

VERTICALITY AND HORIZONTALITY IN ITALIAN ADDRESS FORMS

CHIARA GHEZZI

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the relations between universal spatial image-schemas and culture-specific properties of Italian address forms through the analysis of six Italian comedy plays written in the 16th, 18th, and 20th centuries. The diachrony of the Italian address system shows how the centuries-long centrality of the vertical power semantic was replaced in the 20th century by the horizontal distance semantics. These variations correlate with important changes in politeness conventions associated with the development of a new type of rapprochement politeness from the 19th century on.