

The *-enti* suffix in the Veronese dialect: a semantic and syntactic analysis¹.

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I will describe and analyze a peculiar interrogative verbal suffix (*-enti*) of the dialect of Verona (Veronese) that is found only in main interrogatives and only for the first singular and the first inclusive plural persons:

- (1) Sa magnenti?
What eat.1pl.TI
'So, what am I /are we going to eat?'

The most interesting characteristics of this phenomenon, and the major original contribute to its description, consist of two points:

- A unique form for the first singular and the first inclusive plural persons reference, which results from the combination of a first plural person morphology and an enclitic *-ti*;
- An interrogative marker that encodes the pragmatic features [speaker] and [addressee] and conveys the meaning of a *special question* in the sense used by Obenauer (2004, 2006).

As I will show in section 2.2, the *-ti* interrogative clitic is attached to the inflected verb in the first plural person and the result is the *-enti* suffix. This is not the canonical way to

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form questions in the dialect of Verona, and it encodes a different set of values with respect to *standard questions*².

This phenomenon has not been described yet for Veronese but similar data can be found in varieties close to the area of Verona (the dialect of Trento and the dialects of the central Veneto), for which Loporcaro and Vigolo (1999), Pamelin (2014), Cordin (2015), Chinellato (2004) illustrate the use of a *-ti/-te* enclitic. The Veronese suffix *-enti* shares some features with this clitic but it also displays its own original characteristics that have not been reported for the nearby varieties. Though, I will not provide a comparison with these varieties and this work is intended as a descriptive study for a future comparative analysis.

I will show that the suffix *-enti* is an interrogative marker for the first singular and plural person reference, but also encodes the [speaker] and the [addressee] features. This analysis can account for its semantic proprieties (i.e. its Special Questions reading as in Obenauer 2004, 2006 and the fact that it is interpreted as an inclusive first plural person or first singular person), as well as its morphological properties (it is composed of a verb inflected for the first plural person in the present tense and an interrogative clitic).

The paper is organized in the following way: in section 2, I will introduce some relevant information about the dialect of Verona. In section 3, I will describe in detail the morpho-syntactic aspects of the phenomenon, and in section 4 I will show its pragmatic and semantic values. In section 5, I will combine these aspects in order to give a general description of the phenomenon, and I will conclude the analysis in section 6.

2. The dialect of Verona

Before stepping into the description of the phenomenon, I briefly sketch the crucial properties of the verbal and interrogative systems of the Veronese dialect.

The phenomenon I am describing is productive in a restricted area of the Veronese territory. After some interviews I made in summer 2014, I concluded that the productive zone is comprehensive of the city centre and the north area of the Verona province³. This territory

² The term *standard questions* is used here in opposition to *special questions* in the sense of Obenauer (2004, 2006).

³ I tested 13 people from different areas of the Verona province (Calmasino (1), Fumane (3), Negrar (1), Parona (2), Dossobuono (2), Velo Veronese (3), Boscochiesanuova(1)). The speakers (women and men) have different ages (26-80) and different degrees of education. The phenomenon is quite spread among the speakers, so I did not focus my research on the sociolinguistic differences (there seems to be a slight degradation in the use among the younger generation, but this inconsistency is not robust). Since the author is a native speaker, the tests were

includes the Garda lake coast, the Adige Valley, the Valpolicella and the Lessinia area. The southern border of this territory is to be settled along the zones that are south to the city centre⁴.

Veronese has a half-rich system of subject proclitic forms:

(2) *Conjugation of verb “magnàr” (to eat); present indicative:*

(Mi)		màgnO
(Ti)	te	màgnE
(Lu/ Ela)	el/la	màgnA
(Noaltri/Noaltre)		magnÉMO
(Voaltri/ Voaltre)		magnÌ
(Lori/ Lore)	i/le	màgnA

The verbal inflection of this variety has a verbal agreement and a set of obligatory subject clitics in front of the verb. First person singular, first person plural and second person plural subjects have no subject clitic. This system is very common among North Italian Dialects (Renzi and Vanelli 1983; Poletto 2000).

In interrogative sentences, a subject clitic appears in enclisis to the verb, i.e. Veronese still shows the so-called *subject clitic-verb inversion* in interrogative contexts, which has been lost in other Northern Italian dialects:

(3)	(Mi)	màgno?
	(Ti)	màgneto?
	(Lu/ Ela)	màgnalo?/ màgnala?
	(Noaltri/ Noaltre)	magnèmo?
	(Voaltri/ Voaltre)	magnìo?
	(Lori/ Lore)	màgnali?/ màgnale?

entirely conducted in Veronese. They consisted of different scenes and multiple choice answers: the informants were asked to choose the best sentence to react to these scenes.

⁴ To set these boundaries I used Rigobello's (1998) description of the sub-varieties of Veronese (Rigobello 1998, 39).

Notice that a second person plural clitic shows up in questions, which is not present in proclisis in affirmative clauses. The only persons without a subject clitic at the interrogative modality are the first singular and first plural persons.

The strong subject pronoun is not obligatory and it shows up only when it has specific informational properties (as it is in Standard Italian and other *null subject* languages).

3. Morphological description of the phenomenon

The suffix *-enti* is the result of the clitic *-ti* that attaches to the verb inflected for the first plural person in the present indicative. This account directly follows Loporcaro and Vigolo's (1999) analysis of the *-te* clitic in the dialect of Cavareno (Trento) since this phenomenon in Trentino shares most of the crucial morphological features with the Veronese form, i.e. it consists of an enclitic that follows an inflected verb in the first persons.

Table 1: *-te* enclitic in the dialect of Cavareno (Trento)

Infinitive	Čantàr (to sing)	Vedèr (to see)	Pèrder (to lose)	Dòrmir (to sleep)	Nàr (to go)
First person singular	čanti- te	vedi- te	pèrdi- te	dòrmi- te	von- te
First person plural	čantan- te	veden- te	pèrden- te	dormìn- te	nan- te

(Adapted from Loporcaro and Vigolo 1999)

The main difference between the two varieties is that in Veronese the *-ti* enclitic productively combines only with the first plural inflection in the indicative present tense. The combination of the two morphemes, in this variety, always has the same results: a suffix *-enti*.⁵ For this reason I dubbed the phenomenon the *-enti* suffix and I will refer to it as the *-enti* suffix, except when the morphological analysis requires some specification about the *-ti* clitic that is part of the suffix.

I will now discuss some morpho-phonological aspects of Veronese in order to support my analysis.

⁵ The *-te* clitic in Trentino can follow the verb inflected for different tenses and moods (see Loporcaro and Vigolo 1999).

The *-enti* suffix in Veronese is found on all verbs, without distinctions based on semantics or morpho-phonological forms (i.e. the thematic vowel):

- (4) I CONJUGATION: *Magnàr* → Magnéⁿti ? (to eat)
 II CONJUGATION: *Córar* → Coréⁿti ? (to run)
 III CONJUGATION: *Capìr* → Capéⁿti ? (to understand)⁶

If we consider the verbal paradigm of Veronese, we notice that the first plural person at the present indicative tense has the same ending for the three conjugations:

(5) *Present indicative form:*

I CONJUGATION: <i>Magnàr</i>	(Mi)		magno
	(Ti)	te	magne
	(Lu/ Ela)	el/ la	magna
	(Noaltri/ Noaltre)		magnémo
	(Voaltri/ Voaltre)		magnì
	(Lori/ Lore)	i/ le	magna
II CONJUGATION: <i>Córar</i>	(Mi)		coro
	(Ti)	te	core
	(Lu/ Ela)	el/ la	core
	(Noaltri/ Noaltre)		corémo
	(Voaltri/ Voaltre)		corì
	(Lori/ Lore)	i/ le	core
III CONJUGATION: <i>Capìr</i>	(Mi)		capisso
	(Ti)	te	capisse
	(Lu/ Ela)	el/ la	capisse
	(Noaltri/ Noaltre)		capémo
	(Voaltri/ Voaltre)		capì
	(Lori/ Lore)	i/ le	capisse

I hypothesize that the interrogative suffix *-enti* was formed by attaching a clitic *-ti* to the inflected verb in the first plural person in the present indicative tense.

⁶ The analysis and the examples of the three conjugations are from Patuzzi and Bolognini (1900).

(6) Magnémo > Magnémo + -ti > Magnénti

(7) -èmo > -èm Ø (+ti) > -ènti /*[enti]

The clitic *-ti* is added to the suffix *-émo*. The final unstressed /o/ often underwent apocope in old Veronese (Bertoletti 2005). The coda of the stressed syllable (/m/ in the suffix *-émo*) assimilates to the post alveolar feature of the following syllable (*-ti*), yielding a nasal post alveolar consonant⁷.

Verbs with a suppletive root provide further evidence confirming that the form involved in the formation of the *-enti* suffix is the one of the first plural person agreement plus a *-ti* enclitic. With these verbs the *-ti* clitic can follow only the form of the first plural person:

(8)

Nar	(to go)	
(Mi)		vo
(Ti)	te	ve
(Lu/ Ela)	el/ la	va
(Noaltri/ Noaltre)	némo	→ nénti? /* venti?
(Voaltri/ Voaltre)	ní	
(Lori/ Lore)	i/ le	va ⁸

The phenomenon involves the *-ti* enclitic that follows a verb inflected for the first plural person in present indicative tense. This operation always yields the *-enti* form. In fact, as opposed to the dialect of Cavareno studied by Loporcaro and Vigolo (cf. Table 1), the Veronese *-ti* can only attach to the first plural person and only to the verb inflected for the present tense in the indicative mood.

(9) IMPERFECTIVE Indicative

⁷ This last process is well attested also in Modern Italian.

⁸ The following forms are also possible:
for Noaltri/ Noaltre (we): 'ndémo/ andémo (go)
for Voaltri/ Voaltre (you.pl): 'ndi/ nasi (go).

(Mi)		magnàa		
(Ti)	te	magnàe		
(Lu/ Ela)	el/ la	magnàa		
(Noaltri/ Noaltre)	magnàene		→	*magnaeneti/ *magnaenti
(Voaltri/ Voaltre)	magnàe			
(Lori/ lore)	i/ le	magnàa		

(10) FUTURE Indicative

(Mi)		magnarò		
(Ti)	te	magnarè		
(Lu/ Ela)	el/ la	magnarà		
(Noaltri/ noaltre)	magnarémo		→	*magnarenti
(Voaltri/ voaltre)	magnarì			
(Lori/ lore)	i/ le	magnarà		

(11) (Present)_CONDITIONAL

(Mi)		sarìa		
(Ti)	te	saréssi		
(Lu/ Ela)	el/la	sarìa		
(Noaltri/Noaltre)	saréssimo/saréssene		→	*saressimo+ti>*saressinti/*saressenti(*saréssenti)
(Voaltri/Voaltre)	sarésse			
(Lori/ Lore)	i/le	sarìa		

The *-enti* form is present also on auxiliaries, when they are inflected in the present tense, indicative mood. This is true for the auxiliary TO HAVE (12a.) and TO BE (12b.) at the present perfect or in the progressive periphrasis (12c.)^{9,10}:

(12) a. (Present perfect) *to eat* **Enti magnà?**

⁹ The auxiliary system in modern Veronese is the same as in Italian: it makes use of the verb TO HAVE and TO BE. The progressive periphrasis is formed by the inflected verb TO BE + the preposition DRIO (behind) + the infinitive form of the verb:

i. Son drio magnar (I am behind to eat)
I am eating

¹⁰ With present perfect I refer here to the *passato prossimo*, although the contexts of use of the two tenses is not entirely the same (Giorgi and Pianesi 1997).

- PRESENT AUX to have: **emo+ti** > enti
- b. (Present perfect) *to fall* **Senti** cascà?
- PRESENT AUX to be: **semo+ti** > senti
- c. (Progressive periphrasis) *to mistake* **Senti** drìo sbajar?
- PRESENT AUX to be: **semo+ti** > senti

As for the lexical verbs, the *-ti* clitic cannot attach to an auxiliary when it is not inflected in the present tense indicative mood:

- (13) (Past Perfect) *to fall* Sérene/Sérìmo caschè
- IMPERFECTIVE AUX : ***sérene/sérìmo+ti** > ***sérenti/*sérinti**

As mentioned above, the *-enti* suffix is used only in interrogative clauses. The verb ending in *-enti* has the same syntactic distribution of any verbs followed by interrogative subject clitics: it cannot be used in non-interrogative contexts such as affirmative clauses (14) and imperative clauses (15), it appears only in root questions (cf. (16) and (17) with (18)).

- (14) a. *De solito toienti le botìglie de vero.
usually take.1pl.TI the bottles of glass
‘We usually buy glass bottles’
- b. *De solito tolo/ tóto le botìglie de vero
usually take.3sg.CL/take.2sg.CL the bottles of glass
‘He/You usually buy glass bottles’
- (15) a. *Cantenti na canson!
Sing.1pl.ti a song
- b. *Cantalo/ Canteto na canson!
Sing.3sg.CL/ sing.2sg.CL a song
‘Let’s sing a song!’
- (16) a. *Ai dito che magnenti?
have.they told that eat.1pl.TI
‘Did they say that we are going to eat?’
- b. *Ai dito che magnelo/ magneto stasera?

have.they told that eat.3sg.CL/ eat.2sg.CL tonight
'Did they say that he is/you are going to eat tonight?'

- (17) a. *Non so se magnenti
Not know.1sg if eat.1pl.TI
'I don't know if we eat'
- b. *Non so se magnelo/ magneto
Not know.1sg if eat.3sg.CL/ eat.3sg.CL
'I don't know if he eats/ you eat'

- (18) a. Magnenti?
Eat.1pl.TI
'Are we finally eating?'
- b. Magnelo/ Magneto?
Eat.3sg.CL/ eat.2sg.CL
'Does he/do you eat?'

Because of these syntactic restrictions, I argue that the *-enti* suffix is an interrogative verbal marker, which is made up of the inflected verb and an interrogative clitic (i.e. *-ti*). This analysis follows Poletto's (2000) division between the set of affirmative subject clitics and the set of interrogative subject clitics in North-Italian dialects: *-ti* in Veronese belongs to the set of interrogative subject clitics because of its syntactic distribution. Furthermore, the *-ti* interrogative clitic has some stricter restrictions in its distribution, since it can only follow an inflected verb in the present indicative tense, while interrogative subject clitics are productive for every tense and mood in interrogative clauses (with the exception of future tense, Marchesini forth.). In the next section I consider the relation between the first plural person inflection and the semantic of the *-ti* clitic. For the moment I argue that *-ti* can follow only syntactic tense-less verbs, following Giorgi and Pianesi's (1997) analysis for present-inflected verbs. These authors claim that in Italian the lack of a specific morpheme for the present tense mirrors the lack of a syntactic representation for the present tense (in matrix clauses),

i.e. the TP is not projected for the present tense morphology. The present temporal reference is only specified at LF^{11,12}.

Nonetheless the verb must undergo the person agreement (with first plural person features) before being incorporated to the *-ti* clitic in a higher position, presumably a projection in the left periphery, according to Poletto's (2000) analysis of interrogative subject clitics.

I exclude that the restrictions in the pairing of the *-ti* clitic with a first person plural inflection in the present indicative tense is due to phonological factors (only). The phonological environments of imperfective tense and conditional mood differ from the present indicative inflection, and it seems that *-ti* only follows the present indicative phonological pattern: a close syllable, after a stressed second last syllable (cf. (19) with (21)). However, this hypothesis is not confirmed once we consider the future tense (20):

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| (19) | (imperfective, indicative)
(conditional, present) | magnàene > *magnàen(ti)
magnaréssene > *magnaréssen(ti) |
| (20) | (future, indicative) | magnarémo > *magnaré(nti) |
| (21) | (present, indicative) | magnémo > magnénti |

The future tense endings present the same phonological environment as the present indicative tense endings, but they cannot be followed by a *-ti* clitic. Moreover, future tense in Veronese cannot be (generally) followed by an interrogative subject clitic (Marchesini forthcoming). This means that the incorporation of the *-ti* clitic with a verb inflected for the future tense can be independently blocked by the syntactic computation before PF. Therefore, I cannot say whether some phonological rules also play a role in the use of the *-ti* clitic, but some syntactic restrictions are certainly on use here. I will introduce them further in the next paragraphs.

The literature about the *-ti* clitic, or *-te* in some varieties (cf. Trentino), has split the *-ti* clitic in two morphological components: the element /t/ and the vowel /i/¹³. The analysis on

¹¹ “From an empirical point of view, Italian, as well as many other languages, does not make use of any morpheme to express the present tense in (matrix) clauses.[...] Our proposal is that the temporal properties of the present tense are specified only at LF” (Giorgi and Pianesi, 1997. 40).

¹² Their observation holds for Veronese too.

the origin of the first consonant is controversial. In Loporcaro and Vigolo (1999) (after the hypothesis of Ascoli (1873) and Rohlfs (1968)) the element /t/ is borne out from the re-analysis, in the ancient North Italian dialects, of the third plural person of the verb *esse* (to be) as a first singular person: the form *sunt* (third plural person) has covered the usage of *sum* (first singular person). The new morpheme /t/, i.e. the last consonant in *sunt*, has then spread to all the other lexical verbs to mark the first singular person inflection and then from this to the first plural person. In Quaresima (1965) the origin of /t/ is seen as a result of the analogy of the first person with the second person singular. The interrogative enclitic *-to* (*-tu*) of the second person singular has been used for the first person singular, which lacks a proper subject clitic. From this, its use has passed to the first person plural. The third analysis is the one by Obenauer (2004) (and Poletto and Munaro (2006) for the free particle *ti*, that marks some interrogative clauses) where the /t/ comes from the pronominal system of the second person. This last hypothesis receives support from the semantic analysis, as it will become clear in the next section.

The vowel /i/ has created a less rich debate. All the authors agree in that it results from a first person pronoun that has reduced to the vowel /i/. Benincà and Vanelli (1975) have described a similar phenomenon in Lombard, Trentino and certain Rhaetoromance varieties, where a non-epenthetic vowel that is derived from the first person pronoun is agglutinated to the right of the verb. Poletto (2000) has explained it as an evidence for the movement of the inflected verb to the left periphery in a SpeakerP projection. Since the epenthetic vowel in Veronese is /e/ and not /i/ (*el magna* VS *magnalo*, see exx. (2) and (3)), this analysis can also be applied to the /i/ vowel of the Veronese *-ti* enclitic.

Furthermore, an enclitic form *-i* for first singular or plural subject in root interrogative clauses is reported for varieties of the central area of Veneto (Penello 2007 for Carmignano di Brenta; Michele Brunelli p.c. for Bassano del Grappa):

(22) Vago-i? (Carmignano di Brenta)

Go.I CL

‘Do I go?’

(23) Ndemo-i?

Go.we CL

¹³ Mainly Quaresima (1965); Loporcaro and Vigolo (1999); Cordin (2015); Obenauer (2004) and cf. Poletto and Munaro (2006) on the free particle *ti*.

‘Do we go?’

(Penello 2007, 203)

In Carmignano di Brenta and Bassano del Grappa an interrogative subject enclitic appears for all persons in root interrogative clauses. Crucially, its form in the first persons (singular and plural) is *-i*, like the form I am assuming for the clitic *-ti* in the *-enti* suffix¹⁴.

Therefore, I assume that the *-ti* clitic in the *-enti* suffix is composed by the elements /t/+ /i/. The first consonant /t/ has the same morphological features of the second person pronoun, while the last vowel /i/ is derived from the first person pronoun. The semantic interpretation of this element encodes the features [speaker] and [addressee], as I will try to show in the following section.

4. Semantic and pragmatic features of *-enti*

The verb with a first plural person inflection followed by the *-ti* clitic, i.e. the *-enti* suffix, in interrogative sentences can have a first person plural (24) as well as a first person singular (25) reference. The choice between the two person readings depends on the context.

(24) Elo ora? Nenti?
is.it time? Go.1pl.TI?
‘Is it time to go? Shall **we** go?’

(25) Ndo el catenti?
where it find.1pl.TI?
‘Where the hell can **I** find it?’

Notice that while the morphological agreement is only plural, the meaning makes reference to the first plural person as well as to the first singular person.

Moreover, when it refers to the first plural person, the *-enti* suffix triggers an inclusive reading. The first person plural subject must include the speaker as well as the addressee. If

¹⁴ The *-i* enclitic in Bassano del Grappa can convey a Special Question meaning (see 2.3) (Michele Brunelli p.c.), but the Special Question reading may simply follow from the first person reference in interrogative contexts.

the first plural subject excludes the addressee from the participants to the event (exclusive reading) the use of *-enti* is not felicitous.

(26) Sa fenti mi e ti?
what do.1pl.TI me and you?
'What (the hell) are we doing/are we going to do?'

(27) #Sa fenti mi e Giani intanto che te sì jìa?
what make.1pl.TI me and Gianni while that CL.2sg are away?
'What are Gianni and I suppose to do while you are not here?'

A third person participant is admitted, as far as the subject preserves its inclusive reading:

(28) Sa fenti mi, ti e la Maria?
what do.1pl.TI me you and the Maria
'What (the hell) are we doing/ are we going to do me you and Maria?'

The *-ti* clitic can be seen as the morphologization of both the speaker and the addressee. This proposal follows the morphological analysis of the *-ti* clitic: /t/ encodes the [addressee] feature while /i/ encodes the [speaker] feature. Moreover, it can explain the inclusive reading for the plural reference, since it involves both participants to the speech event in the reference of the plural subject. As for the first singular reference, only the [speaker] feature is considered at the semantic level. Such a usage of the first plural person with a first singular person reference is not rare, cf. the Italian example in (29) and its English translation:

(29) Vediamo un po'!
'Let's see!'

A deep insight in the meaning of the questions with the *-enti* suffix confirms this hypothesis.

In fact, the use of *-enti* has some pragmatic consequences. When it comes to a root interrogative sentence both the standard inflection and the one with the *-enti* can be used. However, there is a difference in meaning between the two versions. While the standard

inflection can be used in any interrogative context, the *-enti* suffix cannot be used in standard questions *out of the blue*, when there is no previous context.

- (30) a. # *Zughenti a carte?*
Play.1pl.TI to cards
b. *Zughemo a carte?*
Play.we to cards
'What about playing cards?'
- (31) a. *Zughenti a carte alora si o no?*
play.1pl.TI to cards then yes or no
b. *Zughemo a carte alora si o no?*
Play.we to cards then yes or no?
'So, are we finally playing cards? (as we have planned before)'

The following sentences are data from the free speech. I report them here in order to pinpoint the context of use.

- (32) 'Ndo **enti** **butà** le chiave?
where have.1pl.TI put the keys
'Where the hell did I put my keys?'
- (33) A: Nona, regalaghe anca ti qualcosa a quel che t' ha dato el puoto.
grandma, give.you.him also you something to that who to-you has given the doll
'Grandma, you should give something to the one who gives you the doll.'
B: Ndo el **vedenti**? No ghe vo mai fora de casa.
where him see.1pl.TI Not there go-I never out of home
'Where am I supposed to meet him? I am never leaving this house.'
- (34) Sa el **ciamenti** a far?!
what him call.1pl.TI to do
'Why should I call him?'

- (35) Sa **magnenti** noaltri se te ghe dé tuto el pan a ela?
 What eat.pl.TI we if CL.2sg to.her give all the bread to her
 ‘What are we supposed to eat if you give her all the bread?’
- (36) Ghe sio né anca voaltri ale terme st’ ano? Orca, parchè te l’ **enti**
domandà?!
 there are-you gone also you to-the spa this year Damn why to-you it have.1pl.TI
 asked
 ‘Have you been to the spa with the others this year? Damn, why did I ask you? (I feel
 jealous of that)’
- (37) A: Quei du lá i cria sempre
 those two there CL.3pl shout always
 ‘Those two are always fighting’
 B: E mi e ti **rienti** mia?
 and me and you fight.1pl.TI not
 ‘Aren’t we always fighting as well?’
- (38) No te **tolenti** mia quel che te vol?
 not to-you take.1pl.TI not that that CL.2sg want
 ‘Don’t you think I buy you everything you want?’

In these examples the *-enti* suffix is always used in syntactical interrogative contexts. That is to say that the clauses in which *-enti* appears always have an interrogative *sentential force* (Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet, 1990). This is clear from the use of *wh-* elements as well as from the prosodic contour. However, the speaker does not intend to ask something to the hearer and does not expect an answer. While the prosodic and syntactic structure of the sentences with the *-enti* suffix is an interrogative one, the meaning is not interrogative.

The real intention of the speaker producing a question with *-enti* (i.e. the *illocutionary force* of the sentence), is to exclude any possible values to match the *wh* operator. The (b) examples in (40) and (42) are the correct paraphrases for the *-enti* suffix (respectively in (39) and (41)).

- (39) Ndo el vedenti?

where him see.1pl.TI

- (40) a. I am asking you where I can see him
b. I am saying that there is no possible place where I can see him

(41) Zughenti?
play.1pl.TI

- (42) a. I am asking you whether we play
b. I am saying that we have to play/ we are expected to play.

In the (a) examples the performative interrogative verb (to ask) marks the interrogative illocutionary force, while in examples (b) the declarative verb (to say) shows that the speaker suspends the assignment of a value to the *wh* operator because he/she already has a possible answer between the following: 1. when the question has a *wh*-element, there is no-value to assign to the *wh* element; 2. when there is a yes/no question, the answer is positive. If every question is an operation combining an interrogative element with a value in a given world, the *-enti* suffix matches the interrogative features with a null set of values or with a specific value that the speaker has already chosen. The *-enti* suffix is found only in interrogative contexts, and only in those contexts that do not have the canonical match between a *wh* operator and a possible value, as it is in standard questions. In a sense, the speaker is asking a question and at the same time he/she is asserting that there is no possible answer for it.

Sentences in which sentential force does not match illocutionary force have been studied in Obenauer (2004, 2006) and Portner and Zanuttini (2003). Obenauer dubbed these sentences *Special Questions* (Obenauer 2004, 2006). He identifies three types of Special Questions that differ in their semantics and also have different syntactic structure in the dialect of Pagotto;

- Can't find the value (CFtV): "used by the speaker to express that he has tried in vain to answer his question" (Obenauer 2004, 28):

(43) Andé l'à- tu catà?

where cl have-cl found

(Obenauer 2004, 26. Es.60)

'Where (the hell) did you find it?'

- Surprise/disapproval question: “it expresses the speaker’s attitude towards the propositional content.” (Obenauer 2004, 6):

(44) Cossa sé-tu drìo magnar?!

what are-cl behind eat

‘What on earth are you eating?!’

(Obenauer 2004, 6. Es.9)

- Rhetorical questions: are “taken to convey, rather than a request for the value(s) of a variable, the assertion that no corresponding value exists (more precisely, an assertion of opposite polarity (...))” (Obenauer 2006, 6)

(45) Who can you trust, nowadays?

(Obenauer 2004, 44. Es.37)

Obenauer does not treat yes/no questions. Questions with the *-enti* suffix in Veronese can roughly correspond to *Can’t find the value* and *Rhetorical* questions but the strict use of the first persons put them on a different prospective. By using the *-enti* suffix, it seems that the speaker wants to recover an information from the common ground in order to recall it to the addressee.

By expressing the speaker and the addressee of the discourse, the speaker makes reference to the information that he/she shares in the common ground with the addressee. It follows that no questions *out of the blue* can make use of the *-enti* suffix, as it is confirmed by the examples (see ex. 30 and 31).

It must be further noticed, that the *special reading* of the questions with the *-enti* suffix is not recoverable if the suffix follows a modal form:

(46) Gh’enti da tor anca el pan?

Got have.1pl.TI to buy also the bread

‘Do I have to buy the bread as well?’

(47) Sa gh’enti da far?

What got have.1pl.TI to do

‘What do I have to do?’

In these cases, the speaker can ask what he/she has to do and the addressee is supposed to give an answer. The special question reading is possible again if the speaker does not address the question to a second person but to himself (in (47) when the speaker ask it to himself). The reference to a first plural inclusive subject is also possible:

- (48) Ndo gh'enti da catarse?
 Where got have.1pl.TI to meet.REF
 'Where shall we meet?'

This exception in the use of the *-enti* suffix does not affect its morpho-syntactic features but rather its semantic and pragmatic values. The introduction of a modality re-introduces some possible values to match the interrogative operator.

Since the standard question reading is possible with the *-enti* suffix when it attaches to a modal form I exclude that this suffix bears some special pragmatic features that can have direct scope on the illocutionary force of the sentence.

5. What is the *-enti* suffix?

The *-enti* suffix is an interrogative verbal suffix. It is productively used only in root questions. It is formed by the first plural person inflection in the present indicative tense (*-émo*) and by the enclitic *-ti*. The enclitic *-ti* encodes the [addressee] and the [speaker] features that give the *-enti* suffix its subject reference (first singular and first inclusive plural person) and its Special Question meaning. Moreover, the clitic *-ti* shares the same syntactic distribution with interrogative subject clitics (Poletto 2000). The problem is that subject clitics always agree with the rest of the verbal inflection. I copy here the verbal paradigm of the verb *to eat*:

- (49) *Conjugation of verb "Magnar"*
 (Mi) m àgnO
 (Ti) te m àgnE
 (Lu/ Ela) el/la m àgnA

	(Noaltri/Noaltre)	magnèMO
	(Voaltri/ Voaltre)	magnÌ
	(Lori/ Lore) i/le	màgnA
(50)	(Mi)	màgno?
	(Ti)	màgneto?
	(Lu/ Ela)	màgnalo?/ màgnala?
	(Noaltri/ Noaltre)	magnèmo?
	(Voaltri/ Voaltre)	magnìo?
	(Lori/ Lore)	màgnali?/ màgnale?

The *phi* features are marked on the verbal ending as well as on the clitics. This is confirmed by the second person singular and second person plural in interrogative contexts. The third person inflection (singular and plural) can be seen as a default inflection, because it does not distinguish the singular and the plural number and it shows the same form as in the imperative (*Magna!*). All in all, there is a clear pattern: the verbal inflection agrees with the subject clitic, since they share the same *phi*-value.

The *-ti* clitic in Veronese follows only the first person plural form and only at the present indicative tense. Capitalizing on Giorgi and Pianesi (1997), I assume that the present tense inflection lacks the TP projection and, therefore, it is a “tenseless” form. The features of the *-ti* clitic are the pragmatic features related to the speaker and the addressee. The first plural inflection of the verb reflects the subject agreement with the pragmatic features of [speaker] and [addressee]. This fact triggers the special question reading as well as the exceptional (for a Romance language) inclusive first person reference.

I conclude that the *-ti* is in fact in a projection related to the subject (interrogative subject) but it also encodes the participants at the speech event.

6. Conclusion

The interrogative form ending in *-enti* in Veronese is composed by a *-ti* interrogative clitic that attaches on the inflected verb in the first plural person, present tense, indicative mood. This is confirmed by its morphology and by its syntactic restrictions. The subject of the verb has a particular reference to an inclusive first plural person or to a first singular person.

Moreover, the context of use of this form is always an interrogative sentence with a Special Question reading; this means that while the sentence has the syntactic status of a question its semantics conveys a different sentential modality. I took this evidence to argue that the *-ti* clitic, while projecting an interrogative clitic position, since it has the same distribution as other subject clitics, encodes different semantic features that are related to the pragmatic role of the participants of the discourse: the speaker and the addressee.

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