MAYARA DA SILVA NETO, BARBARA GILI FIVELA, ELISABETTA SANTORO,
FLAVIANE ROMANI FERNANDES SVARTMAN

Do mitigation strategies affect prosodic correlates?
An investigation on orders and requests in Italian

This paper aims to identify whether and to what extent mitigation procedures affect the intonational pattern of orders and requests produced by Italian speakers (from Lecce), within different social distances contexts. Data were collected using a variant of the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and analyzed within the Autosegmental Metrical framework, on the basis of auditory perception, analysis of the phonological function and exploration of the F0 contour. The results indicate that 1) the intonational patterns of orders and requests differ especially when the latter are expressed by the interrogative form and specifically, as far as intonation is concerned, by a different boundary tone. Moreover, 2) the presence of lexical means of mitigation and the low social distance interact in a complex manner in orders and request, but often favors more peremptory, less neutral patterns.

Keywords: intonation, orders, requests, Lecce Italian, Autosegmental Metrical framework.

1. *Introduction*

From a pragmatic perspective, investigating orders and requests leads us immediately to the Speech Acts Theory and its subsequent developments. According to Austin (1962), author of the aforementioned theory, orders and requests would both be illocutionary acts carried out by means of *exercitive* verbs, that is, verbs that express the speaker's power, right or influence over the listener. Searle (1979), in his turn, proposes a classification where orders and requests are considered a *directive* type of illocutionary act, whose goal – or illocutionary point – is to make the listener perform an action. The two authors admit, therefore, that we are facing similar speech acts, since in their classifications both belong to the same categories. However, while Austin does not state whether there is any kind of differences between orders or commands and requests, Searle does it when he clarifies that illocutionary force and illocutionary point are two different concepts:

> The illocutionary point is part of but not the same as illocutionary force. Thus, e.g., the illocutionary point of requests is the same as that of commands: both are attempts to get hearers to do something. But the illocutionary forces are clearly different. In general, one can say that the notion of illocutionary force is the resultant of several elements of which illocutionary point is only one, though, I believe, the most important one (Searle, 1979, p. 3).

Thus, orders and requests are speech acts through which speakers try to get the listeners "to do something", which can be trivial or demand a great effort, other than have material or discursive consequences. We could assume that such speech acts may force listeners out of their comfort zone, as they need to evaluate if they can, want or must take an action and in what way. Besides, the same listeners, as stated by Brown & Levinson (1987), can be close or distant from the speaker on a horizontal axis of social distance and/or on a vertical axis in terms of hierarchy or power. In our view, this is also an important variable to be considered. Indeed, several studies in pragmatics - focused on production or perception of different speech acts, in language teaching and learning - take into account the social distance, considering it as an independent variable, a contextual element that influences linguistic choices of speakers (e.g. Takimoto, 2007; Nuzzo, 2013; Spadotto e Santoro, 2019; Santoro, Kulikowski & Silva, 2017; Silva Neto, 2018). Further, studies concerning intonation have also showed that social distance plays a role in affecting intonation (e.g. for Catalan, Astruc, Vanrell, & Prieto 2016 on requests and offers and Borràs-Comes, Sichel-Bazin & Prieto 2015 on vocatives).

Speakers are somehow aware of the importance of all contextual factors (including social distance) involved in the realization of these speech acts, as well as they are aware, at least to a certain extent, that they may have undesirable effects and/or require the use of politeness strategies, according to the social rules of a specific culture. Therefore, speakers adopt different means to mitigate the illocutionary force of the abovementioned speech acts. Innumerous studies have investigated mitigation strategies used in orders, requests and other speech acts in different languages, being such strategies subject to intra and cross variation across languages and cultures. Morphosyntactic, lexical or discursive modifiers, supportive moves (preparators, grounders, etc.) and the use of indirectness are quite recurrent means of achieving this purpose (cf. Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Santoro, 2017; among others). It is capital to remember, though, that besides a typical linguistic structure (interrogative form for requests and imperative form for orders, for example), also prosodic elements are conventionalized (Escandell-Vidal, 2011), and convey the specific meaning of different types of speech acts (Ladd, 2008), as well as politeness strategies (Gili Fivela, Bazzanella, 2014). Therefore, the elements used to mitigate or reinforce them will somehow interact with the prosodic makeup of the utterance.

The relation between prosodic features and other information available to listeners is an intriguing matter, which has been investigated with special regards to multimodal communication (see the integration of audio and visual information, e.g., Swerts, Krahmer, 2008). As far as unimodal investigations are concerned, much attention has been paid to the prosody-syntax-pragmatics interface, thus to the impact that syntactic and pragmatic information may have on prosodic features and correlates conveyed through speech (Nespor, Vogel, 1986; Selkirk, 1984; Féry, 2013), for instance also in relation to politeness (Hidalgo, 2003; Hübscher, Borràs-Comes & Prieto, 2017; Caballero, Vergis, Jiang, & Pell, 2018). Nevertheless, according to the authors' knowledge, less attention has been payed to the correlation between

lexical and prosodic information, even though Frota & Prieto (2015) recall that in Sardinian and, to some extent, in Friulian, the poorness of intonation strategies may be correlated to the use of lexical (and syntactic) means to mark sentence modality (Vanrell, Ballone, Schirru & Prieto, 2015; Roseano, Vanrell & Prieto, 2015). As for the impact of social distance on prosody, systematic investigations are few, besides the specific attention paid in some experimental protocols to control changes in the speaker's role, and therefore of speaker's power (Albano Leoni, 2003).

As far as the variety of Italian investigated in this paper is concerned, that is Lecce Italian, previous studies offered results on the main intonation patterns found in requests, orders, and imperative requests (Gili Fivela, Avesani, Barone, Bocci, Crocco, D'Imperio, Giordano, Marotta, Savino & Sorianello, 2015). Specifically, they showed that, as far as phonological patterns are concerned, requests expressed by an imperative form show similarities with orders, especially as for the boundary (i.e., differently from other types of requests, they show a final low boundaries), and orders may show similarities with broad focus sentences (i.e., a H+L* L% nuclear pattern). However, previous investigations also showed that yes-no questions, for instance information seeking yes-no questions, show a completely different pattern (H*+L LH%), and it is well known that requests may be expressed by means of an interrogative form, being therefore intonationally different from requests expressed by imperative forms. However, previous works offered no description of the patterns used when either mitigation strategies or differences in social distance are at play.

2. *Goals and hypotheses*

This paper describes an investigation that is part of a wider PhD project concerning the production of orders and requests by Italian and Brazilian speakers in different social distance conditions (Silva Neto, in preparation). The goal of this paper is to investigate the impact of mitigation strategies (such as adverbs expressing politeness) on the prosodic characteristics of requests and orders in (Lecce) Italian in different social distance conditions (the aspects under investigation are necessarily intertwined with politeness modulation, though politeness *per se* is not going to be directly investigated here). Based on previous descriptions of Lecce Italian intonation (see §1), the main hypothesis is that requests and orders may be prosodically different from each other, even though requests expressed by an imperative form may show similarities with orders, especially as for the boundary tones; requests expressed by an interrogative form are rather expected to show similarities with questions (here, information seeking yes-no questions). However, as already suggested by other works in the literature (Frota, Prieto, 2015), on a regular basis, orders and requests are expected to be different from statements and questions. Moreover, in line with the discussion in §1, we expect both social distance and mitigation expressed through explicit lexical choices to affect intonation from either the phonological (tonal composition, e.g., in the case of mitigation strategies; e.g., Vanrell et al., 2015) or the phonetic point of view (e.g., F0 or intensity range), if not in both respects (Gili Fivela, Bazzanella,

2014). Specifically, we expect the presence of lexical means of mitigation and the low social distance to favor more peremptory, less neutral (and polite) patterns. By the way, throughout this text, we use the term "peremptory" to characterize a firm way of expressing oneself, which leaves little room for denial or refusal. On the other hand, we also expect the lack of lexical means of mitigation and the high social distance to favor more neutral and less peremptory patterns.

3. *Method*

3.1 Corpus and subjects

Five speakers from Lecce were audio recorded using a variant of the Discourse Completion Task tasks (DCT – Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). During the experiment, rather than producing only a spontaneous reaction to the situations, subjects were also asked to read a given target sentence with reference to the same contexts (Gili Fivela et al., 2015). In this paper, we focus on the read speech productions by three out of the five recorded speakers.

Target words and sentences were selected in order to allow for the best comparison of phonological and phonetic prosodic characteristics across utterances. In the subset analyzed here, the target word is *indovina* ("guess"). The target sentence types elicited in this experiment were orders (with the verb in the imperative mood), requests expressed by an imperative form, and requests expressed by means of interrogative form. Further, various productions were included in relation to mitigation strategies. There was a non-mitigated production, a production mitigated by means of *per favore* ("please"), and another production where a different adverb was included, in order to get a non-mitigated production corresponding to the mitigated one as for the structure and number of syllables (*questa volta* – "this time" – in the case of both types of requests and *alla svelta* – "quickly" – in the case of orders). Broad focus statements and yes-no information seeking questions were also included as control sentences, for a total of 11 sentences.

In order to elicit these data, target sentences were inserted in brief contexts whose function was suggesting specific modalities and pragmatic interpretations as well as simulating high (HD) and low (LD) social distance situations between the subject and the hypothetical listener. In all the HD subjects were induced to understand that their hypothetical hearer was someone unknown (with whom there is no frequent interaction or exchange of material or non-material goods, to return to the terms of Brown & Levinson 1987). For the sake of clarity, though, it is important to mention that, even among this kind of sentences, it is possible to find cases where the informant uses *tu* (a pronoun typically used in low social distance interactions) instead of *Lei* (used in high social distance interactions), as there can be an indication that the listener has the same age as the speaker. In the case of LD, the hypothetical hearers of the subjects were identified as being friends. All subjects were selected according to the criteria used for Italian in the investigation of Romance intonation project (Gili Fivela et al. 2015). Accordingly, those analyzed

here are university students, two women (speakers 2Gf, 3Ef) and a man (4Rm), aged between 22 and 26 years. They were born and raised in Lecce and, at the time of data collection, had not lived anywhere else for more than a year. In addition, their parents were also born, raised and living in Lecce.

3.2 Experimental procedure and analysis

The contexts used to elicit the data were randomized and presented to informants via a PC monitor. The audio signal was captured using a professional microphone and recorded with the SoundRecorder function of Praat, which was installed on a computer equipped with a Realtek onboard audio card. A brief explanation and training session preceded the recording session, and a native speaker of Italian ensured that subjects were giving the correct interpretation to the contexts and, therefore, the target utterances.

Each subject was asked to produce 5 repetitions of each context/sentence. Only read target utterances are analyzed here, that is a sample of 330 sentences (11 sentences x 5 renditions x LD and HD x 3 speakers).

Target utterances were phonologically analyzed and labelled for further phonetic investigation. The phonological analysis, which is the focus of this paper, was performed within the Autosegmental-Metrical framework (Pierrehumbert 1980; Ladd, 2008) by identifying pitch accents and edge tones that characterized the different sentence types, also with reference to previous analysis of the Lecce Italian variety. The labelling procedure regarded the main segmental and prosodic boundaries (syllables, phrases) and intonational events (tonal targets). Details concerning alignment and scaling of target tones were impressionistically observed thanks to the phonetic labelling, which is not crucial at this stage, but will rather be used for further acoustic investigation.

4. *Results*

The phonological patterns observed in the data are discussed in the following sections, starting with those found in control contexts, i.e. broad focus statements and information seeking yes-no questions. As for orders and requests, results regard both simple and mitigated forms, and, as for the latter, a further control is considered by taking into account adverbial phrases that do not perform a mitigating function (see 4.1).

4.1 Broad focus statements

Broad focus statements are mostly expressed by means of a H+L* L% pitch accent in both HD and LD contexts (see table 1, where "n. 15" indicates the result of 5 renditions of our 3 subjects), in line with the pattern previously found in several varieties of Italian (Gili Fivela et al., 2015; Gili Fivela & Nicora, 2018). Besides the expected variability in the realization of the H leading tone on the prenuclear, a

considerable variability concerning L* on the nuclear syllable is also found, being the latter performed both as a gradual fall within the vowel and as low target aligned quite early in it - that continues at the same level until the last syllable.

Observing the data in Table 1 it is possible to notice that there are some cases of a H*+L L% nuclear pattern. All of them correspond to the renditions of only one speaker (2Gf), who use it more often in LD than in HD contexts (where H*+L is produced only within a double pitch accent pattern involving two pitch accents on the target words, H* H*+L L%). We cannot exclude that this is due to the speaker's interpretation of the context as if a narrow focus statement was required. However, as the interpretations were checked during recordings, and there is a decrease in the number of instances in HD contexts, we think that this pattern may also be perceived as appropriate, especially in LD contexts. However, H+L* L% remains the most used pattern in both social distance contexts.

Table 1 - *Nuclear patterns found in broad focus statements – HD and LD contexts*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15				Low social distance (LD) – n. 15			
Nuclear patterns	**Speakers**		**Total %**	**Nuclear patterns**	**Speakers**		**Total %**
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H+L* L%	26,6	33,3	33,3	**93,2**	**H+L* L%**	0	33,3	33,3	**66,6**
H* H*+L L%	6,6	0	0	6,6	H*+L L%	33,3	0	0	33,3

4.2 Information seeking yes-no questions

In the case of information seeking yes-no questions, the most frequent nuclear pattern is H*+ L LH%, with a peak aligned to the first half of the nuclear vowel and a pronounced fall phase (in line with previous analyses, Gili Fivela et al. 2015), both in HD (79,9% of cases) and LD (66,6% of cases) contexts – see table 2. As for the boundary tone LH%, in some renditions the rise is compressed and the LH% tone is performed with minimal modulation. At the present stage of analysis, this kind of realization was provisionally annotated as L[!H]%, and reported in italics in the table as a way to recognize the frequency of this phenomenon for the purpose of the paper. We think it is purely phonetic and does not lead to a different interpretation of the sentence (fig. 1 left *vs* right), but could possibly play a different role in the two social distances contexts (or be related to mitigation processes – see §5.4.2). Further, as shown in Table 2, this pattern is only found in productions by the speaker (2Gf), who also showed peculiarities in broad focus statements.

Even though the most used accent for information seeking yes-no questions is a rise-fall including a peak aligned to the first half of the nuclear vowel (H*+L LH%), speaker 4Rm used also a L+H* L!H% pattern to utter a few renditions both in HD and LD contexts, that is, a contour with a rise phase throughout the nuclear syllable, a peak placed in the second half of the nuclear vowel and a final rise showing a very reduced F0 decrease. This specific pattern was already found in Lecce for

counter-expectational yes/no questions (Gili Fivela et al., 2015). Indeed, in these particular utterances, a nuance of doubt seems to be at place and subject 4Rm, according to our perception, sometimes, sounds incredulous.

Further, another pattern is used by one of our speakers, that is 3Ef, who uses an L+H* H!H% pattern in both social distance conditions but especially in LD sentences. Such pattern is already attested in Lecce and several other Italian varieties (Gili Fivela et. al. 2015 and following works), though for a different type of sentence, i.e. the vocative. Here, it corresponds to an information seeking question characterized by a particularly chanting end. Further analysis will show if, besides the similar chanting quality, the pattern differs from the vocative one as for phonetic details such as the F0 range or the intensity level.

Figure 1 - *Information seeking yes-no question* Indovina?*, 'Does he/she guess it?', produced in contexts of HD (left, speaker 2Gf) and in LD (right, speaker 2Gf), where L[!H]% is highlighted for clarity sake, though it is not part of the phonological inventory*
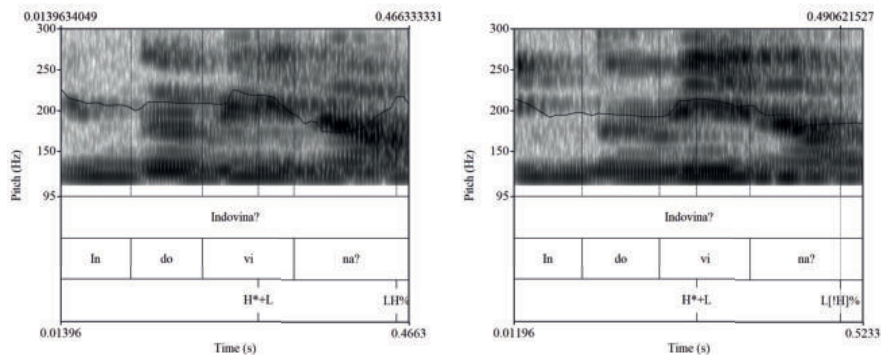

Table 2 - *Nuclear patterns found in information seeking yes-no questions – HD and LD contexts*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15						Low social distance (LD) – n. 15					
Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Partial %	Total %	Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Partial %	Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %				2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %		
H*+L LH%	20	20	20	**60**	79,9	H*+L LH%	13,3	13,3	20	**46,6**	66,6
H*+L L[!H]%	13,3	6,6	0	**19,9**		H*+L[!H]%	20	0	0	**20**	
L+H* L!H%	0	0	13,3	13,3	13,3	L+H* L!H%	0	0	13,3	13,3	13,3
L+H* H!H%	0	6,6	0	6,6	6,6	L+H* H!H%	0	20	0	20	20

4.3 Orders

In several varieties of Italian, including that spoken in Lecce, orders are usually uttered with a falling pattern H+L* L% or, alternatively, with a rising-falling pattern H*+L L% (Gili Fivela et al., 2015). Our data are in line with these observations, since in the case of both social distance contexts the most recurrent pattern is H+L* L% (59,9%), which was produced, to some extent, by all speakers (see table 3); al-

ternatively, two out of three speakers used H*+L L% in some of their renditions (33,2 % of cases in HD and LD, specially by 2Gf, who produced it in almost all the orders). For speaker 3Ef, a secondary strategy is represented by the use of a double pitch accent H* H*+L L%.

Table 3 - *Nuclear patterns found in orders – HD and LD contexts*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15					Low social distance (LD) – n. 15				
Nuclear patterns	**Speakers**			**Total %**	**Nuclear patterns**	**Speakers**			**Total %**
	2Gf %	**3Ef %**	**4Rm %**			**2Gf %**	**3Ef %**	**4Rm %**	
H+L* L%	6,6	20	33,3	**59,9**	**H+L* L%**	6,6	20	33,3	**59,9**
H*+L L%	26,6	6,6	0	33,2	H*+L L%	26,6	6,6	0	33,2
H* H*+L L%	0	6,6	0	6,6	H* H*+L L%	0	6,6	0	6,6

As for the mitigated vs. non-mitigated contexts, unlike the other subjects, speaker 2Gf used the accent H*+L L% in most of non-mitigated orders (see table 3), and the same occurred in mitigated productions, both in HD and LD contexts (see the nuclear patterns in table 4, upper part). Speakers 3Ef and 4Rm, though, slightly changed the accent of the target word *indovina* in presence of mitigation, and in HD contexts both speakers split their productions between the two possible contours. Therefore, H*+L L% is favored (46,5% of the cases, although especially speaker 4Rm still prefers the use of an H+L* L% pattern). In LD, the preference for H*+L L% is even more clear (66,5% of the cases in table 4), as one of the two speakers (3Ef) started to use it twice as more than in HD contexts. A secondary strategy is still represented by the use of a double pitch accent for speaker 3Ef and for speaker 4Rm mainly in HD contexts. In the case of mitigation, then, a slightly different strategy is observed in comparison to that found in orders with no modulation of the illocutionary force.

If we observe the patterns associated with the mitigator *per favore* (see table 4, lower part), in HD contexts, two speakers prioritize an H*+L L-, which is, therefore, the most used one (46,6% of the cases). Only the 4Rm speaker always uses a rising accent L+H*, with a boundary tone realized either as high, H-, or low, L-. So, for this specific speaker, most of the time, we have a (L+H* H-/L-) H+L* L% combination of patterns for mitigator and target word, while for the other two speakers we have (H*+L L-) H*+L L%. In LD contexts, speaker 4Rm maintains exactly the same behavior as in HD. In the case of the two other speakers, however, one (2Gf) uses an H+L* L- pattern more frequently, which lead us to have the same percentage for the two falling accents for the adverbs (33.3% of the cases). Thus, in terms of a higher frequency in contexts of LD, we have for speakers 2Gf and 3Ef a H*+L L% pattern on the target word, while the mitigator can be either H*+L L- or H+L* L- (fig. 2).

Figure 2 - *Mitigated order* Per favore, indovina!, *"Please, guess it!", produced in HD (left, speaker 3Ef) and LD (right, speaker 3Ef) contexts*
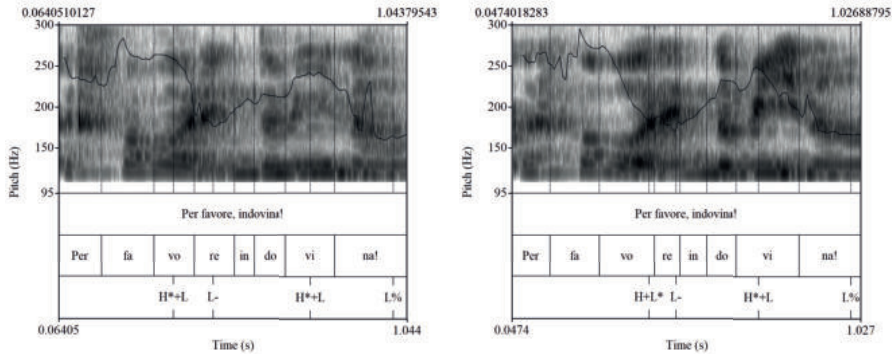

Table 4 - *Patterns in mitigated orders* Per favore, indovina!, *"Please, guess it!" – HD and LD contexts*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15				Low social distance (LD) – n. 15			
Nuclear patterns	Speakers		Total %	**Nuclear patterns**	Speakers		Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H*+L L%	26,6	13,3	6,6	**46,5**	**H*+L L%**	26,6	26,6	13,3	**66,5**
H+L* L%	6,6	13,3	20	39,9	H+L* L%	6,6	0	20	26,6
H* H*+L L%	0	6,6	6,6	13,2	H* H*+L L%	0	6,6	0	6,6

High social distance (HD) – n. 15				Low social distance (LD) – n. 15			
Per favore	Speakers		Total %	*Per favore*	Speakers		Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H*+L L-	26,6	20	0	**46,6**	**H*+L L-**	13,3	20	0	**33,3**
H+L* L-	6,6	13,3	0	19,9	**H+L* L-**	20	13,3	0	**33,3**
L+H* H-	0	0	20	20	L+H* H-	0	0	20	20
L+H* L-	0	0	13,3	13,3	L+H* L-	0	0	13,3	13,3

In orders with a non-mitigating adverb (see table 5), a further increase of the nuclear pattern H*+L L% compared to that of orders with *per favore* is found. There is, though, a very clear prevalence especially in LD (86,5% of cases; see table 5, upper part), mainly due to the fact that, in comparison to mitigated sentences, speaker 4Rm changes the preferred accent from H+L* to H*+L. Finally, 3Ef uses a double pitch accent as a secondary strategy, both in HD and in LD.

With regard to the patterns associated with the adverb *alla svelta*, both in HD and in LD contexts (table 5, lower part), we observed that although speaker 4Rm uses more often a falling contour H+L* L-, the other two prioritize a H*+L L- pattern, this being, therefore, the most recurrent one (59,9% in HD and 53,3% in LD). Thus, in HD contexts, for speaker 4Rm, we have a (H+L* L-) H*+L L% combination of ad-

verb and target word, for speaker 2Gf we have (H*+L L-) H+L* L% and, for speaker 3Ef, (H*+L L-) H*+L L%. In LD contexts, there is a change only as for speaker 2Gf, which uses more often the combination (H*+L L-) H*+L L%, with a different pitch accent choice in comparison to the target word of HD renditions (fig. 3).

Figure 3 - *Order with non-mitigating adverb* Alla svelta, indovina!*, "Quickly, guess it!", produced in HD context (speaker 3Ef)*
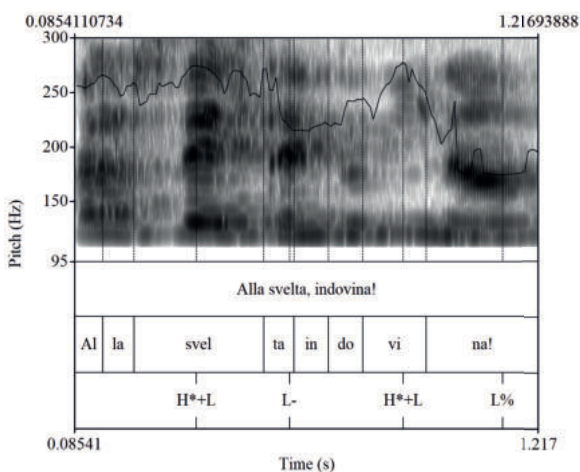

Table 5 - *Patterns found in orders with non-mitigating adverb* Alla svelta, indovina!*, "Quickly, guess it!" – HD and LD contexts*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15				Low social distance (LD) – n. 15			
Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Total %	**Nuclear patterns**	Speakers			Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H*+L L%	13,3	20	33,3	**66,6**	**H*+L L%**	26,6	26,6	33,3	**86,5**
H+L* L%	20	0	0	20	H+L* L%	6,6	0	0	6,6
H* H*+L L%	0	13,3	0	13,3	H* H*+L L%	0	6,6	0	6,6
High social distance (HD) – n. 15				Low social distance (LD) – n. 15			
Alla svelta	Speakers			Total %	*Alla svelta*	Speakers			Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H*+L L-	20	33,3	6,6	**59,9**	**H*+L L-**	20	33,3	0	**53,3**
H+L* L-	13,3	0	26,6	39,9	H+L* L-	13,3	0	33,3	46,6

Thus, H*+L L% is more frequent than H+L* L% as a nuclear pattern in more complex orders, both in HD and LD contexts and independently of the mitigating function of the adverb; further, it is more frequent in LD than in HD. Besides, phonetic implementation details are probably relevant in differentiating utterances

sharing the same main pattern (H+L* L%), such as unmodulated orders and broad focus statements, as well as unmodulated requests in imperative form.

4.4 Requests

4.4.1 Imperative form

Requests expressed by means of imperative form are mostly uttered using a regular falling pattern H+L* L% (figure 4, table 6) both in HD and LD contexts, with a particularly high leading tone on the prenuclear of the renditions of only one female speaker (3Ef). A previous study on Lecce Italian (Gili Fivela et al., 2015) reported an H*+L L% pattern. Indeed, our data showed that this kind of accent is the second most used in this type of sentence (see table 6) in both social distance contexts, but notice that it appears only in the renditions of one single speaker (2Gf). Other options are a double accented target (H* H*+L L%) for speaker 3Ef in both social distance contexts and, for speaker 2Gf and only in LD contexts, the use of a regular L+H* L%, which sounds less peremptory than the requests uttered with an H*+L accent (especially when in a lower range).

Figure 4 - *Request in imperative form* Indovina!*, "Guess it!", produced in a HD context (speaker 4Rm)*
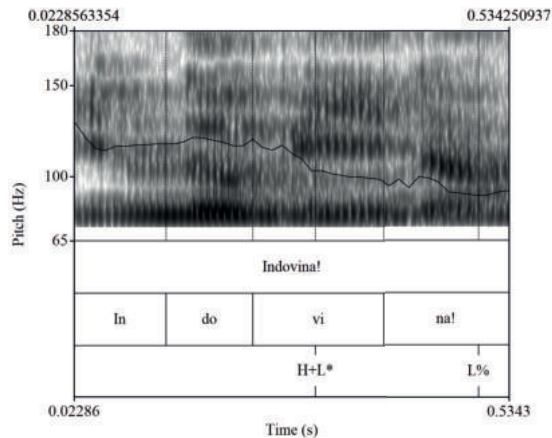

Table 6 - *Nuclear patterns found in requests expressed by means of imperative form*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15				Low social distance (LD) – n. 15			
Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Total %	Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H+L* L%	6,6	20	33,3	**59,9**	H+L* L%	0	20	33,3	**53,3**
H*+L L%	26,6	0	0	26,6	H*+L L%	20	0	0	20
H* H*+L L%	0	13,3	0	13,3	H* H*+L L%	0	13,3	0	13,3
------	---	---	---	---	L+H* L%	13,3	0	0	13,3

When it comes to the mitigated requests in imperative form (table 7), results show that nuclear patterns (table 7, upper part) used in HD contexts equally split between the main options mentioned above, that is, H+L* L% and H*+L L% (around 46,5% each; fig. 5), with a consequential increase in the number of H*+L L% nuclear patterns comparing to non-mitigated requests. This is mainly due to productions of one of the speakers (3Ef), who used mostly a nuclear H+L* L% pattern on non-mitigated requests and started to use more often a different one in presence of mitigation. This particular phenomenon repeats in LD contexts, where the above mentioned increase is even clearer as H*+L L% is the most used contour (59,9% of cases). It is important to highlight, though, that one of the speakers (4Rm) always used a H+L* L% nuclear pattern on mitigated and simple requests, in both social distances.

Figure 5 - *Mitigated request in imperative form* Per favore, indovina,*"Please, guess it!",*
produced in HD (left, speaker 2Gf) and LD (right, speaker 2Gf) contexts
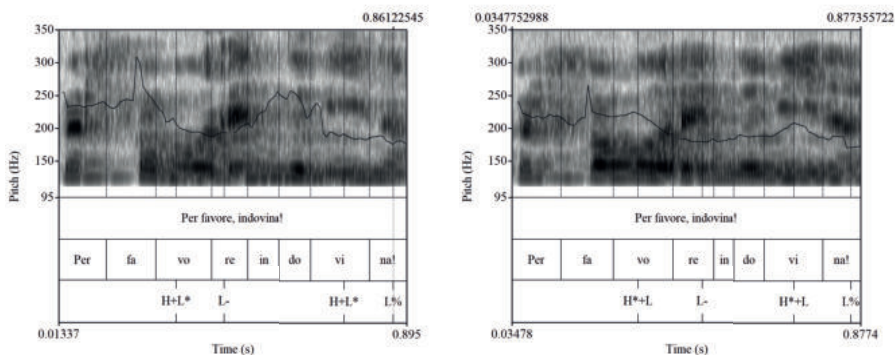
On the mitigator *per favore* (table 7, lower part), two accents are found in HD, one involving a falling phase (H*+L L- and H+L* L-), the other one including a rise (L+H* L-) and being used almost exclusively by speaker 4Rm, just like in the case of mitigated orders (cf. table 4). Thus, in HD contexts, for speaker 2Gf we have a combination of patterns for mitigator and target word (H+L* L-/H*+L L-) H*+L L%, for speaker 3Ef the combination is (H+L* L-) H*+L L%, while for 4Rm we have (L+H* L-) H+L* L%. In the case of LD sentences, H*+L L- is used on *per favore* in 59,9% of the cases, but speaker 4Rm still uses an L+H* L- pattern. Consequently, for this specific speaker the combination of patterns on mitigator and target word is (L+H* L-) H+L* L%, while for speakers 2Gf and 3Ef we have (H*+L L-) H*+L L%.

Table 7 - *Patterns found in mitigated requests expressed by means of imperative form*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15				Low social distance (LD) – n. 15			
Nuclear patterns	**Speakers**			**Total %**	**Nuclear patterns**	**Speakers**			**Total %**
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H*+L L%	26,6	20	0	**46,6**	**H*+L L%**	33,3	26,6	0	**59,9**
H+L* L%	6,6	6,6	33,3	**46,5**	H+L* L%	0	0	33,3	33,3
H* H*+L L%	0	6,6	0	6,6	H* H*+L L%	0	6,6	0	6,6

High social distance (HD) – n. 15				Low social distance (LD) – n. 15			
Per favore	**Speakers**			**Total %**	*Per favore*	**Speakers**			**Total %**
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
L+H* L-	6,6	0	33,3	**39,9**	L+H* L-	0	0	33,3	33,3
H+L* L-	13,3	20	0	33,3	H+L* L-	0	6,6	0	6,6
H*+L L-	13,3	13,3	0	26,6	**H*+L L-**	33,3	26,6	0	**59,9**

As for the imperative requests with a non-mitigator adverb (table 8), in HD contexts the most frequent pattern associated with *indovina* is H+L* L% (59,9% of cases; table 8, upper part), as the one used in imperative requests with no modulation of the illocutionary force, being H*+L L% a secondary option for speakers 2Gf and 3Ef and a double accented pattern H* H*+L L% only for speaker 3Ef.

Figure 6 - *Requests in imperative form with non-mitigating adverb* Questa volta, indovina!*, "This time, guess it!", produced in HD (left, speaker 2Gf) and LD (right, speaker 3Ef) contexts*
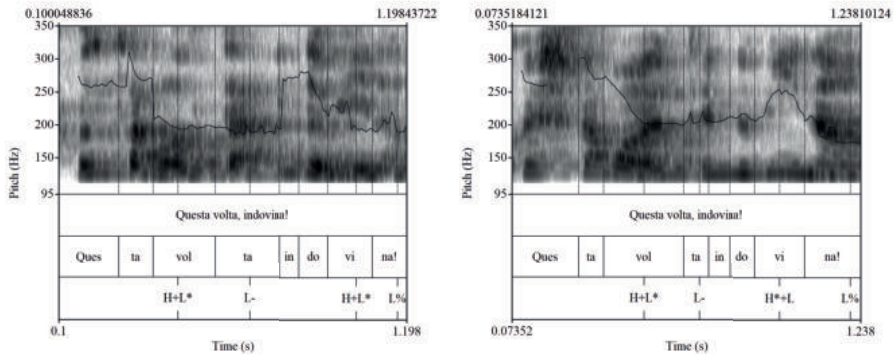
Table 8 - *Patterns found in requests with non-mitigating adverbs expressed by means of imperative form*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15					Low social distance (LD) – n. 15				
Nuclear patterns	Speakers			**Total %**	**Nuclear patterns**	Speakers			**Total %**
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H+L* L%	20	6,6	33,3	**59,9**	H+L* L%	0	0	20	20
H*+L L%	13,3	13,3	0	26,6	**H*+L L%**	33,3	20	6,6	**59,9**
H* H*+L L%	0	13,3	0	13,3	H* H*+L L%	0	13,3	0	13,3
------	---	---	---	---	H* H+L* L%	0	0	6,6	6,6

High social distance (HD) – n. 15					Low social distance (LD) – n. 15				
Questa volta	Speakers			**Total %**	*Questa volta*	Speakers			**Total %**
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H+L* L-	26,6	20	0	**46,6**	**H+L* L-**	20	33,3	0	**53,3**
L+H* H-	0	0	33,3	33,3	L+H* H-	0	0	33,3	33,3
H*+L L-	6,6	13,3	0	19,9	H*+L L-	6,6	0	0	6,6
------	---	---	---	---	L+H* L-	6,6	0	0	6,6

As for the non-mitigating adverb *questa volta* (table 8, lower part), H+L* L% is once more the most frequent contour (figure 6, left), with 46,6% of the instances of HD contexts. An L+H* H- pattern is also used in a few productions, but only by speaker 4Rm. Thus, in HD contexts, the dominant combination of patterns for adverb and target word for speaker 2Gf is (H+L* L-) H+L* L%, for speaker 3Ef it is (H+L* L-) H*+L L% or H* H*+L L% and (L+H* H-) H+L* L% for speaker 4Rm. In LD contexts, even though the pattern associated with the adverb is also most frequently H+L* L- (53,3% of cases), with speaker 4Rm using again a different contour (L+H* H-), there is a shift in the pattern most frequently associated with the target word *indovina* (59,9% of cases, table 8, upper part), which once more is H*+L L%, as in LD mitigated imperative requests (figure 5, right). This shift happened because both speakers 2Gf and 3Ef focused their productions on this pattern, even though speaker 4Rm still used an H+L* L%. We have, then, for adverb and target word in LD, a (H+L* L-) H*+L L% combination for speakers 2Gf and 3Ef, while for speaker 4Rm the patterns are (L+H* H-) H+L* L%.

It is interesting to notice that, as in the case of orders, there are a few occurrences of a nuclear double pitch accent among the requests expressed by means of imperative form without lexical modulation of illocutionary force, but also in those mitigated and in those with a non-mitigating adverb, always in the sentences produced by one particular speaker (3Ef). In those cases, the pattern is H* H*+L L%, as shown in figure 7.

Figure 7 - *Requests in imperative form* Indovina!*, "Guess it", produced in HD context (left, speaker 3Gf) and* Per favore, indovina!*, "Please, guess it", produced in LD context (right, speaker 3Ef)*
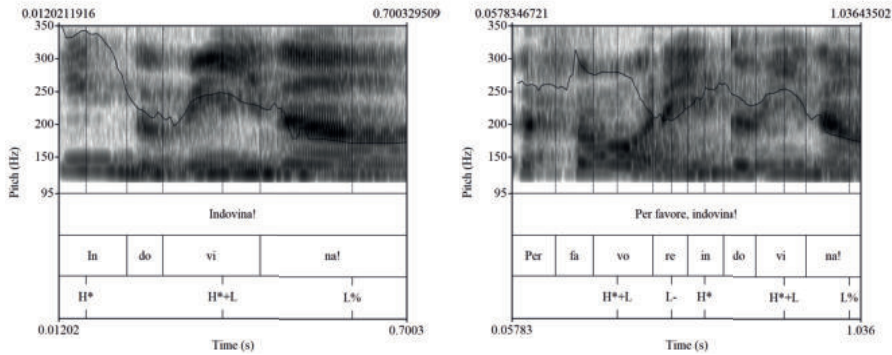
4.4.2 Interrogative form

Both in HD (99,7% of cases) and LD (86,5% of cases) contexts, the pattern most frequently associated with requests in interrogative form is H*+L LH% (see table 9), which corresponds to the one found in information seeking yes-no questions (see §5.2). Another similarity with the latter is that the boundary tone LH% can also be performed with minimal modulation, without changing, though, the meaning of the sentence, or the speech act type. The pattern H*+L L[!H]% is, thus, a representation of an exclusively phonetic variation of the H*+L LH% pattern itself, which just seems slightly more frequent in interrogative requests (and in LD contexts) in comparison to information seeking questions (fig. 8). Besides, in the case of LD contexts, speaker 3Ef used an L+H* H!H% pattern, which is typically found on vocatives, but in this case clearly indicates a request, possibly with a chanting end.

Figure 8 - *Requests in interrogative form* Indovini?*, "Do you guess it?", produced in contexts of HD (left, speaker 3Gf), and LD (right, speaker 4Rm) – L[!H]% is not part of the phonological inventory (see text)*
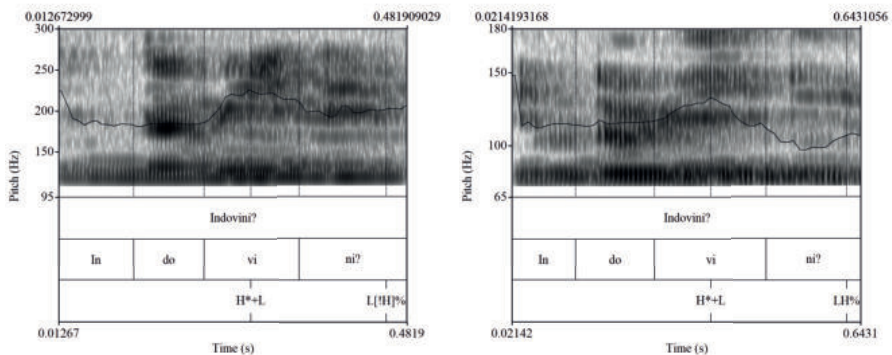
Table 9 - *Nuclear patterns found in requests expressed by means of interrogative form*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15						Low social distance (LD) – n. 15					
Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Partial %	Total %	Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Partial %	Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %				2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %		
H*+L LH%	33,3	6,6	26,6	**66,5**		H*+L LH%	20	6,6	20	**46,6**	
H+L L[!H]%*	0	26,6	6,6	*33,2*	99,7	*H*+L L[!H]%*	13,3	13,3	13,3	*39,9*	86,5
------	---	---	---	---		L+H* H!H%	0	13,3	0	13,3	13,3

Also in mitigated requests in interrogative form (table 10, figure 9), in HD (72,2% of cases) and LD (88,6% of cases) contexts, the target word is mostly uttered with an H*+L LH% (or L[!H]%) contour and, even though we do not consider the difference between LH% and L[!H]% as phonological, we observe the higher frequency of the latter rendition in LD (53,3%) than in HD (26,6%) contexts (table 10, upper part). Further, once more, speaker 3Ef used a chanting pattern L+H* H!H% in some of the sentences. On the other hand, there is a HD sentence of speaker 4Rm with a L+H* L% contour (which, by the way, matches the one used on the mitigator), which does not correspond to a prototypical interrogative request pattern, and presents, according to our interpretation, a nuance of impatience or insistence that could be related to a particular interpretation of the context in that specific rendition. As for the mitigator *per favore* ("please", table 10, lower part), specifically those found in HD contexts, very close percentages were found, with a minor prevalence of H+L* L- (39,9% of cases), since each speaker showed a preference for a different type of contour: speaker 4Rm always used an L+H* L- (as in most of his complex sentences already analyzed), speaker 3Ef preferred an H+L* L- contour, while 2Gf, most of the time, used a regular H*+L L-. In LD contexts, only speaker 3Ef presented a different behavior regarding the scenario we have just described, as she more often used the H*+L L- pattern, which presents, then, a higher frequency, with a more significant percentage (59,9% of cases).

Figure 9 - *Mitigated requests in interrogative form Per favore, indovini?,*
"Please, do you guess it?", produced in HD (left, speaker 2Gf) and LD contexts
(right, speaker 2Gf) – L[!H]% is not part of the phonological inventory (see text)
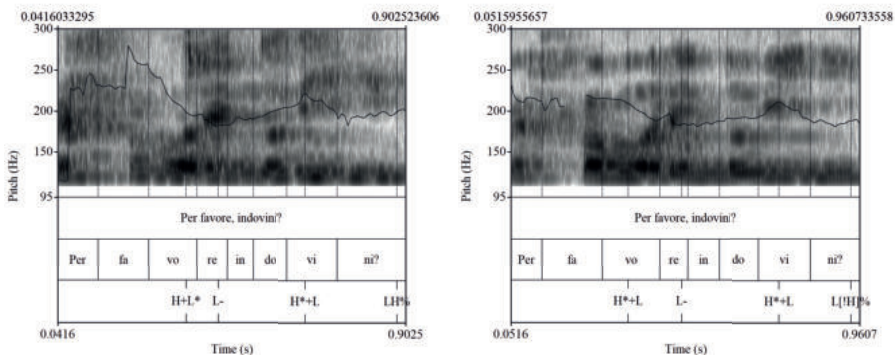
Table 10 - *Patterns found in mitigated requests expressed by means of interrogative form*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15						Low social distance (LD) – n. 15					
Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Partial %	Total %	Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Partial %	Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %				2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %		
H*+L LH%	20	0	26,6	**46,6**	72,2	H*+L LH%	13,3	0	20	**33,3**	88,6
H+L L[!H]%*	13,3	13,3	0	*26,6*		*H*+L L[!H]%*	20	20	13,3	*53,3*	
L+H* H!H%	0	20	0	20	20	L+H* H!H%	0	13,3	0	13,3	13,3
L+H* L%	0	0	6,6	6,6	6,6	------	---	---	---	---	

High social distance (HD) – n. 15					Low social distance (LD) – n. 15				
Per favore	Speakers			Total %	*Per favore*	Speakers			Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H+L* L-	13,3	26,6	0	**39,9**	H+L* L-	0	6,6	0	6,6
L+H* L-	0	0	33,3	33,3	L+H* L-	0	0	33,3	33,3
H*+L L-	20	6,6	0	26,6	**H*+L L-**	33,3	26,6	0	**59,9**

As for requests with a non-mitigator adverb, in both social distance contexts (72,2% of cases in HD and 73,2% of cases in LD, see upper part of table 11) the most recurrent pattern on the target word is, again, H*+L LH%, with a smaller number of L[!H]% renditions specially in LD contexts (6,6%) in comparison to mitigated productions, and with speaker 3Ef using the contour L+H* H!H%, but more pronouncedly in LD contexts. However, there are a few alternative productions among HD utterances which do not sound prototypical. Speaker 3Ef used a L+H* H% pattern in one of her renditions, both on the target word and the adverb; the pattern recalls that of an elliptic question on the adverb and seems to be repeated on the target. Besides, there is a single case of a H+L* LH% (by speaker 2Gf, also with a similar contour in the adverb, except for the L- intermediate boundary tone), which has a strong nuance of availability check.

The adverbs (table 11, lower part), specifically in HD sentences, presented the same percentage of instances with H+L* L- and L+H* L- contours (46,6% of cases). This is due to the fact that speaker 4Rm used L+H* L- in all of his productions and that speaker 2Ef chose this contour a few times; further, because subjects 2Gf and 3Ef used a regular H+L* L- contour more consistently. In LD sentences, even though the others maintained the same behavior that we described for HD sentences, speaker 2Gf realized all her productions with the H+L* L- contour. It became, then, the most frequent one (59,9% of cases).

Table 11 - *Patterns found in requests with non-mitigating adverb expressed by means of interrogative form*

High social distance (HD) – n. 15						Low social distance (LD) – n. 15					
Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Partial %	Total %	Nuclear patterns	Speakers			Partial %	Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %				2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %		
H*+L LH%	26,6	0	20	**46,6**	72,2	**H*+L LH%**	33,3	0	33,3	**66,6**	73,2
H*+L L[!H]%	0	13,3	13,3	**26,6**		*H*+L L[!H]%*	0	6,6	0	*6,6*	
L+H* H!H%	0	13,3	0	13,3	13,3	L+H* H!H%	0	26,6	0	26,6	26,6
H+L* LH%	6,6	0	0	6,6	6,6	------	---	---	---	---	
L+H* H%	0	6,6	0	6,6	6,6	------	---	---	---	---	

High social distance (HD) – n. 15					Low social distance (LD) – n. 15				
Questa volta	Speakers			Total %	*Questa volta*	Speakers			Total %
	2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %			2Gf %	3Ef %	4Rm %	
H+L* L-	20	26,6	0	**46,6**	**H+L* L-**	33,3	26,6	0	**59,9**
L+H* L-	13,3	0	33,3	**46,6**	L+H* L-	0	0	33,3	33,3
L+H* H-	0	6,6	0	6,6	H*+L L-	0	6,6	0	6,6

5. *Discussion*

Observing data related to sentences composed only of a target word, and specifically the intonational characteristics of orders and requests in imperative form, we noticed that they share the same main pattern, H+L* L%, which was also the one identified for broad focus sentences, included in the experiment as a control. These results corroborate those previously found in Lecce and are indeed in line with our initial hypothesis, except in the case of requests in imperative form, for which H*+L L% had been previously described as the main pattern (though not in one word sentences). They share the same intonational pattern and future phonetic analysis may show that they are differentiated by phonetic properties. As for the requests in interrogative form, we identified H*+L LH% - with a strictly phonetic variant showing a L[!H]% edge tone - as the main pattern, the same found in information seeking yes-no questions. Also in this case, phonetic features might differentiate the information seeking question and the request speech acts, in particular the lower final fundamental frequency of the L[!H]% boundary tone found in interrogative requests. Thus, as for our initial hypotheses, results show that there is a clear difference between the intonational patterns of short orders and requests when the latter are expressed by the interrogative form and thus, as far as intonation is concerned, by a different boundary tone.

Further, in the case of short sentences, we only varied the social distance factor and could observe that, besides the above mentioned changes, patterns in orders are not affected by social distance, while patterns in broad focus statements and requests expressed by imperative forms are affected: they show a slightly lower number of H+L* pitch accents in LD conditions in comparison to HD ones (in favor

of the H*+L and double accents H* H*+L in LD conditions). As for requests in interrogative form, results showed that they were affected by social distance as information seeking questions were, that is, they both showed a higher number of H*+L LH% pattern in HD contexts than in LD (adding H*+L LH% and H*+L L!H% realizations). However, requests also showed a slightly higher number of realizations including a lower final high boundary tone (L[!H]%). In our view this may correspond to a lighter cue to prototypical questioning, which is known to play a mitigation role.

However, to answer the main question of this paper, results related to complex sentences (mitigator/non-mitigator adverbs + target word *indovina* "guess it") need to be discussed. In the case of orders produced in both social distance contexts, the preferential pattern used on the target word changed in presence of mitigation (*per favore* "please") and a non-mitigating adverb (*alla* svelta "quickly"). Specifically, adding adverbs, mitigators or not, the pattern changes from H+L* L% to H*+L%, which is considered as more peremptory (Gili Fivela, 2008). Such pattern, which is already an option in both broad focus and orders according to previous investigations, is the most frequent contour in both social distance contexts though it is used much more often in the case of LD sentences with non-mitigating adverb (which is in line with Gili Fivela, Bazzanella, 2014). Therefore, with regard to social distance, it is reasonable to state that if the speakers are socially close, the tendency of using a more peremptory contour on the target word increases. That is, on the target word in orders our expectations are confirmed, as the presence of lexical means of mitigation and the low social distance favor more peremptory, less neutral patterns. Another important aspect to be noticed is that, in general, there is a tendency to use the H*+L L% pattern both on the target word and on the adverbs *per favore* "please" and *alla svelta* "quickly" (in phonological terms, we may hypothesize a pattern copying). However, the H*+L L% pattern on the adverbs is slightly more often used in HD contexts than LD contexts. In terms of the impact of social distance, then, the situation on adverbs in orders is the opposite than expected, as a more peremptory contour H*+L is slightly more often found in HD contexts.

Requests in imperative form including adverbs differ from orders with adverbs only in HD contexts: in the case of the non-mitigating adverb, the H+L* L% pattern is attested more, while in the case of mitigating adverb, it is used as much as the more peremptory one, almost as a way of indicating more clearly, from the intonational point of view, the imperative character of the mitigated sentence. Besides, in requests in imperative form with a mitigating adverb an increase in the use of the H*+L L% pattern on the target word is observed in comparison with imperatives with no preceding adverb. As for the social distance, in HD the above mentioned pattern is used as much as H+L* L%, but in contexts of LD represents the most used contour; a phenomenon that we also identified in the orders and which is in line with previous investigations on Lecce Italian. In other words, here, too, a change is observed in relation to simple imperative requests. As for the patterns used on the mitigating adverb, in HD contexts there is no clear prevalence, though L+H*

L- is used slightly more often, but in LD we see that, as in orders, there seems to be a pattern copying, since the predominant pattern is H*+ L L- on the adverb too. Thus, the tendency to use a peremptory pattern more frequently in LD situations is also found here. On the other hand, when it comes to imperative requests with non-mitigating adverbs, in HD productions, the main pattern of target words and adverbs is the same as for the simple sentences, that is, H+L* L, considered here as less peremptory. Our idea is that, in the absence of a term that clearly performs a mitigating function, mitigation would be carried out by prosodic means, considering that the interlocutor is an unknown person and it would be necessary to use more strategies to protect the participants' faces, in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms. Indeed, if we look at the data related to LD contexts, in which there is greater intimacy between speakers, a more peremptory pattern H*+L L% on the target word is more frequent, although on the adverb an H+L* L- contour prevails. As already mentioned, if we compare the complex forms of orders and imperative requests, we notice that the latter differs from orders mainly in contexts with a non-mitigating adverb: in mitigated requests, the pattern is often H*+L L% both in HD and LD (just like in mitigated orders); in the ones with *questa volta* "this time", though, a potentially less peremptory contour is more usual in HD contexts. The non-mitigating adverbs of orders and requests are different (*alla svelta* "quickly" and *questa volta* "this time" respectively), but both suggests a solicitation, therefore, we believe that their being different is not what motivated the intonational difference described above.

Finally, complex requests in interrogative form, mitigated or with non-mitigating adverbs and in both social distance contexts, present a basic pattern H*+L LH%, as information seeking yes-no questions. Therefore, they are quite different from requests in an imperative form, being mitigated by the very modality of the sentence. It may be important to consider, however, how the phonetic variation with minimal modulation of the boundary tone occurs (here highlighted by H*+L L[!H]%, where [!H]% is not meant to be interpreted phonologically). In LD contexts, a nuclear pattern with a less clearly rising boundary tone is more frequent, especially in the case of the presence of a mitigating adverb, and, on that adverb, a more incisive pattern is found (H*+L L-), which may represent a lower need for prosodic mitigation among close subjects. On the contrary, the mitigating adverb does not seem to have a strong impact in HD (as the patterns are the same independently of the adverb function). In the case of interrogative requests with a non-mitigating adverb, for HD and especially for LD contexts, the combination of patterns H+L* L-, on the adverb, and H*+L LH% on the target word is more often used. As such combination might have a greater mitigating potential, it may be chosen because there is no clear lexical mitigation.

6. *Conclusions*

The aim of this paper was to investigate whether and to what extent mitigation procedures affect the prosodic characteristics of orders and requests made by speakers of Lecce Italian in different social distance conditions. The corpus analyzed here was collected using a variant of the Discourse Completion Task, and the analysis was carried out within the Autosegmental Metrical framework, that is aimed at identifying the phonological patterns.

Our first hypotheses was that orders and requests could be prosodically diverse, but also tightly related, with orders and requests in imperative form being similar on the one hand, and information seeking yes-no questions and requests in interrogative form on the other. Results confirmed such hypothesis and showed that there is a change in the intonational patterns of orders and requests especially when the latter are expressed by the interrogative form and thus, as far as intonation is concerned, by a different boundary tone. Further, while only phonetic analysis will possibly confirm the existence of implementation differences when the same phonological pattern has been found (e.g. orders, broad focus statements and some imperative requests), in some cases available observations point to the existence of differentiating cues. This is the case of the lower rising in L[!H]%, which was found slightly more often in short requests in interrogative form in comparison to questions. In our view, this may correspond to a lighter cue to prototypical questioning, possibly helping in differentiating requests from information seeking questions (in line with other observations in the literature, e.g. Frota & Prieto 2015).

As for the impact of mitigation, we assumed that explicit lexical mitigators could have an impact on intonation patterns, favoring more peremptory, less neutral patterns. Similar patterns were also expected in low social distance contexts. Indeed, in presence of mitigation (and of a non-mitigating adverb), in both social distances, the preferential nuclear pattern of orders changed from a less incisive to a more peremptory one. Regarding requests in imperative form, mitigation seems to be carried out by prosodic means in the absence of a lexical mitigation, with a preference of less peremptory patterns especially in HD; the tendency to use a peremptory pattern more frequently in LD situations is also found. Considering requests in interrogative form, which may be naturally considered a more polite way of uttering a request, the presence of a mitigating adverb does not seem to have a strong impact in HD contexts (as the nuclear patterns are the same independently of the adverb function), while in LD the lexical mitigation seems to be accompanied by an increase of overall mitigating (question like) intonation patterns. However, such patterns also correspond to a less clearly and potentially less mitigating L[!H]% rising boundary tone that appears more often both in LD non-mitigated and mitigated contexts, as if in LD the prosodic mitigation could be weaker.

Thus, though mitigation is clearly intertwined with social distance, results show that lexical mitigation interferes with intonational cues in line with our hypotheses (lack of lexical cue favors intonational ones) in requests expressed by imperative forms. In requests in interrogative form, the impact is found in LD contexts only,

where it apparently goes contrary to our expectations (presence of lexical cues is accompanied by intonational one), even though it does not when considering the L[!H]% phonetic variant, which is a less modulated boundary tone and could be interpreted as being more incisive. Thus, our initial hypothesis on interference of mitigating lexical material was at least partly confirmed, and, further, once more data will be analyzed the interplay of the patterns found on adverbs will probably shed more light on the issue.

Finally, social distance most of the times seems to act in line with expectations. In the case of short sentences, results are consistent in broad focus statements, with a slightly higher number of the more incisive pattern H*+L (even though it is only the secondary one) in LD conditions in comparison to HD ones.

Turning to interrogative forms, both requests in interrogative form and information seeking questions were affected by social distance as they both showed a higher number of H*+L LH% patterns in HD contexts than in LD, where, at least in requests, they showed a slightly higher number of L[!H]%. Thus, our hypothesis on the impact of low social distance to favor more peremptory, less neutral patterns was at least partly confirmed.

All in all, it is quite clear that we cannot generalize results, as, besides the low number of subjects and observations, it is evident that differences are found across speech acts. In any case, those reported in this paper are preliminary observations only, regarding a subset of our subjects. Further, a phonetic analysis is expected to provide important clues about the phenomena we described.

Bibliography

ALBANO LEONI, F. (2003). Tre progetti per l'italiano parlato: AVIP, API, CLIPS. In MARASCHIO, N. & POGGI-SALANI, T. (eds.). *Atti del XXXIV Congresso Internazionale di Studi della Società di linguistica italiana (SLI)*, 19-21 ottobre 2000. Firenze: Bulzoni, 675-683.

AUSTIN, J.L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

BLUM-KULKA, S., HOUSE, J. & KASPER, G. (1989). Investigating Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: an Introductory Overview. In BLUM-KULKA, S., HOUSE, J. & KASPER, G. (eds.). *Cross-Cultural pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1-28.

BROWN, P. & LEVINSON, S.C. (1987). *Politeness: some universals in language use*. Cambridge: CUP.

CABALLERO, J.A., VERGIS, N., JIANG, X. & PELL, M.D. (2018). The sound of Im/politeness. In *Speech Communication*, 102, 39-53.

FÉRY -VIDAL, M.V. (1996). *Introducción a la Pragmática*. Barcelona: Editorial Ariel.

FÉRY, C. (2013). Focus as prosodic alignment. In *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 31, 683-734.

FROTA, S. & PRIETO, P. (2015). *Intonation in Romance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

GILI FIVELA, B. (2008). *Intonation in production and perception: The case of Pisa Italian*. Torino: Edizioni dell'Orso.

GILI FIVELA, B. & BAZZANELLA, C. (2014). The relevance of prosody and context to the interplay between intensity and politeness. An exploratory study on Italian. In *J. Politeness Research* 10, 97-126.

GILI FIVELA B., AVESANI, C., BARONE, M., BOCCI, G., CROCCO, C., D'IMPERIO, M., GIORDANO, R., MAROTTA, G., SAVINO, M. & SORIANELLO, P. (2015). Intonational phonology of the regional varieties of Italian. In FROTA, S., PRIETO, P. (eds.). *Intonation in Romance*. Oxford: OUP, 140-197.

GILI FIVELA, B. & NICORA, F. (2018). Intonation in Liguria and Tuscany: checking for similarities across a traditional isogloss boundary. In VIETTI, A., SPREAFICO, L., MEREU, D. & GALATÀ, V. (eds.). *Speech in the natural context*. Studi AISV 4, Milano: Officinaventuno, 131-156.

HIDALGO, A. (2003). Cortesía y prosodia: un estudio de la frase cortés en el español de Mérida (Venezuela). MARTIN BUTRAGUEÑO, P. & HERRERA, Z.E. (eds.). *La tonía. Dimensiones fonéticas y fonológicas*. México: El Colegio de México, 319-330.

HÜBSCHER, I., BORRÀS-COMES, J. & PRIETO, P. (2017). Prosodic mitigation characterizes Catalan formal speech: The Frequency Code reassessed. *Journal of Phonetics*, 65, 145-169.

LADD, R. (2008). *Intonational Phonology*. 2ª edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

NESPOR, M. & VOGEL, I. (1986). *Prosodic Phonology*. Dordrecht: Foris publications.

NUZZO, E. (2013). La pragmatica nei manuali d'Italiano L2: una prima indagine sull'atto linguistico del ringraziare. *Revista de Italianística*, XXVI(1), 5-29.

PIERREHUMBERT, J. (1980) The phonology and phonetics of English intonation. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dept. of Linguistics and Philosophy.

ROSEANO, P., VANRELL, M.M. & PRIETO, P. (2015). "Intonational phonology of Friulan and its dialects". In: FROTA, S., PRIETO P. (eds.). *Intonation in Romance*. Oxford: OUP, 101-139.

SANTORO, E. (2017). Richieste e attenuazione: un confronto tra italiano e portoghese brasiliano. *Normas*, vol. 7, n. 2, 179-204.

SANTORO, E., KULIKOWSKI, M.Z., SILVA, L.A. (2017). Pragmática sociocultural: a elaboração de um corpus. In CABRAL, A.L.T., SEARA, I.R., GUARANHA, M.F. (orgs.). *Descortesia e cortesia: expressão de culturas*. São Paulo: Cortez Editora.

SEARLE, J. (1979). *Expression and Meaning. Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: CUP.

SELKIRK, E. (1984). *Phonology and syntax: the relation between sound and structure*. MIT Press.

SILVA NETO, M. (2018). Requests in Italian: a study on the perception of politeness by native speakers and Brazilian learners. Master's degree dissertation, University of São Paulo.

SILVA NETO, M. (in preparation). "Intonational patterns of orders and requests in Brazilian Portuguese and Italian: comparisons and possible effects on the perception of linguistic politeness". PhD Dissertation, University of São Paulo.

SPADOTTO, L.N. & SANTORO, E. (2019). Ordens e pedidos em língua italiana: um estudo da percepção de falantes nativos e aprendizes brasileiros. *Revista Letrônica*, v. 12, n. 4.

Swerts, M. & Krahmer, E. (2008). "Facial expressions and prosodic prominence: comparing modalities and facial areas". In *Journal of Phonetics*, 36(2), 219-238.

Takimoto, M. (2007). The Effects of Input-Based Tasks on the Development of Learners' Pragmatic Proficiency. A*pplied Linguistics*, 30, Issue 1, 1-25.

Vanrell, M.M., Ballone, F., Schirru, C. & Prieto, P. (2015). Sardinian intonational phonology: Logudurese and Campidanese varieties. In: Frota, S., Prieto, P. (eds.). *Intonation in Romance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 317-349.