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Vocatives: A Note on Addressee-Management

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to establish a semantic characterisation of vocatives, while leaving aside pragmatic and sociolinguistic considerations as far as possible. I will defend the `IPA-hypothesis' of the meaning of vocatives, that is, the hypothesis that vocatives have three basic functions: to identify the addressee(s), to predicate something on the addressee(s), and to activate the addressee(s). It will be argued that the traditional call vs. address dichotomy is insufficient.

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1 Introduction

Levinson (1983:71) called the vocative "an interesting grammatical category, yet underexplored." Recent years have seen a regain of interest in vocatives, which nevertheless remain a poorly understood category. Several attempts have been made to compare vocatives with other types of elements in sentences, like topics (cf. Lambrecht, 1996; Portner, 2004) or other types of isolated NPs (cf. Zwicky, 2004). There have also been a number of syntactic analyses of certain peculiarities of vocatives (cf., e.g., Longobardi, 1994; d'Hulst et al., 2007).

My focus in this paper is different: I will consider vocatives alone and in isolation, and I will try to examine the semantics of such constructions. As far as possible, I aim to leave aside pragmatic and sociolinguistic elements of vocatives, that is, components of the meaning of vocatives that are not rooted in the linguistic system (i.e., Saussure's *langue*), but that seem to stem exclusively from the *use* that speakers make in context of that system.[1] My main claim is that there is something to be said about the semantics of vocatives.

In what follows, I will only consider vocatives in a narrow sense as noun-phrases that identify or describe the addressee. This means that expressions like "bless you" that Levinson classifies as "vocative in nature" will not be considered. The reason for my position is the following: it is not always that clear, at least for the author of these lines, whether even a given (pro-)nominal expression should count as a vocative or not. We have intuitions, yet it is not obvious to spell out the criteria underlying them. And unfortunately, intuitions are scarce on some borderline cases.[2] Therefore, in the absence of clear criteria identifying unequivocally a vocative, I will stick to the strategy of trying to determine the nature of the vocative in a narrow sense, rather than to extend the investigation on elements that might be vocative in nature.

The paper is structured as follows: in section 2, I will review the standard definition of a vocative, and point out the difficulties associated with it. I will present a supplementary criterion that distinguishes vocatives from other nominal elements in a sentence. Then, I will present the call vs. addresses dichotomy, and present briefly some issues of cross-linguistic variation in vocative forms. In section 3, I will present data showing that not all call-vocatives behave the same, introduce my own claim on the functions of vocatives, and discuss some consequences of that distinction.

2 The Traditional Wisdom on Vocatives

2.1 How to Recognize a Vocative

By definition, a vocative is a nominal element referring to the addressee(s) of a sentence. In mainstream European grammatical tradition, a vocative is taken to be a case-form, though maybe an odd one.[3] In the simplest case, the vocative has a morphologically distinct form, such as in Latin,

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[1]Put in other words, I take to be semantic the part of meaning that is linguistically encoded. Truth conditions are part of that, but clearly not the whole story.

[2]Consider for instance the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father in heaven." Is this a vocative? And more importantly, how can we decide?

[3]The position of the vocative being a case-form among others, however, is not something that should be taken for granted. In the Indian Sanskrit tradition, the vocative is not classified as an independent case (cf. Goldman and Sutherland Goldman, 2004).

Sanskrit or Romanian. Unfortunately, even in these languages, the vocative is not systematically distinct from other case-forms. So, while in the Latin example (1a) *Brute*, *mi*, and *fili* are distinctively vocative, other declination classes (and all plurals) do not distinguish the nominative from the vocative (e.g., 1b).

(1) a. Tu quoque, Brute,   fili   mi?
         you too,   Brutus.VOC, son.VOC my.VOC
     b. Tu quoque, Anna,   filia   mea?
         you too,   Anna.VOC?|NOM?, daughter.VOC?|NOM? my.VOC?|NOM?

While the details are not quite the same for Sanskrit and Romanian, a similar point could be made in these two languages: the form alone does not always suffice to identify a vocative. We need therefore additional criteria in order to characterize vocatives.

Often, the vocative is described as not serving as an argument of the verb, and as being set off from the rest of the sentence by some special intonation (see Zwicky, 1974:777). Taking this as a base, *Jacquie* in (2a) can be identified as a vocative, whereas in (2b), it is the internal argument of the verb, and therefore not a vocative:[4]

(2) a. Jacquie, your grammar leaks.
     b. I am going to tell Jacquie that her grammar leaks.

This definition should probably be generalized in the sense that a vocative does not serve as argument to *any* other element of the sentence, in order to distinguish vocatives from genitives, which most often do not depend on a verb either, but on a noun (or a noun phrase). For instance, in (3), *Angliæ*, *Scotiæ* and *Hiberniæ* do not depend on the verb, but rather on the noun *rex*.

(3)   Carolus I ab   anno 1625 ad mortem fuit Angliæ,   Scotiæ,   et
         Charles 1st from year 1625 to death   was England.GEN, Scotland.GEN, and
         Hiberniæ   rex.
         Ireland.GEN king

A definition in terms of grammatical dependences allows us to exclude the underlined terms in (4) as vocatives, since, while they refer to the addressee, they are arguments of the verb.

(4) a. <u>Ihr</u> <u>Trottel</u> denkt zuviel   nach![5]   b. Was möchte   <u>der Herr</u>?[6]
         you fools   think too much after   What would like the mister
         'You fools think too much!'   'What would you like, sir?'

However, according to this definition, quantified expressions like (5) are to be classified as vocatives:

(5) <u>Everyone who has a dog</u>, you need a dog permit![7]

While the definition presented here is quite intuitive in many cases, it is not without problems. First, the intonational criterion is not a very solid one. Especially, sentence-final vocatives are generally *not* set off the rest of the sentence in a clear way:

(6) Thank you, Fred!

Second, the dependence-idea loses some of its appeal once we are confronted with sentences without a verb, like (1a), repeated below:

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[4]Examples in (2) taken from Zwicky (1974).

[5]Example adapted from Corver (2008:54).

[6]This is the dedicated form by which German-speaking waiters address their (male) clients. Example taken from Cabredo Hofherr (2008).

[7]This example has been pointed out to me by one of the participants of PLC 33.

(7) Tu quoque, Brute,   mi   fili?
     you too,   Brutus.VOC, my.VOC son.VOC?

We have seen above that *Brute*, *mi* and *fili* are morphologically identified as vocatives. The question is, however, whether *tu* should count as a vocative or as a nominative. For this particular problem, one can come up with criteria in order to decide the question.

It seems to be the case that vocatives are "transparent" with respect to focus particles, and that the set of addressees cannot be manipulated just like any other NP in a sentence. Assume that our set of potential addressees is the one in (8a), and that the current set of addressees is the one in (8b).

(8) a. ⟦Simpsons⟧ = {Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie}
     b. {Homer, Bart}

It is not possible to narrow down the currently active set of addressees by a restrictive particle like 'only' (cf. 9), or to augment it with an additive particle like 'also' (cf. 10):

(9) a. * Only Homer, haven't you had enough beer?
     b.   Intended move: from {Homer, Bart} to {Homer}

(10) a. * Also Lisa, you guys go and wash your hands!8
     b.   Intended move: from {Bart, Homer} to {Bart, Homer, Lisa}

Furthermore, one cannot highlight with a particle one member of the set of addressees, while still maintaining that member's inclusion in the larger set of actual addressees. This is illustrated in (11):

(11) a. * Mainly Homer, nuclear waste is a serious problem!
     b. * Even Lisa, where is your homework?

The inability of focus particles to apply to vocatives is explained if one assumes that these particles do not simply manipulate sets, but have discourse functions, and are connected to what has been called the "current question" (cf., for instance, Beaver and Clark, 2008).

The tests with particles give us thus a supplementary context in order to determine whether a noun is a vocative or not, in cases when there is no verb.

2.2 The Two Basic Functions of a Vocative: Calls vs. Addresses

Based on the work of Schegloff (1968), there has been a tradition of distinguishing two basic functions of a vocative, labeled *calls* and *addresses*, respectively.

Calls are designed to catch the addressee's attention, as exemplified in (12):9

(12) Hey lady, you dropped your piano.

Addresses are designed to maintain or emphasize the contact between speaker and addressee:

(13) I'm afraid, sir, that my coyote is nibbling on your leg.

As has been already suggested by Schegloff, in English, some vocatives can be used as calls exclusively, but Zwicky (1974) hypothesises that all address vocatives can be used as calls.

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[8]The situation with additive particles like 'also' and their equivalents in other languages is actually not that clear, as has been repeatedly pointed out to me. Cases like (10), where the vocative appears in the singular, and the main sentence contains a plural verb, are consistently judged as strongly deviant. However, with a plural vocative, 'also' is much more acceptable.

(1) a. Students, please leave the room, and faculty too.
     b. Students and faculty too, please leave the room.

With an additive, this test seems thus to be not quite as robust as with exclusives.

[9]Examples (12–14) taken from Zwicky (1974).

(14) a.   Cabby, drive me to Carnegie Hall.[10]

       b.   * I don't think, cabby, that the Lincoln Tunnel is the best way to go to Brooklyn.

The dichotomy between calls and addresses has proved to be highly useful, and as far as I am aware, the validity of this opposition has gone so far unchallenged in the literature. However, I would like to point out that the dichotomy concerns pragmatic aspects of the vocative in a rather narrow sense. That is, calls or addresses are what a speaker can do with a vocative; it is not that much about what the vocative means.[11]

2.3 The Vocative and Cartographic Approaches to the Sentence (or the DP)

In recent years, there has been quite some discussion on the NP or DP status of vocatives (cf., for instance, Longobardi, 1994; d'Hulst et al., 2007; Hill, 2007). This discussion has been fueled by the fact that, while in some Romance languages, especially French and Romanian, vocatives appear frequently with definite articles (cf. 15), in other languages, like German, vocatives seem to be, at least at a first glance, necessarily bare, as is illustrated in (16–17):

(15) Bonjour, les amis!   [French]
      Good day, the friends!

(16)   a. Der Wikinger hat mein Schiff zu Schrott gefahren. [German]
         the viking   has my   ship   to rubble driven
         'The viking has wrecked my ship.'
     b. Hey (*der) Wikinger, runter von meinem Schiff!
         hey (the)   viking,   down from my   ship

(17)   a. Der Snorre hat mein Schiff zu Schrott gefahren.
         the Snorre has my   ship   to rubble driven
     b. Hey (*der) Snorre, runter von meinem Schiff!
         hey (the)   Snorre, down from my   ship

(15) is the completely standard way of addressing one's friends in French. In German, however, one cannot use the definite article in (16b). Interestingly, even in dialects where one uses standardly the definite article with proper names (cf. 17a), it still is impossible to maintain the definite article in a clear-cut vocative like (17b).

However, it would be premature to conclude from the opposition between (15) and (16–17) that there is something like a parametric variation between these two languages. First of all, in some contexts, it would be highly odd in French to use a definite article. Assume for instance (18) was uttered in the context of a televised address of the French president:

(18)   a.   Françaises, français!
           French.FEM, French
     b. ??Les françaises,   les français!
          the French.FEM, the French

Cabredo Hofherr (2008) observes with respect to the acceptability of the two versions of (18) that the difference between the vocative with and without the definite article in French corresponds to the difference between "definite" and "generic" (i.e., between a particular group, contextually anchored that may be characterized by the noun, and an intensional group).

Second, while the intuitions on (16) and (17) are extremely clear, there are also cases in German where the "bare" version of the vocative is odd, and where some determination of the vocative is needed.

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[10]Examples and judgements in (14) taken from Zwicky (1974:790).

[11]The fact of being "pragmatic" is of course no argument for or against an analysis of the vocative. However, it is worth pointing out, since the basic hypothesis here is that it is at least worth trying to say something about the semantics of vocatives.

(19) a. ?? Guten Abend,   Damen und Herren!
          good   evening, ladies   and gentlemen
      b. Küss' die Hand die Damen, guten Abend die Herren,   grüß' Euch die Madeln,
          kiss   the hand the ladies,   good evening the gentlemen, salute you   the girls,
          servas die Buam![12]
          hi   the boys

While one way of changing (19a) would be to add the equivalent of 'my' before the nouns (*meine Damen und Herren*),[13] one can add the definite article in a similar context, as is illustrated in (19b). While this sentence may exemplify a regional, Austrian variant of German, it remains true that the bare vocative is not an option in German for (19).

To conclude the section on the more formal aspects of vocatives, it needs to be noticed that there is absolutely no reason to expect that vocatives can only appear bare or with definite articles. As we have already seen in (5), on page 177, one can get quantified expressions in a vocative. Probably more surprisingly, there are languages in which one even finds indefinite articles in vocative constructions. A case in point is Middle High German ($\approx$ 1050–1350 CE):[14]

(20) a. genâde, ein küneginne[15]   b. trœste,   ein süeʒe minne, mich[16]
          merci, a   queen   comfort, a sweet love, me.
          'Merci, o queen!'   'Comfort me, o sweet love.'

I will not examine the issue of the more formal or morphological aspects of vocatives any further. But one can see that these aspects are extremely messy, and that it will be difficult to come up with solid cross-linguistic generalizations on these aspects of vocatives. In what follows, I will leave aside such considerations, and focus instead on the semantic side of vocatives.

More specifically, I will try to show that the distinction between calls and addresses is insufficient. It can be shown that not all call-vocatives behave the same with respect to their behavior in what one may call "addressee-management."

It is important to notice that the distinction between calls and addresses, being defined as it is, does not concern so much the meaning/reference/context-change-potential of a vocative (that is, its *semantics*), but rather what speakers can do with a vocative. That is, this dichotomy concerns the pragmatics of the vocative in a narrow sense. Furthermore, speakers could achieve the effects of calls or addresses just as well by employing extra- or para-linguistic means (for instance, tapping on the addressee's shoulder, by hand-waving, or by various kinds of grunting). There simply is nothing specifically linguistic about them.

That, of course, does not mean that the distinction is therefore useless, or uninteresting. I do not doubt at all that the pragmatics are important (and probably more important with vocatives than with other linguistic structures), but I think that as linguists, it is worth dwelling on their semantics as well, which has not been done, as far as I am aware.

3 The Meaning of Vocatives

3.1 Towards a New Classification

Let us assume the following representation of the meaning of a (call-)vocative, as taken from Portner (2004:8):

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[12]Heinz Conrads, a legendary, now deceased, Austrian TV anchorman, was famous for saluting his audience invariably by (19b).

[13]As pointed out by Patricia Cabredo (p.c.), putting in an adjectival specification—like *(sehr) verehrte* ('very estimated')—also makes (19a) more acceptable.

[14]It is true that the Middle High German indefinite article is not a very 'standard' indefinite, if one compares it with indefinite articles in contemporary European languages, cf. Paul et al. (1982) and Schaden (2009).

[15]Walther von der Vogelweide, *Gedichte*, 118,39.

[16]Manessische Handschrift, 1,198.

(21) $[\![\text{CALL}]\!]^C_{w,c} = [\lambda x.\lambda w.\text{speaker}(c) \text{ requests } x\text{'s attention in } w]$

(21) is a rather straightforward implementation of the idea of a call-vocative. If one looks at the typing, it is quite clear that Portner had in mind a proper name (i.e., something of type $\langle e \rangle$) when writing this formula. However, in sticking to (21), one misses a striking difference opposing the behaviour of vocatives.

Consider the following two call-vocatives:

(22)   a. George, could you pass me the salt, please?
       b. Dear friends, let us go inside!

Let us assume furthermore for (22a) the following set of potential addressees:

(23)   {George, Harriet, Gregory, Margaret}

In such a setting, the formula in (21) seems to be perfectly adequate: the speaker requests George's attention in this situation. That means persons other than George are a priori not concerned by the sentence, and should carry on with whatever they are doing.

The function of the vocative in such a context seems to be the following: it picks a person out of a contextually given set of possible addressees, and establishes this person as the addressee of the sentence.

Let us now consider (22b), and let us assume the following context: at a conference, the participants are having a coffee-break outside the conference room. One of the organizers wants to get things started again, and utters (22b). Let us assume furthermore that at least a part of the conference participants are not particularly friends with the utterer of (22b), and that the group as a whole is composed as follows with respect to their friendship status to the speaker:

(24)   {friend$_0$,..., friend$_n$,enemy$_0$,...,enemy$_k$,indifferent$_0$,...,indifferent$_l$}

This means that a considerable subset of members of (24) does not qualify as a *dear friend*. Nevertheless, the call is addressed to the conference participants as a whole, such that even people not satisfying the description should react and go inside.

Intuitively, what happens here is the following: we have a group that is already constituted as addressees of the sentence, or at least, the speaker presupposes the group as already being constituted as the addressees of an utterance. The speaker simply predicates globally something on this group, and doesn't seem to wish to isolate one subpopulation from the greater whole.

I propose that the examples in (22a) and (22b) exemplify two different types of vocatives: the first one is an *identificational* vocative, whose function is to identify the addressee(s) out of a possibly bigger group of potential addressees; the second one is a *predicational* vocative, which globally predicates some property onto some already constituted set of addressees.

One may wonder whether the "globalizing" effect is linked to issues like politeness, or is some kind of fixed use, just like *dear X* at the beginning of a letter, which has become completely worn of any descriptive content it may have (or have had) in other contexts. If the same effects of a predicational vocative would hold with nouns that have a clearer descriptive content, like 'fellow linguists', such a function of the vocative could be ascertained.

Let us assume that at the first day of a linguistics conference, there is a majority of linguists attending, but that there are also a few biologists:

(25)   {linguist$_0$,...,linguist$_n$,biologist$_0$,...,biologist$_k$}

Assume that a slightly confused member of the organizational committee welcomes the guests of the conference as follows:

(26)   Fellow linguists! Welcome to the 33rd Penn Linguistics Colloquium!

Clearly, in this situation, (26) is not felicitous. Interestingly, the type of infelicity one observes looks like a presupposition failure. I argue that examples like (26) are not at odds with the characterization

of predicative vocatives. In the situation we are considering, there is a pre-constituted group of addressees, yet, the descriptive content does not fit the group as a whole.

Contrary to the 'dear friends' example, the descriptive content of 'fellow linguists' is more difficult to accommodate. More generally, nouns with a scalar element, and with speaker-oriented emotive content ('quality nouns', like *idiot, tyrant*, etc., as these are called in Milner 1978, but cf. also Schlenker 2007) are more easily used in such contexts.

The issue of politeness (and the lack of it) also seems to play a role in distinguishing predicative from identificational vocatives. Those vocatives carrying heavy loads of politess or disrespect are not very amenable to discriminating between groups of potential addressees:

(27) a. Illustrious colleagues, let us conclude this cheerful evening with a toast!
      b. Freeze, motherfuckers, or I'll shoot you!

One reason for this behavior may be the following: in order for an identificational vocative to work, the vocative must correspond to the self-ascription of the addressee. In other words, the potential addressee must be able to identify that (s)he is aimed at by the vocative noun (or NP). However, content like that in (27) is difficult to imagine as conforming to a self-ascribed property, and therefore, is not a very effective way of discriminating between different self-ascribed properties holding for different people.

3.2 Are all Vocatives Identificational or Predicative?

So far, we have seen two functions of the vocative: identifying the addressee(s) and predicating some property on them. However, vocatives are quite frequently used in contexts where they clearly do not serve to predicate something on the addressee, and where it is perfectly clear from the context who the addressee must be. The following example illustrates that point:[17]

(28) Red Riding Hood entered the cottage and said, "<u>Grandma</u>, I have brought you some fat-free, sodium-free snacks to salute you in your role of a wise and nurturing matriarch."
      From the bed, the wolf said softly, "Come closer, child, so that I might see you."
      Red Riding Hood said, "Oh, I forgot you are as optically challenged as a bat. <u>Grandma</u>, what big eyes you have!"
      "They have seen much, and forgiven much, my dear."
      "<u>Grandma</u>, what a big nose you have, only relatively, of course, and certainly attractive in its own way."
      "It has smelled much, and forgiven much, my dear."
      "<u>Grandma</u>, what big teeth you have!"

'Grandma' in (28) can be treated as a proper name, and it is clear in the story that this is the only possible addressee in this situation. Thus, the vocative cannot be identificational. At the same time, it makes no sense to say that in this context, Little Red Riding Hood predicates the property of being a grandmother on the individual that she assumes to be her grandmother. Therefore, the vocative in (28) cannot be predicative, either.

Going back to the call–address dichotomy, the use of the vocative in (28) is a good example of the address-type use, highlighting the phatic dimension of the vocatives. Yet, it does not fit into the identificational–predicative dichotomy defended so far.

I propose thus to call this latter function of the vocative "activation," which is taken from an analogue function of focus in Beaver and Clark (2008). This is the last function of a vocative I assume. So, summing up, I claim that vocatives have three basic functions: to *identify* the addressee, to *predicate* a property on the addressee, or to *activate* the addressee. One may call this the "IPA hypothesis" on the meaning of vocatives.

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[17]Example taken from James Finn Garner (1984), *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, Macmillan Publishing.

3.3 Consequences of the Proposed 3-Way Distinction on the Meaning of Vocatives

Can we assume that some elements are more likely to appear in certain uses of the vocative than in others? Or can we even show that some elements are entirely unfit to serve one of the three basic functions?

We have already seen that "quality nouns" appear most likely in predicative vocatives. However, what I would like to concentrate on in this section are pronouns. Pronouns, whatever your favorite theory may say about their semantics, are generally supposed to lack descriptive content. This, of course, should make them unusable as predicative vocatives. Furthermore, they shouldn't be very felicitous as identificational vocatives, as long as there is no additional (contextual) descriptive import.

It has been noted by Zwicky (1974:790ff.), that *you* cannot be used as an address in English:

(29)   * What I think, you, is that we ought to take the money and run.

However, this fact does not seem to be generalizable cross-linguistically: at least in some German dialects (of Austria), the equivalent of *you* may serve as an address.[18] Nevertheless, the syntactic position of the vocative seems to influence the acceptability:

(30)   a.   Du, sag mal, bist Du letztes Jahr auch nach Italien gefahren?
                  you, tell once, are you last   year also to   Italy   driven
                  '(You,) Tell me, did you go to Italy as well last year?'
          b.   * Sag mal, Du, bist Du letztes Jahr auch nach Italien gefahren?
                  Tell once, you, are you last   year also to   Italy   driven

The vocative in (30a) is used as an activation, and under the assumptions in this paper, there is no principled reason why it should not be able to do so.[19]

'You' does appear in identificational vocatives, but there, it has to be accompanied by some kind of (gestural) cue as to how to determine the person it is supposed to refer to:

(31)   You [gesture towards A], you [gesture towards B], and you [gesture towards C], take care of that sniper on the roof!

Furthermore, if a pronoun has in principle no semantic contribution, this explains why in some languages (like English or German), it can serve as a support for predication in a vocative, and why it is excluded with proper names (unless the proper name is taken as a predicate):

(32)   a.   You bastard, where has all that money gone?
          b.   # You John, where has all that money gone?
          c.   You bastards, where has all that money gone?

So, it seems as if the IPA hypothesis is able to shed some light on the behavior of specific linguistic elements with respect to vocatives.

4 Conclusion and Perspectives

In this paper, I have tried to identify three semantic functions of a vocative, namely to identify, to predicate, and to activate (the IPA hypothesis). This differentiation is crucially based on the question

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[18]According to the judgement of Patricia Cabredo, a use like that in (30) is only possible with the familiar and singular *Du*, and not with the plural familiar *Ihr*, or the formal *Sie*. I agree with respect to the judgement on *Ihr*. However, I accept *Sie* without problems, and such examples are attested (1 from E. Ottwalt, *Ruhe und Ordnung*):

(1)   Sie, sagen Sie mal, sollen wir uns da   wirklich in unangenehme Sachen einlassen?
        you, tell   you once, shall we us there really   in awkward   things engage

[19]This means, of course, that I do not have any idea at the moment about how one could derive the difference between the English and the German facts, and more specifically, why one cannot use English *you* in such a context.

whether the (group of) addressee(s) is presupposed to be already established (this is the case with predicative and activational vocatives), or whether the addressee still has to be established as such (identificational vocatives).

I have also shown that the occurrence of (a certain class of) focus particles in vocatives leads to agrammaticality, which provides us with an additional test allowing us to determine whether a given nominal expression is a vocative or not.

Much is still to be done. At this point, I would like to point out three directions for further research. The first one concerns a possible correlation between syntactic position of the vocative in a sentence, and its function. Following Lambrecht (1996), one can establish a rather crude distinction between initial, medial, and final position of a vocative in a sentence:

(33) a. John, thank you!
      b. Thank you, John!
      c. The truth is, Madam, nothing is as good nowadays.[20]

When considering (33a), a call-vocative scenario comes to mind, whereas in (33b), it is probably an address. It has already been noted by Schegloff (1968) that calls are naturally utterance-initial. But it is interesting to note that, when one considers the IPA distinction, there seems to be no necessary structural relation between an identificational vocative and an initial position, at least when there is a tag involved:

(34) a. Faut vraiment être con   pour allumer un sèche-cheveux dans la   baignoire, pas vrai,
         need really   be stupid to   turn on a   hairdrier   in   the tub,   not true,
         Claude?
         Claude
         'One really has to be stupid in order to turn on a hairdrier in the bathtub, isn't it true,
         Claude?'

In a context in which Claude is part of a larger audience, it is not quite clear at whom the utterance is directed; the suspense only falls at the end. In this sense, (34) is an identificational vocative, although its position is final. Yet, the issue of a possible connection between syntactic position and function needs to be examined more closely.

A second direction concerns the (cross-linguistic and language-specific) distribution of bare vocatives and vocatives with determiners (especially definite ones). What exactly are the restrictions, and why is it that some contexts require one form rather than the other?

Finally, as has been suggested by Jean-Marie Marandin and Denis Paillard (p.c.), it might be necessary to distinguish two different levels in the meaning of a vocative: the first one would concern the addressee of the speech act, and the second level would concern the addressee of the more standard content of the utterance. It is probable that these three issues turn out to be intertwined, and that providing an answer for one question also allows insights into the others.

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[20]Example taken from Levinson (1983:71).

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