

Exophoric demonstratives in Umbrian

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Introduction

UMBRIAN: Umbrian is an italic language spoken in the region of Umbria (modern Italy), dated between the VI and the I century BCE and mainly attested in its widest testimony, the Iguvine Tablets, a group of seven bronze tablets which narrate the instructions for a religious ritual in a total of 4 000 words.

EXOPHORIC DEMONSTRATIVES: Exophoric demonstratives are those deictics that point to extra-linguistic realities. Diessel’s typological theory of exophoric demonstratives categorizes its semantic as follows.

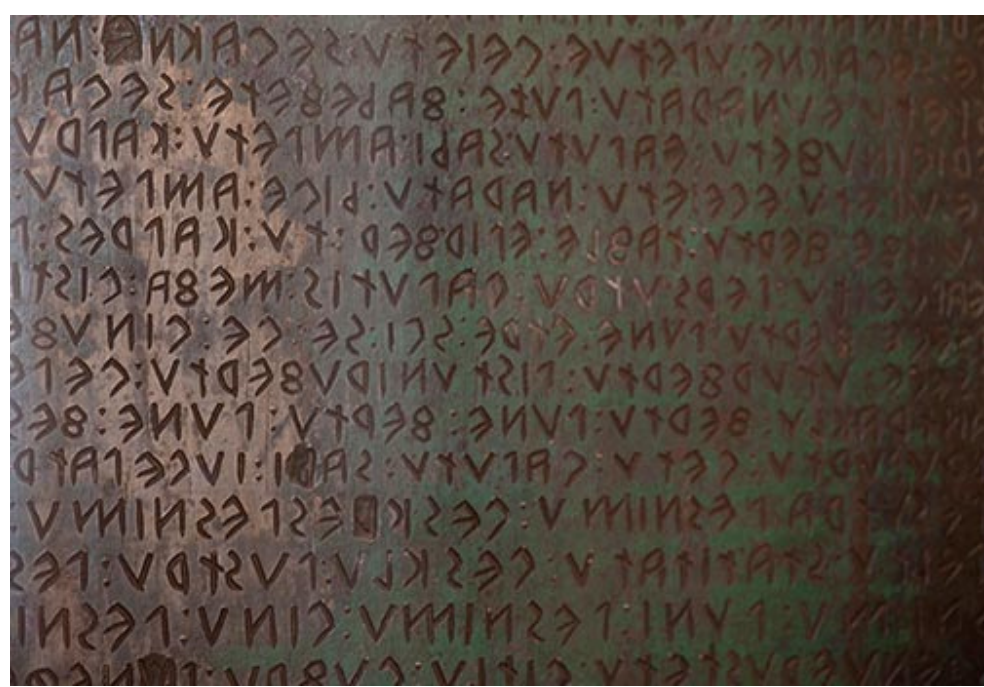
Exophoric semantics

- Gestural** They point to delimitable extralinguistic realities.
- Symbolic** They point to not so delimitable extralinguistic realities.
- Am phantasma** They point to extralinguistic realities as part of a discourse, which can be gestural or symbolic.

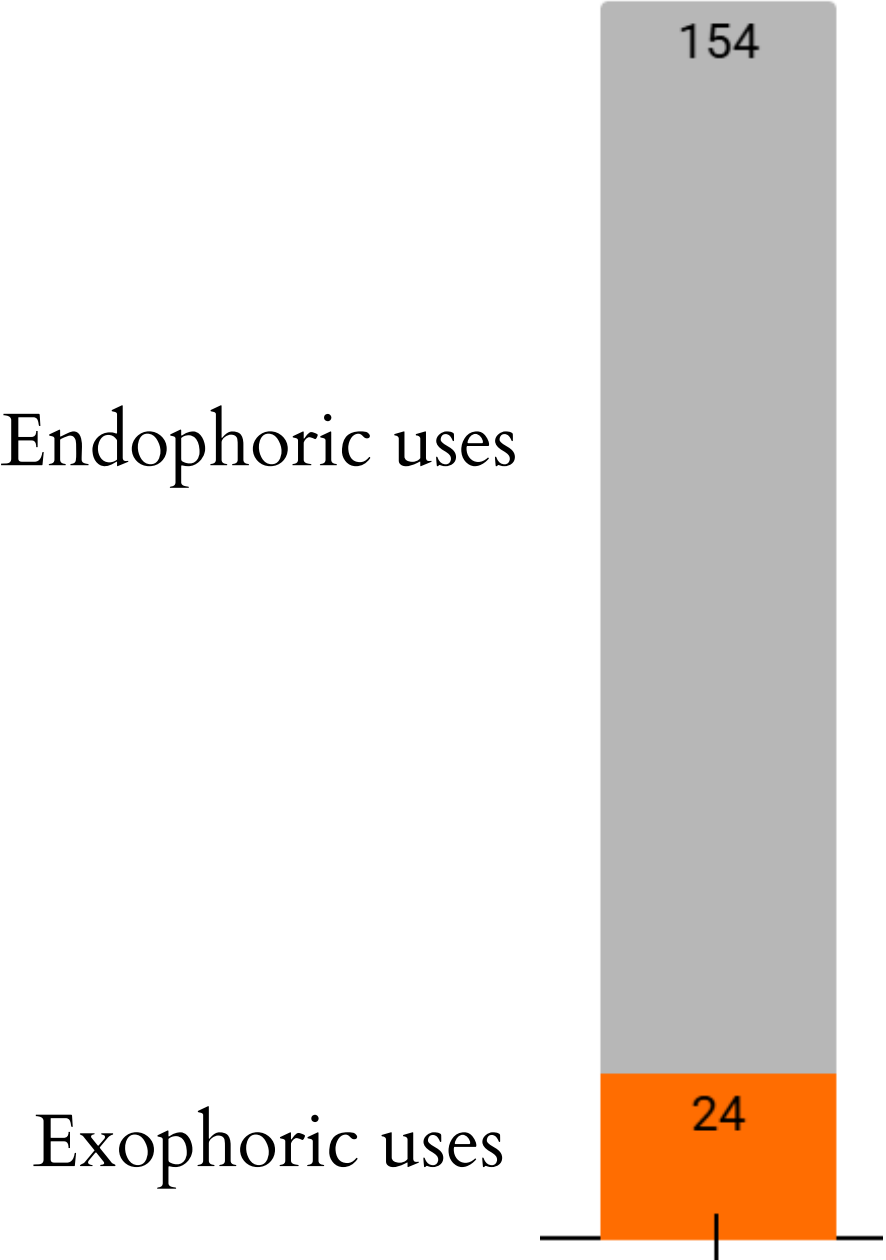
Corpus & methodology

Approach: functional grammar & linguistic typology

Corpus: demonstratives found in the Iguvine Tablets: 178 demonstratives, out of which 24 are recognized as exophoric following Diessel’s guideline:

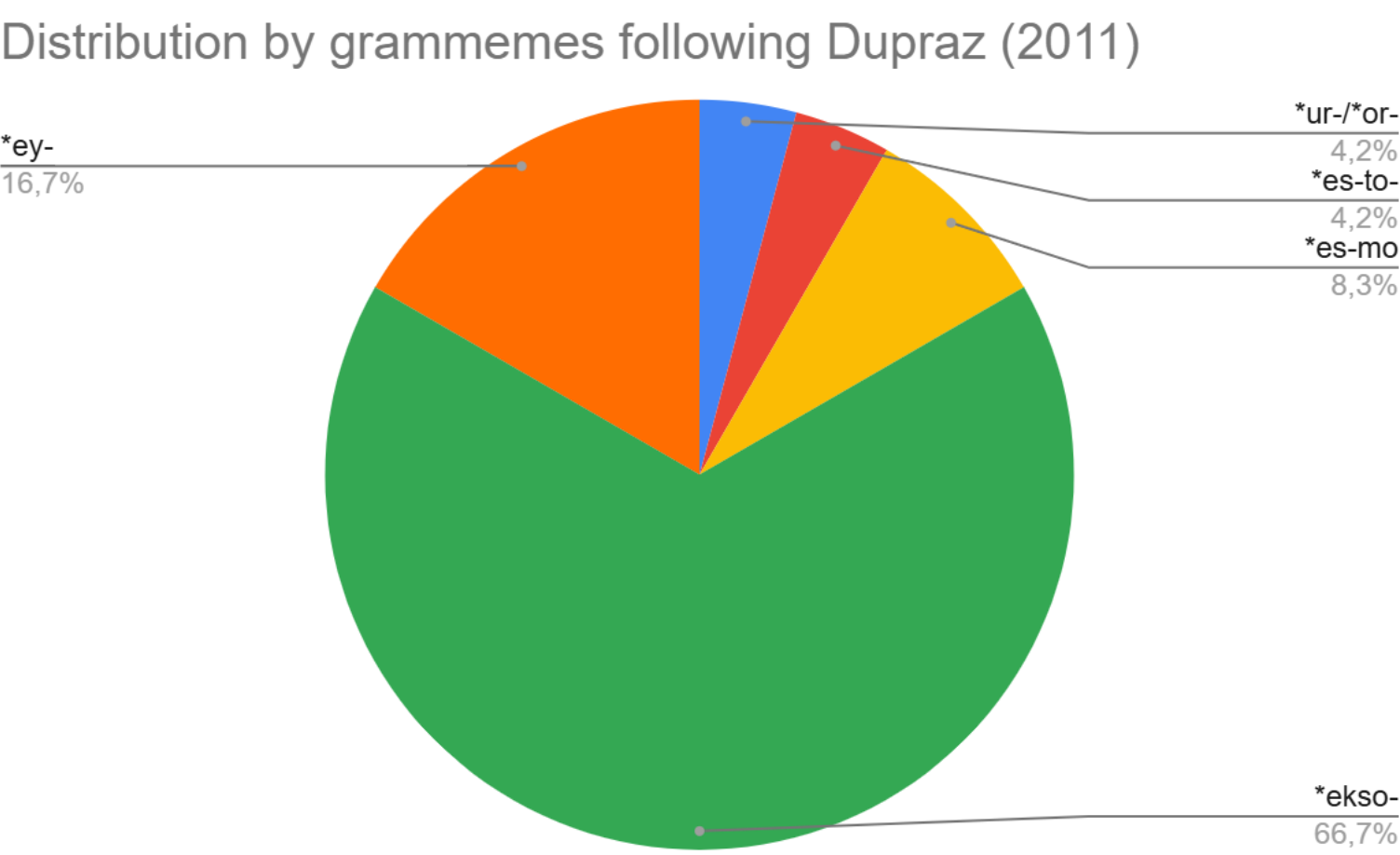


Example of Tablet IIb, written using the umbrian epichoric script.



Results

Morphological distribution



Semantics

<i>Am phantasma</i>	24
Gestural - <i>am phantasma</i>	20
Symbolic - <i>am phantasma</i>	4

References

1	Sacrificial victims	13
2	Other objects or tools	7
3	Groups of people	3
4	Unspecified places	1

Distance form the deictic centre

Except from one dubious example, all of the exophoric demonstratives found in the Tablets point to elements which are close to the deictic centre.

Animated / inanimated references

Except from one example, all of the exophoric demonstratives found in the Tablets point to animate referents.

Conclusions & further study

- Exophoric demonstratives in Umbrian, although few, are interesting to study from a typological perspective. The specific characteristics of Umbrian may not, however, be ignored to achieve full understanding of the language.
- The combination and global overview of the results above show how exophoric demonstratives work in the Umbrian language as a whole.
- Similar results have been found as part of the research made in other indo-european languages, such as Latin or Greek.
- Further study on this topic will include other indo-european languages, such as Hittite or Vedic.

Main bibliogrphy

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