

## SUMMARY

In this paper I examine the first «debate» scene in Sophocles' *Ajax* (430 - 595) between Ajax and Tecmessa. Although the body of criticism that discusses this scene is extensive, very little attention has been given to the language as a vehicle of communication between Ajax and his «spear - won» captive.

Through a close examination of Ajax' and Tecmessa's speeches we have reached the following conclusions:

(1) Ajax systematically uses the «first - person» rhetoric through which he becomes the centre - origo of the reference system. The striking abundance of personal and possessive pronouns (first person) emphasizes Ajax' egocentric character.

(2) Tecmessa, in order to engage the attention of the person addressed, she uses the «second - person» rhetoric in a very effective way, as the large analogy of the second person pronouns denotes.

(3) Fulfilling these functions, personal and possessive pronouns fall under the category of *deixis*.

(4) From a Bakhtinian point of view this scene, despite its monological traits, by recalling Homer's famous episode between Andromache and Hector in *Iliad* 6, 392ff. becomes polyphonic and should be viewed as dialogical by means of the intertextuality and the communicative character of the arguments used by Ajax and Tecmessa.