sum, the interactional meaning of *A presto* can be explicated as follows:

A presto

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I will be with you after a short time, I know this"

[C] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like this: "I know this someone well"

10.9 *Un bacio*

The last salutation analysed in this chapter is *Un bacio* ('a kiss'), which can occur in various other forms including the plural *Baci* and versions with a pre-modifying adjective. Essentially, there is in Italian a whole family of related closing salutations which express the idea 'I kiss you now' in different ways. As one might expect, these salutations are not used to write to any person, but only to very close friends and lovers, as the respondents to the survey confirmed. Accordingly, the typical forms of address with which *Un bacio* combines are TU, first names and attitudinal nouns like *tesoro* ('honey') or *amore* ('love'), and the matching opening salutation is either *Caro/a* or *Ciao*.

In the following exchange between two colleagues, both interactants have signed off with the shortened form of their first name:

- (36) a. ***Cara Teresa***
 ti mando tutto il lavoro, perché veri punti di criticità negli esiti non ce ne sono.
 Un bacio
 Vale

Cara Teresa

I'm sending **you** (TU) the entire work, because there are no real critical points in the results.

Un bacio

Vale

b. *Grazie. **Ricambio il bacio.***

Terry

Thanks. **I return the kiss.**

Terry

Un bacio also occurs in the letters which Aldo Moro wrote to his wife Eleonora or Noretta, as he called her affectionately, the only letters which he signed off by first name only. Again, the use of a diminutive form of a first name to address the recipient reflects the sender's love for his wife. Moro's love for his wife and family is also reflected in the superlative adjectives that he used to refer to them all:

(37) *A Eleonora Moro (non recapitata)*

Mia dolcissima Noretta,

ti mando alcune lettere da distribuire che vorrei proprio arrivassero come mi è stato promesso. [...]

Ed ora dolcissima sposa, ti abbraccio forte con tutto il cuore e stringo con te i nostri figli e i nipoti amatissimi, sperando di restare con voi così per sempre.

Un tenerissimo bacio.

Aldo

To Eleonora Moro (undelivered)

My sweetest Noretta,

I'm sending **you** (TU) some letters to distribute which I would really like to be delivered as it has been promised to me. [...]

And now **sweetest wife, I hug you (TU) tight with all my heart** and with **you (TU)** I hug our **beloved** children and grandchildren, hoping to stay like this with you all forever.

A most tender kiss.

Aldo

(38) *A Eleonora Moro (recapitata il 5 maggio)*

Ora, improvvisamente, quando si profilava qualche esile speranza, giunge incomprensibilmente l'ordine di esecuzione.

Noretta dolcissima, sono nelle mani di Dio e tue.

Prega per me, ricordami soavemente. Carezza i piccoli dolcissimi, tutti. Che Iddio vi aiuti tutti.

Un bacio di amore a tutti.

Aldo

To Eleonora Moro (delivered on May 5th)

Suddenly, now that a weak hope was looming, the order of execution comes incomprehensibly.

Sweetest Noretta, I am in God's hands and in **yours (TU)**.

Pray (TU form) for me, **remember (TU form)** me gently. **Caress (TU form)** the **sweetest** little ones, all of them. May God help you all.

A kiss of love to all.

Aldo

Apart from illustrating how *Un bacio* is used and the message it conveys, these letters are also suggestive of the sender's way of thinking about the addressee. In relation to this, my hypothesis is that when writing *Un bacio* the sender imagines to be with the recipient and to kiss him/her. That is, I suggest that the sender thinks about the addressee and gives a "virtual kiss" to this person as if the two were actually together at the time of writing. For this reason, I will posit a component 'when I say this, I think about you like I can think about you when I am with you' for the meaning of *Un bacio*.

The interactional meaning of *Un bacio* can be explicated as follows:

Un bacio

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I kiss [m] you now"

[C] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say this, I think about you like I can think about you when I am with you

[D] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I feel something very good towards you

10.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the interactional meaning of various closing salutations in Italian.

The presence of the word *saluto/i* as a constituent in most expressions suggests a cultural

assumption whereby it is important to say “something good” to the recipient at the end of a letter or e-mail, and specifically say that one is thinking about this person and that one feels something good towards this person when thinking about them. In English, by contrast, the significant number of closing salutations containing the words *wishes* or *regards* suggests that in Anglo culture it is good to say “I want many very good things to happen to you” or “I think something very good about you”.

The analysis of Italian closing salutations was based on the same dynamic approach taken for the analysis of English salutations in the previous chapter. In particular, I have analysed the closing salutations containing the singular *saluto* as “twists” from the plural form *saluti*. I have suggested that the “twist” from plural to singular has a double aim, that of saying to the recipient “one good thing” instead of “many things” and that of relating more closely to the recipient. As in the case of English, derived closing salutations appear to reflect a generational change in language use. The comments made by the native speakers who responded to the survey indicate that closing salutations with the singular form are now more and more used, and this could reflect a preference for the kind of message and attitude that these expressions convey in comparison with closing salutations with the plural *Saluti*.

Chapter 11. Italian cultural scripts for address practices

11.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the cultural scripts which guide the address practices of Italian speakers in different contexts are discussed. In the first section, five cultural scripts specifically related to the use of “titles” to address people are presented.⁴⁵ In the second section, the address behaviour of Italian speakers in two specific situations is analysed: people meeting for the first time and e-mail exchanges between university students and lecturers. Two specific cultural scripts are proposed, one for each situation, to be compared in the next chapter with the scripts which guide the address practices of Australian English speakers in the same two contexts. In the last part of the chapter, two culturally significant address practices related to the Italian pronominal system of address are discussed: one is the negotiation process through which Italian speakers shift from LEI to TU address form, and the other is the use of VOI for second person singular address.

11.2 Five cultural scripts for using titles to address people in Italian

The presence of so many different titles in Italian used to address various people in different contexts suggests that titles as forms of address are culturally salient in Italy (see Chapter 6). As pointed out by Goddard and Wierzbicka (2004) and Besemeres (2002), it is often the case that non-native speakers are more aware of the cultural salience of particular speech practices

⁴⁵ As discussed in Chapter 6, inverted commas are used here to question the use of “title” as a clear and definite label. The author’s position is in line with Braun’s (1988:10) idea that “there is no unanimity as to what should be classified as a ‘title’”. Throughout the chapter inverted commas are not used anymore.

of a language than the native speakers of that language, because they approach these practices from an outsider's perspective. The cultural salience of Italian titles is indeed noticed and emphasised by cultural outsiders like the British novelists Tim Parks and John Hooper. In the following extract from *The Italians* (2015), Hooper reports that he was addressed with a different title on different occasions:⁴⁶

In the bar I went to for breakfast when I first lived in Italy as a correspondent, they began by addressing me as *Signore*. But after they saw that I owned suits and ties I was upgraded to *Dottore*. [...] There was a faculty of the Sapienza University nearby, so one day the barman tried out *Professore*. But I told them I was no sort of academic. The resulting disappointed frustration was written all over his face.

(*The Italians*, 2015:190)

By observing and commenting on how titles are used in every day interactions in Italy, Hooper provides helpful insights not only on the use of titles as forms of address, but also on their socio-cultural functions. In the following subsections I present five cultural scripts, which capture different functions of Italian titles used to address people as well as the cultural values underlying their use.

11.2.1 A “master” cultural script for using titles to address people in Italian

Why is there in Italian such a large and diverse repertoire of titles used to address people? I propose that the answer is both semantic and cultural in nature: there are culturally salient ways of thinking which encourage the expression of certain meanings when one wants to say something to someone. The kinds of titles used as forms of address which I have analysed in Chapter 6 share a common semantic component: they express, in different ways, how the speaker professes to think about the addressee. Specifically, they all express the idea “I think

⁴⁶ See chapter 6 for a similar quote by Tim Parks (2014).

about you like this: ‘people can know some good things about this someone’’. This is the case not only for the three categories which I have posited in Chapter 6 (“professional titles” like *Avvocato*, nouns used to address people holding top positions in an institution like *Direttore* and “generic titles” *Signore* and *Signora*), but also for titles like *Eccellenza*, *Conte*, *Padre* and *Commissario*, which for reasons of space I could not discuss.

The reason for expressing this way of thinking is what distinguishes professional titles like *Avvocato* and titles for top positions like *Direttore* from *Signore₁* used to address strangers. In the case of titles like *Avvocato* (i.e. professional titles) and titles like *Direttore* (titles for top positions) the professed way of thinking is related to some good things which people, including the speaker, know about the addressee:

1. The addressee *does* some things of some kinds which many people cannot do (e.g. *Avvocato*)
2. The addressee *knows* things of some kinds which many people don’t know (e.g. *Professore*)
3. The addressee is seen as *being someone above* many people in a place of one kind (e.g. *Direttore*)
4. The addressee is seen as *being someone not like* many other people (e.g. *Avvocato*, *Direttore*)

In the case of *Signore₁*, there is very little that the speaker knows about the addressee and the attitude ‘I think about you like this: ‘people can know some good things about this someone’’ is expressed to *say* “something good” to the addressee, of the kind that one could say to many other men whom one does not know (cf. Chapter 6), and by doing this show that one *thinks* something good about this person, as I will discuss in 11.2.3.

At the same time, in expressing the way of thinking ‘I think about you like this: ‘people can know some good things about this someone’” the speaker also says something good *about* the addressee, the idea that the interlocutor is seen as being someone appreciated in society. Thus, I propose that to say “something good” about the addressee with one special word is the culturally salient way of thinking which encourages the use of all titles in Italian. This “something good” consists in a professed way of thinking about the interlocutor which expresses the idea that the speaker thinks something good about this person. To capture this cultural assumption I propose the following “master” cultural script:

[A] An Italian ‘master’ cultural script for addressing people with a title
 [in Italy many people think like this:]
 often when I want to say something to someone
 if I don’t know this someone well,
 it is good if I say something good about this someone to this someone at the same time
 it is good if I say something like this with a word of one kind:
 “I think about you like this: ‘people can know some good things about this someone’”

The script is presented merely as ritualised linguistic practice, not as a “rule” followed systematically by all speakers of Italian. It simply states, in effect, that it is ‘often’ good to address someone with a title. There are two ‘lower level’ scripts which derive from the “master” script just proposed: one is specifically for professional titles like *Avvocato* and titles for top positions like *Direttore*, and the other one is specifically for *Signore₁* used to address strangers.

11.2.2 A cultural script for using professional titles like Avvocato and titles for top positions like Direttore

The professed way of thinking about the addressee expressed by titles for top positions like *Direttore* and professional titles like *Avvocato* differs from that expressed by *Signore₁* because the meaning of these two categories of titles includes two semantic components capturing the

expressed attitude, “I think about you like this: ‘people can know some good things about this someone’” and “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is not someone like many other people’”, whereas only the first of these two components is inherent in the interactional meaning of *Signore*₁. For this reason, two separate scripts need to be posited.

The first component is related to the good things which the speaker knows about the addressee, essentially the fact that this person does a prestigious job which earns them a good position in society. However, in Italian not all professions and all top positions are linked with a special noun used to address the person who exercises it or holds that position. A policeman is not addressed as **poliziotto*, and neither is a fireman addressed as **Vigile del Fuoco* or a *primario* (the head of department in a hospital) as **Primario*. A nurse is addressed as *infermiera* and a waiter as *cameriere*, but there is no component “I think about you like this: ‘people can know some good things about this someone’” in the interactional meaning of these nouns. Indeed, people’s good opinion seems to be central in the use of professional titles and titles for top position. The second component captures the idea that, because of these good things which people can know about the addressee, the speaker sees the addressee as being someone not like many other people.

In sum, I propose that the use of professional titles like *Avvocato* and titles for top positions in an institution like *Direttore* is informed by a specific cultural script which encourages speakers to express two ways of thinking, a combination of the components “I think about you like this: ‘people can know some good things about this someone’” and “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is not someone like many other people’” with a word of one kind, if they know that people can know some very good things about the addressee. This script can be formulated as follows:

[B] *An Italian cultural script encouraging speakers to say with one word how they think about the addressee*

[in Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone,

if I don't know this someone well,

it is good if I say something good about this someone to this someone at the same time

if I know that people can know some very good things of some kinds about this someone,

it is good if I say something like this with a word of one kind:

"I think about you like this:

'this someone is not someone like many other people

people can know some very good things about this someone'"

11.2.3 *A cultural script encouraging speakers to address a male stranger as Signore*

A separate script needs to be posited for *Signore*₁ used to address a male adult interlocutor whom the speaker does not know, because the interactional meaning of *Signore*₁ includes a component "I think about you like this: 'people can know some good things about this someone'", but not also a component "I think about you like this: 'this someone is not someone like many other people'". Unlike "professional titles" like *Avvocato* or titles for top positions like *Direttore*, *Signore*₁ is not reserved for particular people who can be seen as being 'not like many other people', but is the kind of "something good" which can be used to address various male adults whom the speaker does not know. Drawing on the explication for *Signore*₁ proposed in Chapter 6, I propose that there is a specific cultural script in Italian which encourages the expression of the way of thinking 'people can know some good things about this man, like they can know some good things about many other men' to address a stranger, but not the expression of the way of thinking 'this someone is not someone like many other people'. The main assumption seems to be that when talking to a perfect stranger it is good to show that one thinks something good about the interlocutor with a word of one kind. This cultural script can be formulated as follows:

[C] *An Italian cultural script encouraging speakers to address strangers as Signore₁*

[in Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone

if I don't know this someone,

it is good if I say something good to this someone at the same time

if this someone is a man [m], it is good if I say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘people can know some very good things about this man [m]

like they can know about many other men [m]”

11.2.4 *Using titles to signal engagement with the addressee*

Italian titles perform another pragmatic function: signalling engagement with the interlocutor during the interaction. In example (1), a ticket inspector on a train addresses some passengers as *Signori*:

- (1) *Proprio in quel momento la porta dello scompartimento si aprì bruscamente ed entrò il gran controllore. – **Signori**, il biglietto, prego. –*

In that very moment the compartment's door opened brusquely and the great ticket inspector entered. – Ticket, please, **signori** -

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

The fact that *Signori* is said before other things suggests that it is used by the speaker not only to express a particular way of thinking about the addressees, but also to attract their attention and signal that he wants to say something to them. This engagement function of Italian titles is by no means restricted to the initial position in an utterance. In Pirandello's *Pensaci Giacomino!* (1916), Giacomino, a student, addresses his teacher Toti as *Professore* several times during the exchange. This time *Professore* is uttered after other things, but performs the same engagement function:

(2) GIACOMINO: *Non mi tocchi! Non mi s'accosti, **professore!** Lei mi sta facendo soffrire una pena d'inferno! [...]*
 TOTI: *Ma perché, che hai?*
 GIACOMINO: *Vuol sapere che ho? Glielo dico subito. Mi sono fidanzato, **professore.** Ha capito? Mi sono fidanzato.*

GIACOMINO: Don't touch (LEI) me! Don't come (LEI) close to me, **professor!**
 You (LEI) are making me go through hell suffering!
 TOTI: But why, what's wrong with you (TU)?
 GIACOMINO: You want to know what's wrong with me? I'll tell you (LEI) straight away. I am engaged, **professor.** Do you (LEI) understand? I am engaged.

(Luigi Pirandello, *Pensaci Giacomino!*, 1916, from Google Books, my translation)

In comparison with (1), the characters of Pirandello's play know each other well.⁴⁷ This suggests that the engagement function of titles is not limited to people whom one does not know well or not at all. Moreover, this exchange is much longer, and *Professore* is repeated several times (next section). The repetition of *Professore* to address the interlocutor also suggests that in addition to signalling attentiveness Italian titles can also be used as back-channelling cues; that is, from a pragmatic point of view Giacomino is using *Professore* not only to signal that the teacher is the intended recipient of the message, but also to show that he is actively participating in the conversation. From a semantic point of view, the engagement function of Italian titles consists in the expression of the message 'I want to say something to you now' to the addressee, not to be confused with 'I want to say something *good* to you now' discussed in Chapter 2.

It could be pointed out that to use a title is not really necessary to signal engagement with the interlocutor, because if *Signori* in (1) and *Professore* in (2) were omitted the addressee would still know that the speaker wants to say something to them. As I see it, to question the necessity of using a title to signal engagement is to miss the point; the engagement function of Italian titles is not as much a matter of "necessity" as of cultural value. The point is that Italian

⁴⁷ The teacher, Professor Toti, wishes to marry a young girl who is already in a relationship with Giacomino, the two are rivals in love.

speakers appear to use titles on the assumption that *it is good* to signal that one is actively engaging with the interlocutor during an interaction with a word of one kind. This practice is captured in the following script:

[D] *An Italian cultural script encouraging the use of titles to signal engagement with the addressee*
[in Italy many people think like this:]
often when I want to say something to someone
it is good if I say something like this to this someone at the same time:
 "I want to say something to you now"
it is good if I say this with a word of one kind

In this script, too, ‘often’ specifies that to use a title is not always necessary, but that it is good to do so in most cases. It could be suggested that the component ‘I want to say something to you now’ could be complemented by the phrasing ‘not to other people’. However, this phrasing would not be consistent with all the cases in which a title is used to signal attentiveness: although in (2) there are no other addressees, in (1) there are many. Moreover, to indicate who the recipient of a message is and exclude other possible recipients is not the scope of using “titles” in this way. There could be two addressees, a man and a woman, and the speaker would have to signal twice, with different “titles”, to whom the message is intended (e.g. *Salve Professore, Buongiorno Professoressa*).

11.2.5 Repeating titles several times in the same exchange

Example (2) has highlighted another aspect of the use of titles in Italian: the practice of repeating a title several times to address the same person in the same exchange. The repetition of the title suggests that there is another cultural script in Italian which, on the one hand, is related to the main assumption that it is good to say how one thinks about the addressee with one word, and on the other, encourages speakers to express how they think about the addressee with one word several times in the same exchange.

In (3), *Signora* is repeated numerous times to address the same woman. In this case, too, the repetition of *Signora* suggests that the noun is used by the speaker to express the same way of thinking about the addressee several times at different points in the exchange:

- (3) *"Buongiorno, signora. Sono il direttore." "Il dottor Zeri?" Ricordava il cognome che le aveva detto l'impiegato. "Per servirla, signora." "Mi scusi se la disturbo", si accorse che la voce era affievolita dall'emozione. "Forse il suo collaboratore le ha già accennato." "Mi dica, signora." "Mio marito è venuto in banca ieri mattina, vero?" Provava, quando mentiva dicendo "mio marito", una sorta di orgoglio malinconico. "Sì, signora." "Mi può dire verso che ora, più o meno." "Presto, signora, poco dopo l'apertura." Lei chiese, con un certo imbarazzo: "E per fare quale operazione?" "Mi dispiace, signora, ma questo non posso dirlo".*

“Good morning, **signora**. I am the director.” “Are you Doctor Zeri?” She remembered the surname that the clerk had told her. “To serve you (LEI), **signora**.” “Excuse (LEI) me if I disturb you (LEI)”, she noticed that her voice was weakened by emotion. “Maybe your colleague has already said something to you (LEI).” “Tell (LEI) me, **signora**”. “My husband came to the bank yesterday morning, didn’t he?” She felt, when she said “my husband” a kind of nostalgic proud. “Yes, **signora**.” “Can you (LEI) tell (LEI) me what time approximately?” “Early, **signora**, shortly after the opening time.” “She asked, somewhat embarrassed: “And to do what?” “I’m sorry, **signora**, I cannot say that.”)

(Giuseppe Pontigia, *La grande sera*, 1989, my translation)

The case for titles, however, is different from that of *ciao ciao* discussed in Chapter 4, because titles cannot be repeated twice in the same turn without a pause indicated in writing by a comma (**Avvocato Avvocato*). This difference can be captured with a component ‘it is good if I say this word many times’ as opposed to ‘I want to say it another time’ which I have posited for the meaning of *ciao ciao* (see 4.4.4). The cultural script encouraging Italian speakers to repeat a title several times in the same exchange can be formulated as follows:

[E] *An Italian cultural script encouraging speakers to repeat a "title" several times in an exchange*
 [in Italy many people think like this:]
 often when I want to say something to someone,
 if I don't know this someone well,
 it is good if I say something good about this someone to this someone at the same time
 it is good if I say it with one word of one kind
 if I want to say some things to this someone for some time,
 it is good if I say this word many times during this time

It could be asked why the prime WELL has been included in the third component, given that “generic titles”, which are used to address strangers, can also be repeated, as in (3). However, if WELL were omitted, the script would state that it is good to repeat the title *only* when the addressee is someone whom the speaker does not know and this is not the case.

11.3 The address practices of Italian speakers in two specific situations

In various chapters we have seen that in Italian the use of a title as a form of address is accompanied by the selection of specific, semantically compatible forms like LEI and “greetings” like *Salve* (roughly ‘Hello’) or *Buonasera* (roughly, ‘Good evening’) in spoken language and salutations like *Gentile*, *Egregio* and *Cordiali saluti* in written language. The selection of compatible forms of address suggests that speakers intend to express a particular meaning which is felt to be suitable for a given context, and in turn that there are specific cultural scripts which encourage speakers to express that particular meaning in that context.

In this section, I propose two cultural scripts for Italian address practices in two specific situations: oral exchanges between people meeting for the first time and e-mail exchanges between university students and lecturers. The choice of these two particular contexts is deliberate; in the next chapter, I will compare the address practices of Italian and Australian English speakers in the same situations, and these two contexts have turned out to be those in which differences are most striking.

11.3.1 The address practices of Italian speakers in first-time oral exchanges

In general, the way of addressing people whom one meets for the first time in Italy varies depending on the interactants. In example (4), an oral exchange between two women meeting

for the first time is portrayed; three formal elements need to be discussed: the use of titles as forms of address, surnames and the LEI address form:

- (4) “*Piacere, io sono Maria, la nuova amministratrice condominiale.*”
“*Il piacere è mio, **signora Maria**. Io sono Tina Polidoro, del primo piano.*”
“*Oh, **la prego: mi dia del tu e non mi chiami signora**. Non sono sposata, ci mancherebbe altro. Ho ventidue anni, non mi dica che ne dimostro di più, la prego...*
[...]
“*...**signorina Maria?***”
“*Solo Maria, la prego **signora Polidoro**. Mi dica.*”
“*Ecco...**non mi chiami nemmeno lei signora**.*”
“*Come preferisce, **ma lei però mi dia del tu**.*”
“*Sì, **scusa, scusa**...E comunque non è questione di preferire, come dire, nemmeno io sono sposata, anche se non sono giovane **come lei...come te**...*”
- “Nice to meet you, I’m Maria, the new administrator of this condominium.”
“My pleasure, **signora Maria**. I’m Tina Polidoro, I live on the first floor.”
“Oh, **I beg you (LEI): give (LEI) me the tu and don’t call (LEI) me signora**. I’m not married, so there’s no reason. I’m twenty-two, and don’t tell (LEI) me I look older, I beg you (LEI)... [...]
“**...signorina Maria?**”
“Just Maria, I beg you (LEI) **signora Polidoro**. Tell (LEI) me.”
“Right...**you (LEI) too don’t call (LEI) me signora**.”
“As you (LEI) wish, but **you (LEI) give (LEI) me the TU**.”
“Yes, **excuse (TU form) me, excuse (TU form) me**...But anyway it is not a matter of preference, how can I put it, I’m not married either, even though I am not as young as **you (LEI)...as you (TU)**...”

(Chiara Gamberale, *Le luci nelle case degli altri*, 2010:118, my translation)

Signora Polidoro calls Maria by first name, preceded by *signora* first and then by *signorina*. Maria, by contrast, never addresses signora Polidoro by first name, but uses the *Signora* plus the woman’s surname. Furthermore, Maria introduces herself saying her first name only, whereas signora Polidoro introduces herself saying her first name and surname. Unsurprisingly, the LEI form is used by both speakers from the very beginning of the exchange. As I will discuss in 11.5, the interactional meaning of LEI makes this address form suitable for first-time encounters because it includes, among others, a semantic component “when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. Significantly, Maria only speaks to signora Polidoro in the LEI form, even when she invites her not to call her *signora* and to address

her with TU (see 11.5). Signora Polidoro, too, uses LEI from the very beginning, even though she would be perfectly entitled to address Maria with TU because she is the older of the two. As the exchange illustrates, and in line with the observations of Bates and Benigni (1975), in Italian the age difference between the interactants can affect one's address mode, and more generally, one's way of speaking to people whom one meets for the first time.

In the same situation, however, different speakers could select different forms of address. In (5), two men meet for the first time: first of all, *Ciao* has not been used, because the two do not know each other well; secondly, both speakers introduce themselves by surname. The most significant aspect of this oral exchange is that the police inspector is invited by his interlocutor to address him by first name, but the request is made with a verb in the LEI form. The inspector, on his part, switches to first-name address, but retains the LEI form:

(5) *Salve, piacere, Michelotti.*

- *Santini. Il piacere è mio.*

- *Venga, si accomodi nel salottino.*

L'ispettore tirò fuori un piccolo block notes per appuntare le informazioni di Loris.

- *Allora, signor Michelotti...*

- *Mi chiami pure Loris.*

- *Come vuole. Purtroppo, devo esordire con una brutta notizia, Loris; non gliel'ho riferita volutamente per telefono per non farla addolorare prima del tempo. Riguarda Laura, sua cugina...*

- *Salve, nice to meet you, Michelotti.*

- *Santini, my pleasure.*

- *Come (LEI), please sit down (LEI) in my living room.*

The inspector took a small block notes to write down Loris's information.

- *So, signor Michelotti...*

- *Please, call (LEI) me Loris.*

- *As you (LEI) wish. Unfortunately, I have to start with some bad news, Loris; I purposely chose not to say it to you (LEI) on the phone not to make you (LEI) grieve beforehand. It is about Laura, your (LEI) cousin...*

(Rosario Aveni, *Paranoia*, 2014, from Google Books, my translation)

In Italian, first names are prototypically used in combination with TU to address children and, in the case of adults, only people whom one knows well or very well. Colleagues, close friends, and family members normally address each other by first name plus TU. In some cases,

as in (5), first names are also combined with the LEI form. This combination is frequently heard in TV shows which include a moment during which the presenter interacts with people calling from home to intervene live during the show. In such cases, the presenter usually addresses the caller by first name in combination with LEI, as in (6):

(6) From the Italian TV show *Mezzogiorno in famiglia*, broadcast 3/4/2016.
(<http://www.rai.tv/dl/RaiTV/programmi/media/ContentItem-c80ac159-e389-46c4-b0fd-b5096c17aeff.html>)

- *Pronto?*
- *Pronto?*
- *Buongiorno. Il suo nome.*
- *Claudio, da Bologna.*
- *Allora, **Claudio**. Un saluto alla bella Bologna. Mi raccomando. **Deve** ripetere i tre titoli.*

- Hello?
- Hello?
- Good morning. What is **your (LEI)** name?
- Claudio, from Bologna.
- So, **Claudio**. Greetings to the beautiful Bologna. Remember. **You (LEI)** have to repeat the three titles.

At first sight, it might seem that first name plus LEI is a combination of forms expressing opposite, clashing attitudes ('I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well' expressed by first-name address (see Chapter 12) vs "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'" expressed by LEI, see 11.5). However, the attitude expressed by first name plus LEI is not "I think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". My hypothesis is that the expressed attitude of first name plus LEI is that expressed by LEI with a "twist": when a first name is added to LEI, it brings the semantic contribution 'when I say this, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well'; however, this component does not affect the semantics of LEI, which still includes a component "I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". Essentially, my hypothesis is that first name plus LEI is a way of signalling the intention to think about the addressee differently from how

one thinks about people whom one addresses with LEI. This can be seen as a way of establishing a closer relationship with the addressee while still remaining at the level of “acquaintances”. I propose the following explication for the meaning of the LEI plus first name:

Come vuole...Loris (as you (LEI) wish...Loris)

when I say this, I don't think about you like I can think about children

I don't think about you like I can think about many other people

I don't think about you like this: “this someone is someone like me”

I don't think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

at the same time, when I say this I think about you like I can think about someone

if I know this someone well

I think about you like this: “people can know some good things about this someone”

For reasons of space, I cannot justify here all the semantic components posited for the interactional meaning of LEI.⁴⁸ For the purposes of the present discussion, it is the components in bold which capture the attitude expressed by this combination.

Considering (5) and (6), one might think that in first-time encounters in Italy people never address each other by first name only and TU. In fact, however, young people meeting for the first time typically go for first names and reciprocal TU, as (7) illustrates:

(7) *Avevo poco più di **quattordici** anni, Roberto ne aveva **trenta**. Era seduto su uno scatolone di fronte al portone di casa e strimpellava una chitarra. **Era il nostro primo incontro.***

*“**Abiti** qui?” mi ha chiesto.*

“Sì, perché?”

“Da oggi anche io abito qui. Sono il nuovo inquilino.”

*“Ah piacere: **Lorenzo**. **Tu** dovresti andare nell'appartamento libero al secondo piano, io abito alla porta a sinistra dopo la **tua**. **Devi** entrare?”*

I was just over **fourteen**, Roberto was **thirty**. He was sitting on a big cardboard box outside the apartment's main door and was strumming a guitar. **That was the first time we had met.**

“Do **you** (TU) live here?” he asked me.

“Yes, why?”

“From today I'll live here too. I'm the new tenant.”

“Oh, nice to meet you: **Lorenzo**. **You** (TU) must be living in the empty flat on the second floor, mine is on the left past your door. Do **you** (TU) need to enter?”

(Fabio Volo, *Il tempo che vorrei*, 2009:84, my translation)

⁴⁸ For a detailed discussion of LEI, see Wierzbicka (2017) and section 11.5.

In exchanges between adults, a title plus surname combination together with LEI is more likely to be used. First names may be used, but normally in combination with a “generic title” and with LEI. Once again, the age gap between the interactants can affect the address mode.

11.3.2 University students addressing lecturers in e-mails

Another interesting domain to analyse the address practices of Italian speakers is the academic environment. The latest study conducted by Formentelli and Hajek (2015, henceforth F&H) has shown that, when interacting with their lecturer orally or in writing, Italian university students use LEI in combination with *Professore/Professoressa* and with semantically compatible salutations. Their body of data also showed that lecturers, on their part, address students with TU and that “first names are not used [by students] to address lecturers” (126). Before F&H, Musumeci (1991) discussed the use of *Professore/Professoressa* plus LEI from students to lecturers in Italy in relation to the combination *Ciao Professoressa* made by North American university students of Italian. The e-mails which I collected in July 2014 at “L’Orientale” University of Naples is consistent with both these studies. The e-mails were written by twenty-five Italian-born students to their lecturer, a female professor in her fifties. Two of these e-mails are reported here:⁴⁹

- (10) *Student 1*
 Gentile Professoressa Ferrari,
 mi dispiace disturbarla ancora, ma dal momento che avrei due verbalizzazioni
 e un esame da sostenere martedì...
 Attendo una sua cordiale risposta.
 Distinti saluti
 Luca Rossi (numero di matricola)
- Gentile Professoressa Ferrari,**
 I’m sorry to disturb **you** (LEI) again, but since I have two exams to record and
 another one to take on Tuesday...
 I will wait for **your** (LEI) kind reply.

⁴⁹ The lecturer’s and the students’ names have been changed.

Distinti saluti
Luca Rossi (student number)

- (11) *Student 2*
Gentile Professoressa Ferrari,
Potrebbe cortesemente inviarmi la relazione del Prof. Martini, di cui mi aveva parlato nel nostro incontro di lunedì scorso?
Cordiali saluti
Maria Russo (numero di matricola)

Gentile Professoressa Ferrari,
could **you (LEI)** please send me Professor Martini's report which **you (LEI)** mentioned the last time we met last Monday?
Cordiali saluti
Maria Russo (student number)

In all the e-mails collected the lecturer is addressed as *Professoressa* and never by first name. Obviously, it is impossible to make generalisations on the basis of such a small number of e-mails, which are as many as I was able to collect. However, it is significant that the way these e-mails are written is consistent with F&H's findings. Apart from the use of *Professoressa*, four formal characteristics in the above e-mails are significant: (i) *Professoressa* is accompanied by the lecturer's surname; (ii) the lecturer is addressed with LEI; (iii) the opening salutation used is *Gentile*; (iv) all the students signed off with their first name and surname and also added their student number to help the lecturer recognise them. In line with the results of F&H (2015), these examples suggest that e-mails from university students to lecturers are another context in which Italian speakers typically select semantically compatible forms of address which express the ideas 'I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'' and "I don't think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'".

11.3.3 Two Italian cultural scripts for address practices in the two situations discussed

The two situations analysed in the previous subsections suggests that there are specific cultural scripts which guide the address practices of Italian speakers in specific situational contexts. In

general, the examples suggest that age and difference in position can affect the selection of the forms of address. In (4), where there is a big age gap between the interactants, non-reciprocal address is used, the older speaker giving TU and receiving LEI. In (7), where there is a small age gap between the interactants, reciprocal TU is used. As pointed out by Clyne (2009), apart from age, individual speakers' address preferences also play a major role in the choice of address forms and this, I suggest, applies to first-time encounters, too.

The cases in which TU was not used suggest that those speakers intended to express a meaning which excluded the attitude "I think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". This, in turn, suggests the presence of a cultural script encouraging Italian speakers to speak to people whom they do not know well differently from how they speak to people whom they know well. The script can be formulated as follows:

[F] *An Italian cultural script for speaking to people whom one does not know well*
 [in Italy many people think like this:]
 often when I want to say some things to someone,
 if I don't know this someone well,
 it is good if I don't say these things to this someone
 like I can say things to people if I know these people well

In addition, the e-mails sent by university students to their lecturer suggest the presence of another cultural script for addressing people who, roughly speaking, are in the position of giving instructions to other people in a place, for example an employee addressing their boss or a student addressing their lecturer. All the e-mails collected exhibit the same formal features, the LEI form and the professional title *Professoressa*, which match the findings of Formentelli and Hajek's study (2015) based on a larger amount of data (194 questionnaires). Student-lecturer exchanges are not the only cases of construed bottom-up relationship in which titles and LEI are used to address the interlocutor. In Chapter 6, I have adduced numerous examples in which titles like *Direttore*, *Preside* or *Dottore* are used in combination with LEI by people who follow instructions to address someone who is in the position of giving instructions to

these people. Accordingly, I propose that there is a cultural script which encourages Italian speakers to talk to people with whom they have a construed relationship of inequality in a place differently from how they would speak to many other people. This cultural script can be phrased as follows:

[G] *An Italian cultural script encouraging speakers to talk to one's superior differently from how one talks to many other people*

[in Italy many people think like this:]

when I want to say some things to someone,

if this someone is someone above me,

I can't say these things to this someone like I can say things to many other people

For the sake of clarity, it is worth reiterating that all the cultural scripts proposed in this chapter are not meant to represent “rules for speech” which all Italian speakers indistinctly follow. Clearly, not all speakers conform to these scripts, but the assumption is that they are at least aware of their presence and of the implications for discourse which these scripts have in specific contexts. As pointed out by Goddard and Wierzbicka, “even those who do not personally identify with the content of a script are familiar with it, i.e. that it forms part of the interpretive backdrop to discourse and social behaviour in a particular cultural context” (2004:157). The purpose of the proposed scripts is not to absolutize the address practices of Italian speakers without considering individual variation. Rather, the idea is to portray prototypical scenarios which can be used for cross-cultural comparison (next chapter) and to provide cultural outsiders with helpful tools for cross-cultural training.

11.4 Negotiating address in Italian: the expression ‘*dare del tu*’

The examples discussed in 11.3.1 show that in exchanges between people who meet for the first time or who do not know each other well the decision as to which address pronoun to use (and whether or not to use a title) is left to the interactants. Evidence shows that although there

is usually an initial preference for LEI (at least among adults and if there is a substantial age gap between the interactants), the interactants can agree to switch to TU if they feel that the circumstances permit it. If they feel that there are subtle or no differences in social position or age, the switch is made through a process of *negotiation* which starts with an invitation from any of the interactants to switch to TU. However, if there is a difference in age or social position, the shift from LEI to TU can still occur, but in this case there is no negotiation, because only the speaker who, in that relationship, is the older one or is in a position of being able to give instructions to the conversational partner can make the proposal.

The expression used to propose to switch to TU is '*darsi del tu*' (literally 'to give each other TU'), with the verb *dare* ('give') used in the reflexive form to express the idea of "mutuality". Contrary to what the verb "give" may suggest at first glance, the Italian expression '*dare del + noun + a qualcuno*' means, roughly, to say about someone 'you are someone like this' or 'you do things like someone like this does things'. It can be used to say something bad about someone, for example "*Mi ha dato del cretino*", meaning, roughly, 'he/she said that I am stupid'. Therefore, *dare del tu* means, first of all, to say something to someone about someone and in this case the content of the message conveyed is the speaker's professed way of thinking about the addressee. Noticeably, there is no comparable expression in English, because English does not distinguish different second person singular address pronouns. To invite the interlocutor to switch to a "T-like" way of speaking, to use Brown and Gilman's terms, the closest expression available in English is probably *please, (just) call me X* (see Chapter 13). In Italian, this English expression could be rendered as '*chiamami pure X/mi chiami pure X*' ("call me (TU/LEI form) X"), which does not have the same effect because the verb is not in the reflexive form and does not imply mutuality. As one might expect, the expression *darsi del tu*

is usually “lost” in English translation, as in the English version of Pirandello’s *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (1904), where the whole sentence containing *darsi del tu* is omitted:⁵⁰

- (12) *Le anime hanno un loro particolare modo di intendersi, di entrare in intimità, fino a darsi del tu, mentre le nostre persone sono tuttavia impacciate nel commercio delle parole comuni, nella schiavitù delle esigenze sociali.*

Souls have some mysterious device for finding each other out [to the extent of giving each other the TU form] while our exterior selves are still entangled in the formalities of conventional discourse.

(Luigi Pirandello, *Il Fu Mattia Pascal* (1904), translated by Arthur Livingstone, 1923)

In relation to *darsi del tu*, three questions need to be answered: (i) what are the differences in expressed meaning caused by the shift from LEI to TU?; (ii) what effects does the shift have on the relationship between the interactants?; (iii) what cultural values underlie this practice? To try to answer these questions it will be helpful to analyse the meaning of the four different expressions used to propose the shift to TU:

1. *Posso darti del tu?* (‘Can I give you the TU form?’)
2. *Possiamo darci del tu?* (‘Can we give each other the TU form?’)
3. *Diamoci del tu!* (‘Let’s give each other the TU form!’)
4. *Dammi del tu!* (‘Give me the TU form!’)

From the point of view of conversational structure, all four expressions are used after a number of turns in which the interactants have addressed each other with LEI. The difference among these expressions is that (1) and (4) are phrased in terms of *io* (Can I give you), whereas (2) and (3) are phrased in terms of *noi* (we) (with some differences which I will discuss), and therefore imply mutuality. As a result, (2) and (3) imply a process of negotiation, whereas (1)

⁵⁰ English translation by Arthur Livingstone, 1923.

and (4) sound more like “requests” from one speaker to the other. I will discuss each expression in separate subsections.

11.4.1 *‘Posso darti del tu?’*

From a semantic point of view, expression (1) *Posso darti del tu?* conveys three messages: (i) “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”; (ii) ‘I want to say things to you like I can say things to someone if I know this someone well’; (iii) ‘maybe I can do this, maybe not, I don’t know, I want to know’. In expression (1) the question is already phrased in the TU form (*darti*, “give you/TU), therefore the speaker already speaks to the addressee as they speak to people whom they address with TU and already signals that they purport to think about the interlocutor ‘this someone is someone like me’. In addition to that, by using the verb *potere* (‘can’) in the request, the speaker says ‘I don’t know if I can do it’ and wants the addressee to tell them if they can. The meaning of variant (1) can be explicated as follows:

Posso darti del tu?

I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’

I want to say things to you like I can say things to someone if I know this someone well

maybe I can do this, maybe not, I don’t know, I want to know

11.4.2 *Possiamo darci del tu?*

There are two semantic differences between expression (2) and (1) reflected in the first person plural which characterises both the verb *potere* and the verb *dare* in (2) and gives a nuance of mutuality to the shift. Expression (1) is totally hearer-oriented (‘you’) in that the speaker only signals how they think about the addressee and wants to know if they can speak to the addressee like they can speak to people whom they address with TU. Expression (2), by contrast, is both

hearer-oriented ('you') and speaker-oriented ('I'): the speaker conveys the message "I think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'" and at the same time says to the addressee 'you can think the same about me'. In addition, the speaker says that they want to know if they can speak to the addressee like they can speak to people whom they know well and address with TU, but at the same time also says that the addressee can speak to them in the same way. The meaning of variant (2) can be explicated as follows:

Possiamo darci del tu?

I think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'
 you can think the same about me
 I want you to know that when you say some things to me
 you can say them like you say things to people if you know these people well
 I want to say things to you like I can say things to someone if I know this someone well
 maybe I can do this, maybe not, I don't know, I want to know

11.4.3 Diamoci del tu!

Expression (3) differs from the previous two in that the shift to TU is not based on the idea 'I don't know if I can do it, I want to know', but on the idea 'I want you to do the same'. The speaker does not want to know from the addressee if they can shift to TU address, but already assumes that there are the necessary circumstances for both of them to address one another with TU and therefore wants the addressee to shift to TU. Expression (3) is mainly used to be "on the same wave length" with the conversational partner in a variety of situations, for example when two or more people need to collaborate or make decisions together. In such situations, the proposal to shift to mutual TU is aimed at simplifying the exchange, as mutual TU allows the interactants to think about one another 'this someone is someone like me' and to say things to each other like they can say things to people whom they know well. In the following extract from Camilleri's *L'età del dubbio* (2008), Inspector Montalbano talks to a

female colleague whom he has met for the first time. After an initial mutual LEI, Roberta proposes to shift to TU:

- (13) «*Mi chiamo Roberta Rollo, sono una sua pari grado, ma da tre anni mi trovo alle dirette dipendenze dell'Orni*». [...] *«Le posso fare qualche domanda?»*.
 «*Sono in debito con lei. Domandi pure*». [...] *«Scusi, ma... »*
 «*Diamoci del tu*».
 «*Ma mi spieghi che c'entra l'Onu con tutto questo?*».
 «*Hai mai sentito parlare del Kimberley Process?*».
 «*Sì, ma non ho avuto ancora modo di...* ».
 «*Te lo dico io in poche parole...*»

“My name is Roberta Rollo. **We have the same rank**, but for the past three years I’ve been in the direct employ of the UN.” [...] “Could I ask **you** a few questions?”
 “I’m indebted to **you**. **Go** right ahead.” [...] “**I’m sorry**, [ø] but could **you** explain to me exactly what the UN has to do with all this?”
 “Have **you** ever heard of the Kimberley Process?”
 “Yes, but I still haven’t had time tot – “
 “I’ll sum it up for **you** in a few words...”

(Andrea Camilleri, *L’età del dubbio*, 2008 | *The age of doubt*, translated by Stephen Sartarelli, 2012)

Roberta’s proposal to switch to mutual TU address is based on the fact that they “have the same rank”, so they can speak to each other and exchange information as people on the same level and as if they knew each other well. It is significant that Roberta does not say Montalbano ‘I don’t know if I can do it, I want to know’, but explicitly says ‘I want to say things to you like I can say things to someone if I know this someone well’ and ‘I want you to do the same’. Montalbano, on his part, immediately shifts to TU without saying anything about it. In the English translation the proposal to shift from LEI to TU is completely “lost”, because there is just no way of rendering it in English. The result is that the utterance containing *diamoci del tu* has been completely omitted in the English text, and what Montalbano utters in two turns in the original text has been rendered as one sentence in the English text. In this way, the English

reader cannot imagine that what comes in the English version as *I'm sorry* and *could you* is uttered in different turns and is expressed in different address forms in the original text. Crucially, the English reader cannot know that Roberta and Montalbano started the conversation addressing each other with LEI and then negotiated the shift to TU.

Another case in which the invitation to use mutual TU address could be made using expression (3) is when two people who do not know each other well feel or know that they have something to share, for example common life experiences. Example (14) in Appendix A is a transcription of an exchange between two men taken from the popular Italian TV-drama *Un posto al sole* (2010) available on Youtube.⁵¹ Giacomo, the first man, has gone to his fiancé's former husband to ask for advice about what would be a nice present for her. At first, Giacomo uses LEI to address the other man; the other man, on his part, also replies with LEI and the exchange goes on like this until Giacomo proposes to switch to TU, "given their relationship". Giacomo's proposal is based precisely on the fact that they "share" something: they both know the same woman with whom one used to have a relationship and the other one currently has. Moreover, the fact that Giacomo is asking another man for some advice makes him want to switch to TU so that they can speak "from man to man". For Giacomo, then, it is justified to switch to TU. The other man agrees to switch to TU and says that he cannot help Giacomo. At this point, Giacomo suddenly switches back to LEI, but then corrects himself immediately and uses TU again. Evidently, for Giacomo the encounter has not been successful, and yet address forms were successfully negotiated.

The meaning of expression (3) can be explicated as follows:

Diamoci del tu!

I think about you like this: "this someone is someone like me"

I want to say things to you like I can say things to someone if I know this someone well

I want you to do the same

⁵¹ http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ve_sJ2s2q-M.

11.4.4 *Dammi del tu!*

Expression (4) is used in exchanges between people with different age, social position and role by the speaker who, in that exchange, is the older or is in the position of being able to say what to do to the addressee. The speaker is aware that the interlocutor sees him/her as ‘someone above me’ and wants to bridge the gap in the relationship by inviting the interlocutor to address him/her with TU. Of the four expressions, this one could be easily perceived as a proper request, because the speaker already uses TU when saying ‘I want to say things to you like I can say things to someone if I know this someone well’ and uses the verb *dare* in the imperative TU form. Essentially, the speaker expressly says ‘I want you to do it’.

In (15), a woman addresses a man with LEI and the man expressly says “*dammi del TU*”. Noticeably, the man has to ask it twice because the woman is reluctant to switch to TU. The fact that in the end she does shift to TU confirms the request-like tone of this variant, in the sense that the woman does not have much of a choice:

- (15) “Come va?”
“Bene, e lei?”
“**Dammi del tu.**”
“Come mai da queste parti?”
“Ho dimenticato di pagare il meccanico.”
“Me l’aveva detto. Mi aveva anche detto se **la** conoscevo...”
“**Dammi del tu.**”
“Sì.”
“Cosa gli **hai detto?**”
“Che non **ti** conoscevo.”

“*How are you doing?*”
“*Fine, sir. And you?*”
“*Don’t call me ‘sir’.*”
“*What brings you to these parts?*”
“*I forgot to pay the mechanic.*”
“*He told me that, sir. He wanted to know if I knew you.*”
“*Don’t call me ‘sir’.*”
“*All right.*”

*“What did you tell him?”
“I said I didn’t know **you**.”*

(Margaret Mazzantini, *Non ti muovere*, 2001 | *Don’t move*, translated by John Cullen, 2005)

Unlike (13), in this English translation the shift from LEI to TU is not totally “lost”. To render the parts of the original text in which LEI occurs, the translator has used the term *sir*, which is semantically different from LEI (cf. Wierzbicka 2015, Chapter 6). On the one hand, though, by using *sir* the translator successfully captures the social difference between the speakers; on the other, the mere omission of *sir* is not sufficient to capture the shift from LEI to TU occurring in Italian. The English translator captures very well, in my view, the message conveyed with expression (4). It is significant that the affirmative imperative *dammi* (“give me”) has been rendered with a negative imperative in English, “don’t call”. Indeed, from a semantic point of view by asking the hearer to switch to TU, the speaker is in fact asking the interlocutor *not to do* something, i.e. not to think about him/her ‘this someone is someone above me’, but to think about him/her ‘this someone is someone like me’.

The interactional meaning of expression (4) can be explicated as follows:

Dammi del tu!

I want you to think about me like this: “this someone is someone like me”

I don’t want you to think about me like this: “this someone is someone above me”

I want you to say things to me like you can say things to someone if you know this someone well

11.4.5 A cultural script for shifting from LEI to TU in Italian

The analysis of the four ways of proposing to shift to TU has highlighted two important aspects of how the shift takes place. The first is related to the mutuality which characterises expressions (2) and (3), emphasising the possibility of negotiating address with the interlocutor. Speakers can agree to speak to each other using TU and relate to one another as people “on the same

level”. I define this process of negotiation of pronominal address in Italian as the practice of *linguistic equalisation*. The second aspect is related to variants (1) and (4): if the shift to TU is not negotiated by the interactants, the proposal to stop using LEI can only be made by the speaker who is older or is in a position of being able to give instructions to the interlocutor. This suggests the presence of a specific cultural script in Italian stating that linguistic equalisation can only be started by the speaker who is in a construed position of superiority over the interlocutor. In other words, one cannot use the word TU to talk to someone if this someone is perceived as being ‘someone above me’. This script can be formulated as follows:

[H] *A cultural script for shifting from LEI to TU in Italian (linguistic equalisation)*
 [in Italy many people think like this:]
 when I want to say something to someone about this someone,
 if I think like this about this someone: ‘this someone is someone above me’,
 I can’t say something like this to this someone:
 “when I want to say something to you about you, I want to say it with the word ‘tu’
 when you want to say something to me about me, you can do the same”

With this script in mind, it is possible to re-analyse what happens in example (4) previously analysed. Maria asks signora Polidoro to use TU and not to call her *signora* because she is young and unmarried. Noticeably, the request is formulated in the LEI form and Maria continues to talk to signora Polidoro using this form. When signora Polidoro also asks Maria to avoid *Signora*, she does not switch to TU, but keeps using LEI. Maria, at this point, agrees not to address signora Polidoro as *Signora* but insists, in the LEI form, that she should use TU. Signora Polidoro apologises for using TU and corrects herself once again. Evidently, by asking signora Polidoro not to use the title *Signora*, to call her by first name and to shift to TU, Maria is violating the above script, because of the two she is the speaker in a construed position of inferiority (she is the younger).

In the next section, I will present three other cultural scripts related to pronominal address in Italian: one for LEI address, one for VOI address and a “master” script capturing the idea that it is not possible to use TU to address all kinds of interlocutor in Italian.

11.5 The cultural semantics of the address pronoun VOI

Having discussed LEI and TU, I would like to spend some words on the pronoun VOI used for second person singular address, which is always a bit “mistreated” and never clearly discussed in Italian grammars and in studies on Italian address. In particular, I wish to expand on the already detailed analysis made by Wierzbicka (2017) adducing some more examples, and also question a number of points made in the latest study by Formentelli and Hajek (2015).

In line with most Italian grammarians (with the exception of Renzi et al. 1995 and Serianni 2010), Formentelli and Hajek write that “Italian [...] displays a *binary* distinction of T and V address strategies” (121, emphasis added), that is only TU and LEI, whereas VOI “survives mostly in southern areas and is usually perceived elsewhere as regional, rural and/or antiquated” (ibidem). The authors report the perceptions of a number of students whom they interviewed at two universities in northern Italy, who commented that they do not use VOI because it has a “non-standard and old-fashioned connotation” (126). Formentelli and Hajek write that these two universities are attended by students from throughout the country, but they do not specify which students commented on the use of VOI. The reader is left with the impression that all students from all regions indistinctly agreed that VOI is “non-standard and old-fashioned”.

Although it is true that VOI is currently restricted to the central and southern regions of Italy, and that there is no evidence for VOI used at university level in any region, the assumptions that “standard Italian” (if any such thing exists) has a *binary* system of pronominal address and that VOI is “non-standard” and “old-fashioned” are, in my view, arbitrary and unsubstantiated, if

not wrong. As I see it, the perceptions reported by the authors clearly cannot correspond to the perceptions of those speakers who consistently use VOI *together with* LEI and TU, i.e. speakers whose repertoire of address pronouns includes a third variant. Speaking from personal experience, I can tell that speakers from the Naples region use three address pronouns depending on the situation and on the interlocutor. Middle and high school students address their fellows with TU, but address their teacher with *Professore/Professoressa* in combination with VOI, not with LEI. It is only at university level that they learn to dispose of VOI and switch to LEI in combination with *Professore/Professoressa* to address a lecturer. At the same time, these students use LEI to address strangers. The fact that in this region (and not only) speakers use three different address pronouns in specific situations, and to talk to different interlocutors, suggests that they clearly distinguish semantically among the three address pronouns. Crucially, for these speakers VOI does not compete with LEI, because it is used in completely different contexts.

Further examples of a contemporary and fully productive tripartite pronominal system in Italian are found in Camilleri's book *Gli arancini di Montalbano* (1999), set in Sicily. In the book, inspector Montalbano uses TU, LEI and VOI to address different interlocutors: he uses LEI to talk to the headmaster of a school, VOI to talk to a seventy year old man and TU to address his subordinate Fazio (example 16 in Appendix A). The tripartite pronominal system of address has a long tradition in the history of the Italian language. As explained by Alinei (2002), at Mussolini's time VOI was used by peasants not only in the south, but also in the north-central areas of Italy, including Tuscany, "the cradle of the Italian language" (6). During the Fascist era, LEI was abolished by Mussolini, who favoured the use of the purely Italian and Roman VOI.⁵² LEI was reintroduced only after Fascism. Mussolini himself in his speech on the abolition

⁵² Mussolini organised an exhibition in Turin called *Mostra Anti-Lei* ("Anti-LEI exhibition") where numerous pictures and even a lapis of the defunct *Signor Lei* were put on display for school kids. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhtaxoMx8Uw>).

of LEI (October 25th 1938) gave an account of the use of VOI in various regions of Italy (including the northern ones) at that time:

Altro piccolo cazzotto: l'abolizione del «lei». È incredibile che da tre secoli tutti gli italiani, nessuno escluso, non abbiano protestato contro questa forma servile. [...] Fino al cinquecento gli italiani non hanno conosciuto che il «tu» e il «voi», ignorando il «lei». Infatti, quando il contadino ha parlato con me, non mi ha detto: «Senta, Eccellenza», ma mi ha detto: «Senti, Duce, noi non abbiamo l'acqua». In Romagna ancora oggi la moglie dà del «voi» al marito, i nipoti al nonno, e qualche volta il figlio dà del «voi» al padre. Tutta l'Italia meridionale ignora il «lei», sia nelle classi colte, sia in quelle popolari.

Another small punch: the abolition of «lei». It is incredible that in three centuries all the Italians, with no exclusion, have not protested against this servile form. [...] Until the 1500s Italians only knew «tu» and «voi», ignoring «lei». Indeed, when a peasant talked to me he did not say to me «Listen (LEI form), Eccellenza», but said «Listen (TU form), Duce, we have got no water». Still to this day, in Romagna wives address their husbands with VOI, and so do grandchildren to grandfathers, and sometimes the son addresses his father with VOI. The whole Southern Italy ignores LEI, both the educated classes and common people.

(Susmel and Susmel, *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. 29, 1979:183, my translation)

Literature from earlier periods than Fascism illustrates that the tripartite address system was well established in the north-central regions of Italy, too. In 1881 the tripartite address system was used by the Tuscan Carlo Collodi in the child-book *Pinocchio*. In an exchange between Mastro Ciliegia and Geppetto, the two initially address each other with VOI, then have a fight and switch to TU and finally go back to VOI when they make up⁵³ (example (17) in Appendix A). Pinocchio himself addresses the Fire-eater with LEI, but uses VOI to address the Fairy and his father Geppetto. Unsurprisingly, the switch from one pronoun to another is completely “lost” in the English translation of the book (examples (18) to (20) in Appendix A).

An even older and more famous literary example of a tripartite pronominal address system is that between Fra' Cristoforo, a priest, and Don Rodrigo, the local lord, portrayed by Alessandro Manzoni in *I Promessi Sposi* (*The Betrothed*, 1827, but set in the seventeenth

⁵³ English translation by M.A. Murrays (2002).

century Milan area), in which all the three address pronouns are used and the switch from one to another signals a radical change in expressed attitude. Fra' Cristoforo begs Don Rodrigo to let Lucia marry Renzo. Initially, the two address each other with LEI (example (21) in Appendix A), but when Don Rodrigo suggests that Lucia should go under his protection Fra' Cristoforo loses his temper and switches to VOI. Don Rodrigo, on his part, switches from LEI to TU (example 22 in Appendix A). Noticeably, Manzoni himself associates the priest's switch from LEI to VOI with indignation and loss of temper.

The crucial element to capture is the change in expressed attitude caused by the switch from LEI to VOI. This can be done by pinpointing the semantic differences between LEI and VOI clearly. As Wierzbicka (2017) points out,

The fact that *Voi* is in competition with *Lei* for some speakers but not for others, or that it competes with *Lei* in some settings (in the city) but not in others ("back home"), often leads scholars to conclude that *Voi* has no stable, invariant semantic characteristics of its own, sometimes implying 'cordiality' and sometimes 'reverence', sometimes 'inferiority', and sometimes 'superiority'. [...] This fails to capture the semantic invariants of *Voi* and *Lei*, compatible with different ranges of use but made up of stable semantic components. (216)

In other words, the alternation among three pronouns of address displayed by some Italian speakers is an important semantic question which needs to be thoroughly investigated. Wierzbicka (2017:226) proposes the following explications for the interactional meanings of LEI and VOI:⁵⁴

Lei

when I say this, I don't think about you like I can think about children
at the same time, I don't think about you like I can think about many other people
I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone well"
I don't think about you like this: "this someone is someone like me"
I think like this: "people can know some good things about this someone"

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the posited semantic components, see Wierzbicka (2017).

Voi

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like I can think about children
at the same time, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone very well"
I think like this: "people can think some very good things about this someone"

Drawing on Wierzbicka's explications, I suggest that by initially addressing each other with LEI both Fra' Cristoforo and Don Rodrigo express the attitude "when I say this, I don't think about you like this: 'I don't know this someone well'". By contrast, by switching to VOI Fra' Cristoforo expresses the attitude "when I say this, I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone very well'", and by doing this he makes the relationship closer. Don Rodrigo's switch from LEI to TU is even more significant; not only is he treating the priest as someone whom he knows well, but he also expresses the attitude "I think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'". In this way, he purposely avoids expressing some good feelings towards him that the priest deserves as a clergyman. What is more, Don Rodrigo's shift to TU is accompanied by a change in terms of address, as he does not call Fra' Cristoforo *Padre* (Father) anymore, but *frate* (priest), in a rather demeaning way.

Thus, if one considers VOI from a semantic point of view, one can reconsider F&H's finding that VOI is not used at university level from a different perspective. As I see it, it is not that VOI is "old-fashioned" or "non-standard", but that its interactional meaning is not felt to be suitable for that context. In fact, Alinei (2002) has pointed out that, apart from regional dialects, a post-fascist VOI is still being used consistently in the dialogues of TV shows and in the Italian of dubbing. Alinei considers these uses as bad attempts at reconstructing the language of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century social milieu, because the characters portrayed in the shows "belong to the high and middle class, and not uncommonly to the aristocracy, [people] who had not used VOI since the 1600s." (9, my translation). This observation is consistent with the fact that Mussolini associated the use of LEI with the middle class or the bourgeoisie, "the enemy of the regime" (Alinei 2002:6), whereas VOI was used by humble people. In sum, the

fact that VOI is not used by all Italian speakers does not invalidate the semantic question of the differences with LEI (and TU) in expressed attitude.

Having discussed the semantics of VOI address, I propose a cultural script which tries to capture the way of thinking underlying its use. This way of thinking is not presented as shared by all speakers of Italian, as not all have a tripartite pronominal system of address, but as characteristic of speakers from some parts of Italy, as the initial line states:

[I] *An Italian cultural script for using the address pronoun VOI*

[in some parts of Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone about this someone

if it is like this: this someone is not a child, I don't know this someone very well

it is good if I say something like this to this someone at the same time:

"I think about you like this: 'people can know some very good things about this someone'

I can say it with one word

For the sake of comparison, I also propose a script which tries to capture the way of thinking underlying the use of LEI address which, unlike script [I], is not restricted to specific regional areas, but is presented as shared by speakers from all parts of Italy:

[J] *An Italian cultural script for using the address pronoun LEI*

[in Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone about this someone

if it is like this: this someone is not a child, I don't know this someone very well

it is good if I say something like this to this someone at the same time:

"I think about you like this: 'people can know some good things about this someone'

I don't think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'"

I can say it with one word

Both [I] and [J] are purposely related to the two semantic explications proposed by Wierzbicka (2017) presented above; cultural scripts are meant to capture indigenous ways of thinking which encourage the expression of certain meanings in a given linguacultural world, and therefore embody the same key semantic components included in the explications. At the same time, both scripts are related to a more general or "master" cultural script which states

that in Italy it is not possible to address someone who is not a child and whom I do not know well with TU:

[K] *An Italian “master” cultural script for not using the same address pronoun TU for all people*

[in Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone about this someone

if I don't know this someone well

I can't say things to this someone like I can say things to children

because of this, I can't say the word “tu” to this someone when I say something about this someone

Script [K] is a “master” script because it captures the first “rule” for address practices that cultural outsiders need to learn: the first thing that Anglo speakers (who use *you* to address all kinds of people) have to learn is that if their interlocutor is someone whom they do not know well they cannot speak to this person as they could speak to a child. It is the impossibility of using TU to address all kinds of interlocutor that justifies the use of LEI and, in some regions, of VOI address in Italian. All the scripts are meant to be pedagogical scripts to be used in cross-cultural training to teach cultural outsiders how different address pronouns are used in Italian.

11.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have proposed a number of cultural scripts to capture the cultural values which underlie address practices in Italian. I have also discussed the process whereby Italian speakers negotiate the shift from LEI to TU, defining it as a practice of *linguistic equalisation*. This practice is informed by a specific cultural script, which states that the proposal to shift to TU can only be made by the speaker who is in a construed position of superiority over the conversational partner. Finally, I have discussed the cultural semantics of VOI, arguing that it needs to be included in the list of pronominal address variants, because some speakers have it in their repertoire.

An awareness of the salience of “titles” in Italian culture is fundamental for culture outsiders who wish to interact with Italian speakers, not only because it would improve their linguistic and cultural proficiency, but also because they would know what kind of address practices to expect from Italian speakers in intercultural interactions. At the same time, it might be very difficult for Italian speakers to stick to these scripts when interacting with speakers of languages which do not have the same repertoire of “titles” (e.g. English). Italians coming to Australia could easily experience this, as in Australia most speakers are uncomfortable with “titles” and prefer first-name address (next chapter). Crucially, for an Italian speaker the omission of the “title” implies the violation of no fewer than four cultural scripts, those discussed in 11.2.

Chapter 12. Australian cultural scripts for address practices

12.1 Introduction

In this chapter the address practices of Australian English speakers are discussed. The focus is specifically on first-name address, by far the preferred address mode in this linguaculture. An analysis of the interactional meaning expressed by first-name address in Australian English is proposed in the first part, complemented by a discussion of the cultural values which encourage first-name address in Australia. For the sake of cross-cultural comparison with Italian, the address practices of Australian English speakers in the same two situations discussed in the previous chapter, people meeting for the first time and e-mail exchanges between university students and lecturers, are discussed in the second part of this chapter. Two cultural scripts encouraging the use of first-name address in these two contexts are presented for Australian English. These scripts are then compared with the scripts presented for Italian in the previous chapter to highlight the differences in address practices between these two linguacultures.

12.2 A cultural-semantic analysis of first-name address in Australian English

In much anthropological and linguistics literature on Australian society and Australian English various scholars have pointed out that in Australia people prefer reciprocal first-name address in most interactions (Goddard (ed.) 2006, 2009, 2012; Hancock (ed.) 1989; Hirst 1988, 1998, 2007; Ronowicz and Yallop 1999; Thompson 1994). Ronowicz and Yallop have suggested that virtually everyone can be addressed by first name in Australia, including authorities at the highest levels like the Prime Minister:

The Prime Minister may be introduced or addressed in a ceremonious manner at the beginning of a formal meeting or lecture, yet at an informal function afterwards people may use his first name and chat to him casually while he rubs shoulders with ordinary Australians. With no visible security guard around him, he will try to present himself as the equal of other ‘blokes’ on the floor.

(1999:134)

First-name address is also mentioned by Sharp in *Culture shock: Australia* (2001) as a striking difference between British and Australians:

If you’re British, you probably see your antipodean cousin as rather alarming [...] You find the way he tends to ‘get physical’ rather terrifying, although you secretly admire it too. And the way he puts himself on first-name terms with you from the word go is quite beyond the pale.

(82)

At the same time, the avoidance of nouns like *Sir* and *Madam* to address people is often mentioned as a characteristic of Australian English. While Clyne et al. (2009) report that “in service encounters, *Sir* and *Madam* retain their place in British English to address older male and female customers” (18), the historian John Hirst pointed out that already in early Australia “terms of respect such as *sir* were still used, but with less humbleness and touching of hats” (1998:208, emphasis in original). In *The Shearers* (1901), poet Henry Lawson wrote that no man would be addressed as *sir* or *lord* in Australia:

They tramp in mateship side by side –
The Protestant and Roman –
They call no biped lord or sir,
And touch their hat to no man!
(Henry Lawson, *The Shearers*, 1901, emphasis added)

Along similar lines, Ronowicz and Yallop have written:

the words ‘Sir’ and ‘Madam’ have limited use in Australia. [...] The use of Sir and Madam by ordinary members of the public, especially to young people, will strike most Australians as foreign. So if you want to request something of a stranger in public, use words like ‘excuse me’ and ‘please’, frame a question rather than an order, and do not address people as ‘Sir’ or ‘Madam’.

(1999:109)

This does not mean, however, that in Australia people are not addressed at all with particular nouns. *Sir* and *Madam* can be heard in service encounters, and examples (1) to (3) illustrate that “professional titles” like *Doctor*, too, can be used, and that particular nouns are used as forms of address in the political sphere:

- (1) ALI: Hello there, my name is Ali Sharif. I’m the Intensive Care Consultant who’s looking after your mother...

KATIE: Could you tell us what’s happening, **Doctor**?

(David Williamson, *At any cost?*, 2011:11)

- (2) I do congratulate the government on the new concept of the spirit of the outback but at the same time, **Madam Acting Speaker**, this new concept that’ll get into [Townname1] of a night time...

(ICE-Aus corpus, S1B-053(A):115)

- (3) I urge you **Minister** to make sure you keep your eye on what ha is happening in racing in the central west...

(ICE-Aus corpus, S1B-053(A):132)

The wide use of first-name address is by no means a unique characteristic of the Australian variety. In relation to British English, Clyne et al. (2009) write that “the use of first names is now becoming generalised to the extent that honorific + LN is increasingly relegated to marking a more distant and respectful relationship towards the acquaintance” (18). However, what distinguishes first-name address in Australian English from first-name address in other varieties are the cultural assumptions underlying this practice. Much has been written about the relation between first-name address and the cultural value of “*egalitarianism*”, to be discussed in 12.4.5). However, to the best of my knowledge, in the linguistics literature there has been virtually no attempt at pinpointing the interactional meaning expressed by first-name address apart from Wierzbicka (1992). As with nouns used as forms of address, when addressing someone by first name a precise interactional meaning is expressed, a meaning which to Australian English speakers appears to be more congenial and more suitable for most interactions than the meaning expressed by nouns like *Sir* or *Doctor*. Obviously, I am not

suggesting that speakers always reflect on the meanings which they express in interaction, as language use is mostly unconscious. However, the fact that, as I will show, Australian English speakers *can* choose between first-name address and “titles” suggests that, to a certain extent, a difference between these two ways of addressing people is perceived. By pinpointing the interactional meaning expressed by first-name address, it will be possible to highlight the semantic differences with the meaning expressed by “titles” clearly.

To fully appreciate the cultural salience of first-name address in Australia, a semantic analysis is necessary, complemented by an analysis of the cultural values which encourage this practice. An accurate semantic analysis of first-name address has to start from an analysis of the linguistic contexts in which this practice is used. In the next section, I will analyse first-name address used in two specific situations: first-time exchanges and e-mail exchanges between university students and lecturers.

12.3 Two specific contexts for first-name address in Australian English

12.3.1 First-name address in first-time exchanges

The Australians’ preference for first-name address is often problematic not only for speakers of different varieties of English (see below), but especially for immigrants and international students coming Down Under. By the time they settle in this linguacultural world, one of the biggest challenges for newcomers is to get used to addressing people by first name in situations which in their cultures require the use of different address modes (e.g. a “title”). One situation which often strikes foreigners to the extent that they do not know how to behave is when people meet for the first time. Ronowicz and Yallop write that “[in Australia] in many cases, people use each other’s first names from the moment they are introduced” (1999:108). Two extracts

from two different plays by the Australian playwright David Williamson are consistent with this observation.

In *Don's party* (1971), several people meeting for the first time at a party are introduced by first name by a third person, and when they start talking to one another they use first-name address from the very beginning:

- (4) DON: **Mal, Jenny.** I'd like you to meet **Simon and Jody.** [...]
JENNY: That's a lovely dress...**Jody**, wasn't it?
JOY: That's right.
JENNY: I'm terrible with names. [...]
MAL: [to JODY] And what about you, **Jody**? Are you a genuine Liberal? [...]
KATH: Hello **Kerry, Evan.**
DON: I don't think you know the other people here, do you?
Kerry and Evan...Simon, Mack, and Jenny over there in the chair. Simon's wife Jody is ringing up their babysitter and Jenny's husband Mal is out in the kitchen watching the election telecast. Come and meet Mal while I pour you a drink.
MAL: Hullo, **Evan...Kerry**, was it?

(David Williamson, *Don's Party*, 1971)

In *At any cost?* (2011), an exchange taking place in a hospital is portrayed in which doctor Sharif and Des, the husband of a patient, introduce themselves to each other, and the doctor addresses Des by first name from the first turn:

- (5) DES: You're the doctor?
ALI: Yes, Ali Sharif.
DES: Des. Des Watson.
ALI: **Des**, we need to talk about your wife. The news is not good, I'm afraid.

(David Williamson, *At any cost?*, 2011:21)

First-time exchanges can also be e-mail exchanges. Evidence suggests that in this case, too, Australian speakers tend to go for first-name address from the very beginning (provided they know who the recipient is). The following e-mails were sent to me by two different Australian-born speakers working at university who wrote to me for the first time:

- (6) Hi **Gian Marco**
I have been forwarded your request to access a room to practice drums...

Any questions, please get in touch.
Below is general information regarding using our practice rooms.
Kind regards
Clare

(7) Dear **Gian Marco**,
Thank you for your email.
I have passed your enquiry onto our Research Administration team who will look into your enquiry and get back to you shortly.
If you have any further enquiries, please don't hesitate to contact us.
Kind regards,
Sean Smith

Although the authors of these e-mails and I have never met, they used first names to address me from the very first exchange. Noticeably, the person who wrote (6) also signed off with their first name only. Obviously, these two e-mails are only two cases in which first-name address was used and are only representative of two speakers and of one heterogeneous community: academia. It is perfectly possible that speakers operating in a different environment may have chosen a noun plus surname combination (e.g. *Dear Mr. Farese*). Much depends on the relationship between the interactants and, in particular, on how the sender purports to relate to the recipient in the interaction.

One interesting case for which, regrettably, I have no examples is a first-time e-mail exchange between people doing the same job but working in different environments, for example two lecturers from two different universities. All the Australian-born lecturers whom I consulted commented that they would not address a fellow lecturer from another university whom they have never met before as *Dr. Smith* or *Professor Smith* in an e-mail, but by first name. However useful, these comments need to be tested against real examples and moreover, even if I had collected a large number of examples there is always idiosyncratic variation to consider. What I can say on the basis of the available evidence is that in all the examples of first-time exchanges which I have been able to collect (both oral and e-mail exchanges) first-

name address was used from the very beginning. To many cultural outsiders like me, this result does suggest that first-name address is customary in Australia.

The cultural salience of first-name address in Australian English can be appreciated considering the address practices of speakers of other varieties of English in first-time exchanges. Commenting on the behaviour of British English speakers in first-time encounters (as opposed to that of American English speakers), anthropologist Kate Fox (2004) has pointed out that the British are not likely to disclose any personal information about themselves to strangers, including their first name:

“You do not go up to someone at a party (or in any other social setting where conversation with strangers is permitted, such as at a pub counter) and say ‘Hello, I’m John Smith’, or even ‘Hello, I’m John’...The ‘brash American’ approach, ‘Hi, I’m Bill from Iowa’, particularly if accompanied by an outstretched hand and beaming smile, makes the English wince and cringe.”
(Fox, 2004:38-39)

There is also quantitative data in support of the idea that in British English first-name address is not preferred in conversations with strangers. In a study by Schneider (2011), the data illustrate that in the opening turns of small talks at parties British English speakers are less likely to say their first name spontaneously or ask their conversational partner’s first name than American or Irish speakers, who, by contrast, usually say their first name straightaway.

Analysing “early interactions” in different varieties of English, Goddard (2012) has pointed out that in Australian English there is an attitude

according to which early interactions do not seem very complicated or challenging. Newcomers to Australia often comment on the easy attitude Australians adopt with each other and on the willingness with which they speak with strangers (attitudes that can also be seen as, for example, naïve and/or overly familiar).
(1041)

By putting particular emphasis on the impressions that foreigners can have on first-name address in “early interactions”, Goddard highlights the implications of this linguistic practice

for cross-cultural interactions. His comment that Australians often sound to many foreigners “overly familiar” echoes D.H. Lawrence’s comment on the “aggressive familiarity” of Australians in the novel *Kangaroo* (1923:21). From a semantic point of view, these observations on the “overly familiar” character of “early interactions” in Australian English, which strikes foreigners so much, suggest that there is an attitude expressed when addressing someone by first name in Australian English which is not considered suitable for first-time interactions in other linguacultures. As with the interactional meaning of “titles”, the expressed attitude is a key semantic component of the interactional meaning of first-name address, and I will present my hypotheses in 12.4.

12.3.2 First-name address in university e-mails

The other domain in which I have found a largely consistent use of first-name address in Australian English is e-mail exchanges between university students and lecturers. The use of first-name address in the university context has been highlighted by Clyne et al. (2009), too, in relation to British English. The authors have written that “now the most common practice is for staff and students to exchange FN” (99). However, the authors point out that this is generally initiated by lecturers when they introduce themselves. In Australian universities, by contrast, students appear to go automatically for first-name address when interacting with lecturers. In this respect, Goddard (2012) has pointed out that

Australian English goes even further than American English in favouring first-name address; for example, at Australian universities many students spontaneously address their lecturers by their first names from the time of their first meeting.

(1041)

Similarly, Ronowicz and Yallop have stressed that most Australian university students address their lecturer by first name, “to the surprise and sometimes dismay of many visitors”

(1999:108). The e-mails which I collected at ANU, written by about one-hundred undergraduate students, are consistent with the observations of these scholars. Significantly, in 60% of the e-mails collected the lecturer is addressed by first name. Although the small number of e-mails collected (around two hundred) is not sufficient to make broad generalisations, the data clearly suggest a preference for first-name address in this context. The following are two of the e-mails collected, both written by Australian-born students:⁵⁵

(8) *Student 1, Australian-born*

Hi **George**,

I was wondering if there was any way possible that you could link me to some, or at least point me in the right direction for finding some more valid, reliable sources. I would really appreciate it.

Thanks

(9) *Student 2, Australian born*

Hi **Alice**,

I was going through some work on the semantic and syntactic formal criteria and feel that I should probably understand it a bit better. Are there any references or other resources you can pass on for me to use?

Thank you in advance, and have a nice day.

Regards

Noticeably, some international students, too, addressed the lecturer by first name:

(10) *Student 3, Italian, has been in Australia for 4 years*

Hi **Alice**,

I've been working on my essay. The topic is xxx.

Could you please point me to some introductory material?

Thanks

Although the figure for international students who addressed their lecturer by first name is much lower than that for Australian-born students who did the same (just below 10% of the collected e-mails), the presence of these e-mails suggests not only that these international

⁵⁵ E-mails collected at ANU in April 2014; the lecturer's original name has been changed.

students are aware that their Australian course-mates address their lecturer by first name, but also that they decided to adapt to local uses.

This is not to say that first-name address can be expected indistinctly from all undergraduate students and from all people working in an Australian academic environment. As I have shown in Chapter 9, e-mail exchanges between lecturers and administration staff, or between librarians and lecturers in the same university vary with respect to address and salutations. In this chapter, I discuss only the e-mails sent by students to lecturers because this is the only context for which I have comparable data from different speakers, Australian and Italian (section 11.6). In a small number of e-mails written by Australian-born students, the lecturer is addressed with a “professional title”:

(11) *Student 4, Australian-born*

Hi Professor,

I’m working on the second assignment at the moment and I would like to know if you could please suggest any sources I could look at in terms of respectable references.

Paul Johnson

Considering that all the e-mails which I have collected were written by first year undergraduate students, the small variation between first-name address and *Dr./Professor* plus surname emerged from the data could be due to some initial uncertainty as to how to address the lecturer properly. In previous stages of their education (primary to secondary school), Australian students typically address their teacher as *Mr./Ms.* plus surname. When they enter university, students are suddenly confronted with *Professor* and *Dr.* plus surname, and those who add these nouns to their address repertoire need to learn how to use them properly. Those students who have both “professional titles” and first names in their address repertoire can choose in which way to address their lecturer. The semantic question is what the attitude expressed to the lecturer in each case is.

12.4 The interactional meaning of first-name address in Australian English

In the play by David Williamson *At any cost?* (2011), Dr. Sharif addresses the husband of a patient differently in different exchanges; in some exchanges he calls him *Des*, in others he calls him *Mr. Watson*:

- (12) ALI: **Mr. Watson**, she's 82. Her disease is reversible but not without a lot of intervention, care and pain to her.
- (13) DES: Will this work?
ALI: We can only do our best, Des. I really hope so.
- (14) DES: She still wants to live, I know she does.
ALI: **Mr. Watson**, we should be considering – at least considering – the alternative of making her comfortable and stop active treatment.
- (15) KATIE: [*almost screaming*] Just take the ventilator out. For God's sake. I can't stand it anymore.
ALI: What do the rest of you feel?
DES: I want the treatment to go ahead!
ALI: **Des**, what's happening in there isn't pretty.

As with the first name/*Professor* variation emerged from the students' e-mails discussed in 12.3.2, the alternation between *Des* and *Mr. Watson* in this play suggests that Australian English speakers can choose in which way to address the same person. From a semantic point of view, *Des* and *Mr. Watson* express different attitudes. Noticeably, Ali calls Des *Mr. Watson* when speaking to him “as a doctor”, that is when talking about the patient's conditions and when proposing to stop the treatment in (12) and (14). By contrast, he addresses Des by first name when he gives some bad news to him and in showing care for his wife's conditions in (13) and (15). In calling Des by first name, Dr. Sharif speaks to him as a “friend”, except that they barely know each other.

Discussing the differences in expressed attitude between *Mrs. Jones* and *Jean* as terms of address, Ronowicz and Yallop write:

It would seem quite awkward to most Australians to address a neighbour or a workmate as 'Mrs. Jones' rather than as 'Jean' or as 'Mr. Papas' rather than as 'Emil'. [...] The use of title and surname ('Mrs. Malouf', 'Mr. Andrews', 'Dr. Chan') *suggests some marked distance between the people involved*.
(1999:108, emphasis added)

Their mentioning of "marked distance" as a characteristic of *Mrs. Jones* leads one to think that *Jean*, on the contrary, expresses an attitude of "closeness", so to speak. However, it is just not clear enough what this "marked distance" (and, by inference, "closeness") is supposed to mean. Should this "distance" be interpreted as difference in social position, in which case the expressed attitude would be "I don't think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'", or as the fact that the people involved profess to think about each other 'I don't know this someone well'? Or perhaps both? Using the simple, clear and cross-translatable terms of NSM, in Chapters 5 and 6 I have hypothesised that part of the attitude expressed when addressing someone with a title is "when I say this, I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'". Considering the examples presented in this chapter, my hypothesis is that the attitude expressed when addressing someone by first name in Australian English can be captured with a component 'I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well'.

It could be asked why this component is not simply phrased as "I think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'", and whether it should not be 'very well'. There are two reasons: (i) as the examples illustrate, in Australian English first names are used not only to speak to people whom one knows well or very well, but also to people whom one has just met; (ii) it seems implausible to hypothesise that one would express the attitude "I think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'" (or 'very well') to people whom one barely knows. A component 'I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well' is consistent with all the examples presented and therefore is optimal for the invariant meaning of first-name address. The posited component is also consistent with what Dr. Sharif says at

the beginning of the play, when he talks to the audience as if they were his medicine students. Noticeably, he expressly asks his students not to call him *Ali*, but to address him as *Professor*, because, he says, “he is not their friend”:

ALI: [*to the audience*] Okay, let’s get started. I’ve been told that you’re a particularly bright lot of students. [...] My name is Associate Professor Ali Sharif. I’m the Intensive Care Consultant at this hospital. **You can call me Professor, or Prof, or Professor Sharif, but not Ali. I’m not your friend.**
(5)

Considering again what Dr. Sharif says to Des in extracts (5) and (13), another semantic component can be posited for the interactional meaning of first-name address. In these extracts, Dr. Sharif could simply have said “ø, We need to talk about your wife” and “We can only do our best, ø”. The fact that he calls Des by first name is significant from a semantic point of view, because in the utterance “*Des*, we need to talk about your wife” there is something else being said. My hypothesis is that to address the hearer by first name is a way of signalling engagement with the addressee during the exchange, a way of saying ‘I want to say something to you now’. As discussed in Chapter 11, this component is not meant to imply any “exclusiveness” (something like ‘I want to say something to you, not to someone else’), because there could be other interlocutors in the same place at the same time and one could call them all by first name. In this case, the same message ‘I want to say something to you now’ would be conveyed to each of them.

Finally, in his opening speech at the 2014 G20 in Brisbane, the then Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott proposed to the other world leaders a number of “rules” for taking part in the exchange:⁵⁶

In the end, though, this is your retreat. It is open to any of you to raise any subject that you wish. The only *rules*, as far as I’m concerned are: if we can speak from our heart, rather than from a script, that would be good. If we could be reasonably concise, five minutes, please, at the most, that would be

⁵⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_epjAMuS8Wo.

good. And if we could use first names, so, that would be good as well, because whatever disagreements we might have I think it helps if there can at least be personal warmth amongst us.

The implications of such a proposal for the negotiation of address in cross-cultural interactions are discussed in the next Chapter. In this section, I will focus on another interesting point about the Prime Minister's speech: the reason he gave for inviting the other world leaders to address each other by first name, the idea that first names express "personal warmth".

By mentioning "personal warmth" as a remedy to possible disagreement, the then Prime Minister seemed to imply that by addressing each other by first name all the participants can express some "good feelings" towards each other or, in NSM terms, 'when I say this, I feel something good towards you'. In line with the ideas of "friendliness" and "familiarity" mentioned in much sociological literature as key characteristics of the Australian society (Hirst 2007; Ronowicz and Yallop 1999; Thompson 1994), it seems plausible to posit such a component for the interactional meaning of first-name address in Australian English. Bearing in mind that in Australia first-name address can also be used in exchanges between people who have just met, it could be legitimately asked if people who do not know each other well (or not at all) would express some "good feelings" towards one another. Indeed, it seems implausible that someone would want to convey the message 'I feel something good towards you' to a perfect stranger. The component which I posit, however, is not 'I feel something good towards you', but "*when I say this*, I feel something good towards you'. Phrased in this way, the posited component does not state that the good feelings expressed are the speaker's permanent good feelings for the addressee, but that these good feelings are something that the speaker expresses towards the interlocutor at the time of interaction.

Relatedly, the kind of good feelings expressed when addressing someone as *John* must be distinguished from the kind of good feelings expressed when addressing someone as *Mr. Brown*. Wierzbicka (2015) has suggested that in the interactional meaning of *Mr. Brown*, too,

there is an expression of good feelings from the speaker to the addressee. However, with *Mr. Brown* the speaker does not express their personal good feelings towards the addressee ('I feel something good towards you'), but the idea that *people* can feel something good towards the addressee. In order to highlight these differences, in the next section I present both the complete explication for the interactional meaning of first names and the explication for *Mr./Mrs.* plus surname.

12.4.1 The meaning of first-name address compared to the meaning of Mr. plus surname in Australian English

All the components which I have posited for first-name address are integrated in the following explication:

Des

I want to say something to you now
 when I say it, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well
 at the same time, when I say it I feel something good towards you

For the sake of comparison, I also present the explication for *Mr. Watson* proposed by Wierzbicka (2015):

Mr. Watson

I want to say something to you now
 when I say this, I think about you like this:
 "this someone is a man [m]
 I know this man's [m] surname [m]"
 at the same time, I think about you like this:
 "people can know some good things about this someone
 like they can know some good things about other men [m]"
 I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone well"

The difference between the two meanings lies not only in the kind of good feelings expressed, but especially in the expressed attitude. The component 'I think about you like I can

think about someone if I know this someone well’, posited for the interactional meaning of first-name address, clearly clashes with the component “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”, posited for the meaning of *Mr. Watson*. When it comes to analysing the address practises in a language, in this case Australian English, the role of the semanticist is to try to find certain ways of modelling the differences between the competing forms of address in a clear way, and the proposed explications for first-name address and *Mr.* plus surname are as close as I have been able to get to model these differences.

12.4.2 What about “egalitarianism”?

It could be asked why the proposed explication for first-name address does not also include a component capturing the idea of “egalitarianism”, which is typically associated with first-name address in the scholarly literature on Australian society (Goddard 2009, 2012; Hancock (ed.) 1989; Hirst 1988, 1988, 2007; Ronowicz and Yallop 1999; Thompson 1994). The idea that in Australia “people address each other as equals” (Thompson 1994), however, needs to be clarified. As pointed out by Hirst (2006), it is not that in Australia there are no social differences and that Australians are not aware of these social differences when engaging in conversation. The point is, Hirst suggests, that Australians *speak as if they were all “equal”*:

some people claim that Australian society is not egalitarian because there are wide differences of income, which may now be getting wider. This misses the point of Australian egalitarianism. It is the way Australians blot out differences when people meet face to face. They talk to each other as if they are equals and they will put down anyone claiming social superiority.

(301)

In Australian English, the idea “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’” is expressed, for example, by the word *mate* used reciprocally by men to address each other (Wierzbicka 1997). In relation to *mate*, Hirst (1998) wrote that “on the goldfields, also,

high-born and low worked with their hands. Here not only did deference break down; an equality in mode of address developed: everyone on the diggings was ‘mate’” (208). Another way of conveying this attitude is to say *Hi* to someone, as I have suggested in Chapter 3.⁵⁷ It could be suggested that the expression of the attitude “I think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’” is another reason why many Australians prefer to address people by first name rather than with a “title”. However, in Australia first names are also used in schools by teachers and headmasters to address students, whereas students address their teacher with a *Mr./Ms.* plus surname combination up until high-school level.⁵⁸ Arguably, a teacher addressing a student by first name is not professing to think about the student ‘this someone is someone like me’. For this reason, although this component might be part of the peripheral meaning expressed, it cannot be part of the invariant meaning, because it is not consistent with all the contexts in which first-name address is used in Australian society.

On the other hand, if one tries to pinpoint the cultural values underlying the use of first-name address in Australian English (next section), and if one compares the address practices of Australian English speakers with those of speakers of Italian in the same contexts (section 12.6), the idea ‘this someone is someone like me’ is definitely central to this address practice. A component capturing a cultural value, however, cannot be part of a semantic explication, but of cultural scripts, which are proposed in the next section.

12.5 Two cultural scripts encouraging the use of first-name address in Australian English

On the basis of the evidence presented so far, in this section I propose two cultural scripts for Australian English encouraging the use of first-name address in two specific contexts:

⁵⁷ See also Farese (2015).

⁵⁸ The native speakers whom I consulted commented that the switch from *Mr./Ms. Brown* to first names typically occurs at university level.

addressing people whom one does not know well and addressing one's superior. The choice of these contexts is not casual; I wanted to make a cross-cultural comparison between the address practices of Australian English and Italian speakers, and these two contexts are those in which the most striking differences have emerged and those for which I have consistent evidence for both languages. This section is specifically on Australian English cultural scripts; the comparison between Italian and Australian English will be made in 12.6.

12.5.1 Addressing people whom one does not know well

The first cultural script which can be proposed on the basis of the examples analysed concerns situations in which Australian English speakers address people whom they do not know well or not at all. Considering the extracts from David Williamson's plays, in which various characters meet for the first time, and the examples of first-time e-mail exchanges, my hypothesis is that there is a cultural assumption in Australia that it is good to speak to people whom one does not know well as one would speak to people whom one knows well. There are various ways of expressing this attitude in discourse, for example by using *Hi*, and by addressing people whom one has just met or people whom one does not know well by first name. The relation between this cultural assumption and the use of first names is captured in the following cultural script:

[A] *An Australian cultural script for addressing people whom one does not know well by first name*
[in Australia many people think like this:]
when I want to say something to someone,
 if I don't know this someone well,
it is often good if I say it like I can say something to someone if I know this someone well
because of this, it is good if I say this someone's name [m] to this someone at the same time

As with other scripts proposed before, 'often' specifies that this practice is encouraged in many cases, not in all; in professional relationships like doctor-patient, the interactants may not

use first names to address each other. Moreover, although the prime SAY is used in the phrasing, the script is not meant to apply exclusively to oral interactions, but also to e-mails. Evidently, the cultural assumption captured in script [A] is related to the component ‘I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well’ posited for the explication proposed in 12.4.4. The relation between script [A] and the semantic explication for *Des* is a clear example of how semantics and culture are related, and of how a semantic analysis is parallel to the analysis of the salient cultural values of a linguaculture. The expression of particular meanings, captured in semantic explications, is encouraged by particular cultural assumptions, portrayed in cultural scripts.

12.5.2 Addressing one’s superior

The second cultural script which I propose concerns situations in which first-name address is used in exchanges between people who have a construed top-down relationship, for example lecturers and students. All the Australian-born lecturers whom I consulted commented that they address students by first name, both orally and in e-mails. The e-mail exchanges discussed in 12.3.2 illustrate that Australian university students can address their lecturer by first name. Thus, it seems justified to maintain that in an Australian academic environment lecturer-student address can be reciprocal, and specifically reciprocal first name, at least in e-mails.

As far as I know, though, different lecturers have different views on being addressed by first name by a student in an e-mail. Some lecturers find it unacceptable, whereas some others seem to be quite keen on it, and when they are addressed differently they specifically ask students to address them by first name, as in the following case:

- (16) **Dear Gian Marco (and please call me *Alice*)**
 I think it would be best...

Thanks!
Alice

I will discuss this e-mail again in the next chapter from the point of view of cross-cultural communication. Here, I would like to emphasise the cultural assumption which I see reflected in this kind of request. In my view, by asking a student to address him/her by first name, a lecturer shows that they want to reduce the construed inequality of the relationship with the student. This is not to say that the lecturer expresses the attitude of thinking about the student ‘this someone is someone like me’; rather, I suggest that the lecturer is asking not to be considered as “someone above me” by the student.

A similar case is found in David Williamson’s play *The Department* (1975), in which several people address Robby, the head of department, by first name, and Robby himself addresses them in the same way. This suggests that Robby, the boss, is perfectly happy to be addressed by first name by his dependents:

- (17)
- a. JOHN: I think perhaps that’s not entirely rational, **Robby**. There’d be quite a few benefits if we specialised a bit more.
ROBBY (age: 40s): I’m sorry, **John**, but while I’m head of the department I’m not having anyone carve themselves out little empires.
 - b. PETER: I’ve been trying to suggest, **Robby**, that it might not have been anymore.
 - c. HANS: Don’t be a *bastard*, **Robby**. Let the lady stay.

In line with Hirst, who pointed out that Australians “talk to each other as if they are equals and they will put down anyone claiming social superiority” (2006:301), I suggest that in Australian working environments characterised by a construed hierarchical structure the superior’s request to be addressed by first name by his/her dependents signals a willingness to eliminate the differences in positions and relate to each other as “equals”, at least in the way of speaking. The cultural assumption seems to be that if one is seen as being someone above many

other people in an institution, it is good to show that one does not think of oneself as above these people, but as their “equal”. One way of showing this is in discourse, by letting these people know that they can address their superior by first name. This assumption is captured in the following cultural script:

[B] *An Australian cultural script for addressing one's superior by first name*

[in Australia many people think like this:]

if I am above some other people in a place of one kind

it is good if these people can know that I think like this about all of them:

“this someone is someone like me”

because of this, it is often good if these people can know that when they want to say something to me
they can say my name [m] to me

at the same time, it is often good if they know that I want this

Like script [A], script [B] applies to a specific scenario, which in this case is a situation of construed institutional inequality. It should be noted that the script states that it is good if the people holding the lower position can know not only that they *can* call their superior by first name, but also that this is something that the superior themselves *wants*. This idea is suggested by expressions like “*Please, call me Alice*”, as in the above e-mail. The suggestion is that by showing that one *wants* to be addressed by first name, one can also show that one shares the value of “*egalitarianism*” in discourse, which is so central in Australian culture.

12.6 The address behaviours of Australian and Italian speakers compared

The analysis of the address practices of Italian and Australian speakers in the same situations has highlighted some important differences between these two linguocultures. Evidence shows that in both languages first-time exchanges and writing an e-mail to a lecturer are complex linguistic events which require the selection of specific forms of address to express particular meanings. However, different forms of address are chosen and different meanings are

conveyed in the two languages, because the language use of Australian and Italian speakers in these situations is guided by different cultural scripts.

At the generic cultural level, the difference lies in the expressed attitude. I have put forward the hypothesis that when interacting with someone whom they do not know well, Australian speakers are encouraged to speak to this person as they would speak to someone whom they know well, and to profess to think about this person ‘this someone is someone like me’. By contrast, I have suggested that Italian speakers interacting with people whom they do not know well are encouraged to express the attitudes “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’” and “I don’t think about you like this: ‘this someone is someone like me’”.

At the linguistic level, there are four major differences between Australian English and Italian. The first is that Australian speakers tend to prefer first-name address, whereas Italian speakers tend to prefer “titles”. In Italy, lecturers are only addressed as *Professore/Professoressa* and never by first name (Formentelli and Hajek 2015). Moreover, Italian students normally add the lecturer’s surname to *Professore/Professoressa* at the beginning of the e-mail. The second is that the use of a “title” in Italian requires the selection of a semantically compatible pronominal address form (LEI) to express the attitude “I don’t think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”. By contrast, in English there is only one allocutive pronoun, YOU, to address the interlocutor, and *per se* YOU does not convey any semantic information about how the speaker purports to relate to the interlocutor in the exchange.

The two other differences concern e-mail writing. The third difference is that in Australian English it is possible to omit the opening salutation (e.g. *Dear* or *Hi*), whereas in Italian not only is this not possible, but a specific opening salutation which is semantically compatible with the address form and the “title” chosen has to be used (*Gentile* or *Egregio*). The fourth difference is that Australian students can omit their surname when signing off an e-mail (unless

they think that the lecturer might not recognise them), whereas Italian students normally sign off with their first name and surname followed by their student number.

The comparison between Italian and Australian cultural scripts related to address practices shows how different the two linguocultures are in this respect. As one might expect, different cultural scripts can create problems in intercultural interactions and cause what Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) have called a *critical incident*, “an intercultural interaction or repeated experience which one or all parties experienced as ineffective and/or inappropriate and/or unsatisfying” (221). In the concluding chapter, I will discuss three specific cases of intercultural interactions in which Australian and more generally Anglo cultural scripts related to address practices clashed with the address practices of speakers with different linguacultural backgrounds.

Chapter 13. Address in intercultural communication

13.1 Address in intercultural interactions

Clyne (2009) pointed out that “the interaction of languages and cultures presents both opportunities and challenges for address” (395). He suggested that address can become problematic in intercultural interactions because the linguistic and cultural factors which influence the address practices of different speakers can be substantially different (401). He mentioned, among several factors, the different address preferences of individual speakers and the different contextual factors influencing the choice of specific forms of address. In these cases, he wrote, it is likely that speakers with considerably different address practices may experience cases of miscommunication (ibidem). Clyne suggested that it is possible to prevent miscommunication if address is negotiated by the intercultural interactants. In relation to this, it will be useful to mention here the notion of “givers” and “receivers” proposed by Clyne et al. (2009:78), which can apply to both intralinguistic and cross-cultural communication. Receivers choose to adapt to the address practices of the interlocutor, whereas givers impose their own address behaviour, which may differ considerably from that of the addressee. Unfortunately, negotiating address is not always possible or not always done, as pointed out by Wierzbicka (1992):

Interactional meanings are not always a matter of free choice. For example, if a woman has been introduced to us as Katie, and if she calls herself Katie and expects us to call her like that, we may feel obliged to use that form in speaking both to her and about her, even if we felt that a different interactional meaning (for example, that encoded in the full name) would suit this particular relationship better.

(232)

I will discuss in separate subsections three cases of intercultural interactions in which address could not be negotiated and Anglo address practices prevailed.

13.2 The “please, call me Alice” request from a lecturer to an international student

The tendency to address newly acquainted people by first name which many Australians have is complemented by the expectation that the interlocutor will introduce themselves by first name, too. Cultural outsiders who are not aware of this expectation can experience miscommunication in interactions with Australians. This is exactly what I experienced in a series of e-mail exchanges with an Australian-born lecturer at the ANU. From the beginning, I could not choose how to address my interlocutor and had to adapt my address practices to local uses. In the first e-mail which I sent, I had addressed the lecturer with a *Professor* plus surname combination:⁵⁹

(1) **Dear Professor Brown,**

I am writing because I would like to ask you...

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Regards

Gian Marco Farese

The lecturer, on their part, replied addressing me by first name and signed off by first name only. More importantly, the lecturer wrote “*Please call me Alice*”:

(2) **Dear Gian Marco (and please call me Alice)**

I think it would be best...

Thanks!

Alice

Discussing the interactional meaning of first-name address in Australian English, I have hypothesised that this includes the expression of the attitude ‘I think about you like I can think

⁵⁹ The e-mail exchange occurred in April 2014. The lecturer’s name has been changed.

about someone if I know this someone well’. In this case, the attitude is not expressed by student, but the student *is being asked* to think about the lecturer as someone whom the student knows well. At the same time, the student *is being asked* not to think about the lecturer ‘this someone is someone above me’. The semantic content of the “*Please, call me Alice*” request can be explicated in NSM terms as follows:

Please, call me Alice

I want you to think about me like you can think about many people if you know these people well
I don't want you to think about me like this: “this someone is someone above me”

Differently from the lecturer-student relationship in Australia, which tends to be based on an idea of lecturers as people not above students, the reason why Italian students address their lecturer as *Professore/Professoressa* plus surname is precisely that they need to mark in discourse their construed position of inferiority to lecturers. The two kinds of relationships could not be more different. Despite being “mitigated” by *please*, the tone of “*Please, call me Alice*” can be perceived as relatively strong by an international student, who is being explicitly asked to change their address practices and adapt to the Australian code of social relationships, which values the expression of the idea ‘this someone is someone like me’ in discourse.

In my next e-mail, I had to find a compromise between the attitude which I would express to a lecturer in Italy and the attitudes encouraged towards lecturers in Australia. As a result, in the next e-mail I shifted from *Dear Professor* plus surname to *Dear Alice*, not only to adapt to Australian uses, but also because *Alice* is seen, from the perspective of an Italian student, ‘someone above me’ to whom I cannot say “I don’t want to call you by first name”:

(3) Dear Alice,

thank you very much for your reply...

I look forward to hearing from you about when to do this.

Best wishes

Gian Marco

At the same time, I used a different closing salutation (*Best wishes*) and did not add my surname in the signature to signal that I wished to relate to the lecturer as I do with people whom I know well, but not very well. The point is that by shifting from *Professor* plus surname to simply *Alice* I violated no less than four Italian cultural scripts, those presented in Chapter 11.

The same clash between different address practices and the impossibility to negotiate address is often experienced by many other international students in Australia, as well as by many academics with non-Anglo backgrounds meeting at international conferences. As pointed out by Archer et al. (2013),

many academics have become accustomed to using first names with other academics at conferences held in English, to whom they would in their own language use the V-form and a title with last name. [...] Knowing how to address others is, therefore, a potential source of considerable difficulty in cross-cultural encounters. The main problem is that if there is any violation of a norm in form of address [...] will not necessarily be perceived as a mistake, but as the expression of an attitude, possibly negative, towards the hearer. This pragmatic interpretation underlies many misunderstandings and even negative emotional stereotypes.”

(113)

On the same point, Clyne wrote that “the negotiation of address modes is crucial for intercultural dialogue. [...] It is important for a person to know the social significance of their own and their interlocutor’s address mode” (407). Clyne has suggested that the best way of negotiating address is little by little, signalling one’s preference in different exchanges and seeking agreement on the other part. However, he also admitted that “how quickly this proceeds will be conditioned by the address patterns of L1, the disposition of the individual and the obstinacy of the initiator” (408). Moreover, he stressed that “cultural values may induce a person to refrain from accommodating to the interlocutor’s address pattern”. (ibidem)

13.3 The “call me Andy” request in a cross-cultural encounter

The same kind of request appears in a different context, an exchange between two businessmen, an American and a Chinese who meet on a plane from Tokyo to Hong Kong, reported in Scollon and Scollon (2001):

- (4) MR. RICHARDSON: By the way, I’m Andrew Richardson. My friends call me Andy. This is my business card.
MR. CHU: I’m David Chu. Pleased to meet you, **Mr. Richardson**. This is my card.
MR. RICHARDSON: **No, no. Call me Andy**. I think we’ll be doing a lot of business together.
MR. CHU: Yes, I hope so.
MR. RICHARDSON (reading Mr. Chu’s card): “Chu, Hon-fai”. **Hon-fai**, I’ll give you a call tomorrow as soon as I get settled at my hotel.
MR. CHU (**smiling**): Yes, I’ll expect your call.

(Scollon and Scollon 2001:135-136)

The American introduces himself as Andrew Richardson, and then says straightaway that he would like to be called *Andy*, because this is what his friends call him. By saying this, he shows that he wishes to establish with Mr. Chu the same kind of relationship that he has with his friends. Mr. Chu, on his part, does introduce himself saying both his first name and his surname, but addresses his interlocutor as *Mr. Richardson*. By doing this, he expressed the attitude “I don’t think about you like this ‘I know this someone well’”. At this point, Mr. Richardson insists that Mr. Chu should call him *Andy* because he thinks “they will do a lot of business together” and therefore their relationship is going to be very close. To show this, in his next turn Mr. Richardson calls Mr. Chu by first name, *Hon-fai*. Being addressed by first name, Mr. Chu smiles because it is very unusual and inappropriate in business encounters in China to use first-name address. Mr. Chu’s smile is misinterpreted by Mr. Richardson as a signal of a willingness to establish a closer relationship. As Scollon and Scollon observe,

When these two man separate, they leave each other with very different impressions of the situation. Mr. Richardson is very pleased to have made the acquaintance of Mr. Chu and feels they have gotten off to a very good start.

[...] In contrast, Mr. Chu feels quite uncomfortable with Mr. Richardson. He feels it will be difficult to work with him, and that Mr. Richardson might be rather insensitive to cultural differences.

(2001:136)

The reason why, as the authors comment, Mr. Chu felt quite uncomfortable and thought that Mr. Richardson was insensitive to cultural differences is precisely that by asking Mr. Chu to call him *Andy* Mr. Richardson imposed his address practices to Mr. Chu. Evidently, in this case, too, the Anglo-American preference for first-name address clashed with the expectations and practices of another linguoculture, resulting in a critical incident.

13.4 Address in an international context

The question of different address practices in intercultural interactions becomes even more problematic in international contexts like conferences and political meetings attended by diplomats from all over the world. It is often believed that in such situations the English language functions as a culturally-neutral medium of communication. However, like all other languages English is not culturally free, but comes with its own historical and cultural heritage which affects every aspect of the language, including address (Wierzbicka 2006, 2014). As a result, it is often the case that the participants to an international meeting end up following almost automatically the Anglo norms of interaction, or worse that these norms are explicitly imposed by Anglo speakers on the other participants.

This was precisely the case at the 2014 G20 in Brisbane, when the then Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott proposed to the other world leaders that everyone should address each other by first name (Chapter 11). Leaving aside that the fact that he talked in terms of “rules” may already sound strong in tone, the point to stress for the purposes of the present discussion is that by asking them to use first-name address the Prime Minister imposed, no doubt without

realising it, the Australian address practices. As previously mentioned, intercultural interactions can be successful if the interactants are free to negotiate their address behaviour. In general, speakers with intercultural awareness and competence have the necessary skills for negotiating address and avoid cases of miscommunication. As Braun (1988) pointed out,

In many cases speakers tolerate each other's "deviant" behaviour [...] a certain degree of openness is necessary especially in languages with a strong variation [...] Address competence consists in accepting behaviour different from one's own and interpret it in terms of speaker's characteristics rather than evaluating it according to one's standards.

(30-31)

Braun stresses that in intercultural interactions it is important to be "tolerant" and accept that the interlocutor may have different address practices, in which case one should not try to impose one's own.

13.5 Concluding remarks

In this study I have analysed address practices in English and in Italian from both a semantic and a cultural point of view. The aim was to highlight the role of culture in language use and emphasise the relationship between meaning and culture. Address practices represent a glaring example of how culture encourages the expression of certain meanings in discourse and of how these meanings become ritualized in specific contexts.

The study has promoted an idea of address as a social phenomenon apart from a purely linguistic one; address has tangible effects on intercultural communication, and on everyday life in the case of immigrants, when the cultural values which guide address practices in different languages are substantially different to the extent that they clash. In more than one case, we have seen that Italian culture and Anglo cultures (particularly Australian English) encourage the expression of meanings which are not just different, but opposite. In cases like

these, it is important to consider well the boundaries of (in)communicability and the necessities of a successful interaction before establishing the extent to which speakers have to give up their own cultural scripts and adapt to the scripts of their interlocutors. Negotiation and an attitude of availability towards linguacultural differences are, as we have seen, crucial, especially in large multicultural countries like Australia and the US.

Cultural scripts can help understand which linguistic behaviours are considered as appropriate in a society, and can help pinpoint the differences between different linguacultures clearly. The explications and the scripts presented in this study are not just the products of a linguistic analysis, but are meant to have a concrete application and be used as pedagogical tools for an effective cross-cultural training. This, to my mind, is the strength of NSM: the focus on cross-translatability opens the analyst's mind and widens the analytical perspective to include ways of thinking different from one's own.

APPENDIX A

• Chapter 3

- (6) 13th CALLER: Mobile, Alabama. **Hi, professor**. Two questions. One, the best nude beaches in the Mobile-Pensacola area, and where can we get an updated version of the Lee Baksindahl sp? guide to world nude beaches? We have an '82-'83 version
(COCA corpus, SPOK: CNN_King)

- (7) JOHN-1Caller2: **Hi, Professor**. It's a real honor to talk to you. Dr-LIGHTMAN: Thank you.
(COCA corpus, SPOK: NPR_Science)

- (14) Deirdre, appearing **startled**, looked down at her son and said **'Hi'**.
(Wordbanks, brbooks)

- (15) He said **'Hi' slightly nervously** to his father, who grunted acknowledgment from behind the Tollemarche Advent.
(COCA, fiction)

- (16) **"Hi, Bill. Sorry** to ruin your weekend like this," I say into the phone.
(COCA fiction)

• Chapter 4

- (7) *Rientri a casa, quella sera, in un alloggio rimesso a nuovo da un'altra. Sono passati dieci anni. **Ciao cara, ciao tesoro**. Un aperitivo tranquillo. Una cenetta quieta.*

I get back home, that evening, in a place renovated by another woman. Ten years have passed. **Ciao dear, ciao honey**. A quiet small aperitif and dinner.
(CORIS/CODIS, narrative)

- (8) (a) *Ciao compagno Abbado* (La Repubblica 24/01/2014)
(b) *Ciao compagna...* (Liberazione, 29/03/2013)

- (9) *Poco dopo arrivarono i bambini e un'allegria confusione l'avvolse. – **Ciao Maestra!***
*A little later the children came and a joyful confusion surrounded her. – **Ciao Maestra!***
(Virginia Mandolini, *La maschera nera*, 2013:421)

• Chapter 6

- (31) *Lo sapevo che era stato lei! - **mi disse il Preside** - come fu lei a metter la pece sotto i calzonni dello stesso Betti...*

I knew it was you (LEI)! – **the Headmaster said to me** – like it was you (LEI) who put the pitch under Betti's trousers...

(Vamba, *Il giornalino di Gian Burrasca*, 1912)

- (32) *Dal mio osservatorio vidi il Direttore e la Direttrice traversare la sala del venerato Pierpaolo, lentamente silenziosamente, e andarsene nella loro camera dopo aver rivolto verso il ritratto una timida occhiata, come per dire: - A domani sera, e che Dio ce la mandi buona!*

From my observatory **I saw the Director and the Direttrice** walk across the hall of the venerated Pierpaolo, slowly and quietly, and go to their bedroom after taking a timid glance at the portrait, as if to say: - See you tomorrow evening, and may God help us!

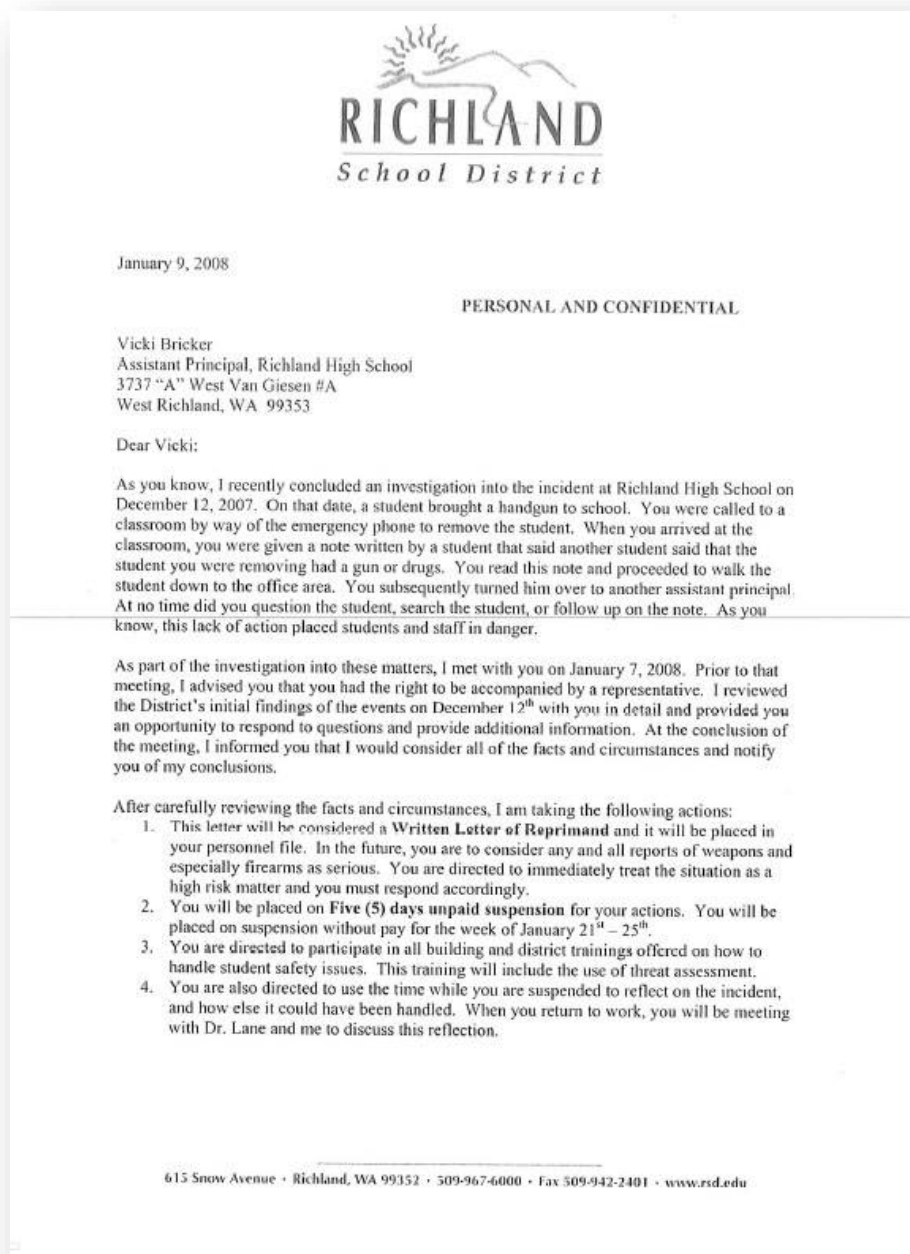
—

(Vamba, *Il giornalino di Gian Burrasca*, 1912, my translation)

- Chapter 7

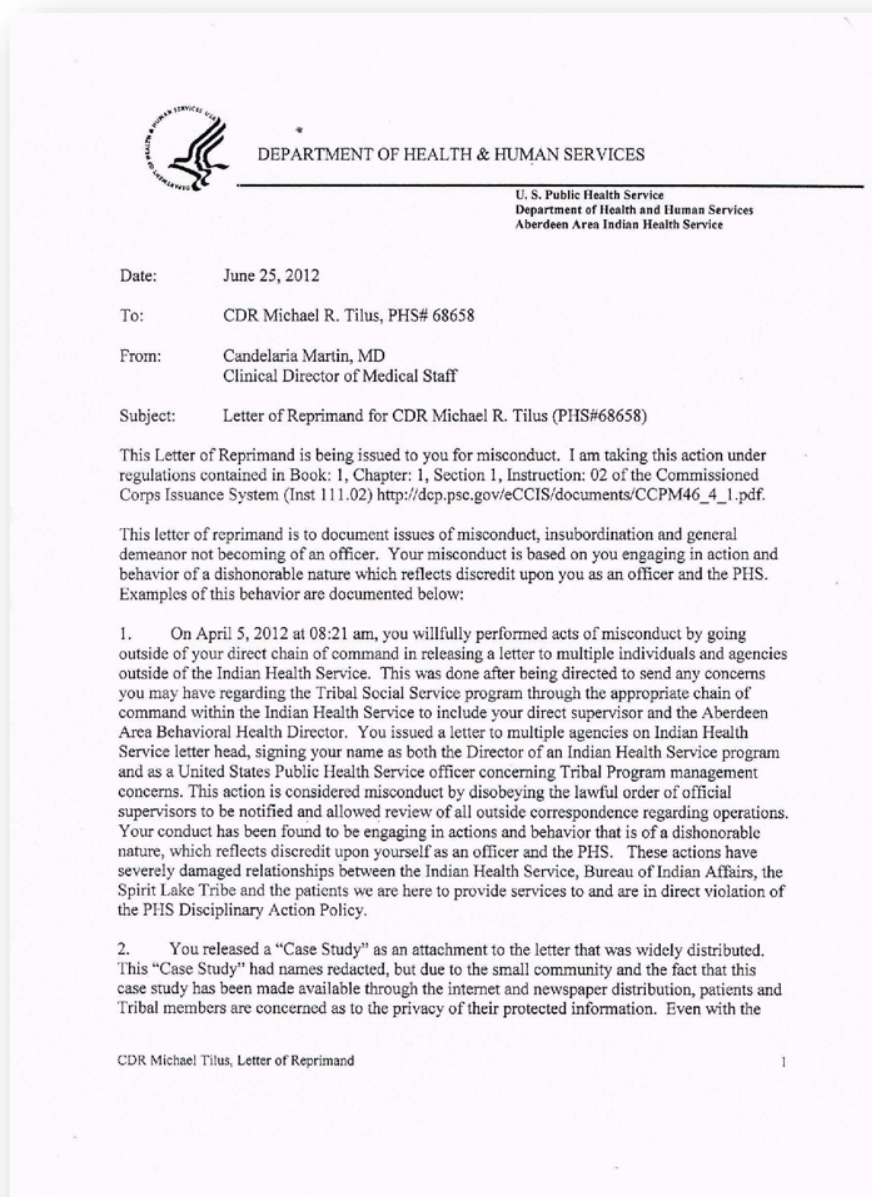
(23) Picture 1. Letter of reprimand with *Dear*.

(source: http://kndu.images.worldnow.com/images/7602962_BG1.jpg)



(24) Picture 2. Letter of reprimand without *Dear*.

(source: <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/404842/pages/letter-of-reprimand-p1-normal.gif>)



- Chapter 8

(4) *Buongiorno a te, zietta cara.*

Good morning to you, **cara auntie**.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

(5) *Ma l'altro non si mosse dal suo beato ottimismo, e aggiunse lealmente che non voleva sciupare quei preziosi sì nemmeno per un **caro figliolo** come Riccardo.*

But the other did not abandon his blissed optimism, and faithfully added that he did not want to waste those precious ‘yes’, not even for a **caro little boy** like Riccardo.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

- (6) *Mi sorrise generoso, come ad un **caro compagno** mattacchione sempre pronto alla battuta.*

He smiled to me kindly, as if to a **caro fellow joker** always ready to make jokes.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

- (16) ***Cara lettrice**, la sua domanda è di grande attualità...*

Cara reader, your (LEI) question is very relevant to current topics...

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, ephemera, letters)

- (17) ***Caro signore**, noi non trattiamo la gente a pugni e calci! Lo **scriva** chiaro sul suo giornale: noi rispettiamo i cittadini.*

Caro signore, we do not treat people with punches and kicks! **Write (LEI form)** this clearly in your journal: we respect citizens.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, ephemera, letters)

- (19) ***Egregi colleghi, gentili colleghe**,*

[...]presentiamo il rendiconto delle attività dei primi due anni e mezzo del lavoro che ha caratterizzato il nostro Consiglio Provinciale.

[...]

Il Prersidente del Consiglio

(name and surname)

Egregi colleagues, gentili colleagues,

[...] we present a report of the activities of the first two and a half years of work made by our Provincial Council.

[...]

The Council President

<http://www.provincia.torino.gov.it/organi/consiglio/resoconto/dwd/relazione.pdf>

- (20) ***Cari Colleghi**,*

L'emozione con cui vi scriviamo questa lettera è quella di chi negli ultimi quattro anni e mezzo ha lavorato per coltivare un grande sogno di integrazione industriale e culturale e oggi lo vede realizzato. [...] Vi garantiamo anche l'impegno a offrirvi un futuro sicuro e stimolante, in un ambiente dove lo scambio di esperienze e culture sarà fonte di crescita professionale e personale.

A tutti voi, e alle vostre famiglie, i più calorosi auguri per un 2014 all'altezza delle vostre aspettative e degli ottimi auspici con cui si apre

John Elkann

Chairman di Fiat S.p.A.

Sergio Marchionne

Chairman & CEO di Chrysler Group LLC

Cari colleagues,

The emotion we feel in writing this letter is that of the people who worked over the past four years to fulfil a great dream of industrial and cultural integration and who see it come true today. [...] We also guarantee to you that we are committed to offering you a safe and stimulating future, in an environment where the exchange of culture and experiences will be a source of personal and professional growth.

To all of you, and to your families, our warmest wishes for a 2014 that, we hope, will live up to your expectations and to the very good prospects with which the new year begins

(http://www.ilsole24ore.com/pdf2010/Editrice/ILSOLE24ORE/ILSOLE24ORE/Online/_Oggetti_Correlati/Documenti/Notizie/2014/01/comunicato-fiat.pdf)

- (22) **Gentile signora,**
ora che le ho parlato dei miei studi, sento il bisogno di ringraziarla per avermi offerto la possibilità di andare a scuola.

Gentile signora,
having told **you (LEI)** about my studies, I feel the need to thank **you (LEI)** for having offered me the possibility of going to school.

(CORIS-CODIS, StampaPeriodici)

- (23) **Gentile signor Russo,**
ho ricevuto la sua lettera e mi congratulo per l'attività che svolge.

Gentile signor Russo,
I have received **your (LEI)** letter and I congratulate **you (LEI)** on the activity which you perform.

(CORIS-CODIS, MON2001_04)

- (24) **Gentile Maria,**
la ringrazio per aver accettato di incontrarci nel Salotto virtuale di CriticaLetteraria per fare una chiacchierata sul suo romanzo...

Gentile Maria,
thank **you (LEI)** for accepting to meet us in the virtual Living Room of CriticaLetteraria to chat about **your (LEI)** novel...

- (25) **Gentile Direttore,** *ringrazio per il rilievo dato al problema albanese sul Suo giornale anche nell'intervista pubblicata il 18 aprile.*

Gentile Direttore, thanks for the emphasis given to the Albanian issue in **Your (LEI)** newspaper, also in the interview published on April 18th.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, ephemera)

- (30) **Egregio presidente Ciampi,**
siamo studenti e studentesse delle scuole secondarie superiori e siamo preoccupati per la situazione della scuola pubblica italiana che peggiora ogni anno di più.

Egregio Presidente Ciampi,
we are male and female secondary school students and we are worried about the conditions of Italian public schools, which worsen year after year.

(CORIS-CODIS, MON2001_04)

- **Chapter 9**

(5) a. 30/1/2015

Dear John,
I know you didn't copy [lecturer's first name] in. [...]
I'd be interested in your take on this!

Best
(first name)

b. 30/1/2015

Hi all,
I think [lecturer's first name] raises a few very good points. ...

Best,
(first name)

(8) 30/04/2015

Hi Gian Marco,
I've been in touch with our June speaker [...]

All the best,
(first name)

(9) 21/7/2015

Many thanks for this Gian Marco – will circulate to the group!

All the best,
(first name)

(10) Dear All

Greetings from Rwanda. How are things in London Office? [...]
Please pass on our thanks to everyone at home for their support.

All the best
(first name and surname)

(Wordbanks, brephem)

(19) 15th November 1985

Dear Mr Baker,
Thank you for your letter dated 31st October. I, in fact, made Davy in 1956 and hoped that, by now, it might have disappeared. I believe it did well in Afghanistan where the customers were allowed to shoot at the screen! I thoroughly enjoyed Bournemouth. I hope you did too.

My **warmest wishes** to you.
Sir Harry Secombe

(Wordbanks, brephem)

(23) Dear Marcel and Lesley,

Anna is very much on the mend – circa 95%, she says. As I haven't been above that in a long time, that sounds like a green light to me.
Would you be free either this Thursday 18th or the 25th?

Regards,
John and Anna

- (24) Hi John, Anna,
I seem to recall that you were friends with xxx and his family. As you may have heard, he passed away last week. Some words on xxx from xxx at the ANU are below the announcement below.

Regards,
Philip

- (31) Letter 11 April 2002

Sir,

How sad it is to see politicians unable to accept that it is not the method of voting that is the cause of low turnout. [...]

Yours sincerely,
(first name and surname)

(Collins Wordbanks, times)

- (35) "Cane farmers are angry and frustrated because they **sincerely believe** they were betrayed," he said.

(Collins Wordbanks, brbooks)

- (36) "Are you sure it's on this street?" Rae asked. She was **sincerely hoping** Anthony would say no.

(Collins Wordbanks, usbooks)

• Chapter 10

- (12) *Con quella sua **aria distinta**, i capelli tirati all'indietro lucidi lucidi, la Chesterfield tra le dita e tutta la sua istruzione, doveva saperla lunga.*

With all that “**distinguished**” **look** of his/hers, his/her very glossy hair tied behind, a Chesterfield in his/her fingers and all his/her education, he/she must know a lot.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

- (16) *Aveva con le persone che lavoravano sotto di lui dei **rapporti cordiali**, se non **amichevoli**. [...] E lui voleva che nei cantieri che dirigeva si lavorasse nella maggiore **armonia** possibile.*

With his dependents he had **cordiali, if not amichevoli relationships**. [...] And he wished that in the yard he supervised people could work in as much **harmony** as possible.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

- (17) *Ringrazio innanzitutto Monsignor Foscolos, Arcivescovo dei cattolici di Atene e Presidente della Conferenza Episcopale di Grecia, per la sua accoglienza e per le sue **cordiali parole**.*

First of all, I wish to thank Monsignor Foscolos, Archbishop of the Catholics of Athens and President of the Greek Episcopal Conference for his welcome and his **cordiali words**.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

(18) *Parlava, soavemente, e aveva **parole gentili** verso tutti.*

He/she spoke, sweetly, and had **gentili words** for everyone.

(CORIS-CODIS, narrative)

(26) *Lui è sempre stato **affettuoso con me** ma tra di noi non è mai successo nulla.*

He has always been **affettuoso with me** but nothing has ever happened between us.

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

(27) *Le risposte agli interrogativi o alle confidenze sono sintetiche e chiare, esprimono il pensiero dello scrittore sui mariti che tradiscono le mogli, sui padri che non vogliono perdere il **legame affettuoso con le figlie** [...]*

The answers to the questions or the secrets are synthetic and clear, they reflect the author's thoughts about husbands who betray their wives, fathers who do not want to lose **their affettuoso bond with their daughters** [...]

(CORIS-CODIS corpus, narrative)

• Chapter 11

(14)

ITALIANO

Salve

Salve...sì

Disturbo?

No, no, no...però se cerca Guido non c'è, lo trova stasera.

No, no...non cercavo Guido io cercavo proprio **Lei**.

Me? E di che cosa potremmo parlare io e **Lei**?

Di Silvia...

Ah, di Silvia...

Eh sì, ecco...se per **Lei** non è un problema, io vorrei **chiederle** un consiglio...

Un consiglio...

Sì. Ecco il fatto è questo. Io vorrei farle un regalo, cioè farle a **lei Silvia** (points back) non a **Lei Lei** (indicates the interlocutor)

Eh no...ecco. **Ma forse è il caso che ci si dia del tu, no? Visti i rapporti...**

Per me...

ENGLISH

Hello

Hello...yes

May I come in?

Yes, please...but if **you (LEI)** are looking for Guido he's not in, **you (LEI)** can find him tonight.

No, no...I wasn't looking for Guido, I was just looking for **you (LEI)**.

Me? What could **you (LEI)** and I ever talk about?

About Silvia...

Ah, about Silvia...

Yeah, well...if it is not a problem for **you (LEI)**, I'd like to ask for **your (LEI)** advice...

Advice...

Yes. Well the fact is that I'd like to buy her a present, well buy **her Silvia** (points back) not **you (LEI) you (LEI)** (indicates the interlocutor). Eh no, well...**But maybe it might be the case that we switch to TU, okay? Given our relationship...**

we switch to TU, okay? Given our relationship...

Okay...

Ecco io vorrei farle un bel regalo, no? Qualche cosa che le piaccia davvero, capisci?

Sì, perfettamente. Quello che non capisco è cosa posso entrarci io, ecco.

Lei? Cioè..tu? Tu sei la persona più adatta per darmi un consiglio, no? Sei stato suo marito per tanto tempo. Hai anni di consuetudine con lei, sei...come dire...conosci sicuramente meglio di me i suoi gusti. E poi, se devo essere sincero, fare regali a una donna non è proprio la mia specialità...

Immagino...

Eh...anzi. Questa è la prima volta che mi capita. Purtroppo, vedi...io credo di non poterti aiutare.

Ah no? E perché?

Perché le persone cambiano, caro Giacomo, e a un certo punto ti rendi conto che...alle persone, ecco, cominciano a piacere delle cose che non avresti mai immaginato...

Addirittura...

Sì. È vero, io conosco molto bene Silvia, però...su tante cose non siamo più in sintonia per cui rischierei senz'altro di darti un consiglio sbagliato.

Eh allora niente, capico, niente...Beh Io ci ho provato...eh...niente, non Le faccio perdere altro tempo. La ringrazio e La saluto, cioè, non ti faccio eh...ti ringrazio e ti saluto...(they shake hands).

Well I'd like to buy her a nice present, that is, something she'd really like, **you (TU) see?**

Yes, perfectly. What I don't understand is what is my part in this.

You (LEI) Sorry...you (TU)? You (TU) are the perfect person to advise me, aren't you? You (TU) were her husband for a long time. You have years of experience with her, you (TU) are...how can I put it...you (TU) definitely know her tastes better than I do. And then, to be honest, buying presents for women is not really my speciality...

I can imagine...

Actually, this is the first time I've had to do it...

Unfortunately, **you (TU) see...**I don't think I can help **you (TU)...**

No? Why?

Because people change, my dear Giacomo, and at a certain point you realize that...people, how to say, begin to like things that you would never have imagined...

Wow...

Yeah. It's true, I know Silvia very well, but...about many things we're not on the same wave length anymore therefore no doubt I would risk giving **you (TU)** some wrong advice.

Right, if so, I understand, right...Well, I tried...eh...nothing, I'm not going to make **you (LEI)** lose any more time. Thank **you (LEI)** and nice talking to **you (LEI)**, that is, I won't make **you (TU)** eh... thank **you (TU)** and nice talking to **you (TU)...**(they shake hands).

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ve_sJ2s2q-M

- (16) a. «**Lei** non segue il corteo fino al cimitero?»
«Will you (LEI) not follow the procession to the cemetery?»
- b. «**Aspetti. Lei** mi sta dicendo che questo pazzo [...] ha perso la testa e l'ha ammazzata?»
«**Wait (LEI form)**. Are you (LEI) telling me that this crazy man lost his head and killed her?»
- c. «Sono un commissario, Montalbano sono.»
L'omo non si cataminò, non parlò.
«**Voi** siete Antonio Firetto?»
Il «**voi**» gli era venuto spontaneo e con quel particolare tono che indicava considerazione, se non rispetto.
«Sì.»
«Da quanto tempo non vedevate Giacomo?»
«Da cinqu'anni. **Vossia** mi cridi?»
«**Vi** credo.»

«I'm an inspector, my name is Montalbano.»
 The man didn't move, nor spoke.
 «Are **you (VOI)** Antonio Firetto?»
 The “**VOI**” had come spontaneously to him, with that particular tone which indicated esteem, if not respect.
 «Yes.»
 «How long had **you (VOI) not seen** Giacomo?»
 «For five years. Do **you (VOI)** believe me?»
 «I believe **you (VOI)**.»

- d. *«Non lo so, ma fate come vi dico. **Tu**, Fazio, porta a Vigàta la mia macchina.»*

I don't know but you guys do as I tell you. And **you (TU)**, Fazio, take my car to Vigata.

(Andrea Camilleri, *Gli arancini di Montalbano*, 1999, my translation)

- (17) “*Chi **vi** ha portato da me, compar Geppetto?*”
 “*Le gambe!...Sappiate, maestr'Antonio, che son venuto da **voi** per chiedervi un favore.*”
 “*Eccomi qua, pronto a servirvi,*” - replicò il falegname rizzandosi sui ginocchi. [...]
 Finito il combattimento, maestr'Antonio si trovò fra le mani la parrucca gialla di Geppetto, e Geppetto si accorse di avere in bocca la parrucca brizzolata del falegname.
 “*Rendimi la mia parrucca!*” – gridò maestr'Antonio.
 “*E **tu** rendimi la mia, e rifacciamo la pace.*”
 I due vecchietti, dopo aver ripreso ognuno di loro la propria parrucca, si strinsero la mano e giurarono di rimanere buoni amici per tutta la vita.
 “*Dunque, compar Geppetto,*” disse il falegname in segno di pace fatta,
 “*qual è il piacere che **volete** da me?*”
 Vorrei un po' di legno per fabbricare il mio burattino. Me lo **date**?

“What has brought you (**VOI**) to me, neighbour Geppetto?”
 “My legs. But to say the truth, Master Antonio, I am come to ask a favour of you (**VOI**).”
 “Here I am, ready to serve you (**VOI**),” replied the carpenter, getting onto his knees. [...]
 When the fight was over Master Antonio was in possession of Geppetto's yellow wig, and Geppetto discovered that the grey wig belonging to the carpenter had remained between his teeth.
 “Give (**TU**) me back my teeth,” screamed Master Antonio.
 “An you (**TU**), return me mine, and let us make friends.”
 The two old men, having each recovered his own wig, shook hands, and swore that they would remain friends to the end of their lives.
 “Well then, neighbour Geppetto,” said the carpenter, to prove that peace was made, “what is the favour that you (**VOI**) wish of me?”
 “I want a little wood to make my puppet; will you (**VOI**) give me some?”

- (18) (Pinocchio to the Fire-Eater)
“Guadagna molto?”
*“Guadagna quanto ci vuole per non avere mai un centesimo in tasca. **Si figuri** che, per comprarmi l’abecedario della scuola, dov  vendere l’unica casacca che aveva addosso.”*
- “Does he gain much?”
 “Gain much? Why, he has never a penny in his pocket. Only think (LEI), to buy a spelling book for me to go to school he was obliged to sell the only coat he had to wear.”
- (19) (Pinocchio to the Fairy)
*Quanto **siete** buona, Fata mia, - disse il burattino asciugandosi gli occhi, - e quanto bene **vi** voglio!*
- “What a good Fairy you (VOI) are,” said the puppet, drying his eyes, “and how much I love you (VOI)!”
- (20) (Pinocchio to his dad, Geppetto)
“Queste tre pere erano per la mia colazione, ma io te le do volentieri. Mangiale, e buon pro ti faccia.”
*“Se **volete** che le mangi, **fatemi** il piacere di sbuciarle.”*
- “These three pears were intended for my breakfast: but I will give them to you willingly. Eat them, and I hope they will do you good.”
 “If you (VOI) wish me to eat them, be (VOI) kind enough to peel them for me.”

(Carlo Collodi, *Le avventure di Pinocchio* 1881, translated by M.A. Murrays, 2002)

- (21) (From *I Promessi Sposi*, by Alessandro Manzoni, English translation by Bruce Penman, 1983)

Fra’ Cristoforo:

*Vengo a propor**le** un atto di giustizia, aregar**la** d’una carità. [...] **Lei** pu , con una parola, confonder coloro, restituire al diritto la sua forza, e sollevare quelli a cui   fatta una cos  crudel violenza.*

I come to supplicate you (LEI) to perform an act of justice. [...] You (LEI) can by a word confound their machinations, and impart consolation to the afflicted.

Don Rodrigo:

***Lei** mi parler  della mia coscienza, quando verr  a confessarmi da **lei**. In quanto al mio onore, **ha** da sapere che il custode ne son io, e io solo....*

Speak (LEI) to me of conscience, when I ask your (lei) advice on the subject; and as to my honour, know (LEI) that I only am the guardian of it...”

- (22) *A siffatta proposta, l'indignazione del frate, rattenuta a stento fin allora, traboccò. Tutti que' bei proponimenti di prudenza e di pazienza andarono in fumo. [...]*
[Fra' Cristoforo]
- La vostra protezione! - esclamò, dando indietro due passi, postandosi fieramente sul piede destro, mettendo la destra sull'anca, alzando la sinistra con l'indice teso verso don Rodrigo, e piantandogli in faccia due occhi infiammati: - la vostra protezione! È meglio che abbiate parlato così, che abbiate fatta a me una tale proposta. Avete colmata la misura e non vi temo più. –
[Don Rodrigo]
- Come parli, frate? –

At such a proposal, the indignation of the friar, which had hitherto been restrained with difficulty, loudly burst forth. All his prudence and patience forsook him. [...]

[Fra' Cristoforo]

“Your (VOI) protection!” exclaimed he, stepping back, and stretching forth both his hands towards Don Roderick, while he sternly fixed his eyes upon him, “Your (VOI) protection! You (VOI) have filled the measure of your guilt by this wicked proposal, and I fear you (VOI) no longer.”

[Don Rodrigo]

“Dare you (TU) speak thus to me [priest]?”

APPENDIX B

Collated semantic explications and cultural scripts as per chapter

Chapter 3

Hi (John, Mr. Forman, %Professor, *Vice-Chancellor)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now

[B] WHY I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it because I want to do something

like people often do when it is like this:

they can see someone somewhere for a short time

they can say something to this someone during this time

they couldn't say something to this someone for some time before

[C] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it in a very short time

[D] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say it, I think about you like this: "this someone is someone like me"

Chapter 4

Ciao (mamma, Gianni, tesoro, Maestra, *Professoressa, *Signor Rossi)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now

[B] WHY I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it because I want to do something

like people often do when it is like this:

they can see someone somewhere for a short time

they can say something to this someone during this time

they couldn't say this to this someone on that day before

[C] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it in a short time

[D] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say it, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well
at the same time I think about you like this: "this someone is someone like me"

[E] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY IT

when I say this, I feel something good towards you

*Va bene*₁

it is like this: something happens as I want

I think like this about it: "this is good"

Va bene₂

I say: "this is good"
you can not say more about it now
I can not say more about it now

Va be'/vabbè

I say: "this is good"
I don't want to say more about it now

ciao ciao

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU
I want to say something good to you now

[B] WHY I WANT TO SAY IT
I want to say it because I want to do something
like people often do when it is like this:
they can see someone for a short time
they can say something to this someone during this time
they can't say something to this someone after this

[C] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT
I say it another time because I want to say it like people often say it to children [m]

[D] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT
when I say this, I think about you like this: "I know this someone very well"
at the same time I think about you like this: "this someone is someone like me"

[E] HOW I FEEL WHEN I SAY IT
when I say this, I feel something good towards you
this is true, I want you to know it

Chapter 5

Thanks, *Doctor (Coach, Chef, Boss...)*

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now

[B] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

“there are many people in this place,

I am one of these people, this someone is one of these people

this someone does some things in this place, I don't do the same things in this place

this someone is someone above other people in this place”

[C] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU AT THE SAME TIME

at the same time, when I say this to you I think about you like this:

“this someone can do some good things for other people in this place

other people in this place can't do the same”

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

Thanks, *Professor₂*

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good about you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is not someone like many other people’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

because of this, they can feel something good about this someone”

[B] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like this:

“I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me”

Chapter 6

Buongiorno, *Signora* (on its own, *Signora Persichetti*, *Signora Direttrice*, *Signora Maria*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is someone of one kind

someone of this kind is a woman [m]

someone of this kind can be someone’s wife [m]’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

people can feel something good towards this someone because of this”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

Prego, *Signore*₁ (on its own, **Tu* except to address God)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this: ‘this someone is a man [m]”

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone,

like they can know some good things about many other men [m]

people can feel something good towards this someone because of this”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone”

Rossi! (surname address)

I want to say something to you now

when I say this to you, I think about you like this: “I know what this someone’s surname [m] is”

I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

Buongiorno, *Signor*₂ *Rossi* (*Signor questore*, **Ciao*, **Tu*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is a man [m]

this someone is not someone like many other men [m]’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

people can feel something good towards this someone because of this”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

Prego, *Signorina* (on its own, *Maria, Donghì*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is someone of one kind

someone can be someone of this kind if this someone is a woman [m]

someone can be someone of this kind if this someone

can be a woman [m] after some time

someone can’t be someone of this kind if this someone is someone’s wife [m]

people can feel something good towards someone of this kind’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

people can feel something good towards this someone because of this”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

Prego, *Signori*₁ (*Signori Masina*)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU TWO NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to two people at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about these two people like this:

‘these two people are not people of the same kind

one of the two is a man [m], the other is a woman [m]

this woman is this man’s wife [m]’

at the same time, I think like this about these two people:

‘people can know some good things about these two people”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU TWO WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think like this about these two people: “I know these people well”

Prego, *Signori*₂ (used to address a mixed audience)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU ALL NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to some people at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think like this about these people: ‘these people are not people of the same kind’

at the same time, I think like this about these people:

‘people can know some good things about these people”

[B] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU ALL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think like this about these people: “I know these people well”

Buonasera, Signori₃ (e.g. Signore e Signori)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU ALL NOW

when I say this, I want to say something good to some people at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think like this about these people: ‘these people are people of one kind, they are all men [m]’

at the same time, I think like this about these people:

‘people can know some good things about these people’”

[B] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU ALL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think like this about these people: “I know these people”

Buongiorno, Avvocato (Dottore₁, Professore₁, Ingegnere, Architetto, Notaio, Maestro)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is not someone like many other people

this someone can do things of some kinds, not many other people can do these things

this someone knows many things about things of some kinds,

not many people know these things’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone

because of this, they can think something good about this someone’”

[B] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like this:

“I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me”

Buongiorno, Professore₂ (for medical doctors)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time

I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is someone of one kind

people of this kind can do many good things for other people in a place of one kind

this someone is someone above many people of this kind in this place”

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people know some good things about this someone

because of this, they think something good towards this someone’”

[B] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

Scusi, *Dottore*

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time
I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is someone of one kind

people of this kind are above many other people, I am one of these other people
because of this, this someone is someone above me’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘because this someone is someone of this kind,
people can think something good about this someone’”

[B] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

Grazie, *Maestra*

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time
I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is a woman [m]

this someone is someone of one kind

someone of this kind is a teacher [m]’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone
people can think something good towards this someone because of this’”

[B] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you I don't think about you like this: “I know this someone very well”

Buongiorno, *Direttore (Direttrice, Preside, Presidente, Sindaco/a, Rettore, Ministro/a)*

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

when I say this to you, I want to say something good to you at the same time
I want to say something like this with a word of one kind:

“I think about you like this:

‘this someone is not someone like many other people

this someone is someone above many people in a place of one kind

there are no other people above this someone in this place’

at the same time, I think about you like this:

‘people can know some good things about this someone
because of this, they can think something good about this someone’”

[B] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like this:

“I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me”

(Your bag), Sir. (Wierzbicka 2015)

I can think about you like this now:

“in this place, at this time, this someone is someone above me
if this someone wants me to do some things
I want to do these things because of this”

Chapter 7

She is a *dear little girl*

I feel something good towards this someone
like people often feel towards someone like this
I don't feel something like this towards many other people

He is a *dear friend*

I feel something good towards this someone
like people often feel towards some other people
I don't feel something like this towards many other people

***Dear* (Alice, Colleagues)**

I want to say some things to you now in writing [m]
before I say these things I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when they want to say some things to someone in writing [m]
I say: “I feel something good towards you”

Chapter 8

un *caro* ragazzo (una *cara* persona)

I feel something good towards this someone
I don't feel something like this towards many other people

***Caro* Tullio (*cara nonna, caro signore, caro professore, cara lettrice*)**

I want to say some things to you now in writing [m]
before I say these things, I want to say something good to you
I say: “I feel something good towards you, I don't feel something like this towards many other people”
when I say this, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well

***Gentile* (Professore, cliente, Alessandro, *nonna)**

I want to say some things to you now in writing [m]
before I say these things I want to say something good to you,
like people often say when they want to say some things to someone in writing [m]
I say: “I think about you like this: ‘people can think some good things about this someone’”
when I say this, I don't think about you like this: ‘I know this someone well’”

Egregio (Direttore, Signore, *Gianni, *nonno)

I want to say some things to you now in writing [m]

before I say these things I want to say something good to you,

like people sometimes say when they want to say some things to someone in writing [m]

I say: "I think about you like this:

people can think some very good things about this someone

not many people are like this someone"

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: 'I know this someone well'"

Chapter 9

Best wishes

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I want many very good things to happen to you"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone very well"

Best

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,

like people often say when it is like this:

they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]

at some point [moment] they think like this:

"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I want very good things to happen to you"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like this:

"I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me

I can often say things to this someone, this someone can often say things to me

because of this, I can say this to this someone with one word"

All the best

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I want many very good things to happen to you"
I want to say more
I want to say:
"I know that many things will happen to you after this, I want all these things to be very good"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this:
"I know this someone very well, I can say more to this someone after a short time"

All best

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I want many very good things to happen to you"
I want to say more
I want to say:
"I know that many things will happen to you after this, I want all these things to be very good"

[C] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like this:
"I know this someone well
because of this, I can say this to this someone with not many words"

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I can say more to this someone after a short time"

Warmest wishes

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I want many good things to happen to you"

[C] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I feel something very good towards you,
I don't feel something like this towards very many other people

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone very well"

Regards

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I think something very good about you, I feel something good towards you because of this"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this:
"I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me"

Best regards

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I think something very good about you, I feel something good towards you because of this"
I want to say more
I want to say: "I don't think like this about very many people"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this:
"I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me"

Mary is *kind* (adapted from Travis 1997:139)

this someone often thinks like this about people:

“I don’t want this someone to feel something bad
I want to do something good for this someone if I can
this something good is not a very big thing
I know that I can not-do it, I want to do it”

this someone often does something good for people because this someone thinks like this

Kind regards

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
“I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “I think something very good about you, I feel something good towards you because of this
I want to do some good things for people like you if I can”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this:
“I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me”

I *sincerely* hope so (adapted from Goddard 2001:671)

when I say this, I say it as I think

I know that some people can think about me like this now:

“this someone says it like this because this someone thinks like this:
‘it is good if I say things like this’”

I don’t say it like this because I think like this

I say it like this because it is true

it is good if people can say things as they think, I know this

Yours sincerely

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
“I don’t want to say more to this someone now”

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: “if you want me to do some things, I want to do these things if I can”
at the same time, I say: “when I say this, I say it as I think”

[C] HOW I DON’T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don’t think about you like this: “I know this someone well”

Yours

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I feel something good towards you
if you want me to do some things, I want to do these things if I can"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like I can think about many other people

Sincerely

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU

I want to say something good to you at this moment
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment], they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it to you like I can say something like this to many other people at other times

[C] WHAT I SAY

I say: "when I say something to you I say it as I think"

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone well"

Chapter 10

Saluti da Roma

I say: "I'm thinking about you now
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
like people want to say something good to someone
if they don't see this someone for some time"

Saluti (as a closing salutation)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I'm thinking about you now,
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
like people want to say something good to other people
if they don't see these people for some time"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this:
"I know this someone very well, I can often say things to this someone"

Distinti saluti

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I am thinking about you now
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
like people want to say something good to other people
if they don't see these people for some time"

at the same time, I say:

"people can know some very good things about this someone
people can think something very good about this someone"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this:
"I know this someone well, this someone is someone like me"

Cordiali saluti

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I am thinking about you now
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you now,
like people want to say something good to other people
if they don't see these people for some time"

at the same time, I say: "I feel something good towards you"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say this, I don't think about you like this:
"I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me"

Cordialmente (as a closing salutation)

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "when I say this to you I feel something good towards you, I want you to know it"

[C] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say this, I don't think about you like this:
"I know this someone very well, this someone is someone like me
I can often say things to this someone"

Affettuosi saluti

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY TO YOU

I say: "I am thinking about you now
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you now,
like people want to say something good to other people
when they don't see these people for some time"

[C] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I feel something very good towards you

[D] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone very well"

Un saluto

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it not like I can say something like this to many people at many times
because of this, I want to say one good thing to you, not many things

[C] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I am thinking about you at this moment
when I think about you, I feel something good towards you
at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
like people want to say something good to other people
if they don't see these people for some time"

[D] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well
at the same time, I think about you like this:
"I know that someone like me can do some good things for people like this someone"

[E] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I can often say things to this someone"

Un caro saluto

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] HOW I WANT TO SAY IT

I want to say it not like I can say something like this to many people at many times
because of this, I want to say one good thing to you, not many things

[C] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I'm thinking about you at this moment
when I think about you I feel something good towards you,
at the same time, I want to say something good to you,
like people want to say something good to other people
if they don't see these people for some time"

[D] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I feel something good towards you
I don't feel something like this towards many other people

[E] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well

[F] HOW I DON'T THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I don't think about you like this: "I can often say things to this someone"

A presto

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I will be with you after a short time, I know this"

[C] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I think about you like this: "I know this someone well"

Un bacio

[A] WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU NOW

I want to say something good to you now,
like people often say when it is like this:
they say some things to someone for some time in writing [m]
at some point [moment] they think like this:
"I don't want to say more to this someone now"

[B] WHAT I SAY

I say: "I kiss [m] you now"

[C] HOW I THINK ABOUT YOU WHEN I SAY IT

when I say this, I think about you like I can think about you when I am with you

[D] WHAT I FEEL WHEN I SAY THIS

when I say this, I feel something very good towards you

Chapter 11

[A] An Italian 'master' cultural script for addressing people with a title

[in Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone

if I don't know this someone well,

it is good if I say something good about this someone to this someone at the same time

it is good if I say something like this with a word of one kind:

"I think about you like this: 'people can know some good things about this someone'"

[B] *An Italian cultural script encouraging speakers to say with one word how they think about the addressee*

[in Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone,

if I don't know this someone well,

it is good if I say something good about this someone to this someone at the same time

if I know that people can know some very good things of some kinds about this someone,

it is good if I say something like this with a word of one kind:

"I think about you like this:

'this someone is not someone like many other people

people can know some very good things about this someone'"

[C] *An Italian cultural script encouraging speakers to address strangers as Signore₁*

[in Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone

if I don't know this someone,

it is good if I say something good to this someone at the same time

if this someone is a man [m], it is good if I say something like this with a word of one kind:

"I think about you like this:

'people can know some very good things about this man [m]

like they can know about many other men [m]"

[D] *An Italian cultural script encouraging the use of titles to signal engagement with the addressee*
[in Italy many people think like this:]
often when I want to say something to someone
it is good if I say something like this to this someone at the same time:
 "I want to say something to you now"
it is good if I say this with a word of one kind

[E] *An Italian cultural script encouraging speakers to repeat a "title" several times in an exchange*
[in Italy many people think like this:]
often when I want to say something to someone,
 if I don't know this someone well,
it is good if I say something good about this someone to this someone at the same time
it is good if I say it with one word of one kind
if I want to say some things to this someone for some time,
 it is good if I say this word many times during this time

[F] *An Italian cultural script for speaking to people whom one does not know well*
[in Italy many people think like this:]
often when I want to say some things to someone,
 if I don't know this someone well,
it is good if I don't say these things to this someone
 like I can say things to people if I know these people well

[G] *An Italian cultural script encouraging speakers to talk to one's superior differently from how one talks to many other people*
[in Italy many people think like this:]
when I want to say some things to someone,
 if this someone is someone above me,
I can't say these things to this someone like I can say things to many other people

[H] *A cultural script for shifting from LEI to TU in Italian (linguistic equalisation)*
[in Italy many people think like this:]
when I want to say something to someone about this someone,
 if I think like this about this someone: 'this someone is someone above me',
I can't say something like this to this someone:
 "when I want to say something to you about you, I want to say it with the word 'tu'
 when you want to say something to me about me, you can do the same"

[I] *An Italian cultural script for using the address pronoun VOI*
[in some parts of Italy many people think like this:]
often when I want to say something to someone about this someone
 if it is like this: this someone is not a child, I don't know this someone very well
it is good if I say something like this to this someone at the same time:
 "I think about you like this: 'people can know some very good things about this someone'
I can say it with one word

[J] *An Italian cultural script for using the address pronoun LEI*

[in Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone about this someone

if it is like this: this someone is not a child, I don't know this someone very well

it is good if I say something like this to this someone at the same time:

"I think about you like this: 'people can know some good things about this someone'

I don't think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'"

I can say it with one word

[K] *An Italian "master" cultural script for not using the same address pronoun TU for all people*

[in Italy many people think like this:]

often when I want to say something to someone about this someone

if I don't know this someone well

I can't say things to this someone like I can say things to children

because of this, I can't say the word "tu" to this someone when I say something about this someone

Come vuole...Loris (as you (LEI) wish...Loris)

when I say this, I don't think about you like I can think about children

I don't think about you like I can think about many other people

I don't think about you like this: "this someone is someone like me"

I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone well"

at the same time, when I say this I think about you like I can think about someone

if I know this someone well

I think about you like this: "people can know some good things about this someone"

Posso darti del tu?

I think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'

I want to say things to you like I can say things to someone if I know this someone well

maybe I can do this, maybe not, I don't know, I want to know

Possiamo darci del tu?

I think about you like this: 'this someone is someone like me'

you can think the same about me

I want you to know that when you say some things to me

you can say them like you say things to people if you know these people well

I want to say things to you like I can say things to someone if I know this someone well

maybe I can do this, maybe not, I don't know, I want to know

Diamoci del tu!

I think about you like this: "this someone is someone like me"

I want to say things to you like I can say things to someone if I know this someone well

I want you to do the same

Dammi del tu!

I want you to think about me like this: "this someone is someone like me"

I don't want you to think about me like this: "this someone is someone above me"

I want you to say things to me like you can say things to someone if you know this someone well

Lei (Wierzbicka 2017)

when I say this, I don't think about you like I can think about children
at the same time, I don't think about you like I can think about many other people
I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone well"
I don't think about you like this: "this someone is someone like me"
I think like this: "people can know some good things about this someone"

Voi (Wierzbicka 2017)

when I say this to you, I don't think about you like I can think about children
at the same time, I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone very well"
I think like this: "people can think some very good things about this someone"

Chapter 12

Des

I want to say something to you now
when I say it, I think about you like I can think about someone if I know this someone well
at the same time, when I say it I feel something good towards you

Mr. Watson

I want to say something to you now
when I say this, I think about you like this:
 "this someone is a man [m]
 I know this man's [m] surname [m]"
at the same time, I think about you like this:
 "people can know some good things about this someone
 like they can know some good things about other men [m]"
I don't think about you like this: "I know this someone well"

[A] *An Australian cultural script for addressing people whom one does not know well by first name*

[in Australia many people think like this:]

when I want to say something to someone,

 if I don't know this someone well,

it is often good if I say it like I can say something to someone if I know this someone well

because of this, it is good if I say this someone's name [m] to this someone at the same time

[B] *An Australian cultural script for addressing one's superior by first name*

[in Australia many people think like this:]

if I am above some other people in a place of one kind

it is good if these people can know that I think like this about all of them:

 "this someone is someone like me"

because of this, it is often good if these people can know that when they want to say something to me

 they can say my name [m] to me

at the same time, it is often good if they know that I want this

Chapter 13

Please, call me Alice

I want you to think about me like you can think about many people if you know these people well
I don't want you to think about me like this: "this someone is someone above me"

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