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## Variation in Romance

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### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to show how the study of linguistic variation across closely related languages can fuel research questions and provide a fertile testbed for linguistic theory. We will present two case studies in structural variation – subject clitics and (perfective) auxiliation – and show how a comparative view of these phenomena is best suited to providing a satisfactory account for them, and how such a comparative account bears on a number of theoretical issues ranging from (rather trivially) the modeling of variation to the definition of wordhood, the inventory of parts of speech, and the division of labour between syntax and morphology.

### 5.2 Systematic variation: the case of subject clitics

French, northern Italian Dialects, Ladin, and Romansh are characterized by the presence, with variable degrees of obligatoriness, of clitic elements stemming from Latin nominative personal pronouns.

Subject clitics are not a minor peculiarity scattered across several varieties, but a macro-phenomenon, which has been studied extensively in the past decades (see Poletto and Tortora 2016 for a recent overview). On the theoretical side, subject clitics raise several questions regarding the nature of null subject languages and the relation between pro-drop and agreement (cf. also §23.2.1).

#### 5.2.1 Subject clitics and the null subject parameter

It is worth recalling that the null subject parameter cuts across the area of subject clitics: northern Italian dialects exhibit subject clitics (cf. 1a), but, unlike French, they exhibit the canonical properties of null subject languages, i.e., they are not subject to the so-called *that*-trace effect (cf. 2) and allow free inversion (cf. 3). For these reasons, clitics in northern Italian dialects have been often analysed as agreement markers, rather than fully-fledged pronouns (Rizzi 1986; Brandi and Cordin 1989).<sup>1</sup>

- |   |     |                      |                      |       |          |                |
|---|-----|----------------------|----------------------|-------|----------|----------------|
| 1 | a   | parla                | italiano. (It.)      |       |          |                |
|   |     | speak.3SG            | Italian              |       |          |                |
|   | b** | (Il) parle           | italien. (Fr)        |       |          |                |
|   |     | 3SG.NOM=             | speak.3SG Italian    |       |          |                |
|   | c** | (El) parla           | italian (Ver.)       |       |          |                |
|   |     | 3SG=                 | speak.3SG Italian    |       |          |                |
|   |     |                      | ‘He speaks Italian.’ |       |          |                |
| 2 | a   | Chi hai              | detto                | che _ | ha       | scritto        |
|   |     | who have.2SG         | say.PST.PTCP         | that  | have.3SG | write.PST.PTCP |
|   | b** | Qui as-tu            | dit                  | qu’ – | a        | écrit          |
|   |     | who have.2SG=2SG.NOM | say.PST.PTCP         | that  | have.3SG | write.PST.PTCP |
|   | c   | Ci ghe-to            | dito                 | che _ | ga       | scrito         |
|   |     | who have.2SG=2SG     | say.PST.PTCP         | that  | have.3SG | write.PST.PTCP |
|   |     | questo libro? (It.)  |                      |       |          |                |

\* This article was conceived and written jointly; nevertheless, for academic purposes DP is responsible for §§5.2-5.2.5, 5.3.5 and 5.4, ML for §§5.1, 5.2.6, and 5.3-5.3.4.

<sup>1</sup> In the following examples, the gloss NOM is used only for pronominal clitic subjects.

- this book  
 ce livre? (Fr.)  
 this book  
 sto libro? (Ver.)  
 this book  
 ‘Who did you say wrote this book?’  
 3 a È arrivato Gianni. (It.)  
     be.3SG arrive.PST.PTCP John  
     b\*\*Est arrivé Jean. (Fr.)  
     be.3SG arrive.PST.PTCP John  
     c L’ è rivà Giani. (Ver.)  
     3SG= be.3SG arrive.PST.PTCP John.  
     ‘John has arrived.’

Given this state of affairs, it is tempting to treat subject clitics as affixes. In this respect, the notion ‘clitic’ has fuelled a huge debate, which is understandable since it is an ‘umbrella term’, as Zwicky (1994:xiii) puts it, and ‘[u]mbrella terms are names for problems, for phenomena that present “mixed” properties of some kind, not names of theoretical constructs’. As examples of the on-going debate, consider, for instance, Bermúdez-Otero and Payne (2011), who question the legitimacy of Zwicky’s (1977:4) category of ‘special clitics’, to which Romance pronominal clitics are usually ascribed. These, on the other hand, ‘are better regarded as elements which are neither canonical affixes nor canonical clitics’ according to Spencer and Luís (2013:147). And there is indeed plenty of evidence that they cannot be reduced to (word-level) affixes.<sup>2</sup> For instance, in some modern Romance varieties, pronominal clitics can be separated from their hosts by an intervening adverbial, which never happens to affixes (see Ledgeway and Lombardi 2005:80-82) and subject clitics, unlike inflexional affixes, often undergo subject-clitic inversion in interrogative clauses. At the same time, however, Romance pronominal clitics differ from corresponding full pronouns in several respects (cf., e.g., Kayne 1975; van Riemsdijk 1999:2-4; Russi 2008:4-7). This means that, even if subject clitics were considered agreement markers, they would differ in nature from agreement affixes, a possibility excluded in some typological accounts of the word vs affix divide (Bickel and Nichols 2007).

With this in mind, let us entertain the hypothesis that subject clitics in a non-null-subject language like French are fully fledged pronouns, whereas clitics in null-subject languages are (non-affixal) agreement markers. Loporcaro (2012:176) argues for a principled distinction between *clitic subjects* (i.e., fully-fledged pronouns that, from a morpho-phonological point of view, are clitics) and *subject clitics* (i.e., non-argumental clitic markers expressing agreement features). Further evidence seems to support the hypothesis: in northern Italian dialects, but not in French, subject clitics can double a non-dislocated subject, follow negation, and cannot be dropped under coordination:

- 4 a Nessuno gli ha detto nulla. (Flo.)  
     none 3SG= have.3SG say.PST.PTCP nothing  
     b\*\*Personne il n’ a rien dit. (Fr.)  
     none 3SG.NOM= NEG= have.3SG nothing say.PST.PTCP  
     ‘Nobody has said anything.’

<sup>2</sup> A conceivable alternative consists in analysing Romance clitics as phrase-level affixes: cf., for example, Bermúdez-Otero and Payne (2011) for discussion and criticism.

- 5 a Un tu compri mai mele. (Flo.)  
 NEG 2SG= buy.2SG never apples  
 b Tu n' achètes jamais de pommes. (Fr.)  
 2SG.NOM= NEG buy.2SG never of apples  
 'You never buy apples.'
- 6 a La canta e la balla (Flo.)  
 3SG.F= sing.3SG and 3SG= dance.3SG  
 b Elle chante et danse. (Fr.)  
 3SG.F.NOM= sing.3SG and dance.3SG  
 'She sings and dances.'

However, Poletto (2000) shows that northern Italian dialects, although behaving like null-subject languages, do not always allow doubling, do not always display the order negation > clitics, and, under certain circumstances, allow the omission of certain clitic forms in coordinated structures. At the same time, corpus studies have shown that in French varieties such as colloquial metropolitan French as well as Quebec, Ontario, and Swiss varieties of French (see Palasis 2015 and references therein), subject clitics and NP/DP subjects (including strong pronouns) co-occur even if the latter are not dislocated, which has led some scholars to conclude that French clitic subjects, at least in certain varieties, are also in fact agreement markers (subject clitics, in Loporcaro's 2012 terms).

To conclude, clitic elements with nominative etymology are attested in both null and non-null subject languages, but their syntactic behaviour differs in the two types of language in several respects (above all, doubling of a clause subject). This suggests that clitic subjects in non-null subject languages may have a pronominal status, whereas subject clitics in null-subject languages cannot, although the correlation between the syntactic properties of subject clitics (and clitic subjects) and the divide between null/non-null subject languages is more complicated than previously thought (Poletto 2000; Roberts 2014; Palasis 2015).

### 5.2.2 Expletive subject clitics and agreement

In this section, we discuss the conclusion of the previous section in the light of evidence from dialects exhibiting expletive subject clitics.

Some northern Italian dialects – null subject languages, according to the traditional subdivision – exhibit expletive subject clitics in impersonal clauses. For instance, in the dialect of Monno the non-agreeing/expletive clitic *el* in (7b-c) co-occurs with postverbal subjects and weather verbs.<sup>3</sup>

- Monno, Lombardy
- 7 a Le matele le lavarè zo i piacc  
 the girls 3FPL= wash.FUT.3 down the dishes  
 'The girls will wash the dishes.'
- b El salta zo le foe.  
 3.MSG= drop.3 down the.FPL leaf.PL  
 'Leaves are falling'
- c El plof.  
 3.MSG= rain.3  
 'It is raining.'

<sup>3</sup> The patterns in (7) and (8) are broadly reminiscent of the distinction between *canonical* and *expletive* null subject languages (see D'Alessandro 2015 for a recent overview).

In other dialects, such as Triestino, subject clitics are optional if the subject is preverbal,<sup>4</sup> whereas the clitic never occurs with postverbal subject (cf. 8b), or in impersonal contexts (cf. 8c; more on impersonals below).

Trieste (Syntactic Atlas of Italy, <http://asit.maldura.unipd.it/>)

- 8 a Le mule (le) laverà i piati. (Trieste)  
 the girl.PL 3FPL= wash.FUT.3 the.PL plate.PL  
 ‘The girls will wash the dishes.’  
 b. Casca le foie.  
 drop.3 the.FPL leaf.PL  
 ‘Leaves are falling.’  
 c. Piovi.  
 rain.3  
 ‘It is raining.’

The idea that agreement markers act as expletives needs further discussion. First, subject expletives are normally regarded as placeholders, i.e., dummy elements having the same status of phrasal subjects. This definition, however, is at odds with the behaviour of subject clitics in dialects that allow doubling (cf. 8a): since clitics and phrasal subjects co-occur, it is unlikely that subject clitics, namely agreement markers, can satisfy any syntactic requirement related to the subject position.

Second, if subject clitics were agreement markers, they would occur across-the-board, i.e., in all impersonal constructions such as (8b-c) or in prototypical subject-less contexts such as imperatives, contrary to fact. It is worth noting that Romance imperatives normally exhibit agreement endings, therefore the absence of subject clitics cannot result from a generalised impoverishment of agreement morphology in imperative contexts. Rather, central Romance varieties ban subject clitics precisely in those contexts where phrasal subjects are ruled out, which amounts to saying that the distribution of subject clitics mirrors that of strong subject pronouns.

As for impersonal contexts, Renzi and Vanelli (1983) observed that expletive clitics are more readily found with weather verbs and,<sup>7</sup> to a lesser extent, with existentials and impersonal *si* constructions. Some dialects require an expletive clitic to occur with the modal verb expressing impersonal necessity (‘it is necessary to’), but – to the best of our knowledge – this happens if and only if the expletive clitic occurs in the remaining impersonal contexts. Hence, also the distribution of expletive clitics in impersonal environments follows an implicational scale, illustrated in Table 5.1 (from Pescarini 2014 with modifications):

Table 5.1: Expletive clitics in impersonal environments

Variety	Weather verb	Existential construction	Raising construction	Arbitrary construction	Impersonal necessity
Carcare	U ciov	U j-è	U smija...	U s diz	U bsogna
Cesena	E piov	U j-è	E per...	U s dis	Ø bsogna
Monno	El plof	El g'e	El par	Ø s dis	Ø gna
Rocca P.	El piof	L'è	Ø omea	Ø se dis	Ø moza
Aldeno	El piove	Ø gh'e	Ø par	Ø se dis	Ø bisogna

<sup>4</sup> Benincà and Poletto (2004a) argue that it is mandatory when the subject is dislocated. Finally, in some varieties subject clitics must be dropped in certain environments such as restrictive (vs appositive) relative clauses or subject-wh interrogatives, whereas similar omissions never target fully-fledged agreement markers.

<sup>7</sup> This is reminiscent of partial pro-drop languages, but recall that here we are dealing with dialects which are pro-drop, although they have subject (expletive) clitics.

'it rains'	'there is...'	'it seems that...'	'one says'	'it is needed...'
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### 5.2.3 Subject clitics vs verbal agreement

Even if they were agreement markers, it is not clear why subject clitics should 'double' the information conveyed by verbal endings. The naïve hypothesis is that subject clitics emerged to disambiguate person agreement (or license null subjects, in the terms of Roberts 2014) after verb endings had merged via sound change.<sup>8</sup> In fact, however, many dialects with subject clitics have very transparent verb morphology and, among dialects with a complete set of subject clitics, these are often syncretic or optional (cf. 9a-f). Consequently, if clitics were meant to 'counterbalance' the loss of verb endings, why is the inventory of clitics more syncretic than that of endings?

#### Gruyère, Switerland (De Crousaz and Shlonsky 2003)

- 9 a Me (i) medzo dou fre.  
I 1.SG= eat.1SG of.the cheese  
'I am eating cheese.'
- b Tè te medzè dou pan.  
you 2.SG=eat.2SG of.the bread  
'You are eating bread.'
- c li (i) medzè chinti lé dzoa.  
he 3.MSG= eat.3SG that all the days  
'He eats that every day.'
- d No no medzin rintyé la demindze.  
we 1.PL=eat.1PL only the Sunday  
'We eat only on Sundays.'
- e Vo vo medzidè avu no.  
you.PL 2.PL= eat.2PL with us  
'You (pl.) are eating with us.'
- f Là (i) medzon to cholè.  
they 3.PL= eat.3PL all alone  
'They are eating all alone.'

Roberts (2014:196f.) elaborates on the following typology of morphological systems on the basis of the lack/presence of overt agreement markers on subject clitics and finite verbs:

- 10 SCL [+agr] V [+agr] 'fully redundant', null-subject system  
SCL [+agr] V [-agr] non-null-subject system  
SCL [-agr] V [+agr] a non-redundant null-subject system  
SCL [-agr] V [-agr] (usually) a complementary system

However, no system is 'pure' as, for instance, a dialect can be fully redundant in the singular and non-redundant or complementary in the plural. On average, all systems are redundant. Table 5.2 reports data from a sample of ten varieties regarding the co-occurrence of subject clitics and verbal forms of the present indicative (regular verbs). Even factoring out morphophonological aspects (sandhi phenomena, e.g., liaison, irregular verbs, suppletion, gaps, etc.), the taxonomy in (10) looks somewhat idealized.

<sup>8</sup> This issue parallels the discussion on the relationship between richness of verb agreement and pro-drop (e.g., Taraldsen 1980; Matasović 2018:45-48).

Table 5.2: Patterns of gaps and syncretism in the paradigms of subject clitics (left) and verbal forms (right)<sup>9</sup>. The number of contrastive exponents is given in the shadowed row.

Pigna (Lig.)		Cortemilia (Pie.)		Donceto (Lmb.)		Casola (Tsc.)		Chioggia (Ven.)	
1 <sub>a</sub>	1 <sub>a</sub>	1 <sub>a</sub>	1 <sub>a</sub>	1 <sub>a</sub>	1 <sub>a</sub>	1 <sub>a</sub>	1 <sub>a</sub>	0	1
2	2 <sub>b</sub>	2	2 <sub>b</sub>	2	2 <sub>a</sub>	2	2 <sub>a</sub>	2	2
3	3 <sub>a</sub>	3	3 <sub>a</sub>	3	3	3 <sub>b</sub>	3 <sub>a</sub>	3	3 <sub>a</sub>
4 <sub>a</sub>	4 <sub>c</sub>	4 <sub>a</sub>	4	4 <sub>a</sub>	4	4 <sub>a</sub>	4	0	4
5 <sub>a</sub>	5 <sub>c</sub>	5 <sub>b</sub>	5 <sub>b</sub>	5 <sub>a</sub>	5	5	5	0	5
6	6 <sub>b</sub>	6 <sub>b</sub>	6	6	6	6 <sub>b</sub>	6	6	6 <sub>a</sub>
4	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	5

French		Gruyère (Frp.)		Breil (Occ.)		Vallader (RaeR.)		Badiot (Lad.)	
1	1 <sub>a</sub>	1 <sub>a</sub>	1	0	1 <sub>a</sub>	1	1	1 <sub>a</sub>	1
2	2 <sub>a</sub>	2	2 <sub>a</sub>	2	2	0	2	2	2
3	3 <sub>a</sub>	3 <sub>a</sub>	3 <sub>a</sub>	3	3	0	3	3	3 <sub>a</sub>
4	4	4	3	0	4	0	4	4 <sub>a</sub>	4
5	5	5	4	0	5 <sub>a</sub>	0	5	5 <sub>a</sub>	5
6	6 <sub>a</sub>	6 <sub>a</sub>	5	0	6	6	6	6	6 <sub>a</sub>
6	4	4	5	3	5	3	6	4	5

Once the above data are plotted into a Cartesian diagram representing the number of contrastive exponents in the paradigms of verbs (X-axis) and subject clitics (Y-axis), we may notice that all dialects occur in the high-right part of the plan, which means that the total possible number of distinctive combinations always exceeds the six persons of the paradigm. The tendency (dotted) line suggests that the morphological richness of the verbal and clitic systems correlate inversely, but the hypothesis needs to be tested on the basis of a larger set of data.

Fig. 5.1: Distribution of languages according to the number of contrastive exponents in the paradigms of verbs (X-axis) and subject clitics (Y-axis)

From a qualitative point of view, the hypothesis of an inverse relation between the verbal and proclitic domain is particularly promising in the case of the fourth and fifth persons, which normally display idiosyncratic exponents in the verbal paradigm (e.g., suppletive or non-rhotonic forms), whereas the corresponding clitics are missing or syncretic (more on this below). If the whole paradigm is examined, however, the impoverishment of verb inflexion may be considered a possible factor in shaping clitic paradigms, but verbal morphology per se cannot be regarded as a necessary condition for the emergence of clitic systems.

#### 5.2.4 Gaps

Calabrese (2011) quantifies Manzini and Savoia's (2005) data (from 183 varieties) on the distribution of gaps. What follows elaborates on Calabrese's scrutiny, combined with

<sup>9</sup> Key: 1-6 = Person; 0 = gaps; subscripts (a, b, c) mark syncretism.

quantitative observations on other datasets, e.g. the *Atlante Sintattico d'Italia* (ASIt) covering 182 more dialects.

Among Manzini and Savoia's (2005) 183 paradigms (from northern Italian and Romansch dialects.), 72 are defective, as seen in Table 5.3, which lists the patterns attested in at least two or more varieties, with a diffusion > 0,005:

Table 5.3: Gaps in subject clitic paradigms in dialects of northern Italy and Romansh

number of gaps	5	4		3	2		0
number of dialects	3	4	6	39	3	4	111
diffusion <sup>10</sup>	0,02	0,02	0,03	0,21	0,02	0,04	0.60
1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
3	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
6	0	0	1	1	1	1	1

By combinatorics (see also Heap 2000; 2002), a 6-cell paradigm allowing gaps is supposed to generate 64 possible patterns. Hence, the probability of developing a non-defective paradigm is lower (1/64) than the probability of developing a system with gaps. Probability and actual diffusion are compared in the graph in Figure 5.2:

Fig. 5.2: Distribution of patterns per number of gaps: diffusion of dialects in the sample (in orange) vs probability (in blue).

Leaving full paradigms aside, the distribution of defective patterns looks rather regular as it follows the curve of probability. However, it is worth noting that among the 20 possible patterns with three gaps, only one system is broadly attested, viz. that featuring only second person singular, third person singular, and third person plural clitics (this system has a diffusion of 0.21, one system in five).

The diffusion of the above pattern is confirmed by further data from the ASIt database. We have plotted the presence of first person singular and second person singular clitics in the 182 varieties surveyed there. Four possible patterns are expected:

- Ø, Ø: both first person singular and second person singular are missing;
- Ø, 2: the first person singular is missing;
- 1, Ø: the second person singular is missing;
- 1, 2: both clitics are attested.

As shown in the pie chart in Figure 5.3, the patterns in which the second person singular clitic is missing are unattested or very marginal:

Fig. 5.3: Presence of 1sg and 2sg clitics in the ASIt dataset

<sup>10</sup> = number of dialects / 183



The diagram in Figure 5.4 shows the diffusion of the same four patterns in four linguistic areas of northern Italy. We can observe that the pattern [Ø, 2] is strongly predominant in Venetan dialects. Hence, in this case areal factors might play a role, although areal explanations per se cannot capture the overall asymmetry in the make-up of clitic paradigms.

Figure 5.4: Presence of 1sg and 2sg clitics in four linguistic areas (northern Italo-Romance)

Building on similar data, previous studies revealed some robust trends in the form of implicational statements (see further the discussion in §23.2.1):

- 11 a 2 > 3 > 6 > 5 > 4 > 1 (Renzi and Vanelli 1983)  
 b 2 > 3 > 6 > 1 > 4/5 (Cabredo Hofherr 2004; Calabrese 2011)  
 c 2 > 6 > 3 > 4 > 1 > 5 (Heap 2000)

Heap (2002), Olivieri (2011), Calabrese (2011) among others tried to formulate higher grade generalizations, although all accounts based on feature geometries are eventually challenged by counterexamples.

### 5.2.5 Syncretism

Subject clitics exhibit systematic syncretism, i.e., identity of exponence across paradigm cells. The graph in Figure 5.5 illustrates the distribution of syncretisms and gaps in the 183 paradigms reported in Manzini and Savoia (2005):

Figure 5.5: Number of clitic systems with gaps and/or syncretic items in Manzini and Savoia's (2005) dataset

Almost all dialects exhibit either syncretism or gaps. Moreover, gaps and syncretism seem tightly linked. As Calabrese (2011:311) points out, '[w]e find zeros in all of the cases where we have syncretic exponents'. The correlation between the two phenomena is illustrated in the following diagram, which represent the number of overt (light grey) and idiosyncratic exponents (dark grey) for each person. Despite the different dimensions – which are due to the larger amounts of systems with syncretism (Fig. 5.6) – the two areas have the same shape:

Figure 5.6: Number of non-syncretic and non-null exponents per person

### 5.2.6 Pantiscu, an outlier

For all central Romance dialects addressed so far, despite huge variation, the following holds true: a) distributionally, the (non-)occurrence of subject clitics obeys morphological (see §§5.2.4-5.2.5) and syntactic constraints; and b) functionally, subject clitics encode exclusively the inflexional categories of person, number and (for third person) gender, marking subject agreement on a par with the verb's contextual inflexion (in Booij's 1994; 1996 terms). There is, however, just one Romance variety for which (a)-(b) do not hold, which is an outlier also geographically, as it is spoken far off the central Romance area stretching from Bordeaux to the Alps to Florence, from which we have drawn examples so far. Pantiscu, the Sicilian dialect spoken on the island of Pantelleria, was shown (by Loporcaro et al. 2010, Loporcaro

2012) to possess subject clitics whose occurrence is not dictated by syntax and whose function consists in marking, in addition to person, number and (for third person) gender, the progressive value of the aspect category:

Pantelleria

- 12 a dđza pit'tʃotta ('i)dđza pas'sia.  
 that.FSG girl.SG 3FSG= stroll.3SG  
 'That girl is taking a walk.'
- b 'iddzʊ e ma'ri:a ʊn dʒi 'fannʊ 'nente.  
 3MSG and Mary NEG 3PL= do.3PL nothing  
 'He and Mary are not doing anything.'
- c 'jɛ ʊnjɛ 'mantʃʊ (\*\*mai).  
 1SG NEG-1SG= eat.1SG (never)  
 'I am not eating'
- d dđzʊ pit'tʃottʊ 'sempe ke (\*\*dđzʊ) 'kurre  
 that.MSG boy.SG always that 3MSG= run.3SG  
 'That boy always runs.'

Examples (12a-d) contain present tense forms that could be replaced by the imperfect, the only other imperfective tense in the indicative mood. Note that in (12a-c) a pronominal element (3FSG, 3PL and 1SG, respectively) occurs, which could be omitted, but not *salva veritate* because without it, the clauses would be aspectually unmarked, compatible with both perfective (*praesens pro futuro*) and imperfective non-progressive readings. Compare (12d), where 'sempe 'always' forces a habitual reading and causes 3FSG dđzʊ to be ungrammatical, while with dđzʊ and without 'sempe (12d) would mean 'that boy is running'. Progressive, in other words, is expressed by pronominal elements, which a) agree with the clausal subject, b) co-occur with a subject NP, and b) test positively for cliticness diagnostics: to mention just one, in (12b-c) the clitics follow, rather than precede, preverbal negation (ʊnn),<sup>11</sup> thus occupying a position from which all subject NPs are barred (see Loporcaro 2012:757f. for other tests). Thus, Pantiscu has subject clitics, like northern Italian dialects, but unlike the latter these subject clitics are not syntactically obligatory nor semantically void, expressing – on top of number, gender and person – an aspectual value which is usually encoded in the verb's inherent inflexion. In line with this, pronominal progressives are barred whenever progressives are cross-linguistically out (e.g., with state-denoting verbs). A final remarkable point is that Pantiscu subject clitics are all syntactic clitics but, again contrary to central Romance dialects, they are not uniformly phonological clitics. As exemplified in (12a), third person clitics have a full form, bisyllabic and homophonous with the stressed personal pronoun, occurring in free variation with a reduced unstressed monosyllabic form (both seen in 12b), but first and second persons lack reduced forms, so that subject clitics are fully homophonous with subject pronouns (e.g., 'tʊ ʊn tʊ 'mantʃi 'you are not eating').

### 5.3 Auxiliary selection and auxiliary splits

Romance languages and dialects all feature auxiliary verbs, defined as 'a lexically designated closed class of verbs whose defining property is that they inherit' their subject (Rosen 1997:112). While, under many definitions, modal verbs are also labelled 'auxiliaries', modals differ from auxiliaries proper in that they reinitialize (i.e., bestow a thematic role on) their

<sup>11</sup> (12b-c) are from Khamma, a rural outlying part of Pantelleria, whose dialect allows progressive subject clitics to co-occur with negation, while most speakers from central Pantelleria resort to the alternative pan-Romance progressive construction whenever negation is involved.

subject argument. By contrast, perfective auxiliaries (cf. 13-14), whose sole function is to form (perfective) periphrastic verb forms, do not:

- 13 a María ha comido (el arroz). (Sp.)  
María has eaten the rice  
b Marie a mangé (le riz). (Fr.)  
Marie has eaten the rice  
'Mary has eaten (the rice).'
- 14 a María ha entrado. (Sp.)  
María has come in  
b Marie est entrée. (Fr.)  
Marie is come in  
'Mary has come in.'

As the examples show, Spanish and French display diverging distributions: while French preserves an auxiliatio contrast, which arose in proto-Romance (cf. La Fauci 1988), with auxiliary E selected in unaccusative (14b) and H in unergative/transitive clauses (13b), Spanish has generalized auxiliary H.<sup>13</sup> There is a huge literature on this twofold binary contrast, i.e., the syntactic contrast (13b) vs (14b) within languages such as French – or Italian and Sardinian – and the contrast between French-type 2-aux Romance varieties and languages such as Spanish – or Portuguese, Catalan and Romanian. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg, since variation in auxiliatio readily reveals itself as much more pervasive, as soon as one widens the scope of inquiry beyond the standard languages. As it happens, lesser-known non-standard dialects display a kaleidoscope of auxiliatio options, whose rationalization poses fascinating analytical challenges and yields insights into basic issues of linguistic theory, such as those mentioned in §5.1.

### 5.3.1 Lexical and semantic factors

Semantic and lexical factors, relevant to this variation, can be briefly sketched here (see also discussion in §23.2.2). TAM-driven splits occur in several varieties: Romanian has auxiliary *a avea* 'H' in the indicative present perfect and auxiliary *a fi* 'E' in other tenses/moods (Ledgeway 2014), and comparable splits occur in Italian and Catalan dialects (Loporcaro 2016:813f.). *Aktionsart* (in particular (a)telicity) and agentivity correlate with auxiliary selection in intransitives: Sorace (2000) put forward an Auxiliary Selection Hierarchy (ASH) which has telic change of location verbs like (14) at the top, selecting auxiliary E categorically, and verbs designating non-motional process at the bottom, with categorical auxiliary H, and 5 more semantic classes in between, selecting E with decreasing likelihood and showing variation (cf. Legendre and Sorace 2003:196). Along these lines, some studies (e.g., Aranovich 2003; Bentley 2006; Cennamo 1999; 2002; 2008) contend that unaccusativity can be reduced to the semantics and that a syntactic representation of unaccusativity can be entirely dispensed with. However, Loporcaro (2011; 2015; 2016) has shown that, alongside semantic gradience (ASH), an orthogonal syntactic gradient is to be recognized, as first proposed in Loporcaro (1999:213) within Relational Grammar and adapted to other frameworks in Bentley (2010) and Ledgeway (2012:321). While the ASH may (see Aranovich 2003 for old Spanish) or may not (see Loporcaro 2015:67-71 for old

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<sup>13</sup> As shown by La Fauci (1988), split auxiliatio, like other unaccusativity-related phenomena, was established in proto-Romance as one of the manifestations of active/inactive alignment, while generalization of just one auxiliary is part of a later drift towards the reestablishment of a more consistent accusative/nominative alignment.

Sicilian and old Neapolitan) play a role in shaping variation and change, this is unquestionably a subordinate role, since this variation is observed within the limits of syntactically defined classes of predicates.

Lexical factors play a role in the Romance drift 2-aux > 1-aux, involving gradual depletion of the set of E-selecting unaccusatives, as observed when comparing Italo-Romance (with about 300-400 such verbs) with modern French, where this set shrinks to around 30, and northern and American Oil dialects in which just one or two verbs still select aux E (examples and references in Loporcaro 2016:812).

Reference to the lexicon is found in approaches to auxiliation which capitalize on the alleged (change in) the ‘lexical’ specification of, say, auxiliary *haber* ‘have’ in (the diachrony of) Spanish. This view, criticized in Loporcaro (2007b:175f.), will not be further considered here.

### 5.3.2 The syntactic gradient

An advance in research on variation in Romance auxiliation was the recognition that, as more dialects are considered, the (seemingly) binary contrasts in (13)-(14) become part of an implicational scale: French and Spanish occupy the two extremes on one dimension, while on the other axis unaccusatives and unergatives/transitives are the endpoints:<sup>14</sup>

Table 5.4: Implicational scale for auxiliary selection

		INACTIVE				ACTIVE
		unacc.	Reflexive			trans./unerg.
			retr.	dir. tr.	indir. tr.	
a.	French	E				H
b.	Logudorese Sdn.	E				H
c.	Picernese	E				H
d.	Old Florentine	E				H
e.	Leccese	E				H
f.	Spanish					H

In between, the steps of the scale are shaped by auxiliary choice with different types of reflexive construction. For instance, type (b) is exemplified by the Apulian dialect of Lesina:

15	<u>Lesina (Foggia)</u>	Clause type:
a	'jɛss'ɛ 'mmɔrt. she is died. <u>FSG</u> 'She has died.'	unaccusative
b	'jɛssə tʃ 'ɛ lla'vatə. she REFL.3 is washed 'She has washed herself.'	direct transitive
c	'jɛssə tʃ 'ɛ rrəspun'nutə'solə. she REFL.3 is answered alone 'She has answered to herself.'	(monadic) indirect unergative E
d	'jɛssə tʃ 'a lla'vat i 'manə .	H

<sup>14</sup> E and H in Table 5.4 stand for [I don't understand what you mean by 'stand for'! Rephrase; v. *risposta al rigo I di 5.3.3: intendevo it. 'stanno per/stanno a rappresentare'. Tipo, "NP stands for noun phrase": qui forse potrebbe andare "represent"?*] the majority case, but what is crucial is the auxiliation contrast or lack thereof. Thus, while for option (f) in Table 5.4 generalization of H is most widespread, Portuguese – with generalized *ter* 'hold' – and the dialects of central-southern Italy (Tuttle 1986:267 on Terracinese) and of Catalonia (cf. Alcover 1903:470f.; Fabra 1912:136 on Rossellonès) which generalized aux E are instances of the same type.

she REFL.3 has washed the hands indirect transitive (dyadic)  
 ‘She has washed her hands.’  
 e 'iss 'a 'rrött a bbut'tɪj̥ə/ 'a kkammə'nat as'sa.  
 he has broken the bottle/ has walked a lot transitive/unergative  
 ‘He has broken the bottle / has walked a lot.’

As seen in (15), this dialect like Logudorese Sardinian (option b in Table 5.4; cf. data in Loporcaro 2016:809) selects auxiliary H not only with ergatives/transitives but also with dyadic reflexives, the only reflexive predicates to feature a distinct initial subject and direct object, while the rest of the reflexive constructions pattern with unaccusatives in selecting auxiliary E. The auxiliary E/H divide can occur at other points on the scale (cf. Loporcaro 2016:814f. for details): most options are attested in modern dialects, except for option (d), which is illustrated with old Florentine and (variably) old Castilian in Loporcaro (2015:63-65). Crucially, discontinuous options (say, auxiliary E in unaccusatives and indirect unergative reflexives vs auxiliary H elsewhere) are unattested. This can hardly be coincidental and calls for a formal explanation, which has been provided under the form of a parametric rule in Loporcaro (2007b:193; 2011:82). However, structural variation in auxiliary selection by no means reduces to the six options in Table 5.4.

### 5.3.3 Person-driven variation and splits

In the examples in (13)-(14) and (15)-(16), third persons are representative for homogeneous paradigms, displaying auxiliary E or H throughout. Several Italo-Romance dialects depart from such uniformity in that they show free variation and/or complementary distribution of E/H depending on verb person. The dialect of Ruvo di Puglia (province of Bari; Manzini and Savoia 2005:2.724f.) illustrates both cases:

16 Ruvo di Puglia  
 1sg 'sɔ /'aʝə drəm'meutə/və'neutə.  
 am/have.1SG slept/come  
 2sg 'si drəm'meutə/və'neutə.  
 are.2SG slept/come  
 1pl 'ɔmmə drəm'meutə/və'neutə.  
 have.1PL slept/come  
 ‘I/you.SG/.PL have slept/come.’

In the dialect of Ruvo di Puglia, all classes of verbs select auxiliary E/H in free variation in the first person singular, while in the second person singular only auxiliary E is grammatical and in all plural persons (exemplified with first person plural in 16) only auxiliary H is grammatical. However, the person split in (16) is just one among a host of different options displayed by Italian dialects. While there is an extensive literature on such mixed systems (e.g. Tuttle 1986; Giammarco 1973; Ledgeway 2003; 2009:618-20; in press; Bentley and Eythórsson 2003; Vecchio 2006), Manzini and Savoia (2005, II: 682-727, 784-91; III:2-34) provide by far the largest first-hand dataset available, with 50 dialects showing person splits and possibly free variation in some persons in addition.<sup>15</sup> To these (unreferenced in Tables 5.5-6), we will add the dialects mentioned in further sources providing full paradigms: Giammarco (1973) (8 dialects), Tuttle (1986) (5 dialects), Loporcaro (1999; 2001; 2007b) (2, 1, and 4 respectively), Ledgeway (2003; 2009:618-20) (1) (these sources are abbreviated

<sup>15</sup> Ledgeway (in press) presents an analysis of perfective auxiliiation which covers not only person splits but also all the factors disregarded here (mentioned in §5.3.1), whose discussion would exceed the scope of the present chapter (though, for discussion, see also §23.2.2).

M&S, G, T, L1, L2, L3, and Le respectively in Tables 5.5-6), which adds up to a convenience sample of 76 dialects with person splits, which we will use to draw some generalizations on auxiliary distribution. The dialects are scattered over Italy: Abruzzo 20, Basilicata 4, Calabria 5, Campania 6, Lazio 13, Marche 4 (all from the southernmost province of Ascoli Piceno), Molise 6, Piedmont 5 (all Lombard dialects are from the eastern fringes of the region), Puglia 12. The skewing depends on the sources available and, more importantly, on the fact that such split systems occur in the mentioned areas, not in others: thus, in southern Italy, no split system occurs in Sicily, while in northern Italy the only area featuring relevant phenomena, as noted as early as Salvioni (1902:208), straddles Lombardy and Piedmont.

By way of a preliminary observation, let us recall that, as shown in Loporcaro (2001; 2007b), split systems can be mapped onto the scale in Table 5.4, provided that one focuses not on the individual auxiliary morpheme selected but rather on the contrast patterns between the classes of predicates selecting different combinations. Thus, some split systems select the same person-sensitive combination for all classes of predicates, and are hence instances of 1-aux systems (option f in Table 5.4), while others display two or even three contrasting options, whereby unaccusatives and unergatives/transitives represent the opposite poles and the different classes of reflexives pattern in different ways.<sup>16</sup>

Among dialects showing person-split auxiliation, 21 exhibit the scheme EEHEEH with unergatives/transitives, 10 of them also with unaccusatives, while the other 11 display EEEEE with unaccusatives. The remaining 53 varieties exhibit alternative person-split auxiliation patterns.<sup>17</sup>

Consider first unergatives. As shown in Figure 5.7, with unergatives E is favoured in the 2sg, H in the 3pl, whereas free variation of H/E is rather frequent in the 1sg.

Figure 5.7: Auxiliary forms per Person with unergative verbs in our sample (76 dialects, 36 auxiliatio patterns)<sup>18</sup>

Comparing the paradigms in Table 5.5., we note that no dialect has only E with unergatives, whereas a few have only H (jj) (these are listed here because they present a person split with unaccusatives; see options z, aa, kk and nn in Table 5.6). Focusing on the similarities and differences across persons, we observe that first person singular and second person plural nearly always have the same auxiliary choice (three exceptions: a, t, ,z in Table 5.5.), whereas in the first person singular E mostly occurs if it occurs in the second person singular as well (1 exception, ee in Table 5.5.), and the same goes for plural persons (3 exceptions: t, z, aa in Table 5.5.):<sup>19</sup>

Table 5.5.: Patterns of split auxiliatio in our sample (76 dialects)

<sup>16</sup> This has been shown for selected dialects in Loporcaro (2001; 2007b) but would be impossible given the present sample, because of the crucial gaps in the data usually provided by sources, as discussed in Loporcaro (2015:65).

<sup>17</sup> For simplicity, we limit our discussion to the compound perfect, since several among the dialects in the sample also show TAM-related splits of the kind mentioned in §5.3.1 (for further discussion, §23.2.2).

<sup>18</sup> Key (also valid for Figure 5.9 and Tables 5.5-6): E = 'be', H/E = 'have/ be' in free variation, H = 'have', E=H = syncretic form of both auxiliaries, H-E = 'have' and 'be' according to phonological context (shape condition).

<sup>19</sup> In Tables 5.5-6, auxiliatio patterns are ordered so that prevailing selection of E and H cluster at the top and bottom, respectively. Occurrence of the third option (free variation) precludes a strictly monotonic display.

	#	1sg	2sg	3sg	1pl	2pl	3pl
a.	Poggio Imperiale	1	E	E	E	H/E	E
b.	Pàstena-Castelpetroso	1	E	E	E	E	H/E
c.	Roccasicura	1	H/E	E	E	E	E
d.	Cori (T), <sup>20</sup> Miglionico	2	E	E	E	E	H
e.	Pescocostanzo	1	E	E	H	E	E
f.	Gallo Matese	1	H/E	E	E	E	H/E
g.	Monteroduni	1	H/E	E	E	E	H
h.	Vastogirardi	1	H	E	H	E	E
i.	Amandola, Bellante, ecc. <sup>21</sup>	21	E	E	H	E	H
j.	Veroli (T)	1	H/E	E	H/E	E	H/E
k.	Capracotta	1	H	E	E	H/E	H/E
l.	Amaseno (T) <sup>22</sup> , S. Vittore, Viticuso	3	H/E	E	H	E	H
m.	Guardiaregia	1	H/E	E	H	H/E	H/E
n.	Sassinoro	1	H/E	E	H/E	H/E	H/E
o.	Secinaro	1	H/E	E	H	H/E	H
p.	Agnone	1	H/E	E	H	H	H/E
q.	Lanciano (G)	1	E	E	H	H/E	H/E
r.	Bisceglie <sup>2, 23</sup> Giovinazzo, Pietransieri (L3)	3	E	E	H	H	H
s.	Ruvo di Puglia	1	H/E	E	H-E	H	H
t.	Bitetto	1	H	H	H-E	H/E	E
u.	Montenerodomo, Popoli	2	E	E	H	H	H
v.	Castelvecchio Subequo, Molfetta	2	H/E	E	H	H	H
w.	Minervino Murge	1	H/E	H/E	H	H/E	H
x.	Vasto (G)	1	H	E	H/E	H	H
y.	Altamura (L3)	1	H/E	H/E	H/E	H/E	H
z.	Trecate	1	H/E	E=H	E	E	E=H
aa.	Cerano	1	H/E	E=H	E	H/E	H/E

<sup>20</sup> Tuttle (1986:270), checked on Chiominto (1984:178).

<sup>21</sup> Amandola, Bellante, Borgorose-Spedino, Campi, Canosa Sannita, Colledimacine, Ortezzano, Pontecorvo, San Benedetto del Tronto, Sonnino, Torricella Peligna, Tuffillo (M&S); Avezzano, L'Aquila, Pescara (G), Roiate, Subiaco (T), Colonna, Zagarolo (L1), Servigliano (L2), Acquafondata (L3).

<sup>22</sup> Amaseno (Tuttle 1986:233, checked on Vignoli 1920:71).

<sup>23</sup> This is Manzini and Savoia's (2005) description of the dialect of Bisceglie (Bari), diverging from that given by De Gregorio (1939) indicated as Bisceglie1 below.

bb.	Morcone, Frigento <sup>24</sup>	8	H	H	E	H	H	H
cc.	Bisceglie1; Introdacqua, Scanno (G)	3	H	E	H	H	H	H
dd.	Notaresco (G)	1	E	H	H	H	H	H
ee.	Padula, Monteparano	2	H	H	H/E	H	H	H
ff.	Canosa di Puglia	1	H/E	H	H	H	H	H
gg.	Gravina di Puglia	1	H/E	H	H-E	H	H	H
hh.	Briga Novarese, Masserano	2	H	E=H	H	H	H	H
ii.	S. Giorgio d. Sannio	1	H	H	E=H	H	H	H
jj.	Naples (Le), Aliano, Viguzzolo	3	H	H	H	H	H	H

With unaccusatives (Figure 5.8), the 2sg remains the person in which auxiliary E is most widespread, though increased usage of E in the 3sg is observed:

Figure 5.8: Auxiliary forms per Person with unaccusative verbs (76 dialects).

If we now focus on distribution across paradigm cells within each system, we see that some dialects (option a in Table 5.6) have only E (as previously mentioned, they appear here because they exhibit a person split with unergatives). No dialect exhibits only H with unaccusatives:

Table 5.6: Patterns of split auxiliiation with unaccusative verbs in our sample (76 dialects).

	#	1sg	2sg	3sg	1pl	2pl	3pl
a.	Amandola, Borgorose-Spedino, etc. <sup>25</sup>	11	E	E	E	E	E
b.	Roccasicura	1	H/E	E	E	E	E
c.	Vastogirardi	1	H/E	E	E	E	E
d.	Pàstena-Castelpetroso	1	E	E	E	E	H/E
e.	Briga Novarese	1	E	E=H	E	E	E
f.	Cori (T), Miglionico	2	E	E	E	E	H

<sup>24</sup> In addition to Morcone and Frigento (Manzini and Savoia 2005, III:22f., 26f.) six more dialects belong here (those of Albidona, Alessandria del Carretto, Nocara, Oriolo, Rocca Imperiale, Rotondella, Manzini and Savoia 2005, II:784-91) which the authors (2005, II:779) claim to select auxiliary H uniformly. Consider, for example, the following data from Albidonese (II:784f.):

- i a 'ε ddər'mutə/bbə'nutə 's/he has (lit. is) slept/come'  
 b 'jε kkwən'tentə 's/he is happy'  
 c 'ya 'famə 's/he is hungry' (lit. 'has hunger')

The authors argue that the third person singular auxiliary form in (i.a) must belong to 'have', like those in other persons, because it is not homophonous with the copula (.ib). However, they neglect the fact that the corresponding form of 'have' (which they provide, (i.c)) is clearly distinct, both segmentally and because it does not cause word-initial consonantal fortition (*raddoppiamento fonosintattico*), while the form of 'be' does, both as a copula and as an auxiliary. That the forms of 'be' in those two functions may diverge, with a more reduced one occurring as an auxiliary, is an independently well-known phenomenon.

<sup>25</sup> Amandola, Borgorose-Spedino, Colledimacine, Ortezzano, Poggio Imperiale, Torricella Peligna, Tuffillo (M&S); Colonna, Zagarolo (L1), Servigliano (L2), Roiate (T, checked with Orlandi 2000:124).



g.	Pescocostanzo	1	E	E	H	E	E	E
h.	Gallo Matese	1	H/E	E	E	E	E	H/E
i.	Monteroduni	1	H/E	E	E	E	E	H
j.	Capracotta	1	H	E	E	H/E	H/E	E
k.	Bellante, Campi, Canosa Sannita, etc. <sup>26</sup>	11	E	E	H	E	E	H
l.	Trecate	1	H/E	E=H	E	E	E=H	E
m.	Cerano	1	E	E=H	E	H/E	H/E	E
n.	Pietransieri	1	E	E	E	H/E	H/E	H/E
o.	Amaseno (T), S. Vittore, Viticuso	3	H/E	E	H	E	E	H
p.	Veroli (T)	1	H/E	E	H/E	E	E	H/E
q.	Montenerodomo, Popoli	2	E	E	E	H	H	H
r.	Secinaro	1	H/E	E	E	H/E	H/E	H
s.	Guardiaregia	1	H/E	E	E	H/E	H/E	H/E
t.	Agnone	1	H/E	E	E	H	H	H/E
u.	Scanno	1	H	E	E	H	H/E	H/E
v.	Bitetto	1	H	E	H-E	H/E	E	H
w.	Masserano	1	H	E=H	H/E	H	H/E	E
x.	Altamura	1	H/E	H/E	E	H/E	H/E	H/E
y.	Sassinoro	1	H/E	E	H/E	H/E	H/E	H/E
z.	Naples (Le), Minervino Murge	2	H/E	H/E	H/E	H/E	H/E	H/E
aa.	Viguzzolo	1	H/E	H/E	H/E	H/E	H/E	H
bb.	Ruvo di Puglia	1	H/E	E	H-E	H	H	H
cc.	Padula	1	H/E	E	H/E	H	H	H
dd.	Castelvecchio Subequo	1	H/E	E	E	H	H	H
ee.	Bisceglie2, Giovinazzo	2	E	E	H	H	H	H
ff.	Molfetta	1	H/E	E	H	H	H	H
gg.	Vasto (G)	1	H	E	H/E	H	H	H
hh.	Lanciano (G)	1	H	E	H	H	E	H
ii.	Gravina di Puglia	1	H/E	H	H-E	H	H	H
jj.	Bisceglie1, Introdacqua (G)	2	H	E	H	H	H	H
kk.	Albidona, Aliano, Morcone, ecc. <sup>27</sup>	8	H	H	E	H	H	H
ll.	Notaresco (G)	1	E	H	H	H	H	H
mm.	Canosa di Puglia	1	H/E	H	H	H	H	H
nn.	Monteparano, Frigento	2	H	H	H/E	H	H	H
oo.	S. Giorgio d. Sannio	1	H	H	E=H	H	H	H

Implications among persons parallel those seen for unergatives, first person plural and second person plural very often share the same pattern and in the first person singular and the plural

<sup>26</sup> Bellante, Campi, Canosa Sannita, Pontecorvo, San Benedetto del Tronto, Sonnino (M&S); Avezzano, L'Aquila, Pescara (G), Subiaco (T), Acquafondata (L3).

<sup>27</sup> To Aliano and Morcone (data in Manzini and Savoia 2005, III:30, 22), the six additional dialects mentioned in n. 19 above must be added.

persons, E tends to occur if it occurs also in the second person singular. The following graphs illustrate the comparison between unergatives and unaccusatives. Figure 5.9, which represents the frequency of E forms, shows that unaccusativity correlates with an increase of E in the third person singular and, to a lesser extent, in the remaining persons but the 3pl.

Figure 5.9: Diffusion (%) of E forms (in percentage): unergatives vs unaccusatives. Sample: 76 dialects

Free variation of H/E, plotted in Figure 5.10, increases most, with unaccusatives (vs unergatives), in the third person singular and second person plural, less markedly so in the first person singular and second person singular, while the reverse tendency is observed elsewhere.

Figure 5.10: Diffusion of the free alternation between E and H forms (in percentage): unergatives vs unaccusatives. Sample: 76 dialects

To sum up, the following generalizations emerge from Tables 5.5-6, and Figures 5.7-10:

#### 17 Generalizations

- a All-H and all-E paradigms are attested only with unergatives and unaccusatives, respectively;
- b We observed a correlation with unaccusativity in some persons: auxiliary E is much more frequent in the third person singular and less markedly in the second person singular, and the same holds (with lesser skewing) for E/H free variation, where the second person plural also shows a similar imbalance;
- c E is the most frequent option in the second person singular;
- d first person singular and plural persons tend to have E iff second person singular also has E.

A complementary perspective on split systems thereby emerges, compared with that in Loporcaro (2007b:185f.), which stressed the theoretical consequences of the combination freedom in auxiliary choice within person-split systems. Since each paradigm cell represents an independent variable, which can host one of three values (E, H, or E/H), this yields in principle  $3^6 = 729$  possible combinations for 1-aux mixed systems,  $729^2 = 531,441$  for 2-aux mixed systems, and  $729^3 = 387,420,489$  for 3-aux mixed systems. What we have now seen, even on the basis of this very limited casual sample, is that not all conceivable options and combinations occur with the same frequency. In the following sections, we will try to make sense of the distributional generalizations in (17) and address the significance of these results for the modelling of variation and the other theoretical issues raised in §5.1.

#### 5.3.4. Variation in mixed auxiliatation: give to morphology what belongs to morphology

The generalizations in (17a-b) mention unaccusativity, an eminently syntactic concept, and are indeed often treated as though they were syntactic in nature. We will argue, however, that they are best accounted for within inflexional morphology in terms of verb paradigm structure. This view was first proposed in Loporcaro (1999:213) and further elaborated on in

Bentley and Eythórsson (2001:70f.), Loporcaro (2001:462, 470; 2007b:186): we will provide new and cogent arguments in support of it.

Considered in itself, (17a) would appear a bona fide syntactic generalization: if only auxiliary E is selected with unaccusatives and only H with unergatives, at first sight this seems liable to be stated in terms of a syntactic rule in the same way as (the first clause of) the French/Italian (non-mixed) auxiliation rule: i.e., ‘select auxiliary E iff the final subject is an initial direct object; select auxiliary H elsewhere’. To realize that this move would be wrong, one needs to consider auxiliation in its entirety, within split systems such as, for instance, Alianese or Viguzzolese (jj in Table 5.5., and aa, kk in Table 5.6):

Table 5.7: Perfective auxiliation in the dialect of Aliano (province of Matera; Manzini and Savoia 2005, III:30-32):

	1sg	2sg	3sg	1pl	2pl	3pl
a. unergatives	H	H	H	H	H	H
b. unaccusatives	H	H	E	H	H	H

Table 5.8: Perfective auxiliation in the dialect of Viguzzolo (province of Alessandria; Manzini and Savoia 2005, II:20-22):

	1sg	2sg	3sg	1pl	2pl	3pl
a. unergatives	H	H	H	H	H	H
b. unaccusatives	H/E	H/E	H/E	H/E	H/E	H

In both systems, the ‘elsewhere condition’ could be as in standard Italian or French, but the positive specification cannot be stated as ‘select aux E’, given that the latter occurs only in the third person singular in (b) in Table 5.7 while in (b) in Table 5.8 it is in free variation with H except in the third person plural. Thus, the rule must refer to the auxiliation patterns b (positive specification) vs a (elsewhere case) rather than to the individual auxiliary morphemes.<sup>28</sup> The same holds for selection of auxiliary E in type (a) in Table 5.6.

Of course, it is not by chance that in these dialects, as well as in the others in type (jj) in Table 5.5., auxiliary H is homogeneously selected in the elsewhere case. Likewise, it is hardly by chance that auxiliary E is selected uniformly with unaccusatives in the dialects of type (a) in Table 5.6. Rather, these are remnants of the proto-Romance auxiliation rule, in which the two auxiliations patterns could be labelled ‘auxiliary E’ vs ‘auxiliary H’ for short. However, as soon as the systems turned mixed, such a descriptive shortcut becomes illegitimate. In other words, (17a) has a syntactic reason, which however pertains to a past stage, like the light from a distant star: synchronically, it has nothing to do with syntax.

The same goes for the quantitative skewing of auxiliaries E and H across classes and persons in (17b). Here, the strongest correlation with unaccusativity is observed in the third person singular, which is hardly surprising in view of the fact that this is cross-linguistically the grammatical person that hosts more contrasts, whenever these are distributed unevenly across paradigms (cf. Greenberg 1975:41-43).

Also generalizations (17c-e) are purely morphological: in a nutshell, there is no longer a (syntactic) reason for the second person singular to host auxiliary E most frequently (17d) than there is for, say, the first person plural of the present indicative in Italian to be copied

<sup>28</sup> In addition, since reflexives pattern with unaccusatives, not unergatives, the rule must include the same restriction (the final 1[you’re assuming here that all our readers are familiar with RG – can you express this in more neutral terms, e.g. the surface subject etc.?] is a non-multiattached [= non-reflexive] initial 2) as in the non-mixed systems of type (e) in Table 5.4.

from the corresponding person of the present subjunctive via a rule of referral (Thornton 2005:132). An alternative view claims that occurrence of auxiliary E in the first person singular and second person singular is derived syntactically and depends on a person-split of the kind observed in languages with ergative alignment in which only first and second person pronouns align accusatively (Manzini and Savoia 1998:130f.; 2005, II:729-31). Objections to this use of Siverstein's (1976) hierarchy have been raised in Bentley and Eythórsson (2001:73), Loporcaro (2007b:195-97). Figures 5.8-10 show that the dialects for which this has been argued were cherry-picked among a host of different options which are not amenable to such a syntactic explanation.

A further clear indication that the occurrence of E/H in different persons is a matter of inflexional morphology, not syntax, comes from syncretisms (cf. Cennamo 2010; Loporcaro 2016:814), which usually result from blends of the forms of auxiliaries E/H, as seen, for example, in *a'fi* 'fættə 'you.SG have done' in the dialect of Ortona a Mare (province of Chieti, see Giammarco 1973:165) which has 1-aux H except in the second person singular, where it blends forms of 'have' and 'be' ( *á* and *'fi* in neighbouring dialects). Unlike subject clitics (§§5.2.4-2.5), gaps do not occur since the auxiliary is the carrier of finite verb morphology in these verbal phrases and thus cannot be missing.

Crucial evidence on the status of person-driven alternations is provided by three dialects of central Apulia, those of Ruvo, Gravina, and Bitetto (data from Manzini and Savoia 2005, II:724-26; III:29f.). All three dialects present person-splits (see the patterns in types s, t, gg of Table 5.5, and types v, bb ll of Table 5.6). In all persons but the third singular – as exemplified for Ruvo in (16) – either E or H or H/E free variation occur, while only Bitettese contrasts unergatives with unaccusatives, whose auxiliary differs just in the second person singular. In the third person singular, however, a phonologically-conditioned complementary distribution is observed:

18 Ruvo di Puglia

- a 'ε drəm'meutə/və'neutə // s ε la'vətə.  
 be.3SG slept/come REFL.3 be.3SG washed
- b 'ɔv əpət'tətə / arrə'vətə // 's 'ɔv as'seisə.  
 have.3SG waited / arrived// REFL.3 have.3SG sat  
 'S/he has slept/come/washed him/herself/arrived/waited.'

19 Gravina di Puglia

- a 'je ddər'məutə/vvə'nəutə/m'murtə // s 'e la'vətə.  
 be.3SG slept/come/died REFL be.3SG washed
- b 'av a'pirtə la 'portə // s 'av as'sisə.  
 have.3SG opened the door// REFL.3 have.3SG sat  
 'He has slept/come/died/washed himself/opened the door/sat down.'

20 Bitetto

- a 'ε drəm'meutə/və'neutə // s 'ε lla'vitə  
 be.3SG slept/come REFL.3 be.3SG washed
- b 'av arrə'vitə /a'pirtə // s 'av a'pirtə  
 have.3SG arrived/opened REFL.3 have.3SG opened  
 'S/he has slept/come/washed him/herself/arrived/opened//it opened'

As seen in (18)-(20), auxiliary E is selected with verbs of all classes whose participle begins in a consonant, while auxiliary H occurs before vowel-initial participles. Now, if the two third

person singular forms were selected by syntactic rule, this would violate the phonology-free-syntax principle:

syntax can be sensitive to abstract properties realized in the distribution of phonological features, but not to the specific phonological features. [...] no language has a syntactic rule stipulating that some constituent begin with an obstruent, or have no more than two syllables, or contain only unrounded vowels, or have stress on its penultimate syllable. (Zwicky 1996:4477)

There is indeed a more economical solution. Once one admits that person-driven auxiliation is specified morphologically, one can derive (18)-(20) via a shape condition of the kind accounting for the distribution of *a/an* in the English indefinite article, which ‘specifies aspects of the phonological shape of *i*[inflectional]-forms, but “postlexically” – by reference to triggers at least some of which lie outside the syntactic word.’ (Zwicky 1986:310). This specification:

is not part of the lexical entry for the word, because it refers to the following syntactic context. It is not a phonological rule of English, for it applies only to the indefinite article and has no general applicability to phonological domains. It is a condition on shape that overrides the lexical entry for the indefinite article and stipulates that another shape is called for. (Pullum and Zwicky 1988:262)

In our case, too, replacement of 'ε through 'ɔv/'av prevocally does not follow from a phonological rule but is sensitive to the postlexical phonological context, in a way syntactic rules never are. This description would be out of reach for theories which derive the specific forms of auxiliaries from syntactic factors, such as Kayne's (1993) approach to person-mixed auxiliation systems. According to Kayne (1993:3), “‘Have’ is identical to ‘be’ but for the incorporation of an abstract preposition’. In our case, the movement leading to incorporation of the abstract preposition P° would be triggered by a following initial vowel, which would constitute an unprecedented exception to phonology-free syntax. Conversely, if selection of 'ɔv/'av prevocally is effected by a shape condition, the problem evaporates and we gain cogent evidence that auxiliaries E/H in mixed systems are not selected by a syntactic rule. The syntax goes so far as to decide that perfective auxiliation obeys one of the distribution options (a)-(e) in Table 5.4 attested for 2-aux systems (or one of the three patterns contrasting in 3-aux systems). Then, however, exactly which auxiliary is selected in which person, is specified by the morphology, that may allow, albeit rarely, for phrasal allomorphy as in (18)-(20), comparable with that observed for the English indefinite article.

### 5.3.5 An outlier: *do*-support in the dialect of Monno

In the previous sections we focused on perfective auxiliation and, so far, we have taken for granted that the sole role of Romance auxiliaries is that of carrying TAM and agreement features. However, the Italo-Romance dialect of Monno (Benincà and Poletto 2004b) exhibits a peculiar system of auxiliation in which perfective auxiliaries of the H/E type are in complementary distribution with the auxiliary *fa* ('to do'),<sup>30</sup> which occurs only in interrogative main clauses. As illustrated in (21), Monnese exhibits subject clitic inversion in main clause interrogatives, like many other northern Italo-Romance dialects, but, unlike the surrounding dialects, Monnese does not allow the inversion of lexical verbs (21a). To interrogate clauses in simple tenses, auxiliary *fa* is inserted, while the lexical verb occurs in

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<sup>30</sup> A comparable phenomenon is attested in old and middle French (Miller 1997).

the infinitive form, see (21b). Conversely, in compound tenses, it is the perfective auxiliary that undergoes inversion and therefore, the insertion of the *fa* auxiliary is ruled out, see (21c).

- 21 a \*\*maja-l?  
     eat.PRES.3SG=3SG  
 b fa-l                      majà?  
     do.PRES.3SG=3SG    eat.INF?  
     ‘Does he eat?’  
 c \*\*fa/à-l                majà?  
     do/has.PRES.3SG=3SG eaten?  
     ‘Has he eaten?’

The same holds for *wh*-questions in (22), except for questions on the subject. Also, as in English, *fa*-support is excluded from embedded clauses. Unlike English, the *fa* auxiliary of Monnese does not occur in negative declaratives and cannot carry emphasis.

- 22 a \*\*ke    maja-l?  
     what eat.PRES.3SG=3SG  
 b. ke    fa-l                      majà?  
     what do.PRES.3SG=3SG    eat.INF?  
     ‘What does he eat?’  
 c. ke    \*\*fa/à-l                majà  
     what do/has.PRES.3SG=3SG eaten?  
     ‘What has he eaten?’

Lastly, unlike English, lexical subjects and strong pronouns are not subject to (auxiliary) inversion. Hence, Monnese differs from all other Romance dialects in showing a specific auxiliatation system in main interrogative clauses.

#### 5.4 Modelling linguistic diversity

The data illustrated so far raise several questions regarding the modelling of linguistic diversity: do the above phenomena result from a finite set of (universal) discrete parameters or emerge from a *continuum* of language-specific options? The notion *parameter* has been subject to extensive debate and criticism for decades (more on this below). Conceptually, parameters differ from concrete properties as the former are inferred from the latter and, in the end, are speculative in nature.

In origin (for an overview, see Chomsky and Lasnik 1993), parameters were mainly conceived as (binary) choices between alternative instantiations of the same invariable and universal property (called *Principle*).<sup>32</sup> For instance, given the Principle that all syntactic structures are binary branching (Kayne 1984), a parameter is needed to establish which branch precedes the other (i.e. head-complement vs complement-head), giving rise to opposite word orders e.g., OV vs VO, AdjN vs NAdj, PN vs NP.

Being linked to principles, parameters have been argued to be universal: our I(nternal)-Language is therefore endowed with a finite and invariable set of parameters, while languages differ with respect to the value (positive or negative) of each parameter. In this sense, parameters are not only abstract generalizations, but ‘real’ mental objects, hard-wired in our brain, and possibly, innate. In fact, acquisition is conceived as a process of parameter setting, in which the value of each parameter is fixed on the basis of the external experience. The

<sup>32</sup> On binarity, see Clark and Roberts (1993).

parametric hypothesis has eventually led to strong predictions regarding the way in which grammatical systems vary, are acquired, and eventually lost in the case of pathologies.

The above ‘strong’ claims, typical of the early Principles and Parameters framework, have been questioned by several scholars, claiming that (certain) parameters are in fact *epiphenomenal*. On the one hand, the parametric hypothesis has been completely discarded by scholars such as Newmeyer (2004), Haspelmath (2008), claiming that parameters are idiosyncratic clusters of language-specific properties. Other scholars, on the other hand, have reformulated the theory of parameters by claiming that (macro-)parameters of the early Principles and Parameters framework may be better conceived as clusters (or hierarchies) of micro-parameters (Baker 2001; see also Roberts and Homberg 2005 and Longobardi and Roberts 2010 who reply to Newmeyer 2004 and Evans and Levinson 2009, respectively).

A clue to the hierarchical organization of parameters comes from cases in which grammatical properties isolate concentric subsets of languages, e.g. Language 1 exhibits a subset of the phenomena that characterize Language 2, etc. Entailment/subset relations hold also within languages belonging to the same family/group and, in this respect, implications of the kind overviewed in the above sections may help scholars in modelling parametric hierarchies (see Ledgeway in press on auxiliiation systems, as well as the extensive discussion in §23).

Furthermore, under a hierarchical model of parametric variation one might explain why certain empirical domains, e.g., subject clitics or perfective auxiliaries, are subject to a higher degree of cross-linguistic variation than others, e.g., object clitics or modal auxiliaries. Assuming that parameters are organized into sub-hierarchies, higher-level parameters are expected to affect entire sub-hierarchies, thus resulting in a higher degree of crosslinguistic variation in certain empirical domains.

However, regular, systematic variation – the kind that can be easily captured by hierarchies – is always amenable to external explanations, i.e., a subset of the speakers of the language L1 has developed a subvariant L2, which in turn has been subject to further differentiation giving rise to the subvariant L3 and so on. In this way, languages gradually shift from one to another giving rise, in synchrony, to hierarchies of the type  $L1 > L2 > L3$ . Hence, hierarchies do not provide conclusive evidence in favour of parameters as, in Haspelmath’s words, one ‘runs the risk that he will discover shared innovations that have purely historical explanations, rather than properties that are shared because of the same parameter setting.’ (2008:fn 8).

Pleading for the notion ‘micro-parameter’, Manzini and Savoia (2005, I:120) claim that gaps in the distribution of subject clitics (§5.2.4) result from the micro-parametrization of the Null Subject Parameter (§5.2.1), which ‘cannot be defined for the entire language, but must be applied to the individual forms of the paradigm’ (translation in Roberts 2014:178). Roberts (2014:179), however, argues against such radically microparametric approach, which would ‘mak[e] the number of possible grammatical systems hyperastronomical’ and which fails to see that many of the instances so treated are not parametric ‘but rather represent unpredictable taxonomic variants’. This critique resonates with the view of auxiliary selection defended in §5.3, and the whole issue has far-reaching implications for the modeling of free variation occurring both in subject clitics and auxiliiation systems. A widely held view, prominently defended by Kroch (1994), has it that morphosyntactic variation is best formalized in terms of coexisting and competing grammars.<sup>33</sup> This is the position endorsed in Manzini and Savoia’s (2005,II:740) account of mixed auxiliiation: ‘[i]n terms of theory, the seeming optionality in auxiliary choice is to be traced back to the co-presence of different grammars’. In this view, ‘optionality must be treated as an instance of (micro-)bilingualism’ (Manzini and Savoia 2007:76). Loporcaro (2007a:333) argues that this is hardly plausible since, as said in

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<sup>33</sup> Objections to Koch, addressing, like the original proposal, variation across English dialects, have been raised, for instance, by Pietsch (2005), Haser and Kortmann (2009).

concluding §5.3.3, just for auxiliary selection, combination options grow exponentially, so that one should be prepared to cope with millions of different ‘grammars’, whose number should in turn multiply by any single variation point in other fragments of grammar. This computational argument parallels the aforementioned objections levelled by Roberts (2014:178f.), discussing subject clitics, against the ‘strictly local’ view of microparameters advocated by Manzini and Savoia (2005,I:357). For auxiliiation, the otherwise ‘hyperastronomical’ number of possible grammars is aptly constrained as soon as the division of labour between syntax and morphology proposed in §5.3.3 is adopted: what is really syntactic is the choices along the scale in Table 5.4, while the specific auxiliary (or combination of auxiliaries) selected, in each dialect with person splits, is a matter of morphology, to be treated on a par with other aspects of the shape of verb inflexional paradigms, which are not for the syntax to predict.

On a similar note, radically microparametric approaches are at odds with relatively rare systems such as the subject clitic system of Pantiscu or the *do*-support system of the dialect of Monno. The functional elements of Monnese, for instance, derive from the same late-Latin/proto-Romance inventory characterizing nearby dialects, which, unlike Monnese, have never developed *do*-support. Again, if structural differences hinged only on properties of the functional lexicon, how did the singularity of Monnese emerge? Which kind of internal factors triggered such a peculiar innovation if the functional ‘ingredients’ of the grammar were the same as in neighbouring vernaculars? Without resorting to high-level parameters, we think that a principled answer to this kind of questions cannot be advanced.



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