The Development of *uni* in Istriot

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This research focuses Istriot, an endangered Romance variety spoken by some 400 people in several villages scattered across southwestern Istria, in today's Croatia. In particular, it presents a synchronic investigation into the development of a plural indefinite determiner, *uni/une,* which would be a novelty in the Italo-Romance domain. Prior research (Giudici & Zanini 2021) suggests that its use is increasingly acceptable beyond the grammaticalizing context of *pluralia tantum* nouns, especially to younger speakers. Comparing this situation with the stages typical of the crosslinguistic development of indefinites, as described in Heine (1997) and Haspelmath (1997), they suggest that *uni/une* may be shifting from what Heine calls "specific markers" to "non-specific markers" in a development that would ultimately lead to "generalized markers" such as Spanish *unas/unos*.

Using a combination of self-paced reading and interpretation tasks, this study aims to expand and test this prediction: if it is in fact grammaticalizing, *uni* will show signs of spreading towards non-specific reference, as well as from *pluralia tantum* to other noun classes, especially among younger speakers. Moreover, the research consists of two separate experiments, one conducted in Istriot and one in Italian, offering a comparative approach to a related and neighboring language in which this element is unavailable, as well as a testing ground for the instrument itself before the very limited pool of Istriot speakers is tested.

References

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