VARIATION IN THE POSSESSION OF KINSHIP TERMS IN THE DIALECTS OF ITALY

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1.   Introduction

The term 'dialects' often refers to varieties that derive from the standard form of a language (Clivio et al. 2011). However, this definition does not apply to the non-standard dialects of Italy (even though they are often referred to as 'Italian dialects'), as they are not considered to be variants of Standard Italian (henceforth SI) (Clivio et al. 2011). Rather, they are widely considered to be separate varieties that descended from the Vulgar Latin that was spoken on the Italian peninsula and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia (Ledgeway 2016). Thus, the dialects of Italy have been grouped geographically, rather than by their similarities with SI, as intelligibility among the dialects (due to their phonetic, morphological and syntactic similarities) is seemingly correlated with geographic proximity (Clivio et al. 2011). Traditionally, the dialects spoken north of the city of Rome in the west and the city of Ancona in the east on the Italian peninsula have been grouped as the dialects of northern Italy (DNI), while the dialects spoken south of that geographic line have been grouped as the dialects of southern Italy (DSI). The dialects spoken on the island of Sicily have also been traditionally grouped with the DSI (Ledgeway 2016). The dialects spoken on the island of Sardinia, on the other hand, have not been considered as dialects belonging to either group (Clivio et al. 2011).

In this paper, I explore the forms and the syntactic distribution of the possessors that are used with common nouns[1] and compare them with those used with kinship nouns in each of the groups of dialects, as well as in SI. More specifically, I determine whether the traditional categorization of the dialects of Italy holds with respect to these possessive constructions, using the primary dialectological technique of comparing forms and structures between variants (Clivio et al. 2011). By highlighting the type of possessors (possessive adjectives/reduced possessors/enclitic possessives), whether the possessor occurs with a definite article, and whether the possessor occurs pre- or post-nominally, I show that the possessives in the DSI, particularly in the Sicilian dialects, show the most variation in their group and should not necessarily be grouped with other DSI with respect to the possession of kinship terms. My data is taken from the Sprach-und Sachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz (henceforth AIS) by Jaberg and Jud (1928-1940), and from original research on the Calabrian dialect of Ardore Superiore.

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[1] Common nouns in this paper refer to alienable nouns, which are nouns that do not have an obligatory possessor in a given language. Kinship nouns, on the other hand, refer to a subset of inalienable nouns, which are nouns that have an implicit possessor (Crystal 1980).

2. Possession in SI

2.1 Possessors in the possession of common nouns

Unlike other Romance languages (namely Spanish and French), SI uses possessive adjectives in the possession of common nouns. Like most Romance languages, however, these possessive adjectives agree in person with the possessor DP (van Peteghem 2012). They are considered to be possessive adjectives because they have an attributive adjectival distribution; they agree in φ-features, namely in number and gender, with the noun that is being possessed (van Peteghem 2012). The only exception is the possessive adjective for the third-person plural, *loro*, which is invariable (Anna Laura and Giulio Lepschy 1988). Additionally, they are always preceded by a definite article that also agrees in number and gender with the possessed noun (van Peteghem 2012). The only difference between possessives adjectives and other types of adjectives in SI is that possessive adjectives occur pre-nominally, while most[2] other adjectives in SI occur post-nominally. Consider the following examples:

(1) *(Il)   mio   libro
     DET.**MSG**   my.**MSG** book.**MSG**
     "My book"

(2) *(le)   tue   borse
     DET.**FPL**   your.**FPL** purse.**FPL**
     "Your purses"

(3) *(il/la)   loro   astuccio/matita
     DET.**M/FSG** their.**M/FPL** pencil case/pencil.**M/FSG**
     "Their pencil case/pencil"

As the examples in (1-3) show, the possessive adjectives *mio*, *tue* and *loro* are always preceded by the definite article; the possessive construction is considered ungrammatical if the definite article is omitted. Furthermore, these definite articles always agree in number and gender with the noun that is being possessed. The possessive adjectives also agree in number and gender with the noun that is being possessed, except for the possessive adjective in (3) (*loro*), which is invariable. Crucially, the possessive adjectives generally occur pre-nominally; possessive adjectives can only occur post-nominally in SI if they are used as a term of address or endearment (consider *sole-mio* (literally 'my sun') or *amico-mio* ('my friend') [Cinque 2010]), or if they are the focus of the sentence (Trionfera 2018). When the possessive adjectives are post-nominal and focused, they presuppose a contrast (for example, *questo è il libro MIO* ['this is MY book']), presupposes *questo è il libro MIO,*

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[2] Most adjectives in SI occur post-nominally; however, there are some adjectives, such as "buono" (roughly 'good'), "bello" (roughly 'beautiful'), "vecchio" (roughly 'old'), "caro" (roughly 'dear'), etc., that can occur pre-nominally (Cinque 2010).

non il TUO/SUO, etc. ['this is MY book, not YOURS/HIS, etc.']). The following is a chart that shows the paradigm of possessive adjectives in SI:

Table 1. Paradigm of Possessive Adjectives in SI:

	MSG	MPL	FSG	FPL
1SG	mio	miei	mia	mie
2SG	tuo	tuoi	tua	tue
3SG	suo	suoi	sua	sue
1PL	nostro	nostri	nostra	nostre
2PL	vostro	vostri	vostra	vostre
3PL	loro	loro	loro	loro

Table 1 shows that the possessive adjectives in SI have almost a complete paradigm for possessive adjectives; there are four forms for each person: a masculine-singular form, a masculine-feminine form, a feminine-singular form and a feminine-plural form. The only exception is the third-person plural, which only has one form, *loro*.

In the next section, I show that the constructions involved in the possession of kinship nouns differ from those involved in the possession of common nouns in only one crucial respect: the behaviour of the definite article.

2.2   Possessors in the possession of kinship nouns

Similar to the possession of common nouns, SI uses the entire paradigm of pre-nominal possessive adjectives that agree in person with the possessor and in number and gender with the possessed noun in the possession of kinship nouns. The crucial difference that can be seen in the possession of kinship nouns is that, if the kinship noun is singular, it cannot occur with the definite article; the definite article must be omitted, otherwise the construction will be ungrammatical. This is not the case for singular common nouns. Compare the possessive construction in (1) with the following possessive construction:

(4)   (*il)   mio   padre
      DET.**MSG** POSS.**M1SG**   father.**MSG**
      "My father"

Omitting the definite article *il* renders the possessive construction in (1) ungrammatical; however, that same definite article *must* be omitted in (4).

This is the case for all singular, bare root kinship nouns; however, this is not the case for singular kinship nouns that have a suffix attached to it (especially, but not limited to, diminutives[3]) (Anna Laura and Giulio Lepschy 1988). Furthermore, the definite article is

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[3] Clivio et. al (2011) note that some speakers of SI omit the definite article with certain kinship nouns with suffixes (for example, *matr-**igna*** ('god-mother')), but they offer no explanation as to why that is the case.

still necessary in the possession of plural kinship nouns. Consider the following possessive constructions:

(5)   (*il)   tuo   fratello
     DET.**MSG** POSS.**M2SG** brother.**MSG**
     "Your brother"

(6)   *(il)   tuo   fratell-ino
     DET.**MSG** POSS.**M2SG** brother.**MSG**-DIM
     "Your brother"

(7)   *(i)   tuoi   fratelli
     DET.**MSG** POSS.**M2PL** brother.**MPL**
     "Your brothers"

In example (5), the definite article *il* cannot occur in the possession of the kinship noun *fratello*, considering the noun is a singular, bare root kinship noun. Conversely, in example (6), the kinship noun *fratello* has the diminutive suffix *-ino* attached to it, which is why the definite article *il* must occur to make the possessive construction grammatical. Finally, in (7), the kinship noun is plural (*fratelli*), which also means that the definite article is required.

With that in the mind, the only significant difference between the possessive constructions used in the possession of common nouns and the possessive constructions used in the possession of kinship nouns is that the definite article must be omitted in the possession of singular, bare root kinship nouns, while it is obligatory in all contexts with common nouns.

3.   Possessors in the DNI

3.1   Possessors in the possession of common nouns

In the DNI, possessive adjectives are also used in the possession of common nouns. However, unlike SI, the DNI have two forms of possessive adjectives: (1) full post-nominal forms; (2) reduced pre-nominal forms. The only significant syntactic difference between the reduced pre-nominal possessor and the full post-nominal possessors is that the reduced pre-nominal possessors cannot be coordinated or focalized like the full post-nominal ones can:

(8)   <u>Fiorentino: (reduced pre-nominal form)</u>
     la   mi (*e   tu)   casa   è verde
     DET.**FSG** my (*and your) house.**FSG** is green
     "My (*and your) house is green."

(9) Padovano: (full postnominal form)
     questa   zé a   casa   mia   (e   tua)
     This.**FSG** is DET.**FSG** house.**FSG** my.**FSG** (and your.**FSG**)
     "This house is mine and yours."   (Trionfera 2018)

As the example in (8) shows, it is ungrammatical to coordinate the reduced pre-nominal forms *mi* and *tu* in the northern dialect of Fiorentino. The example in (9), on the other hand, shows that this is possible with the full post-nominal forms *mia* and *tua* in the northern dialect of Padovano.

With both types of possessors, the definite article is *always* present and precedes the possessed noun. Thus, the word order for possessive constructions in the DNI is either article+noun+possessive or article+possessive+noun. Additionally, both types of the possessors agree in person with the possessor; however, it is only the full postnominal forms that agree in gender and number with the noun that is being possessed. The reduced prenominal forms are always invariable. Consider the following examples:

(10) Fiorentino:
      la   mi/tu/su   casa
      DET.**FSG**   my/your/his   house.**FSG**
      "My/your/his house"

(11) i   mi/tu/su   libbro
      DET.**MSG**   my/your/his   book.**MSG**
      "My/your/his book"

(12) Venetian:
      Ea   casa   mia/tua
      DET.**FSG**   house.**FSG**   my.**FSG**/your.**FSG**
      "My/your house"

(13) 'l   libro   mio/tuo
      DET.**MSG**   book.**MSG**   my.**MSG**/your.**MSG**
      "My/your book"   (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2019)

As the Fiorentino examples in (10-11) show, the reduced, pre-nominal possessors *mi/tu/su* are invariable; the same reduced pre-nominal possessive forms are used in the possession of the feminine-singular word *casa* and the masculine-singular word *libbro*. Conversely, the Venetian examples in (12-13) show that the post-nominal possessors change form based on the number and gender of the noun that is being possessed; for the feminine-singular word *casa*, the 1SG and 2SG feminine-singular possessors *mia* and *tua*, respectively, are used, while for the masculine-singular word *libro*, the 1SG and 2SG masculine-singular possessors *mio* and *tuo*, respectively, are used. This is the case across the DNI (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2019).

3.2 Possessors in the possession of kinship nouns

In the DNI, only the reduced, pre-nominal possessive forms are used in the possession of kinship nouns. This is ubiquitous across the DNI (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2019). Similar to the reduced, pre-nominal possessors in the possession of common nouns, the reduced, pre-nominal possessors used in the possession of kinship nouns are invariable. The only syntactic difference between the possessive constructions used in the possession of common nouns and those used in the possession of kinship nouns is that the definite article is *rarely* used in the possession of singular kinship nouns in the north-east DNI. Consider the following Venetian example:

(14) Venetian:
      To   fradeo
      Your brother.**MSG**
      "Your brother"

(15) i   to   fradei
      DET.**MPL** your brother.**MPL**
      "Your brothers"   (AIS = Jaberg and Jud 1928–1940)

The Venetian examples in (14-15) show that the north-east DNI are like SI with respect to the possession of kinship nouns, considering the definite article does not occur with singular, bare root kinship nouns, such as *fradeo*. The definite article only occurs with plural nouns, such as *fradei*. However, there are some exceptions; in the majority of the north-east DNI, the definite article is omitted with the singular and plural forms of the kinship nouns 'brother in-law', 'sister in-law' and 'cousin'. Consider the following examples:

(16) Cavarzere dialect (spoken around Venice):
      so   cugna
      his/her brother in-law.**MSG**
      "His/her brother in-law"

(17) so   cugnadi
      his/her brother in-law.**MPL**
      "His/her brother in-laws"

(18) Vicenza dialect:
      su   cugna
      his/her sister in-law.**FSG**
      "His/her sister in-law"

(19) Trieste dialect:
      me cuzin/cuzina
      my cousin.**MSG/FSG**
      "My cousin"

(20) me cuzins
      my cousin.**MPL**
      "My cousins"   (AIS = Jaberg and Jud 1928–1940)

As the examples in (16-20) show, the definite article does not occur with the nouns for 'brother in-law', 'sister in-law' and 'cousin' in the dialects of Cavazere, Vicenza and Trieste, regardless of whether the noun is singular or not. According to Cardinaletti and Giusti (2019), the omission of the definite article in both the singular and the plural is restricted to kinship terms of second or third degree, i.e. kinship terms that are not a part of the immediate blood family. Mostly terms relating to the family of one's spouse fall into this group. The variation in the appearance of the definite article for the nouns: 'brother', 'sister', 'cousin', 'brother in-law', and 'sister in-law' for the north-east DNI is summarized in the table below. The AIS points analysed for these DNI are Venezia 376, Gamberale 375, Cavarzere 385, Trieste 369, Udine 339, Gorizia 349, Mortaso 330, Faver 332, Canal San Bovo 334 and Vicenza 363:

Table 2. Variation of the article in the north-east DNI

Token	Singular		Plural	
	$\emptyset$	Article	$\emptyset$	Article
brother	10	0	4	6
sister	10	0	5	5
cousin	20	0	16	4
brother in-law	10	0	6	4
sister in-law	8	2	7	3
Total	58	2	38	22
	60		60	

In the north-west DNI, on the other hand, the definite article is obligatory with all kinship nouns, singular or plural. Thus, the north-west DNI are less similar to SI with respect to the occurrence of the definite article, as even the singular, bare root kinship nouns occur with the definite article. The increase in the use of the definite article in the north-west DNI with the same terms in Table 2 is shown in the table below. The AIS points analysed for these DNI are Milano 261, Monza 252, Bienate 250, Torino 155, Montanaro 146, Corio 144, Sassello 177, Genova 178, Rovegno 179:

Table 3. Variation of the article in the north-west DNI

	Singular		Plural	
	∅	Article	∅	Article
brother	10	0	1	9
sister	6	4	1	9
cousin	16	4	1	19
brother in-law	6	4	3	7
sister in-law	8	2	1	9
Total	46	14	7	53
	60		60	

In short, considering the same type of possessors are used across the DNI, it appears that the only variation that can be seen in the possession of kinship nouns in the DNI is in the occurrence of the definite article. In the next section, I discuss the DSI, where there is considerable variation in the possessive constructions used in the possession of kinship terms, as variation is not just seen in the behaviour of the definite article.

4. Possessors in the DSI

4.1 Possessors in the possession of common nouns

In the DSI, possessive adjectives are also used in the possession of common nouns. However, unlike in SI, these possessive adjectives are always postnominal (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2019). Additionally, for many of the DSI, it is unclear whether the possessive adjectives agree in number and gender with the noun that is being possessed, considering the endings of both the nouns and the possessive adjectives have been neutralized to a schwa or completely deleted (Maiden 1991). They do, however, agree in person with the possessor. Nonetheless, like SI and the DNI, there is always an obligatory definite article preceding the common nouns in these possessive constructions. Thus, the word order in these possessive constructions is always article+noun+possessive. Consider the following examples:

(21) Napoletano:
     a'   cas   miə
     DET.**FSG**   house.**FSG**   my.**FSG???**
     "My house"

(22) Pugliese:
     u'   libru   miə
     DET.**MPL**   book.**MPL**   my.**MPL???**
     "My book"

(23) Matera dialect (spoken in the region of Basilicata):
      u   c'sspren   mei
      DET.**MPL** cousin.**MPL** my.**MPL**
      "My cousins"

The examples in (21-23) collectively show that the definite article is always present and that the possessive adjective is always postnominal. Additionally, the examples in (21-22) show that the schwa is often the ending for possessive adjectives in the DSI, regardless of number and gender. Thus, it is unclear whether the possessive adjectives concord in number and gender with the common noun being possessed, although there are some dialects, like the Matera dialect in (23) that have a full paradigm for possessive adjectives. In other words, there are four forms for each person: a masculine-singular form, a masculine-feminine form, a feminine-singular form and a feminine-plural form.

Besides the fact that some of the DSI have deficient paradigms for possessive adjectives, while others have complete ones, there is very little variation in the DSI with regards to the possessive constructions used in the possession of common nouns.

4.2   Possessors in the possession of kinship nouns

The DSI also use their paradigm of post-nominal possessive adjectives in the possession of kinship nouns. However, they are rarely used, especially if the possessor is in the 1SG or 2SG:

(24) Napoletano:
      u/#e   fratə   tuojə[4]
      DET.**MPL/SG**   brother.**MPL/SG** you.**MPL/SG**
      "Your brother/s"

Instead, the use of enclitic possessives is preferred across the board for the 1SG and 2SG (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2019, Trionfera 2018, Clivio et. al 2011, Sotiri 2007, Maiden 2006, Dahl and Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001). Their use is preferred only for the 1SG and 2SG because, in the majority of the DSI, there are only forms for the 1SG and 2SG. These enclitic possessives are unstressed possessors that necessarily attach as suffixes to the kinship noun that is being possessed, which means that they are post-nominal. Unlike possessive adjectives, especially the ones that do have rich morphology, these enclitic possessives are invariable; they do not agree in number and gender with the kinship noun that is being possessed. Additionally, in most of the DSI, they occur without determiners, unless they attach to plural kinship terms (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2019):

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[4] The "#" indicates here that it can be said, but it is a bit odd. Additionally, considering the endings on most nouns and possessive adjectives are neutralized in Napoletano, I feel it is important to say that this example alone does not exactly show that possessives adjectives are mostly only used in the possession of plural kinship nouns. The idea is that, if a speaker opts to use a possessive adjective with the noun *fratə* ('brother'), it almost always entails that they are referring to more than one of their brothers. The definite article used in these possessive constructions confirms this, as it almost always the masculine-plural form *u* that is used.

(25) Barese dialect:
      (*u/a)   marítə/mugghier-mə/-tə
      DET.**MSG/FSG** husband.**MSG**/wife.**FSG**-my/your
       "My/your husband/wife"

(26) (*u)   nepúdə-mə/-tə
      DET.**MSG**   grandchild.**MSG**-my/your
      "My grandchild"

(27) (li)   nepúd**i**-mə/-tə
      DET.**MPL**   grandchild.**MPL**-my/your
      "My grandchildren"   (D'Alessandro and Migliori 2017)

As the Barese examples in (25-27) show, the 1SG enclitic possessive -*mə* and the 2SG enclitic possessive -*tə* are invariable; they do not change form when possessing a masculine-singular, feminine-singular, or masculine-plural kinship noun (*marítə*, *mugghier* and *nepúdi*, respectively). Furthermore, the examples in (25-26) show that it is ungrammatical to have the enclitic possessives co-occur with the definite article *u* and *a* when possessing a singular kinship noun; however, the definite article can occur with the enclitic possessive when possessing a plural kinship noun (D'Alessandro and Migliori 2017). In fact, the definite article is used frequently in the possession of kinship terms in the DSI. The following table shows the frequency in the use of the definite article in the possession of the same kinship nouns as in the tables (22-23). The tokens were taken from the AIS points 721 Napoli, 720 Monte di Procida, 722 Ottaviano, 719 Bari, 728 Alberobello, 729 Carovigno, 736 Matera, 733 Castelmerrano, 735 Pisticci and 751 Acquaformosa:

Table 4. Variation in the article in the DSI

	Singular		Plural	
	∅	Article	∅	Article
brother	10	0	3	7
sister	10	0	4	6
cousin	19	1	5	15
brother in-law	1	9	1	9
sister in-law	1	9	1	9
Total	41	19	14	46
	60		60	

What is interesting to note from Table 4 is that the terms 'brother in-law' and 'sister in-law' in the DSI seem to require the definite article with possessors, even in the singular. This is unlike the north-east DNI, where those same terms never seem to occur with the definite article, even in the plural.

4.2.1 Possessors in the possession of kinship nouns in the Calabrian dialects

Enclitic possessors seem to act uniformly across the DSI except in the dialects of Calabria seems to differ from the enclitic possessives in the rest of the DSI . In this section, I explore the Calabrian dialect of Ardore Superiore to illustrate this point.

In the dialect of Ardore Superiore (unlike in most of the DSI) the paradigm for enclitic possessives includes a 3SG possessor:

Table 5. Paradigm for enclitic possessives in the dialect of Ardore Superiore

Person	Enclitic Possessive
1SG	-mə
2SG	-tə
3SG	-sə

Similar to the rest of the DSI, the use of these enclitic possessives (including the 3SG one) are preferred over possessive adjectives in the possession of kinship nouns. The most notable difference between the enclitic possessives in the DSI and the ones in the dialect of Ardore Superiore (besides the fact that the dialect of Ardore Superiore has a more complete paradigm for enclitic possessions with the inclusion of a 3SG possessor) is that the enclitic possessives in the dialect of Ardore Superiore have more syntactic/morphological restrictions than the rest of the DSI on the type of kinship nouns to which they can attach. For instance, they only attach to singular kinship nouns; this point cannot be illustrated with examples, considering the endings for the masculine-singular, masculine-plural, feminine-singular and the feminine-plural nouns in this dialect have been reduced to the schwa. However, if an enclitic possessive is used in the possession of a kinship noun, the kinship noun must refer to a singular noun; it cannot be used to refer to a plural noun. For instance, *fratə-mə* ('brother-my') necessarily refers to the possession of one brother; it can never be understood as 'my brothers'. In the other DSI, adding the plural definite article before the noun and the enclitic possessive would imply that the noun that is being possessed is plural, considering the definite article cannot occur with enclitic possessives attached to singular kinship nouns (this can be seen in the Barese example in [27]); however, adding the definite article in the possessive structure is not possible in the dialect of Ardore Superiore:

(28) *i   fratə-mə
      DET.**MPL** brother-my
      "My brothers"

Thus, the enclitic possessives in the dialect of Ardore Superiore cannot attach to plural terms. Additionally, the definite article never occurs in possessive constructions with enclitic possessives in the dialect of Ardore Superiore.

Although the enclitic possessives in the dialect of Ardore Superiore can attach to singular kinship nouns, it appears that they cannot attach to singular kinship nouns that already have a suffix or diminutive attached to them. Consider the following examples:

(29) neputə-mə
      nephew/niece-my
      "My nephew/niece"

(30) *nepu**tin**ə-mə
       grandchild-my
      "My grandchild"

(31) cuginə-tə
      cousin-your
      "Your cousin"

(32) *cugin**ett**ə-tə
       little cousin-your
      "Your little cousin"

(33) sorə-sə
      sister.**FSG**-his/her
      "His/her sister"

(34) *sore**lin**ə-sə
       little sister.**FSG**-his/her
      "His/her little sister"

(35) **cum**patrə-mə
      godfather.**MSG**-my
      "My godfather"

As the examples in (29-34) show, the enclitic possessives cannot attach to singular nouns with suffixes. Conversely, the example in (35) shows that this is not the case for nouns with prefixes. Thus, it would be incorrect to say that they must attach to singular, bare root kinship terms, as the restriction seems to be with singular kinship nouns with suffixes, not with infixes in general.

Despite the differences in the enclitic possessives, the dialects of Calabria (namely the dialect of Ardore Superiore) still belong with the other DSI with respect to the possession of kinship terms, as non of the DNI do not have possessors that resemble enclitic possessives morphologically or syntactically. In the next section, I show the striking similarities that the Sicilian dialects have with the DNI with respect to these possessive structures. This comparison ultimately challenges their categorization as a DSI.

4.2.2 Possessors in the possession of kinship terms in Sicilian dialects

Unlike the DSI, the Sicilian dialects have two types of possessors: full post-nominal possessives (which have a complete paradigm) and reduced pre-nominal possessives, (which are generally invariable and, thus, only have one or two forms for each grammatical person). The crucial, syntactic difference between the two types of possessors is that the full post-nominal forms are the only ones that can be focalized or coordinated. In the possession of common nouns, both types of possessors are used, preceded by the definite article. In the possession of kinship nouns, on the other hand, only the reduced pre-nominal forms are used:

(36) Sicilian (spoken in the city of Palermo):
      Me ccusino
      my cousin.MSG
      "My cousin"

(37) *U   ccusino miu
       DET.**MSG** cousin   my.**MSG**
      "My cousin"

This is, precisely, what can be seen with the DNI. Thus, it appears that the Sicilian dialects behave morphologically/syntactically like the DNI and unlike the DSI with respect to these possessive constructions. More specifically, it appears that the Sicilian dialects behave the most like the north-east DNI, considering the definite article is almost always absent with singular kinship terms, unlike with plural terms. This characteristic also approaches the Sicilian dialects to SI:

(38) The dialect of Sperlinga:
      so   cugna
      his/her brother in-law.MSG
      "His/her brother in-law"

(39) i   soi   cugnai
      DET.**MPL** his/her.**PL** brother in-law.**MPL**
      "His/her brother in-laws"

The following table shows the frequency in the use of the definite article in the possession of the kinship nouns 'brother', 'sister', 'cousin', 'brother in-law' and 'sister in-law'. The tokens were taken from the AIS points 803 Palermo, 821 Vita, 824 Baucina, 826 Mistretta, 836 Sperlinga, 845 Calascibetta, 851 San Biagio Platani, 844 Villalba, 846 Catenanuova and 865 Aidone:

Table 6. Variation in the article in the Sicilian dialects:

	Singular		Plural	
	∅	Article	∅	Article
brother	10	0	0	10
sister	10	0	0	10
cousin	18	2	0	20
brother in-law	10	0	0	10
sister in-law	10	0	0	10
Total	58	2	0	60
	60		60	

What really solidifies the idea that the Sicilian dialects behave more like the DNI than the DSI in the possession of kinship nouns is the fact that there are *no* enclitic possessives in the Sicilian dialects. The use of enclitic possessives over reduced prenominal possessive adjectives in the possession of kinship nouns is the most significant morphological difference between the DSI and the DNI in these possessive constructions, which is why their categorization as a DSI with regards to these possessive constructions is likely inaccurate.

5   Conclusion

Both the DNI and the DSI differ from SI when it comes to the possession of kinship terms. However, they also differ from one another in the types of possessives that are used and in the position that the possessives are found with respect to the noun. The traditional categorization of the DNI and the DSI holds (for the most part), as the only variation that can be seen in the possession of kinship nouns in the DNI is with the frequency of use of the definite article and as all the DSI have enclitic possessives. However, this research on the possessives used in the possession of kinship nouns in the dialects of Sicily ultimately shows that these dialects cannot be grouped with the DSI with respect to these possessive structures, as the behaviour and type of the possessive closely resemble those used in the DNI.

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