

# Pragmatic aspects of the vocative-nominative competition in addressative function across Slavic languages<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The study tests the hypothesis according to which the Slavic anthroponyms in *-e* and *-o* underwent evolution from vocative endings to hypocoristic derivative suffixes and then to anthroponymic formants. According to the Author, such a hypothesis can be considered entirely plausible, albeit only as a mechanism of formation parallel to and intertwined with other processes of morphemic function change. As a phenomenon observable in both diachrony and synchrony, categorial lability between vocative and word formation can thus be considered inherent in the system of Slavic languages. However the anthroponyms in *-e* and *-o* have had different diffusion and distribution in the various Slavic languages and today occupy dissimilar places within the system and varieties of each language.

**Keywords:** Vocative case, Pragmatic strategies, Slavic standard languages, Inter Slavic contrastive approach.

0. The substitution of the nominative case for the vocative is a well-known issue in Slavic linguistic studies, and has been addressed by many philologists and linguists over time. Research on this topic has mainly focused on explaining the reasons for this phenomenon, in general ascribed to 1) the syntactic and functional identity between vocative and nominative; 2) the formal coincidence of nominative and vocative with neutral and plural substantives or within the adjectival declension; and 3) the low occurrence of the vocative case with inanimate substantives. This study aims to shed light on the vocative-nominative competition in forms of address across Slavic languages from a different point of view. Assuming that the presence of two coexisting morphological strategies usually leads to diversification on the semantic or functional level, the present research sets out to verify whether differences of usage exist in Slavic languages where both vocative and nominative occur in addressative sentences and to see what such differences are. At the same time, an attempt will be made to investigate the developmental dynamics of the Slavic vocative as it loses its morphological marking and is gradually replaced with the nominative.

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1. Within nominal declension, the vocative is atypical because it sharply contrasts with other cases on the paradigmatic level (only masculine and feminine substantives in the singular have vocative desinences), as well as on the level of syntax (since vocatives are syntactically independent from other sentence elements). Generally speaking, the vocative may be considered a “case” only with respect to its morphological marking, although it plainly diverges from other morphologically marked cases as to the function it performs in the sentence. Considerable literature has been devoted to the investigation of the categorial status of vocative case in Slavic and in other languages (see Siczkowski 1964; Topolińska 1973; Qyonje 1986; Dąbrowska 1988; Piper et al. 2005, 651–70; Greenberg 1996; Skab 2002, and many others). On a wider scale, attention has also been paid to the linguistic category of address (see Bühler 1934 (Appelfunktion); Jakobson 1960 (conative and fatic functions); Mazzoleni 1995; Donati 2009, etc.), of which the vocative may be said to be a prime example. However, since a detailed examination of the issue is beyond the scope of our study, we will adopt the definition given by Topolińska (1973, 270), according to which “[...] inwariant semantyczny kategorii vocativu (informacja, którą ta kategoria gramatyzuje) to informacja, że mówiący chce zmobilizować uwagę adresata wypowiedzi [...]” “[...] the semantic invariant of the category of vocative (the information that this category grammaticalizes) is the information that the speaker wants to mobilize the attention of the addressee of the utterance [...]”. Vocative endings do not encode logical relations and syntactic dependencies inside the sentence, but represent an explicit morphological strategy for expressing the category of address. Because of that, the vocative case, unlike other cases based on a logic category, may be defined as the grammaticalized device for expressing a pragmatic category. Functional dishomogeneity between the vocative and the other inflectional cases is also attested if we consider the different outcomes in the development of nominal flexion across Slavic languages. Vocative case endings may be maintained or lost independently of the maintenance or loss of other cases: e.g. Bulgarian has preserved the vocative case but no longer has nominal flexion. Russian, by contrast, displays a fully-fledged nominal flexion system, in which vocative has disappeared.

Along these lines, it is worth observing that there are neither prosodic nor syntactic differences in forms of address between a language which does not use morphologically specialized markers and a language where addressives display obligatory vocative endings. Also, the development path of morphological marking in the vocative shows that the loss of the vocative does not engender any compensatory language strategies. Instead, the evolution of nominal flexion from synthetic to analytic triggers a transformation of logical functions and encoding strategies, e.g. from desinences to prepositions or to a new constituent order (free order > fixed order).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Vocative is a functional and grammatical category that develops freely in speech and virtually unaffected by linguistic norms. As vocative forms occur more frequently in spoken language and school education does not usually covers this topic, vocative lacks the normatization typical of other morphological categories.

2. In the study of the development of Slavic vocative, two key aspects need to be taken into consideration: first of all, the extent to which the original set of endings is preserved or has undergone modifications; secondly, the extent to which the nominative case (or basic form) may substitute for the vocative case in the address and how such shift affects the functional values of the vocative case within the language system. The dismantling of the original vocative-ending system and the ensuing decrease in the use of the vocative are interrelated phenomena and show different facets of the same weakening process. In the present section and in the paragraphs under 3, we will focus explicitly on the various degrees of substitution of nominative for the vocative. The redistribution or innovation in the set of desinences will be specifically addressed in paragraph 5. For the sake of analysis, such redistribution of vocative endings will be observed exclusively from the point of view of the semantic and pragmatic shifts that are triggered by formal changes.<sup>3</sup>

Slavic languages may be classified according to the level of preservation of morphologically marked vocative. This gives us four main groups:

- 1) *Conservation* (Czech, Ukrainian): vocative case markers are compulsory.
- 2) *Alteration* (Polish, Croatian and Serbian, Macedonian, Bulgarian): vocative case marking is for a more or less wide range of nouns optional or even uncommon. The occurrence of vocative case markers in these languages shows considerable inconsistency and variability.
- 3) *Reduction* (Belorussian, Higher Sorbian): vocative usage is drastically curtailed and nominative forms generalized to nearly all contexts.<sup>4</sup>
- 4) *Elimination* (Slovak, Lower Sorbian, Slovene, Russian): the vocative case is no longer a live morphological category and nominative is used in all forms of address. Vocative can still be present in crystallized forms, as it is reported for Slovak, with masculine nouns of kinship or social terms (*sváku!*, *človeče!*), or, more frequently, in exclamations (Russian *bože!*, *gospodi!*). In Slovene, “relic” forms have been eliminated altogether.

These four groups can be thought as progressive stages of a degrammaticalization *cline* of the vocative case, so that an initial state of formal and functional integrity eventually leads to the complete loss of vocative as a morphological category. The typological development of the vocative case goes through a progressive simplification of the morphematic level (syncretism and merge of endings) and the increasing extension of the nominative to all contexts of address. It is

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed inventory of changes related to vocative endings in Slavic languages, see Trovesi 2008.

<sup>4</sup> For Belorussian there is, however, disagreement in the evaluation of the normative status of vocative. According to *Belaruskaja mova. Encyklopedia* (Michnevich 1994, 262) vocative is considered a typical form of contemporary language, conversely a recent Belorussian textbook for foreign students states that “U pracěse historyčnaha razvicia belaruskaj movy kličny sklon supau (u forme zvarotka) z nazoŭnym sklonam”, ‘in the process of the historical development of the Belorussian language, the vocative has come to coincide (as an allocutive form) with the nominative’ (Sjameška et al. 1996, 305). See Jankouški 1989, 147.

commonly believed that when the nominative takes over all the functions of the former vocative, “relic” vocatives tend to turn into exclamations or interjections.

In conclusion, it is worth noticing that since the vocative is the grammaticalization of a functional-pragmatic category and that in the loss of morphological markers its communicative function is increasingly fulfilled by the nominative, it would be more correct to define this development as a process of de-morphologization (see Giannini 2003, 102–4; Andersen 2010).

3. Analysis of the differences between vocative and nominative uses in forms of address will be carried out on the Slavic languages from the first two groups of the classification above: 1. (*Conservation*), where only few cases of nominative for vocative substitution can be observed, and 2. (*Alteration*), where the co-occurrence vocative-nominative is most widespread.

In Slavic languages, where vocative is morphologically unstable, a remarkable degree of inconsistency in the occurrences of morphologically marked vocative is recorded. It is therefore virtually impossible to establish for each language the word groups and contexts which preserve vocative case markers or to list all instances when the nominative is substituted for the vocative. As noted independently for different Slavic languages, the selection of vocative / nominative endings in forms of address depends on a complex interplay of motivations, mainly of pragmatic nature: (e.g. Pärvev 1965, 7; Krzyżanowski 2001, 85).<sup>5</sup>

3.1 Czech displays the best state of preservation of a vocative case amongst Slavic languages. There are only few exceptions to the compulsory usage of vocative case marking in address expressions. In the compound form of address “*pan* + surname” vocative case markers may be omitted on the second element: *pane<sup>V</sup> Novák!* instead of *pane<sup>V</sup> Nováku<sup>V</sup>!* Such forms are very popular in spoken Czech and *de facto* accepted as standard (cfr. Krčmová 1998, 169). Nevertheless, some surnames are preferentially used in the nominative, while others occur obligatorily in the vocative, mostly in accordance with formal characteristics (morpho-phonological alternations tend to be avoided: *pane<sup>V</sup> Němec!* instead of *pane<sup>V</sup> Němče<sup>V</sup>!*). When other titles are used, the vocative seems to be preserved on both elements (*předseda Adamec* > *předsedo<sup>V</sup> Adamče<sup>V</sup>!*).

In my recent study on Czech vocative,<sup>6</sup> native speakers were asked to evaluate the two concurring address forms “*pan* + surname” in the vocative and in

<sup>5</sup> In addition to usual considerations about the syntactic and semantic closeness between the vocative and the nominative—which has been shown to promote the merging of vocative into nominative—for Ukrainian and Belorussian one needs also to keep in mind that the demise of morphologically marked vocative may have to do with the long-lasting interaction with Russian, in which the vocative had long disappeared. In the past, Russian played the role of a prestigious language to different extents in the two languages. However, more evidence is called for to validate the theory of language contact as a cause for the demise of vocative case marking.

<sup>6</sup> Paper presented in 2012 at the IV edition of the “Incontri di linguistica slava” conference and published as Trovesi 2014.

the nominative with regards to degrees of formality, politeness, distance, and normative character. The results indicated that forms with the vocative are perceived as more polite, as expressing a higher degree of distance and formality, and as decisively closer to the language norm. Conversely, forms lacking vocative markers on the surname are felt to be more informal, but not necessarily less polite, and express a closer proximity to the addressee.<sup>7</sup>

3.2 As reported in normative grammars and Ukrainian language handbooks, Ukrainian vocative is still intact both formally and functionally (see Bezpal'ko et al. 1957, 172–216; Bulachovs'kyj 1977, 281–84; Leonova 1983, 81–104; Bezpojas'ko et al. 1993, 44–5; Pljušč 1994, 205–22, 350–51; Vychovanec' 1987; Juščuk 1988, 64–77; Ponomariv 2001, 121–33, 291–97; Zubkov 2009, 182–229). There are only few restrictions to the normative use of the vocative:<sup>8</sup> vocative endings may be omitted in compound addressative phrases where either only the surname lacks vocative endings (*pane<sup>v</sup> Storoženko!*, *pane<sup>v</sup> Storoženku<sup>v</sup>!*) or both phrasal elements are in the nominative (*gromadjanin Poliščuk!*). Grammar books are significantly inconsistent as to the appropriateness of using nominative endings in such compound phrases (“title + first name”; “title + surname”; “name + surname”; “title + title”). For example, with reference to the form of address “title + surname”, Leonova (1983, 98) claims that the surname has nominative endings. Zubkov (2009, 197) on the contrary, maintains that vocative endings are required, while Juščuk (1998, 72) allows either the nominative or the vocative.

Despite normative language rules, empirical observation suggests that nominative forms in addressative function are largely employed in spoken Ukrainian. And the very fact that Ukrainian grammarians should so often feel the need to advocate the use vocative endings attests to the widespread and everexpanding use of the nominative in forms of address. It seems therefore that it would be more suitable to include Ukrainian in the second group of languages from the classification above.

Hypotheses as to the possible divergences in meaning between address forms in the vocative and in the nominative occur in the literature only sporadically. It seems that the use of vocative or nominative depends largely on an interplay of sociolinguistic parameters. Native Ukrainian speakers report that the vocative case is preferred by educated people and sounds rather formal and old-fashioned. Along similar lines, Babyč (2003, 123) mentions the communicative contexts where nominative is preferred to vocative in forms of address. It would seem that the vocative, perceived as the sign of formal or controlled speech, is ultimately seen as unsuitable in informal or colloquial speech. From a different

<sup>7</sup> As a matter of fact, there is another case where nominative occurs in addressative forms in spoken Czech, that is with names or more often with surnames in strict and impersonal orders in military, sports or educational contexts (Karlík, Nekula, Rusínová 1995, 235–36). However, as the great majority of native speakers tend to consider this usage not acceptable, it will not be considered further (Trovesi 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Since the last decade of the 20th century the definition *vidminok* for the vocative have definitively prevailed over *forma* (see Ponomariv 2001; Vychovanec' 1987; Vychovanec' 2004).

perspective, Čerednyčenko (1962, 287) has recently argued that the nominative carries a nuance of formality. The reason for such contradictory evaluations of the vocative is in all likelihood to do with divergent official attitudes towards Ukrainian over time: when, in the Soviet era, the distance between Ukrainian and Russian was downplayed, the vocative was perceived as a low-prestige, socio-linguistic feature, typical of rural environments. After the country achieved its independence, vocative turned into one of the symbols of linguistic distinctiveness from Russian and its usage has ever since been strongly recommended by language normativists.

A survey of the use of vocative in Ukrainian made upon a corpus collected in novels of contemporary writers (Sofija Andruchovič, Maria Matos, etc.) showed that the morphologically marked vocative is especially used as a stylistic device to reproduce either the language varieties from Western Ukrainian countryside or the controlled speech of “nationally aware” speakers (like Olesja, the main character of Natalka Snjadanko’s *Kollekcja prystrastej*, ‘Collection of passions’), portrayed as a *spravžnaja galičanka*, ‘a true Galician woman’). The way vocative is sometimes employed in literary texts seems to mirror the actual normativist approach to the vocative, which insists that the vocative should be preserved. Such survey does not however entitle us to draw conclusive remarks about the distribution of the vocative case across the different lexical groups it occurs in (although the use of vocative with names of foreign origins is openly discouraged). Nor were we led to conclude that certain meanings in the forms of address we surveyed were elicited by the use of either the vocative or the nominative.

3.3 In Polish, normative use of the vocative displays a well-maintained set of morphological endings. A relevant modification with respect to an etymological set of desinences is the extension of *-o* ending to weak feminine substantives (*ziemio<sup>V!</sup>*).

However, in spoken Polish the nominative is widely substituted for the vocative in forms of address. The numerous works on this topic report how the nominative case tends to expand to all substantives without regard to their morphological features and virtually to all contexts in which the vocative would be required (see Topolińska 1973; Lubaś 1983; Dulewiczowa 1984; Dąbrowska 1988; Łuczyński 2007). Dąbrowska (1988, 59) writes that “proces ten, obserwowany od dawna, trwa i trudno w tej chwili przewidzieć, czy wszystkie formy wołacza zanikną na korzyść mianownika”, ‘this process, which has been going on for a long time, is ongoing and it is difficult to predict at the moment whether all forms of the vocative will disappear in favour of the nominative’.

Vocative endings are usually omitted with proper names,<sup>9</sup> but no clear distribution rules can be defined. Both forms are often possible (*Andrzeju<sup>V!</sup>* and *Andrzej!*). The vocative case is still regularly employed with: a) with proper nouns

<sup>9</sup> The use of surnames in addressative function is generally considered impolite, especially without preceding titles, and therefore avoided.

and surnames in formal addressative expressions after titles (*drogi Janie<sup>V</sup>!*, *panie<sup>V</sup> ministrze<sup>V</sup>!*; with few exceptions: *panie<sup>V</sup> kelner!* and not *panie<sup>V</sup> kelnerze<sup>V</sup>!*); b) with hypocoristics, especially those ending with soft sounds (*Stasiu<sup>V</sup>!*, *Kasiu<sup>V</sup>!*), although nominative is not excluded (*Piotruś*); and c) pejoratives (*chamie<sup>V</sup>!*).

Vocative endings are widely perceived as more normative and thus often used to convey deference towards the addressee: “Wokatiwy oznaczone morfologicznie są nacechowane wyższym stopniem prestiżu należnego nadawcy niż wyrażone mianownikiem”, ‘Morphologically marked vocatives are characterised by a higher degree of prestige due to the sender than those expressed by the nominative’ (Lubaś 1983, 214). With reference to this, addressative forms including a proper noun may be arranged in descending order according to their respective degree of deference: *panie<sup>V</sup> Wiktorze<sup>V</sup>!* (high), *Wiktorze<sup>V</sup>!* (average), *Wiktor!* (low). In formal or official contexts, the use of the nominative is unsuitable, as it would sound impolite. Conversely, vocative case endings are usually avoided by young speakers in informal speech because they tend to sound conceited or aloof. However, this does not entirely affect the use of vocative with hypocoristics and diminutives. With these lexical groups, addressative forms are still regularly employed in the vocative.

3.4 In Croatian and Serbian (or BCS<sup>10</sup>) the vocative case is well preserved. Nevertheless, some lexical items or groups are in general no longer used with vocative endings. We will focus on the most relevant ones (for a full list see Babić et al. 2007, 317–19, 387–91, Piper et al. 2005, 655).

The choice of morphological vocative marking in Croatian and Serbian is still largely ruled by the formal features of the words involved. In the masculine, the vocative is less common with names and surnames of foreign origin (*Rihard!* and *Riharde<sup>V</sup>!*), with names ending in vowel (*Nikola!*, *Pavle<sup>V</sup>!*), with various kind of surnames (*Popov!*, *Dukin!*), and is generally avoided with words where the vocative morpheme would trigger morpho-phonological alternations (*Leskovac!* beside *Leskovče<sup>V</sup>!*). Still, vocative inflection is well preserved in masculine forms, namely with some titles (*gospodine<sup>V</sup>!*, *gospođo<sup>V</sup>!*) and compound addressative forms (*gospodine<sup>V</sup> Petroviću<sup>V</sup>!*, *gospodine<sup>V</sup> profesore<sup>V</sup>!*<sup>11</sup>), but also with simple names and some surnames (*Milane<sup>V</sup>!*, *Miloševiću<sup>V</sup>!*).

Feminine nouns regularly retain the vocative with disyllabic words which have a long rising accent (*Mára* > *Máro<sup>V</sup>!*<sup>12</sup>) as well as with substantives which end in the lexical formant *-ica* (*direktorice<sup>V</sup>!*). Otherwise, feminine nouns have more extensively lost vocative markers: all surnames and usually first names too occur in addressative function in the nominative (*Marta!*). With kinship terms, the nominative is the usual form of address (*mama!*, *tata!*), but if used

<sup>10</sup> With regard to the vocative, there are no evident divergences between the standard varieties arisen from the dissolution of Serbo-Croatian.

<sup>11</sup> The usage of vocative endings only with the first element of the compound addressative is reported for the northern part of the Croatian language area.

<sup>12</sup> The vocative induces a change in accent, from long rising to long falling.

with a derogatory meaning for designating other referents the vocative ending *-o* is employed (*babo<sup>v</sup> jedna!*).

Substantives with lexical suffix *-ica*, add the ending *-e*, especially in the case of feminine nouns or hypokoristics of both genders (*drugarica* > *drugarice<sup>v!</sup>*, *Ivica* > *Ivice<sup>v!</sup>*), or *-o* when the substantive refers to an object (*ulico<sup>v!</sup>*). Masculine names ending in *-ica* may keep the nominative in address function, most of all when they are homonyms to feminine nouns *Dobrica!* (m.) e *Dobrice<sup>v!</sup>* < *Dobrica* (f.), as they would probably be assimilated to diminutives.

When vocative morphological marking is still dominant, the nominative may be stylistically or pragmatically marked. For example, with feminine nouns it expresses “*prijekor, ljutnja, grdnja*” ‘reproach, anger, scolding’ (Babić et al. 2007, 389), whereas with masculine nouns it may occur in strict order in military contexts (*Vod, stoj!*). On the contrary, when nominative is the usual form of address, masculine vocatives may be perceived as strongly normative, expressing a higher degree of formality, while feminine vocatives may carry additional meanings, often of a derogatory nature. With reference to this double nature of vocative Piper et al. (2005, 650–59) reports that the vocative is used to express either respect or contempt and blame.

3.5 Although the vocative case seems to be well preserved in Bulgarian,<sup>13</sup> we witness a functional reassessment of vocative endings in favour of the nominative case. When used in addressative function, several nouns no longer display vocative morphological marking: “*Zvatelnite formi v sãvremennija ezik ne sa zadãlžitelni*”, ‘The vocative forms in contemporary language are optional’ (Dimitrova 1997, 71).

Vocative is avoided with masculine first names ending with a vowel except *-i* (*Nikola!*, *Georgi!* and *George<sup>v!</sup>*), but vocative marking may be omitted occasionally even in other masculine proper names. For the most part, masculine surnames do not have vocative forms (*Stojanov!*). Morphological marking in the vocative still occurs with the form *gospodine<sup>v!</sup>*. The vocative does not usually occur in compound forms of address (*gospodin Ivanov!*), although it might be used on the second element if that element takes vocative endings (*gospodin profesor!* and *gospodin profesore<sup>v!</sup>*). Feminine proper nouns add vocative endings only in order to express contingent pragmatic meanings (see Pärvev 1965, 11; Stankiewicz 1986, 251–57; Dimitrova 1997, 71)—communicative closeness (ameliorative *Tane<sup>v!</sup>*) or distance (pejorative *Tan’o<sup>v!</sup>*)—, otherwise the neutral way of addressing is the nominative / basic form (*Tanja!*). Vocative forms are also avoided with feminine surnames and titles, but are used with the title *gospožo<sup>v!</sup>* (and *gospoža!*), especially in compound addressatives (*gospožo<sup>v</sup> Ivanova!*). Conversely, the vocative desinence *-o* is regularly added to common nouns (*gospožo<sup>v!</sup>* but *gospoža!* too,

<sup>13</sup> Formal and functional peculiarities of the vocative in Bulgarian, Macedonia, Croatian and Serbian are sometimes considered a result of a common development in the Balkan area (Qvojne 1986; Greenberg 1996).



*Ameriko<sup>V!</sup>*), while the desinence *-e* is used with words ending with the suffix *-ica* (*Milice<sup>V!</sup>*) and diminutives (*Ivanke<sup>V!</sup>*).

The pragmatic meanings conveyed by vocative endings may lead to complete avoidance of vocative endings in neutral contexts. In general, vocative is increasingly perceived either as an archaic or as rural / lower, and its use has become uncommon especially among younger speakers and in controlled speech.<sup>14</sup>

3.6 Work on Macedonian reveals optional and inconsistent usage of vocative desinences (see Koneski 1976, 237–43; Friedman 1993, 264–65; Greenberg 1996, 32–3; Minova-Āurkova 1998). When used, the vocative is usually felt as “rude humorous or dialectal” (Friedman 1993, 264). This applies even to official addressative formulas that, from this point of view, traditionally display a high degree of persistence. Of all the Balkan languages, Macedonian shows the highest level of erosion of vocative case marking, and it should be included in the third group of the above classification (*Reduction*).

4. Our overview of nominative usage vocative in forms of address in Slavic languages has enabled us to uncover a number of common traits and relevant patterns of development.

The demise of vocative markers begins 1) with substantives, where vocative endings would sound unusual (names of less productive inflexional models; names of foreign origins) or would generate unproductive morpho-phonological alternations; and 2) with compound forms of address (title + surname), where vocative endings on the second element are perceived as redundant.

At a later stage, when vocative turns into an unstable category, vocative case marking becomes increasingly less common with proper nouns, first feminine then masculine, and tends to be employed preferentially with the following words: a. formal addressative forms; b. diminutive and hypocoristic names; c. pejoratives and depreciatives.

This peculiar distribution of vocative case marking is the outcome of the semantic and pragmatic re-functionalization of the vocative case as it is progressively replaced with the nominative. On the one hand, by virtue of its normativity, the vocative case sounds more formal and is therefore either preserved in official addressative expressions (Czech *pane<sup>V</sup> Nováku<sup>V</sup> / pane<sup>V</sup> Novák*; Serb. and Croat. *gospodine<sup>V</sup> Nikoliću<sup>V</sup>*) or altogether avoided with first names, when the level of formality it carries would sound inappropriate (Pol. *Krzysztof*). On the other hand, vocative case marking is still used with words which overtly express the

<sup>14</sup> There two main hypotheses about the ongoing demise of the vocative case in Bulgarian. According to Pärvev (1965, 3) and Andrejčín (1978, 122) it is due to the influx of foreign languages, while for Garavalova (2003, 172) it is a consequence of the analytical tendency inherent in Bulgarian. However, both diachronic evidence and the comparison with other Slavic languages show that the maintenance or loss of vocative case marking is an outcome of the internal development of a language and evolve independently of other parts of the language system, including the maintenance / loss of nominal declension.

speaker's attitude towards the addressee and serves to reinforce the pragmatic and evaluative content of such words (Pol. *Krysiu<sup>v</sup>!*; Bulg. *Stele!* / *Stelo!*). Ultimately, the vocative may turn into a substandard feature and become stylistically rural or dialectal.

The preservation of vocative with official forms of address reflects the normal evolution path of morphological categories, as morphological marking of fading grammatical categories tends to be preserved in more normative varieties and eventually to crystallize in formulaic expressions. Conversely, the reason for the preferential use of vocative with hypocoristics and pejorative nouns lies in the inherent categorial traits of the linguistic category of address, of which the vocative is the morphological realization.

Address is a universal language category that performs the function of identifying the addressee in order either to attract or to hold their attention during speech. At the same time, as Arutjunova (1976, 355–56) rightly noted, along with an explicit addressative function the category of address plays an evaluative role: it serves to give voice to pragmatic meanings based on the speaker's attitude towards the addressee (*sub'ektivnaja ocenka*). In other words, forms of address disclose the communicative distance between speaker and addressee, exhibiting different degrees of politeness and conveying axiological assessments. Mazzoleni (1995, 382) provides an almost identical description of the functions peculiar to the linguistic category of address, labelling the pragmatic values inherent to forms of address as “emotional load” that bears alternatively positive or negative axiological charges:<sup>15</sup>

altrettanto centrale nella semantica del vocativo, è l'esplicitazione che avviene attraverso di questo del rapporto soggettivo del parlante nei confronti del ricevente. In questo senso il vocativo è indice del rapporto sociale e psicologico che intercorre tra mittente e destinatario (superiorità – inferiorità; confidenza – distanza), o meglio ancora è espressione di una carica affettiva, che può essere sia positiva che negativa.

The evaluative function and the “emotional charges” are peculiar to forms of address across languages, where they are conveyed by a choice of lexis or and specific intonational curves. From this point of view, there are no differences between a language that has overt vocative marking and a language that does not, because when required, the vocative fulfils its primary function, the addressative one, and secondary pragmatic meanings are conveyed by lexical choices and intonational curves.

Conversely, evidence from those Slavic languages where the vocative case is an unstable category shows that the competition of vocative and nominative in addressative forms allows emotional loads and their different axiological charges to come to the surface. In other words, the vocative case marking may become

<sup>15</sup> As Mazzoleni refers mainly to languages without vocative morphological markers, by using the word “vocative” he means the category of address in general.

an explicit means for expressing pragmatic meanings related to the speaker's attitude towards the hearer.

The demorphologization of the vocative manifests itself in the progressive loss of pragmatic markedness on forms of address in the nominative and the disclosure of "emotional loads" on addressives in the vocative. With regard to the use of the vocative with proper nouns, depending on which proper noun is selected, both the vocative and the nominative may be either unmarked or express a positive / negative emotional load. In spoken Polish, the nominative is unmarked, although careful or older speakers would find it unsuitably impolite; finally, in Bulgarian, the nominative is the unmarked addressive form with female proper nouns, while the vocative carries explicit pragmatic meanings.

At a certain stage of this process, the substitution of the nominative case for the vocative brings about a refunctionalization of vocative endings, which become a device for expressing pragmatic meanings or emotional charge. Vocatives turn into specialized linguistic strategies that play an evaluative function, while a neutral addressive function is carried out by the nominative.<sup>16</sup>

These conclusions allow us to explain why, in Slavic, vocative endings are used preferentially with hypocoristic and pejorative names: it has to do with the convergence on the pragmatic level of this lexical group and vocative case marking. A natural "attraction" develops between these two linguistic categories because the vocative on the morphological level and the hypocoristic/pejorative names on the lexical level cover the same pragmatic functions, and express the same positive or negative emotional charge. Being co-functional, the use of vocative adheres and reinforces the semantics and pragmatics of hypocoristic/pejorative names.

5. A series of morphological changes across the vocative desinence set in the Slavic languages provides further evidence for the refunctionalization of vocatives as markers of communicative distance between the speakers and for the semantic and pragmatic attraction between vocative and specific lexical groups possessing explicit axiological contents.

In Balkan Slavic languages, we find several instances where vocative endings are selected only partially on the basis of their gender and formal traits, but mainly according to the different evaluative meanings they can give voice to.

In BCS the vocative ending *-e* serves to convey positive, ameliorative meanings (Babić et al. 2007, 388 "se tim nastavkom obilježuje dragost, nježnost"),

<sup>16</sup> Along these lines, it is interesting to note how the pragmatic meanings of "closeness" / "distance", "politeness / impoliteness" from the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) are applied by two different researchers Mazzoleni (1995) and Jaworski (1992). The former refers to them within a general description of the linguistic category of address, while the latter considers them with regard to the issue of vocative—nominative competition in Polish. This confirms indirectly that the development of vocative case in Slavic is an outcome of its refunctionalization on the basis of the pragmatic traits proper to vocative itself as a morphologic expression of the category of address.

while the ending *-o* expresses derogatory nuances. This may be best seen in the case of substantives ending in *-ica*. The ending *-e* is used with hypocoristics of both genres (*bakice<sup>V!</sup>*, *Jurice<sup>V!</sup>*) reinforcing the positive semantics of the addressative form reinforce. On the other hand, the ending *-o* is used with substantive of both genres that already carry a depreciative meaning (*ubico<sup>V!</sup>*).

This kind of distribution of vocative endings is well attested in Bulgarian, where, as already pointed out above, feminine proper names in addressative function are normally used in the basic form *Tanja!* The two etymological vocative endings (*-o*, *-e*) are no longer selected according to formal features of the words, nor are they made to work as exclusively vocative markers, but have become means for expressing different pragmatic meanings. As in BCS *-o* adds a derogatory element, while *-e* carries hypocoristic nuances. Therefore *Tane<sup>V!</sup>* and *Tan'o<sup>V!</sup>* are respectively the hypocorist and pejorative variants of the proper name *Tanja*. As a result of this development, the ending *-e* is typically employed with diminutives (*Elenke<sup>V!</sup>*) or hypocoristics (*Done<sup>V!</sup>*) (see Stojanov 1983, 114) as they share the same semantic and pragmatic tras. However, common nouns or proper nouns for nonhumans add vocative endings in compliance to traditional morphological rules. Therefore, hard-stem feminine substantives ending in *-a* add the desinence *-o* without any additional negative emotional load (*mamo<sup>V!</sup>*, *sestro<sup>V!</sup>*). For Macedonian, Koneski (1976, 241) reports that occasionally competing desinences may voice a similar pragmatic distinction for masculine substantives as well: *brate<sup>V!</sup>* (positive emotional load), *bratu<sup>V!</sup>* (negative emotional load).

In Polish and Ukrainian we observe the overextension of the original masculine ending *-u* to all hypocoristics and diminutives of both genders (*Krzysztof* > *Krzyś* > *Krzysiu<sup>V!</sup>*; *mama* > *mamusia* > *mamusiu<sup>V!</sup>*) ending in soft consonants (*Ania* > *Aniu<sup>V!</sup>*). This kind of morphological syncretism may be interpreted as a specialization of a desinences across gender differences on the basis of the semantic and pragmatic features of words, with masculine and feminine hypocoristics sharing the same morphological and pragmatic traits (see Zaleski 1963, Trovesi 2010).

At this stage of the process of vocative categorial weakening, the semantic and pragmatic closeness between vocative and hypocoristics engenders a reinterpretation of vocative case markers as word-formative elements. Vocative desinences employed to carry specific pragmatic meanings on addressative forms may progressively turn into devices only meant to express such pragmatic meanings. In other words, refunctionalized vocative forms do not compulsorily occur in addressative function, but may fulfil a non-addressative role in the sentence, that is, they may be used as the subject of a sentence. In fact, Bulgarian addressative forms like *Tane<sup>V!</sup>* are at times already classified as hypocoristics and no longer seen as vocative forms (see Vasilev 1971, 80; Andrejčín 1978, 121).<sup>17</sup> In Polish, some specific masculine vocative forms in *-u* may be used as nominative (*Stasiu/Lechu przyszedł*

<sup>17</sup> This development might be due even to the formal identity of the vocative ending with the diminutive formant *-e*.

*na kolację*), where “ich typowa postać niesie ze sobą dodatkowy ładunek ekspresji nieobecny w neutralnych formach mianownika”, ‘their typical form carries an additional expressive load not present in neutral nominative forms’ (Krzyżanowski 2001, 84). Although such usage is quite limited (see Zaleski 1959, Lubaś 1983, Zarębina 1984), such occurrences clearly show how vocative markers expressing pragmatic meanings may be reinterpreted as word-formative elements, whose crucial semantic features are identical to those of the vocative form.

Thus, the development of vocative uncovers an interesting interface between nominal morphology and word formation strategies brought about by the convergence of refunctionalized vocatives and hypocoristics / pejoratives on the semantic and pragmatic level.<sup>18</sup>

6. In conclusion, we have argued that the loss of obligatory vocative marking in Slavic languages leads to a refunctionalization of the vocative itself, consisting in a) the shift of the proper addressative function to the nominative and b) the explicit disclosure of the inherent evaluative meanings of address carried by vocative endings. As the process of demorphologization continues, the “emotional charge” typical of all forms of address is eventually—and quite specifically—conveyed. Further, such development of the vocative promotes attraction between vocative markers and specific lexical groups that share the same pragmatic and semantic features. That is the reason why during the process of weakening and loss vocative tends to be better preserved not only in formal address forms, as required by the language norm, but also with ameliorative, hypocoristic and pejorative nouns. Eventually, vocative endings that were originally employed along distributional criteria based on different categorial (masculine – feminine) or formal (hard – soft consonants) word features turn into dedicated means for voicing “emotional charge”. At this stage of development, vocatives may become sources for word-formative elements, especially hypocoristics. This shows that, in the evolution of morphologically marked vocatives, crystallization into ritual or exclamatory formulas may be only one among the possible outcomes.

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<sup>18</sup> Questioning the categorial status of vocative, Anstatt comes to the conclusion that vocative endings ought to be considered word-formative elements rather than case desinences: “Die Zuordnung der Vokativ-Formen zu den Wortbildungsmitteln [...] erlaubt es, diese Formen als in unterschiedlichem Grade obligatorisch zu betrachten, erklärt die Beschränkung auf bestimmte Subkategorien einer Wortart und die pragmatischen Funktionen” (Anstatt 2005, 340).

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