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## ***Et cetera, eccetera, etc.* The development of a general extender from Latin to Italian**

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### **Abstract**

This paper discusses the range of functions of *et cetera* in Latin, as well as the multifunctionality and evolution of *eccetera* in Italian. Both forms pertain to the category of general extenders, i.e. markers whose main function is to ‘extend’ otherwise grammatically complete utterances. We will propose a qualitative analysis based on data from Latin, Old Italian, and contemporary written and spoken Italian. In particular, we will discuss the semantic-pragmatic expansion of *et cetera* and *eccetera*, highlighting how both expressions tend to develop intersubjective and procedural meanings in addition to their original functions. Moreover, since the original components of *eccetera* are by now blurred in contemporary Italian, we will show how recent developments allow its use in disjunctive contexts.

**Keywords:** general extenders, Latin, Italian, intersubjectivity

### **1. Introduction**

In current research, the various epigones of the Latin locution *et cētēra*, which literally means ‘and (the) other things’, have been analysed both as indicators of vagueness and as typical examples of general extenders. As is well known, this term designates a series of expressions such as Engl. *and*

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<sup>1</sup> This article is the result of joint work by the two authors. For academic purposes, Ilaria Fiorentini is responsible for Sections 3 and 4, while Elisabetta Magni is responsible for Sections 1 and 2.

*stuff like that, and everything, or something*, that is, markers that tend to occur in phrase- or clause-final position and typically display a basic syntactic structure consisting of a conjunction followed by a generic nominal (or a proform), with an optional comparative or similitive phrase. Such forms are attested in many languages and, as evidenced by the fortunate label coined by Overstreet (1999: 3), their basic characteristics are: to have nonspecific, ‘general’ reference and to ‘extend’ otherwise grammatically complete utterances.

Although many studies quote *et cetera* as a prototypical example of the category, no attempt has been made so far to investigate the evolution of this specific expression.<sup>2</sup> To fill this gap, in this paper we will first illustrate the uses and functions of *et cetera* in Latin (Section 2), and then we will discuss the multifunctionality and recent developments of *eccetera* in Italian (Section 3). To this end, we will propose a qualitative analysis of the materials obtained from various databases:<sup>3</sup> for the Latin language the *LLT-Series A (Brepolis Library of Latin Texts)*,<sup>4</sup> for Old Italian the OVI corpus (*Opera del Vocabolario Italiano*),<sup>5</sup> for contemporary written Italian the CoLFIS corpus (*Corpus e Lessico di Frequenza dell’Italiano Scritto*)<sup>6</sup> and ItTenTen 2016 (*Italian Web corpus*),<sup>7</sup> and finally, for spoken contemporary Italian, the LIP (*Lessico di frequenza dell’italiano parlato*),<sup>8</sup> LIT (*Lessico Italiano Televisivo*),<sup>9</sup> and KIParla<sup>10</sup> corpora. In the last part (Section 4), we will discuss the semantic and formal evolution of the general extender, which in spoken contemporary Italian displays intersubjective and procedural meanings in addition to its original objective and conceptual functions, but is also gradually developing new analytic variants.

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<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the forms and functions of general extenders in Latin see Magni (2019). For a discussion of Italian *eccetera* see Fiorentini (2018) and Fiorentini (2019).

<sup>3</sup> The source of the data will be specified within brackets after each example.

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <http://apps.brepolis.net/BrepolisPortal/default.aspx>.

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <http://gattoweb.ovi.cnr.it>.

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <http://linguistica.sns.it/CoLFIS/Home.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Available at: <https://www.sketchengine.co.uk/ittenten-corpus/> (2016 version).

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <http://badip.uni-graz.at/en/> Cf. also De Mauro et al. (1993), Voghera et al. (2014).

<sup>9</sup> Available at: [http://www.italianotelevisivo.org/contenuti/36/banche\\_dati](http://www.italianotelevisivo.org/contenuti/36/banche_dati).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Goria and Mauri (2018).

## 2. *Et cetera* in Latin

As in other languages, in Latin as well the category of general extenders has received little attention in traditional grammars. The data collected by Magni (2019) confirm the usual distinction between adjunctive and disjunctive general extenders (Overstreet 1999: 3): the former are introduced by *et*, *atque* or enclitic *-que* ‘and’, while the latter are introduced by *aut* and *uel* ‘or’. In addition, the two types display both short forms (e.g. *ceteraque* ‘etcetera’, *et reliqua* ‘and the remaining things’, *aut similia* ‘or the like’) and long variants (e.g. *et sic cetera* ‘and similar other things’, *et alia de hoc genere* ‘and other things of this kind’, *aut aliquid eiusmodi* ‘or something like that’).

The overall inventory of Latin adjunctive general extenders found on the Brepolis database, within the period *Antiquitas* (works of so-called Classical Antiquity, from ca. 200 BC to ca. 200 AD), is summarized in Table (1), adapted from Magni (2019: 701):<sup>11</sup>

Table 1. Adjunctive general extenders in Latin

	short forms	long forms	total
<i>(et) cetera / ceteraque</i> ‘and the other things’	40	17	57
<i>(et) alia</i> ‘and the other things’	7	38	45
<i>et similia</i> ‘and similar things, and the like’	20	19	39
<i>et multa</i> ‘and many things’	1	14	15
<i>(et) reliqua</i> ‘and the remaning things’	9	0	9
<i>et talia</i> ‘and such things’	5	0	5

<sup>11</sup> Disjunctive general extenders, which will not be discussed in this paper, display lower frequency and variability with respect to adjunctive ones, as also in other languages. More specifically, the locution *aut aliquid* ‘or something’ is attested 4 and 6 times in short and long forms, respectively; *aut / uel similia* ‘or similar things’ occurs 1 and 2 times, respectively; *aut quiduis* ‘or anything, or whatever’ is found only once, in the long variant *aut quiduis generis eiusdem* ‘or anything of that sort’.

<i>et deinceps</i> ‘and so on’	2	1	3
<i>et porro</i> ‘and so forth’	0	1	1
	<b>84</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>174</b>

According to these data, *et cetera*, which contains the neuter plural of the adjective *ceterus*, *-a*, *-um* ‘the other, that which exists besides, the other part’, is evidently the most frequent and, as we will see, the most versatile form.

Considering its consistency with the basic structural features and constraints of the category, it has been observed that *boni scriptores* may at times omit connectors (Hand 1832: 471), as illustrated in example (1):

- 1) *si est nihil nisi corpus, summa erunt illa: ualetudo, uacuitas doloris, pulchritudo, cetera.* (Cic. *fin.* 4, 35)

‘if there is nothing except the body, these will be most relevant: health, freedom from pain, beauty, and so on.’

In addition, this expression can be found not only in clause-final position, which is typical of most general extenders, but also in clause-internal position, as shown in (2):

- 2) *Nam mentem, fidem, spem, uirtutem, honorem, uictoriam, salutem, concordiam ceteraque huius modi rerum uim habere uidemus non deorum.* (Cic. *nat. deor.* 3, 61)

‘for mind, faith, hope, virtue, honor, victory, health, concord and the like, we see them to have the force of things but not of gods.’

Despite these particularities, throughout the history of Latin *et cetera* behaves as a normal general extender, and the last example confirms that it can also have long variants with modifiers denoting similarity (e.g. *et cetera huius modi*, *et cetera de hoc genere*, *et sic cetera*). Let us therefore analyse its functions by discussing some examples taken from literary texts.

## 2.1. Functions of *et cetera*

### 2.1.1 Completing lists and marking sets

Adjunctive general extenders, which have the basic meaning ‘there is more’ (Overstreet 1999: 126), display the typical values of addition when ending a series of three or more elements. This usage is in fact quite frequent for *et cetera*, as shown in examples (1-2), and also in (3):

#### 3) *Nauigia atque agri culturas, moenia, leges,*

*arma, uias, uestes <et> cetera de genere horum*, [...] (Lucr. 5, 1448-1449)

‘Navigation, the cultivation of fields, walls, laws,

arms, roads, clothes and things like that ...’

In these cases, *et cetera* has an enumerative function (Cortés Rodríguez 2006) and works as a *list completer* (Jefferson 1990). Of course, since in non-exhaustive lists items are not random but are linked to an idea, the ending general extender usually suggests an expansion based on objective connections in a particular context, such as the testimonies of human and civil progress itemised in example (3).

The role of context and associations is even more prominent in (4), where *et cetera* does not occur in a true list but follows a single exemplar, broadening its reference and marking it as belonging to a homogeneous group of entities: in this case ‘small insects and parasites’.

4) *sentimus nec priua pedum uestigia quaeque,*

*corpore quae in nostro culices **et cetera** ponunt.* (Lucr. 3, 389-390)

‘we do not feel each of the footsteps that  
mosquitoes and suchlike place on our body.’

Here, the expression has mainly an illustrative function and works as a *set marker* (Dines 1980). For Dines, the main function of general extenders, which in her view are mostly considered as carrying referential meanings, is in fact “to cue the listener to interpret the preceding element as an illustrative example of some more general case” (Dines 1980: 22). Interestingly, it has also been observed that these expressions are particularly useful in spoken and informal language, because they “provide a way of talking about groups of entities or actions that spontaneously need to be referenced together when no established referring expression for the group is known (or even exists)” (Overstreet 1999: 43). This function is illustrated in (5), where Seneca discusses curious analogies between the earth and the human body, which both have veins and canals in which liquids and air circulate:

5) *in quaedam uero terra umorque putrescunt, sicut bitumen **et cetera huic similia.*** (Sen. nat. 3, 15, 2)

‘some [substances] originate from the decay of the earth and its fluids, such as bitumen and others like it.’

Clearly, when the philosopher was writing the *Naturales Quaestiones*, the category implicated by *bitumen et cetera huic similia* was a non-lexicalized one, but even today the proper superordinate noun, that is, ‘natural hydrocarbons’, may not easily come to mind and a general extender could thus serve to overcome the lack of adequate scientific knowledge.

### 2.1.2 Sharing knowledge and building categories

Considering the usages discussed above, general extenders can be viewed as *vague category identifiers* (Channell 1994). In some cases, especially when used after a single exemplar, they can also serve to access fluid and temporary conceptual associations, i.e. categories that are “inherently variable, and created on-line as and when needed” (Croft and Cruse 2004: 92). In this role, the expressions at issue do not suggest a well-defined and stable set, but rather imply abstraction over the given exemplar(s) through a context-driven associative reasoning, which leads to infer an *ad hoc* category (Barsalou 1983). In other words, a heterogeneous group of entities whose individuation is crucially conditioned by the exemplar provided, the linguistic context, the purpose of the text and the interlocutors’ pragmatic knowledge. This peculiar function of *et cetera* can be found in example (6):

6) *Ego, dum panes et cetera in nauem parantur, excurro in Pompeianum*, (Cic. Att. 10, 15, 4)

‘While the bread, etc. is being made for the ship, I am running to my place at Pompei.’

In Cicero’s letter, the locution *panes et cetera* does not suggest a precise set of items, but rather invites Atticus to both try an associative reasoning starting from the mentioned exemplar and to recall well-known information about the necessary (and disparate) ‘things for a journey by ship’.

Previous researches on the forms like *et cetera* have centred on the list completing and set marking functions. Nonetheless, more recently the relevance of their context-driven interpretation has led scholars to recognize that general extenders can also be exploited for a number of pragmatic and interpersonal purposes.

### 2.1.3 Pragmatic and interpersonal functions

As observed by Overstreet (2014: 120-121), general extenders often reflect the Gricean maxim about the quantity of information when they are used to suggest that enough is said “for the current purposes of the exchange” (Grice 1975: 45), thus displaying hedging functions. In Latin, *et cetera* is in fact



frequently used to shorten well-known quotations or formulae, like the proverb in (7), or to abbreviate a series of examples, as in (8):<sup>12</sup>

7) ‘*agas asellum*’ ***et cetera***. (Cic. *de orat.* 2, 258)

‘«Drive the ass», etc.’ (sc. *cursum non docebitur* ‘he will not be taught the way’)

8) *dicimus lauo manus, sic pedes* ***et cetera***. (Varro *ling.* 9, 107)

‘we say: I wash my hands, my feet, etc.’

In similar cases, the general extender seems to develop the implied meaning ‘this is enough’, which is probably also suggested by its frequent ending position, and it is therefore employed to replace something that the writer considers superfluous, since it is supposed to be already known to the reader. As it has been observed, an interesting correlation of this kind of usage in naturally occurring conversations is that general extenders can often “help to establish and maintain a sense of rapport among the interlocutors” (Overstreet 1999: 18). If we apply this statement to the textual discourse, we may say that, similarly, *et cetera* can help to establish a connection between the writer and the reader, thus performing interpersonal functions.

As we have seen from the preceding examples, the completion of a list or the recovery of a specific category can be secondary aspects in the use of general extenders: these functions become in fact irrelevant when these expressions are used to imply shared experience or evaluation, and familiarity or solidarity in interaction. This observation seems confirmed by example (9):

9) *additurum principem defunctae templum et aras* ***et cetera*** *ostentandae pietati*. (Tac. 14, 3, 3)

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<sup>12</sup> Considering other Latin general extenders, this usage is peculiar of *et cetera*, which in this function can be compared to analogous expressions in Ancient Greek such as καὶ τὰ ἕτερα, καὶ τὰ λοιπά, or καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς.

‘The emperor would add a temple and shrines and the like for the deceased lady, to display filial affection.’

In this case, *et cetera* ends the reported speech whereby Tacitus imagines that the freedman Anicetus was not only abetting Nero to murder his mother but, at the same time, also inviting complicity and confirming solidarity through the implicit message: ‘I don’t have to tell you everything because we share this scheme’.

We can thus observe that, in the uses of *et cetera*, the implication of associative reasoning and inference triggers the interplay between objective and subjective meanings, while the suggestion of shared knowledge and common ground complements the emergence of intersubjective meanings “centred on the addressee” (Traugott 2010: 30). As we will see, it is also by virtue of this multifunctionality that the expression becomes more frequent over time.

## 2.2 The evolution of *et cetera*

Expanding the research on *et cetera* to Late Latin, we find that in the period *Aetas Patrum I* on the Brepolis database (works of Late Antiquity, from ca. 200 to ca. 500) the form tends to gain in frequency. To give an idea of this phenomenon, it is sufficient to say that from 38 occurrences (plus 2 *ceteraque*) in the entire *Antiquitas* period, we reach a total of 314 attestations only in the works of Augustine (Magni, 2019: 709). Furthermore, in the long run the overall increase in use reflects in the spread of abbreviations, which are found in medieval manuscripts since the VII century, and in the later univerbation *etcetera*, which is attested since the XI century.

Before these formal changes, in the early imperial age, phenomena of decategorialization (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 106-109) announce semantic bleaching, whereby *et cetera* starts to lose certain morpho-syntactic features by having categories other than noun as referents. For instance, it is interesting to notice that the expression can also be found after verb phrases, as exemplified in (10):

(10) *Eius enim esse inuenire, disponere, eloqui et cetera.* (Quint. inst. 3, 3, 11)

‘For it is his business to invent, arrange, express, etcetera.’

The increasing mismatch between the properties of the ‘host’ element and those of the proform in the extender (a neuter plural) is even more evident when the preceding item refers to animate entities, like *pedisequos* ‘servants’ in example (11):<sup>13</sup>

(11) *Vestem, uniones, pedisequos et cetera*

*Illi adsignate, uitam quae luxu trahit.* (Phaedr. 4, 5, 36)

‘The clothes, the pearls, the servants and the like,

give them to the one who spends her life in luxury.’

Unsurprisingly, these phenomena, partly favoured by the increasing (and sometimes opaque) use after quotations, become more frequent in later authors, as illustrated in (12):

(12) *Det nobis perseuerare in mandatis suis, ambulare in uia recta eruditionis suae, placere illi in omni opere bono, et cetera talia.* (Aug. c. Pel. 13, 60)

‘may He allow us to persevere in his commandments, to walk the straight path of his instruction, to please him in every good work, and other such things.’

In the example above, Augustine is explaining that Pelagian heretics deny the value of the liturgical prayer of blessing, whose contents are shortened by using *et cetera talia* after a series of clauses.

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<sup>13</sup> An anonymous reviewer remarked that the list provided by Phaedrus contains possessions, and that slaves as well were deemed as objects that could be possessed.

Similar cases signal the referential ambiguity that results from loss of a precise grammatical connection between *cetera* and its antecedents, which leads to the extension to new contexts.

To sum up, we have observed that a Latin expression encoding the basic meaning ‘there is more’ frequently triggers heuristic procedures such as associative reasoning and similarity inference, whereby speakers construct lists, sets and categories basing on shared knowledge. In some cases, however, we have noticed that the typical ending position of *et cetera* intensifies the additional meaning ‘this is enough’, whereby speakers conclude, abbreviate, and approximate utterances drawing on Gricean conversational heuristics. Therefore, according to the contextual emergence of different semantic nuances, the form *et cetera* can be used not only to complete lists, mark sets and build ad hoc categories, but also – and increasingly – to perform hedging functions at the textual and interpersonal level.

The scheme in Figure (1), summarizes these coexisting functions, which range along a continuum that reflects the shift from objective to subjective and intersubjective meanings:

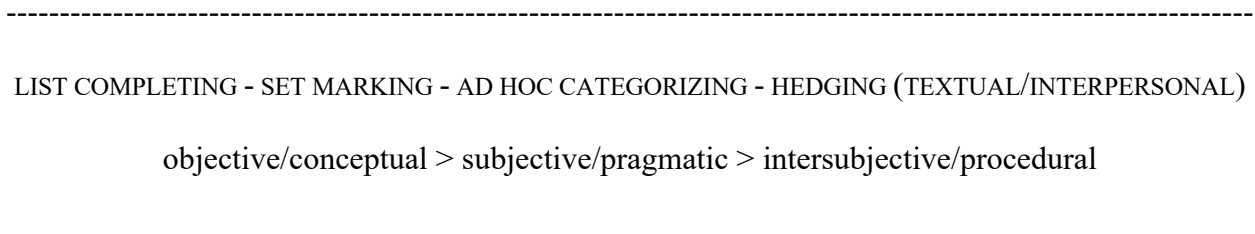


Figure 1. Functions of Latin *et cetera*

On the whole, the inference of additional meanings that we have posited for *et cetera* is consistent with recent findings concerning the paths of pragmaticalization already observed in other languages (Diewald 2011), and, in particular, it is in keeping with those phenomena of semantic-pragmatic expansion by which, in the long run, “the set-marking meaning of GEs (*sc.* general extenders) gradually recedes while their intersubjective and other pragmatic/procedural meanings increasingly come to the fore” (Pichler and Levey 2011: 18). Of course, we have to admit that the interpersonal

uses of Latin general extenders appear less developed than textual ones, but clearly this also depends on the nature of our data, which prevents us from grasping the extent of pragmatic functions in spoken language. These aspects will become clearer in the next section, where we will discuss the uses and the recent developments of *eccetera* in contemporary Italian.

### 3. From Latin to Italian

In Old Italian, *et cetera* underwent a phonological reduction which led to the univerbation in *etcetera* (XI century, see Section 2.2), and subsequently in *eccetera* (XIV century). These forms were often abbreviated (*etc.*, *ec.*, *ecc.*) and were usually found after a list, a description or a quotation, to concisely replace something considered redundant or already known to the interlocutor. The use in a fixed position (i.e. at the end of sentences) was especially common after quotations (Fiorentini 2019), as in (13), and common sayings or formulaic expressions, as in (14):

- (13) *quando disse a Cristo: “facciamo qui tre tabernacoli in sul monte Taborre, **eccetera**”*

(OVI, Bosone da Gubbio, *Fortunatus siculus (l'Avventuroso Ciciliano)*, 1333, L.2, osservazioni, 312, 15)

‘When he said to Christ: “let us make three tabernacles on mount Taborre, etcetera”.’

- (14) *“(…) passasti in cielo laddove tu se’ risplendente nel mezzo della divina schiera ne lo splendore de la incorruttibile gloria, in allegrezza de la insaziabile gioconditade rallegrandoti, **eccetera**”. Queste cose disse Teodoro. (OVI, *Leggenda Aurea*, XIV c., ch. 118, S. Bartolomeo - vol. 3, page 1040, line 22)*

‘You passed into heaven where you are shining in the midst of the divine legion, rejoicing the splendor of the incorruptible glory, the joy of the insatiable playfulness, etcetera’. These are the things that Theodore said.’

These uses, as we have seen, were already possible for Latin *et cetera*. The form *eccetera*, however, continued to evolve over time: after a brief overview on previous studies, we will focus on its functions in spoken Italian, in order to account for its multifunctionality and its more recent developments.

### 3.1 Previous studies on Italian *eccetera*

Although there is a shortage of studies dealing with Italian general extenders as a category (cf. Cucchi 2010, Fiorentini 2018), some works focus on *eccetera* in contemporary written and spoken Italian.<sup>14</sup> Galli de’ Paratesi (1969: 43) proposes a comparison with semantically vague expressions like *cosa* ‘thing’, which can also be used to talk euphemistically about uncomfortable topics and to avoid negative themes (cf. O’Keeffe 2004). For instance, in (15) *ecc.* replaces something that the author of the letter preferred to omit (Galli de’ Paratesi 1969: 121, cf. also Prandi 1990, Fiorentini 2019):

(15) *un giorno mi misi con una mia coetanea e andammo in campagna con i nostri fidanzati. Arrivati lì, si sa come si fa, baci, carezze ecc.*

‘One day I got together with a girl my age, and we went to the countryside with our boyfriends. When we got there, you know how it goes, kisses, caresses etc.’

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<sup>14</sup> *Eccetera* can also act as a noun: *ci sono troppi eccetera* ‘there are too many ecceteras’; *con tutti questi eccetera* ‘with all these ecceteras’ (cf. Treccani online, <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/eccetera/>).

Similarly, *eccetera* can be used to shorten well-known texts or formulae, in order to “downgrade the ‘more’ that is considered routine and predictable” (Overstreet 1999: 131), as in (16):

- (16) *L'uomo potrebbe essere, nel migliore dei casi, un molestatore, nel peggiore un violentatore. La donna, per dire pane al pane eccetera, una ninfomane.* (COLFIS)

‘The man could be, in the best-case scenario, a molester, in the worst, a rapist. The woman, to call a spade a spade etcetera, a nymphomaniac.’

In the example, the second segment of the Italian popular saying *dire pane al pane e vino al vino* (literally ‘to call bread bread, and wine wine’) is replaced by *eccetera*. In order to be able to complete the saying, the reader must already know it; hence, s/he does not have to infer other possible elements, but rather to import something from her/his memory.

This function is typical of written Italian, whereas it is rarer in oral speech (Fiorentini 2019: 258). In particular, it can be found when the speaker is quoting part of something previously uttered by one of the participants, or when s/he is reading something out loud to the hearer, as in (17):

- (17) *venga si scriva questa lettera signora # allora mette la dottoressa Melania Angotta eccetera eccetera no prende gli estremi da \$* (LIP\_Florence\_A\_12\_A)

‘Please come here and write this letter, Mrs... So, write “Doctor Melania Angotta” etcetera etcetera, no?, you can take the information from [xxx]’

Here, the speaker is dictating something to the interlocutor while the text is physically available for both participants; therefore, there is no need to read it through completely. At the same time, the hearer does not need to abstract anything.

According to Guil (1999), *eccetera* is one of those “proformas alusivas” (literally ‘hinting proforms’), which are typical of oral speech. These proforms are usually placed after list of heterogeneous (yet

similar) elements and refer to the existence of other elements similar to the expressed one(s). Such elements are considered analogous, but nonetheless informatively new, as in example (18) (Guil 1999: 95):

(18) *c'è tutto un sistema adesso offre la Macintosh di boh non so quanti computer schermi cose in rete **eccetera** per cui la stampante viene gratis*

‘There is a whole system now, Macintosh offers I do not know how many computers, screens, network things, etcetera, this is why the printer is free.’

Furthermore, like other general extenders, *eccetera* has been described as a vagueness marker. For instance, Cucchi, who labels these forms as “vague expressions” or “vague items”, states that *eccetera* “may give an impression of vagueness and non-conclusiveness” (Cucchi 2010: 101). On the other hand, Ghezzi (2013: 65) underlines that it may be used to imply a vague categorization, as well as to signal an approximation of the propositional content of the utterance, as shown in (19) (Ghezzi 2013: 142):

(19) *è comodo il cellulare perché magari sei in giro per strada chiami un amico chiami un'amica **eccetera***

‘The mobile phone is useful, because if you are outside, on the street, you call a boyfriend, you call a girlfriend, etcetera.’

Here, the speaker uses two examples (*chiami un amico*, *chiami un'amica* ‘you call a boyfriend, you call a girlfriend’) to approximate “the choice of a lexical item in relation to a particular concept”; nevertheless, the presence of *eccetera* signals that such approximation “is somehow unsatisfactory” (Ghezzi 2013: 142).



To sum up, previous studies (which did not take into account the diachronic dimension) have focussed mainly on two values of *eccetera*: its referential function (Guil 1999), considering it only “as a form that indicates additional members of a list, set, or category” (Overstreet 1999: 11), and, subsequently, its role in marking vagueness (Cucchi 2010, Voghera 2012, Ghezzi 2013) and also reticence (Galli de’ Paratesi 1969). Nevertheless, these two values do not account for the whole range of functions of the form, which will be discussed in the following section.

### 3.2 *Functions of eccetera in contemporary spoken Italian*

#### 3.2.1 *‘There is more’: completing lists and building categories*

According to Guil (1999), *eccetera* is the most frequent general extender in contemporary spoken Italian: its 191 occurrences represent 59,3% out of a total of 322 general extenders in the LIP corpus (cf. Fiorentini 2018: 27). Similar to Latin *et cetera* (Section 2.1.1), one of its main functions concerns list completion. In these cases, *eccetera* is generally placed after two or more elements, signalling that ‘there is more’:

- (20) *i figli di immigrati hanno tante altre possibilità di rinforzare il loro italiano tramite queste associazioni giornali la radio **eccetera** e quindi anche qualche accenno all’importanza delle comunità italiane in Australia* (LIP\_Naples\_A\_12\_C)

‘Immigrants’ children have many other possibilities to improve their Italian through these organizations, newspapers, the radio etcetera, and therefore [I want] to mention also the importance of Italian communities in Australia.’

In addition, *eccetera* can be used to extend the reference of a given exemplar so as to include other (non-explicit) referents. Therefore, it signals that there are other elements which share a property with the expressed one(s), consisting in the fact that they can co-occur in a frame (*ad hoc* categorization,

Barsalou 1983), and it can combine “with a named exemplar (or exemplars), whose characteristics make it possible for the hearer to infer a category the speaker has in mind” (Overstreet 1999: 11). In other words, “[b]y etcetera we mean that there are others, but not any others” (Sacks 1992: 246, quoted by Overstreet 1999: 47):

- (21) *questa è l’ultima lezione all’ultima lezione possono partecipare anche i parenti amici eccetera che vogliono venire* (LIP\_Milan\_A\_23\_D)

‘This is the last class, the last class can also be attended by relatives, friends, etcetera who want to come.’

The speaker in (21) mentions two examples of people who can attend to a swim class: *parenti* ‘relatives’ and *amici* ‘friends’ are therefore members of a larger set characterized by the property ‘people who are near and dear to the hearer’. The identification of the property is facilitated by the comparison among the two examples (cf. Barotto 2018), which, together with *eccetera*, triggers an associative inference towards it. The function of *eccetera* is therefore to signal that there are other members belonging to the same category, which will remain unexpressed.

Furthermore, in spoken interactions, the participants can cooperate in the construction of the category, as in (22):

- (22) A *i vari records, e:h che sono: (.) e::h caratterizzati da vari campi, vari fields. quindi autore, (.) titolo dell’opera::=m:h (.) anno di [pubblicazione, soggetto eccetera,]*

B *[soggetto:, (.) editore,] (.) [luogo di pubblicazione],*

A *[luogo di pubblicaz]ione,(.) e eh che m::h=nsomma l’insieme di questi records, danno vita alla banca dati.* (KIParla)

‘A: The different records, which are characterised by various fields, various fields, that is author, title of the book, year of publication, topic etcetera’

B: Topic, publisher, place of publication

A: Place of publication, and, well, the combination of these records brings the database to life.'

Speaker A first lists four items belonging to a vague category (*vari campi* 'various fields'), followed by *eccetera*. After that, he overlaps (as indicated by square brackets) with speaker B, who repeats the last exemplar mentioned by A and adds two more items. In turn, speakers A repeats the last exemplar cited by B and then concludes his turn. In this case, the general extender triggers the co-construction (cf. Du Bois 2014) of the category, and speaker B demonstrates her understanding and cooperation by adding other relevant members.

### 3.2.2 'You know what I mean': indexing shared knowledge

In the examples considered so far, *eccetera* (like *et cetera* in 4-6) entails the existence of unexpressed members of a category, which share a property with the expressed ones. Nonetheless, in other cases the form does not point to other elements, but only to a property, and refers to some knowledge that only the participants in the interaction share:

(23) B: *e poi è a Ostia 'sta scuola*

A: *ah*

B: *morta'*

A: *ma tu avevi fatto domanda*

B: *ma l'ho fatto mica quest'anno perché col fatto che stavo ancora al Camilli **eccetera** l'avevo fatte l'anno scorso le domande*

A: *ah dall'anno scorso (LIP\_Rome\_B\_2\_B)*

'B: And, moreover, this school is in Ostia.

A: Oh!

B: Damn!

A: But did you apply...

B: Well, I didn't apply this year because, since I was still at Camilli etcetera, I applied last year.

A: Oh, last year.'

The speakers in (23) are talking about the school in Ostia<sup>15</sup> where speaker B is going to teach the following school year. To understand what she is referring to with *eccetera*, the hearer must know that the "Camilli" mentioned by B is another school in Ostia, which is quite far from where she currently lives. In similar cases, "the knowledge shared between participants seems completely inaccessible to non-participants" (Overstreet 1999: 70). To some extent, this is similar to the use exemplified in example (16): the main difference is that the first function refers to a fixed text, whereas this one usually refers to the common ground of the interlocutors.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that in this example *eccetera* can easily be deleted without changing the propositional content of the segment (Fraser 1999: 944), whereas in the previous ones it cannot. For instance, in (21) the deletion of *eccetera* would indicate that only the four listed exemplars (i.e. *autore, titolo dell'opera, anno di pubblicazione, soggetto* 'author, title of the book, year of publication, topic') were possible.<sup>16</sup> On the contrary, in (23) the general extender functions like a discourse marker, in the sense that it does not contribute "to the propositional meaning of either segment" (Fraser 1999: 944; cf. also Hansen 1998b).

Another interesting example is the following:

(24) *vedete nel primo rigo. gli accordi della A di (.) "But not for me", sono (.) molto semplici*

[plays piano for 16 seconds]

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<sup>15</sup> A large district of Rome.

<sup>16</sup> However, the non-exhaustivity and the existence of alternatives could also be indicated by prosody.

*eccetera. okay?* (KIParla)

‘You can see it in the first line. The chords of [line] A of ‘But not for me’ are very simple.

Etcetera. okay?’

Here, *eccetera* follows a non-verbal turn, during which the piano teacher plays some chords which he is claiming to be very simple. After that, he stops and begins to speak again by means of *eccetera* followed by an interactional discourse marker (i.e. *okay?*) which requests the agreement of the interlocutors. In this case, the form is not simply replacing something that the participants already know, but rather could be paraphrased as “you know what I mean by saying that they are very simple”. To sum up, in examples (22-23) *eccetera* marks some degree of shared knowledge (Overstreet 1999: 18), it seems “to underline the shared experience” (Cheshire 2007: 182) of the participants and can be paraphrased as “you know what I mean”. Therefore, it has an interactional function, similar to other discourse markers (cf. Pons Borderia 2006, Hansen 1998a, Hansen 2006). This is consistent with the view of general extenders as primarily “markers of intersubjectivity through which speakers indicate solidarity, self-connection or an assumption of shared experience” (Cheshire 2007: 158). Contrarily to the other functions of *eccetera*, by which “a speaker implicates a category, so that a hearer can infer additional or alternate members of the category the speaker has in mind” (Overstreet 1999: 66), in this case “the meanings apparently recognized and shared by the participants seem to be unfathomable to anyone else” (Overstreet 1999: 65). Similar interpersonal uses were already present in Latin (Section 2.1.3); nonetheless, while in written texts the suggestion of shared knowledge and common ground is less evident, it emerges quite clearly in spoken data, where it is particularly frequent.

### 3.2.3 ‘There are alternatives’: disjunctive uses

Occasionally, *eccetera* can signal that ‘there are alternatives’, i.e. other elements that share a property with the expressed elements, which makes them alternatives to each other. In these cases, it functions

like a disjunctive general extender (similar to *o cose del genere* ‘or stuff like that’), indicating that the exemplars represent an approximation which “may not be exactly right” (Overstreet 1999: 112):

- (25) *vediamo che cosa proponete a chi vi viene a chiedere eh un viaggio per la Norvegia o per la Svezia **eccetera** # benissimo giriamo la carta e vediamo un attimo quali itinerari proporreste* (LIP\_Florence\_C\_5\_A)

‘Let’s see what you would propose to somebody who asks you for a trip to Norway, or to Sweden, eccetera... Very well, let’s turn the map and see which itinerary you would propose.’

- (26) B: *se tu diciamo fai un intervento*

A: *ah*

B: *o per ricoveri **eccetera** ti decorre ti decorre dopo dopo sei mesi* (LIP\_Rome\_B\_7)

‘B: If you, say, have surgery...

A: Ah

B: ...or for hospital days etcetera, it shall apply after six months.’

In these examples, the speakers offer two alternatives to exemplify the category they are referring to; such alternatives are connected by the disjunction *o* ‘or’ (Ariel and Mauri 2018). In (25), the speaker, a geography teacher who is examining her students by means of role playing, mentions two possible members of the category she is talking about (i.e. Nordic countries), so that the students can infer other elements. In (26), the participants are discussing the benefits to take out insurance; the examples mentioned by speaker B are two possible cases to which the insurance would apply. In both cases, *eccetera* signals that there are alternatives which will be not explicitly mentioned.

The alternatives can also be mutually exclusive, as in the case of antonyms, exemplified in (27):

- (27) *come avviene la surgelazione altro problema tecnico velocemente lentamente eccetera eccetera poi il problema sono il trasporto di questi di questi surgelati* (LIP\_Milan\_C\_11\_B)  
 ‘How does the freezing happen? [This is] another technical problem, rapidly, slowly, etcetera etcetera, then there is the problem of the transport of these frozen products.’

In this case, the two exemplars (*velocemente* and *lentamente*) represent two opposite freezing paces, i.e. rapidly or slowly, and are incompatible with each other. Nevertheless, since they stand for the two extremes on a scale, they are gradable: therefore, the other possible alternatives indicated by *eccetera* are the intermediate points of deep-freezing pace.

These uses clearly show that the original adjunctive meaning of *eccetera* is becoming opaque. This point will be developed in the next Section.

### 3.3 *Recent developments*

The use of *eccetera* in disjunctive contexts due to the semantic bleaching of its original constituents represents a further step in its process of grammaticalization. More specifically, a first reanalysis concerns the conjunction *e* ‘and’ (Latin *et*), which is no longer transparent nor recognizable in the unverbated form. Therefore, the original boundary (Langacker 1977: 119) is recreated by means of adding the conjunction back (*e eccetera*, *ed eccetera*):

- (28) *nessuno che sappia dove stia ‘sta:: porta dell’ade, e abbia visto questo cane a più:: mh=eh questo cane, apparentemente a più teste, con il collo da serpente:: (.) ed eccetera eccetera*  
 (KIParla)  
 ‘Nobody knows where this Hades door is, and [nobody] has seen this dog with multiple, uhm, this dog, allegedly multi-headed, with a snake neck...and etcetera etcetera.’

The reanalysis is probably caused, or at least facilitated, by the fact that *eccetera* differs from the prototypical structure of Italian general extenders, which are for the most part analytic (Fiorentini 2018: 27) and transparent with respect to “the operations underlying their function” (Mauri 2014: 13), since they have the following structure: [conjunction + proform (+ similative)]. In cases like example (28), *eccetera* is reanalysed as a proform (similar to *cose* ‘stuff’ in *e cose del genere* ‘and stuff like that’), with the subsequent addition of an adjunctive conjunction.

The forms [conjunction + *eccetera*] are still quite rare in the corpora of spoken Italian consulted for this research. Nonetheless, some instances can be found in web-based corpora, which represent well colloquial and informal usage of Italian, however written (Fiorentini and Sansò 2019: 108). A simple search of concordances on the ItTenTen corpus on SketchEngine (2016 version, 4.9 billion words)<sup>17</sup> returned 46 occurrences of *e(d) eccetera*:

(29) *Nasce a Torino (Italia) nel 1937. Vive, lavora **ed eccetera** nel capoluogo piemontese.*

‘Born in Turin (Italy) in 1937. He lives, works and etcetera in the Piedmontese capital.’

(30) *Mentre gli scienziati fanno complicati calcoli su velocità, traiettoria, massa, accelerazione, resistenza eolica, impatto **ed eccetera simili**, e mentre i politologi riscrivono Machiavelli e discutono prezzi con i moderni principi, lo zapatista si avvicina alla mela, la guarda, l’annusa, la tocca, l’ascolta.*

‘While scientists make complicated calculations on speed, trajectory, mass, acceleration, wind resistance, impact and etcetera like that, and while political scientists rewrite Machiavelli and discuss prices with modern princes, the zapatista [militant] approaches the apple, he looks at it, smells it, touches it, listens to it.’

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<sup>17</sup> The Italian Web corpus (itTenTen), which consists of written texts collected on the Internet (websites, forums, blogs, and so on), is part of the TenTen corpus family, i.e. a set of web corpora built up using the same method, with a target size of more than 10 billion words (<https://www.sketchengine.eu/ittenten-italian-corpus/>).



In example (30), the reanalysis of *eccetera* as a proform is particularly evident. In addition to the conjunction, the writer adds *simili* ‘like that’ (literally ‘similar’), consistently with the above-mentioned structure [connective + proform (+ similative)]. As a result, the general extender becomes more semantically explicit and with a higher degree of internal complexity.

A further step of the reanalysis concerns the loss of the adjunctive (‘there is more’) meaning. As we have already seen (examples 25-27), *eccetera* can be used in disjunctive contexts, and, in some cases, the adjunctive value has blurred to the point that *eccetera* is preceded by a disjunction, i.e. *o* ‘or’. Although there are no instances of *o eccetera* in LIP and KIParla corpora, we found 13 occurrences in ItTenTen 2016:

- (31) *Mi piace anche se spesso non sono d'accordo con quello che scrive, o non mi piace il suo tono o eccetera.*

‘I like her, although I often disagree with what she writes, or I do not like her tone or etcetera’.

- (32) *Quindi - riassumendo – l'omosessualità (o bi- o eccetera- ) è una cosa perfettamente in natura, a mio parere.*

‘So – to sum up - homosexuality (or bi- or etcetera- ) is a perfectly natural thing, in my opinion.’

In (32), the opaqueness of the form is further proved by the fact that it is followed by a hyphen. This means that the writer is treating it like a prefix, exactly as *bi-* in the previous exemplar. Nonetheless, since it is a generic and semantically empty dummy word, it indicates that its slot could be alternatively filled by other prefixes.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusive remarks

The analysis presented in Section 2 has shown how Latin *et cetera* displays both objective and (inter)subjective functions. Its basic meaning ‘there is more’ can trigger associative reasoning and similarity inference, which lead to the construction of lists, sets and categories basing on shared knowledge, while the additional meaning ‘this is enough’ can favour hedging functions at the textual and interpersonal level.

We observe the same multifunctionality in Italian *eccetera* (Section 3), along with further developments. As regards multifunctionality, it is possible to identify three basic meanings, which correlate with three main functions:

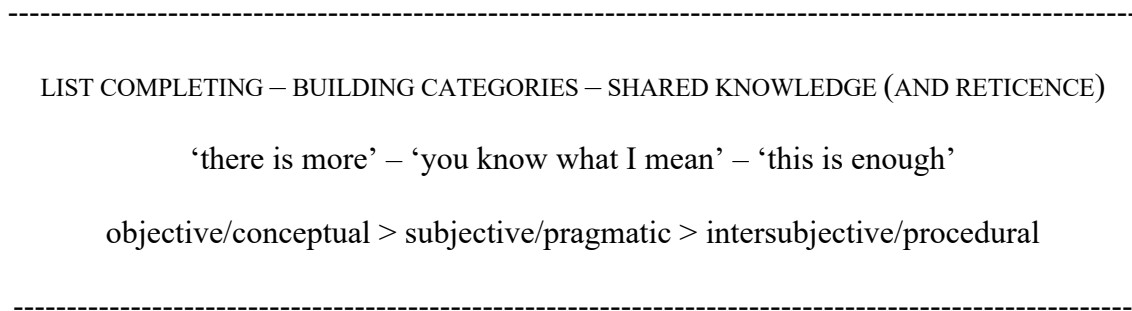


Figure 2. Functions and meanings of Italian *eccetera*

Such functions and meanings are for the most part consistent with those of Latin *et cetera* (see Figure 1), with some differences. In particular, in more recent data, and especially in oral speech, the interpersonal functions of *eccetera* are clearly deployed: (i) it can be used to (co)-construct categories in interaction (example 22); (ii) it can index shared knowledge between the interlocutors. In the latter case, it does not invite the hearer to infer other elements in addition of the one expressed, rather pointing to something which is supposed to be present in the common ground of the interlocutors. Similar intersubjective meanings were already present in Latin, although they appeared to be less prominent than the other functions, due to the nature of written texts, which prevents us from grasping

the extent of the pragmatic functions of *et cetera*. Furthermore, spoken interaction generally depends more highly on context, and is more deeply rooted in the common ground shared by speakers.

On the other hand, we have observed that the more recent developments of *eccetera* are caused by the opaqueness of the form (probably also due to its frequency in speech; cf. Fiorentini 2018). Although these instances are still quite rare, examples (28-32) clearly show that *eccetera* is undergoing a further process of semantic bleaching, since it can be used as a proform (like *cose* ‘stuff’) and, as such, it can form analytic general extenders (*ed eccetera simili* ‘and eccetera like that’, example 30).<sup>18</sup> Therefore, we can schematise the evolution of the form as in Figure (3):

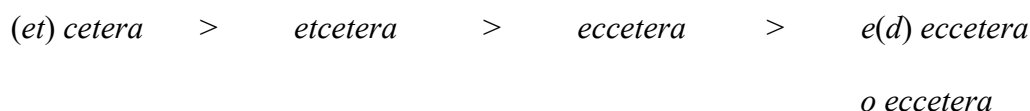


Figure 3. The development of the form.

The figure shows how, after the univerbation and the subsequent assimilation (*etcetera* > *eccetera*), in Old Italian, the form has been further reanalysed in contemporary Italian. More specifically, the conjunction *e* ‘and’ has blurred to the point that *eccetera* can be preceded by another conjunction (*e(d) eccetera*) or even a disjunction (*o eccetera*).<sup>19</sup> In the latter case, the form signals that there are alternatives to the exemplars, thus losing its adjunctive meaning and functioning as a disjunctive general extender (similar to *o cose del genere* ‘or stuff like that’).

<sup>18</sup> Since they are semantically empty, such proforms can be preceded either by a conjunction or a disjunction; besides *e/o cose così* ‘and/or things like that’ (Fiorentini 2018), see for instance also French (*et/ou*) *machin* ‘(and/or) stuff’ (Béguelin and Corminboeuf 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, this is also the case of English *etcetera*, which sometimes can be preceded by *and* or *or*, as in the following examples (extracted from EnTenTen 2013 corpus, <https://www.sketchengine.eu/ententen-english-corpus/>):

1) *But, depending on your background you will add other services to stay competitive and also to utilize what you know: website design, Internet research, article writing and submission, event planning **and etcetera**.*  
 2) *And since so many of us like to fit in workouts during our lunch breaks **or etcetera**, we often don't think about what we should eat.*

In conclusion, we have observed a semantic-pragmatic expansion of both Latin *et cetera* and Italian *eccetera*, which have developed intersubjective and procedural meanings besides the original (objective and conceptual) functions. Finally, in contemporary Italian *eccetera* is undergoing a further development, due to the opaqueness of its components, which is leading to the creation of new analytic general extenders: *e(d) eccetera*, *o eccetera*.

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