

Perfective Auxiliary Selection in heritage Italo-Romance¹

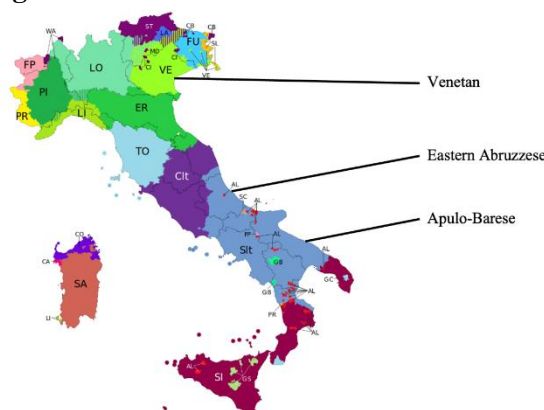
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1. Introduction

This paper investigates the perfective auxiliary selection (AS) of three Italo-Romance heritage varieties, i.e. Venetan, a northern variety originally spoken in and around Veneto, and Eastern Abruzzese and Apulo-Barese, upper-southern varieties from Abruzzo and Apulia, in contact with Argentinian Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, as well as English as spoken in New York.

Fig. 1: Varieties considered



This preliminary study, although involving only 26 participants, shows some meaningful tendencies which are worth reporting, given the large microvariation and the small size of the language communities involved.

Here, we focus on two AS systems with BE/HAVE alternation (B/H henceforth) in different contexts: split-intransitive and “person-driven” AS. The former (cf. Perlmutter 1978) operates according to the argument structure of the V(erb),² i.e. is sensitive to the thematic roles of external vs internal arguments: agentive transitive A/unergative S_A select H vs B with undergoer unaccusative S_O. In contrast, person-driven AS is not sensitive to the V-type, but grammatical person of all Nominative Ss. The B/H-alternation generally distinguishes discourse participants ([1]-[2] persons), selecting B, from non-discourse participants ([3] persons), selecting H.³

While the Italo-Romance HLs under investigation show these two AS pattern involving B/H alternation, all three contact languages show no AS mechanism at all: Arg. Spanish and US English generalized H in all contexts, whereas Br. Portuguese uses the synthetic past for temporal values, with auxiliary *ter* (‘have’) used to express aspectual values. Indeed, the distribution of compound vs simple past heavily differs in the Italo-Romance HLs vs dominant languages considered here: while the former experienced an aoristic drift favoring the compound form over the synthetic one (less so in Apulo-Barese and some Abruzzese varieties), the latter experienced the reverse and employ synthetic forms more often than their European counterparts – bar Portuguese (Bertinetto & Squartini 2016).

We define “heritage” speakers (HS) as the children of Italian emigrants who acquired the HL from their (grand)parents and only use it at the family/community level, whereas 1st generation speakers (G1) were born in Italy and emigrated to the Americas, mostly around the 1960s. The lack of official status for our Italo-Romance minority HLs, both in the “homeland” and heritage context, makes it hard to establish the “baseline” for comparison, due to the large microvariation across the homeland varieties; changes that occurred after the G1 moved to the host country; attrition in the “baseline” speakers (cf. Andriani *et al.* 2022a; D'Alessandro *et al.* 2021). In short, here, some caution is in order when discussing *change*: cross-checking the heritage data with descriptions of the exact homeland variety from the past century, as well as with that of G1 speakers, were crucial steps to take. Hence, our “baseline” is mostly an abstraction, an reconstructed *ideal* grammar, rather than a language as is now spoken in Italy.

The data were elicited by presenting our informants with audio stimuli and instructions recorded in their Italo-Romance varieties (see Andriani *et al.* 2022a for a description of the material and data elicitation). Table 1 shows the number of speakers we interviewed for each language pair:

¹ We wish to thank Jiayi Zhou and Rishabh Suresh for brainstorming and helping out with the data.

² Cf. Burzio 1986; Sorace 2000; Bentley 2016; Loporcaro 2016; a.o.

³ Cf. Tuttle 1986; Kayne 1993; Ledgeway 2000; Manzini & Savoia 2005: II, §5.5 (M&S henceforth); Torcolacci 2015. For further references, see Andriani 2017:ch.5, 2018.

Table 1: Number of speakers

	Abruzzese	Apulo-Barese	Venetan
Arg. Spanish	2HS		6G1, 3HS
Br. Portuguese			2G1, 8HS
NY English	2HS	4HS	8G1, 10HS

We tested AS using an auditive completion task in which the speakers were prompted to fill the gap by producing the past tense form, aided by temporal adverbs, in the relevant grammatical person, e.g. **Error! Reference source not found.** for Abruzzese:

- (1) ujə maɲɲə ji | ka jirə _____ tu [→(s)i maɲɲatə]
 today eat.1S I that yesterday you are eaten
 ‘I’m eating today, since you [ate] yesterday’

[1-2-3S] persons were tested with transitive ‘eat’, unergative ‘work’, unaccusative ‘arrive’, and direct reflexive ‘wash oneself’. Crucially, these results are integrated here with data from semi-guided spontaneous conversations.

The rest of the paper discusses data for perfective AS in homeland and heritage Venetan (§2) and Abruzzese and Apulo-Barese (§3). Section 4 concludes by drawing some generalizations on (lack of) changes in AS and interface phenomena.

2. Split Intransitive AS in Venetan

Homeland Venetan AS broadly operates according to V-type: transitives and unergatives select H, unaccusatives select B; however, B/H-alternation does surface with a range of unaccusative, reflexive, and impersonal verbs (Belloni 1991; Benincà 1994:67-87; Marcato 1998:251-254; M&S 2005: II,107,628-629, *i.a.*). In the present work we wish to provide an overview of AS with core transitive/unergative vs unaccusative predicates, i.e. the two poles of the split-intransitive *continuum*; for this reason, reflexives are left for future research, due to their diachronically highly unstable AS patterns.

2.1. Heritage Venetan

Due to the different (urban vs rural) setting of the Venetan communities in the two countries (cf. Toso 2011; Andriani *et al.* 2022), the HSs we found in Argentinian cities were either 1st- or 2nd-generation, whilst those in southern Brazil were mainly 3rd- or 4th-generation. Therefore, comparison with the relevant baseline (abstraction) is not always possible due to dialectal levelling and/or blending which took place across Venetan varieties, as well as other imported Italo-Romance varieties. The Brazilian Venetan spoken in and around Caxias do Sul has been described a.o. by Frosi & Mioranza (1983) as a *koine* largely based on Central Venetan varieties (i.e. Paduan/Vicentino; Zamboni 1974:7), with some intrusion of Feltrino-Trentino or Lombard morphology and lexis (cf. also Margotti 2004:76). Nonetheless, in the present study, we try to distinguish the place of origin of our HSs’ families to control for potential microvariation (§2.2.1).

2.2. Heritage Venetan AS

Due to the differences introduced in §2.1, the Brazilian heritage context offers a larger (yet, very limited) number of studies on AS than the Argentinian one. For Brazil, AS was investigated at different depths in the works by local authors, such as Frosi & Mioranza (1983:54-75) and Faggion (2013), and, more recently, by D’Alessandro & Frasson (2023) for different Venetan-speaking enclaves. Faggion (2013:140) reports the presence of H with unaccusatives and reflexives in speakers born after 1970, linking this to transfer from Portuguese *ter* ‘have’, while older speakers born before 1970 select B. Cordin & Degasperis (2020) report a similar tendency for Brazilian Trentino, which they too relate to *ter*.⁴

In contrast to these tendencies, D’Alessandro & Frasson (2023) discovered a new grammaticalization in Brazilian Venetan AS involving the specialization of three forms of [3]-person B: *è/lè/zè*. “Bare” *è* is employed when the subject is [3S]; *l-è*, preceded by a (crystallized) [3S] subject clitic, is used with inverted subjects and participial anti-agreement effect, while *z-è*, with a locative clitic, surfaces with preverbal subjects and participial agreement. Hence, unaccusative B seem to resist at least in [3] persons and innovate in a different direction.

We now present evidence from the same database consulted by D’Alessandro & Frasson (2023), in which some Venetan HSs from Brazil and Argentina employ H in unaccusative contexts.

⁴ That the generalization of Venetan and Trentino HAVE is to be ascribed to transfer from Portuguese is not entirely convincing, as the distribution of the synthetic vs analytic form and relative temporal vs aspectual functions do not match (cf. §1).

2.2.1. The data

The data were elicited from 18 speakers of heritage Venetan, 9 in Argentina and 9 in Brazil (cf. Table 1). Our HSs' families migrated mostly from the provinces of Padua and Vicenza, with a minority from the areas of Venice and Verona; for convenience, in Table 2 speakers are grouped according to their origin. Here we only consider the results from test⁵ and spontaneous conversations for unaccusatives, the prototypical BE-domain where also H can surface. In contrast, all transitives/unergatives consistently select *gaver* 'have', while we leave the complex (person-driven) AS with reflexives for future research. In Table 2, we integrate the task results with the spontaneous-production data, which include [1P]/[3P] contexts (while [2P] was never produced); we visually distinguish these by highlighting the latter context in bold.

The test results for unaccusative 'arrive' show a sharp contrast between the G1 speakers and HSs, regardless of the country. While all G1 consistently select B, all Venetan HSs, irrespective of the country, favor H in [1S]⁶ and [2S], except HS#12 who selects B in [2S]. In [3S] the three Argentinian respondents all select B but HS#3 (however, see fn.6).

The neat picture just mentioned becomes more blurred in the spontaneous speech of HSs, as B surfaces more often than H with some unaccusatives, on a par with homeland varieties (§2.1) and our G1 speakers #5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18 (of whom we only present the test results below).

Table 2: Unaccusative AS in Venetan HSs

#	Country, Generation, Gender, Age	Origin	1s	2s	3s	1p	3p
1	A_G1_M_71(arr. 2)	Codiverno PD	H/B	H	B/H	B	B
2	A_H1_M_41	"	H	H	B		B
3	A_H1_M_67	"	H/B	H	B/H ⁷		B
4	A_H1_M_51	Padua PD	B		B	B	B
5	A_G1_F_83	Cittadella PD	B	B	B		
6	A_G1_M_84	"	B	B	B		
7	B_H2_M_66	Padua PD	H/(B)	H	H		H
8	A_G1_M_85	Villafranca VR	B	B	B		
9	A_G1_F_85	Chirignano VE	B	B			
10	B_H3_M_58	VR/VE(?)	H	H	H		
11	B_H3_F_55	?	H/B	H	B	B	B
12	B_H2_M_55	Vicenza VI	H	B			B
13	B_H2_M_82	Muzzolon VI			B/H	B	B/H
14	B_H2_M_52	Schiavon VI			B		B
15	B_G1_F_76	"	B	B			
16	B_G1_M_82	"	B	B			
17	B_H3_M_69	Arzignano VI	H/B	H	B	B	H
18	A_G1_F_92	"	B	B	B		

Second-generation Paduan HSs in Argentina (#1-4) show the consistent selection of B with unaccusative 'leave, come, go, enter, be born, die, the same detected for G1 speakers. In contrast, H seems to systematically surface with the tested predicate 'arrive' (and psych-verb 'like'). Only HS#3 shows B/H alternation in [3S] even when using the same verb 'enter' (while [2S] is never produced). It appears that the generalized H from the dominant language did not have an impact on unaccusative syntax, with some exceptions.

In sharp contrast with Paduan HSs in Argentina, the only 3rd-generation Paduan HS#7 from Brazil shows the extension of H to most unaccusative contexts (2), while B is selected in one single instance: [1S] with 'go' (2):

(2) Heritage Br. Venetan (#7)

a. *e mi, quando son ndato là, go cognesesto el paron*
am gone.M.S

b. **go** *vegnesto qua*
have.1S gone

c. V. **ga ndato** *in Republica Ceca* / *el ga ndà al Canada, USA, Fransa*
has gone.M.S has gone

d. *i ga vegnesto 1880 là darente de Padova. Mi no savaria parlar la cità de che i ga vegnesto*
3P have come

⁵ Unfortunately, 3 HSs out of 18 participants were not tested, and 9 [3s] forms are missing/left blank.

⁶ In spontaneous speech too, where HSs #10-11 state to know the BE-variant *son rivà*, but they use **go** *rivà*.

⁷ For the sentence 'Mary('s) arrived', HS#3 utters *se ga rivà Maria*, as if the predicate were reflexive 'arrive oneself'.

- e. *ma quando i ga rivato qua in Brasile*
3P have arrived.M.S
- f. *e qua i ga rivà*
3P have arrived
- g. *e là ga nasesto V. e V.*
have(.3P) born
- h. *i ga pagà un tanto e ga ndà via*
3P have gone away

Vicentino HSs #12, 13, 14, 17 are all located in Brazil. Despite the scarcity of produced forms, HSs #13-#17 show some B/H-alternations. HS #13 tends to select B with unaccusatives, however, B/H-alternation shows up in [3S] ‘arrive’ (3a) and [3P] ‘come’ (3d), while impersonal ‘happen’ only selects H (3c):

- (3) Heritage Br. Venetan #13
- a. *ze rivà la familia/ el ga rivà prima*
is arrived has arrived
- b. *el riva casa e dize: “Cossa ze che ga susedesto?”*
has happened
- c. *è vegnesto qua*
is come.M.S
- d. *i ze vegnisti/ quando che i ga vegnesto tanti italiani*
3P are come.M.P 3P have come.M.S
- e. *i ze rivài*
3P are arrived

HS#17 shows an even more complex pattern, in which B/H-alternation only appears in grammatical persons [1S] (4a-b) and [3P] (4e-f):

- (4) Heritage Br. Venetan #17
- a. *onde go nasesto mi iera come un buso*
have.1S born
- b. *so sta sete volte*
am been
- c. *è vegnesto me bisnono*
is come
- d. *i ze vegnesto 125 persone/ quando i ga vegnesti col bastimento*
3P are arrived.M.S 3P have arrived.M.P
- e. *i ga rivà*
3P have arrived

In line with some literature (§2.2.1), the presence of H could be considered – even though in minimal areas of unaccusative syntax⁸ – as characteristic of Brazilian Venetan, but not (yet) of the Argentinian one, where the “saliency” of the structure *have*+participle should favor transfer. Further evidence (5) comes from HSs of other Brazilian Venetan varieties, showing H with ‘come’ and ‘go’ in [3S]:

- (5) Heritage Br. Venetan #10
- a. *el ga vegnesto come se fose na roba de n'altro mondo*
has come
- b. *la mià sorela ga andato 5 ani fa*
has gone.M.S

In sum, especially the Venetan HSs in Brazil produce (albeit minimally) H with specific unaccusative verbs (mainly motion ones) or grammatical persons. This can have two explanations: either H was part of the “conservative” grammars of G1 migrants (arrived between 1800 and 1900), or started spreading for independent reasons and became the native option for the new generations of Venetan HSs.

⁸ HAVE is found in unaccusative irrealis contexts too, e.g. HS#13: *mi pensava che gavesse sciopà la pipa del vin!* ‘I thought that the wine pipe had bursted!’.

3. Person-driven AS in Abruzzese and Apulo-Barese

Abruzzese and Apulo-Barese, among other upper-southern Italo-Romance varieties, operate their AS according to the grammatical person of the Nominative subject, rather than the verb's argument structure. The varieties exemplified in Tables 3–4 by the dialects of Arielli CH and Bari display the most frequently attested person-split AS (BBHBBH), selecting B in [1]–[2] persons (i.e. discourse participants) and H in [3] persons (i.e. non-discourse participants). Crucially, note that, in Barese, all singular auxiliary forms trigger the lengthening of the following consonant, i.e. *raddoppiamento fonosintattico* (RF; cf. §4), while none do in Ariellese:

Table 3: Ariellese ‘have fallen/worked’ (adapted from D’Alessandro & Roberts 2010:43-44)

	Aux	Unacc.	Unerg.	Aux
1S	so	casate/	fatijate	B
2S	si	casate/	fatijate	B
3S	a	casate/	fatijate	H
1P	seme	caschite/	fatijite	B
2P	sete	caschite/	fatijite	B
3P	a	caschite/	fatijite	H

Table 4: Barese ‘have fallen/worked’ (adapted from Andriani 2018)

	Aux	Unacc.	Unerg.	Aux
1S	sə	kkadutə/	ffadəgatə	B
2S	si	kkadutə/	ffadəgatə	B
3S	a	kkadutə/	ffadəgatə	H
1P	simə	kadutə/	fadəgatə	B
2P	sitə	kadutə/	fadəgatə	B
3P	annə	kadutə/	fadəgatə	H

However, this ‘well-behaved’ person-split is by no means the only one found in both dialect groups, where neighbouring varieties display enormous microvariation. Casamassimese and Bitettese – also featuring, two Apulo-Barese spoken in Casamassima and Bitetto, both 20 km ca. away from Bari, show more complex patterns than those in Tables 3–4:

Table 5: Casamassimese ‘have slept/come’

	Aux	Unacc.	Unerg.	Aux
1S	sə	və'nutə/	ddər'mutə	B
2S	a	və'nutə/	dər'mutə	H
3S	ε	və'nutə/	ddər'mutə	H≈B ⁹
1P	simə	və'nutə/	dər'mutə	B
2P	sitə	və'nutə/	dər'mutə	B
3P	vənnə	və'nutə/	dər'mutə	H

Table 6: Bitettese ‘have slept/come’ (M&S 2005: II,725)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unerg.	əjjə dər'meutə	a dər'meutə	ε ddər'meutə	simə/amə dər'meutə	sitə dər'meutə	annə dər'meutə
Unacc.	əjjə və'neutə	si və'neutə	ε və'neutə	simə/amə və'neutə	sitə və'neutə	annə və'neutə

Casamassimese in Table 5 minimally differs from ‘well-behaved’ person-driven AS in the presence of H in [2S] (without RF) across all V-types; however, the [1-2] vs [3] split is present in the plural. Instead, Table 6 shows an even more complex pattern, where specific persons still select one generalized auxiliary (e.g. H in [3]), but also show free B/H-alternation and sensitivity to V-type in individual cells of the paradigm (split intransitivity in [2S]; the influence of Italian AS should also not be excluded, as all these speakers are bilinguals). However, Loporcaro (2022) attests two further patterns for Bitettese, of which we consider the more ‘permissive’, where the preferred options are boldfaced:

Table 7: Bitettese AS (Loporcaro 2022:222)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unerg./Unacc.	B/(H)	B/(H)	B≈H	B/H	B/H	H

⁹ Unlike authors who analyze [3S] auxiliary ε [ε] as a form of B (Tuttle 1986:270; but cf. [3P] ənnə [ennə] and It. *hanno/sono*), we consider this syncretic form to be stemming from H, witness its non-reduced counterpart [avə] when a vowel follows.

In Table 7, this Bitettese pattern is clearly moving towards the [1-2] vs [3] split in the singular, while [1-2P] show a (more or less) free B/H-alternation. This is not unexpected at least in [1S], where H is attested to be the ‘conservative’ option, later replaced by B in more innovative AS patterns. A case in point is the Abruzzese from Lanciano CH: while Finamore (1893) still attests B/H-alternation in [1S], in Giammarco (1973) B is the only possibility. Likewise, Andriani (2017: ch. 5, 2018) argues that B in [1S] must have replaced H in Barese AS only recently, as the latter was attested until the 20th century.

Similarly, B is the only [2S] auxiliary for all V-types in some Abruzzese varieties, e.g. Introdacqua AQ (cf. Giammarco 1973):

(6) ‘have eaten’ Introdacqua AQ (Bentley & Eyþórsson 2003: 465)

1S	ɛjjə	maɲɲatə
2S	ʃi	maɲɲatə
3S	ə	maɲɲatə
1P	avemmə	maɲɲetə

In contrast, some of the neighbouring varieties show what has been argued to be a conservative diachronic stage of AS (Giammarco 1960, 1976) where generalized H occurs in all grammatical persons of all V-types (similarly to Spanish). Among these varieties, we find the Abruzzese dialect from Orsogna CH (cf. Table 8) which also features in our database (cf. M&S 2005: II, §5.5 for Apulo-Barese varieties). Indeed, the peculiar person-split AS paradigms have been argued to be a recent development – never attested before the 18th century – in the ‘unstable’ AS systems of these Italo-Romance varieties. Tuttle (1986:270) capitalizes on the synchronic microvariation of Abruzzese and Southern Lazio dialects and argues that, from an initial stage of generalized H across all V-types (e.g. Orsognese), B gradually spread into the realm of transitive syntax following a specific order, starting from [2S] as in (6). Other varieties extended B further, allowing free B/H-alternation in [1-2] until B becomes the sole auxiliary. This yields the BBHBBH pattern in Tables 3–4 as some sort of ‘default’ pattern to which many varieties historically converged (e.g. the dialects of Bari, Pescara, and L’Aquila). However, Tuttle’s hypothesis cannot account for patterns like that of Casamassima, where we only find B in [1S] and never [2S].

3.1. AS in Heritage Abruzzese and Apulo-Barese

To our knowledge, research in Italo-Romance HL contexts has never addressed the person-driven AS pattern. In our small data sample, we find a rather stable situation among G1 speakers and, hence, we only discuss the AS of our 8 HSs, 4 Abruzzese and 4 Apulo-Barese (all in the US, except HSs #3-4 in Argentina):

Table 8: Heritage Abruzzese AS

#	Country_Generation_Gender_Age	Origin	1s	2s	3s	1P	3P
1	US_H1_F_49	Introdacqua/Sulmona AQ	B	B	H	H	H
2	US_H1_F_59	Orsogna CH	H	H	H	H	H
3	A_H1_M_60	Pietraferranzana CH	B	B	H	B	
4	A_H1_M_70	Lentella CH	B	B	H		H

Table 9: Heritage Barese AS

#	Country_Generation_Gender_Age	Origin	1s	2s	3s	1P	3P
1	US_H1_M_50	Casamassima	B	H	H	B	H
2	US_H1_F_59	Bitetto	B	B	H	H	H
3	US_H1_F_49	Bitetto	B	B	H	H	H
4	US_H1_F_38	Bitetto/Grumo	H	H	H	H	H

In the two dialect groups, a first clear tendency is that H remains as ‘default’ in [3] persons. In the [1-2] persons, we also observe the loss of B/H alternations (present in the Abruzzese G1 we interviewed, as well as in homeland varieties, cf. §3) in favor of the consistent choice of *one* auxiliary per grammatical person, e.g. all Bitettese HSs show generalized H in the plural (more similarly to the homeland AS in Table 6). Moreover, we detect some more minimal variation from the “expected” output(s) in the singular persons:

- i. HS#4 only selects H irrespective of the V-type or grammatical person, in contrast to the AS of her parents and (older) Bitettese HSs #2-3, who show the [1-2S] vs [3S] person-split. Even though this suggests transfer from English, the form of [1S] H is Italian [ɔ] – which triggers the RF, unlike the “indigenous” form [aɲə]:

(7) Heritage US Apulo-Barese #4
 ɔ mmandʒətə/ arrəvətə
 have.1S eaten arrived

This results from code-mixing with a variety of Italian, either the local koine or homeland Italian, to which most HSs are exposed within their local and oversea communities;

- ii. Abruzzese HS#1 (with family from neighbouring villages Introdacqua and Sulmona, AQ) employs an innovative AS pattern selecting B in [1S] instead of the conservative H attested in the literature (cf. ex. (6), §3). In this situation we cannot ascertain whether the ‘default’ person-split was already in the HS’s input (e.g. Bitettese above) or whether it is an independent endogenous innovation (cf. §3).

4. AS in heritage Italo-Romance: some observations

Drawing generalizations based on such a small sample is unwise; hence, we limit ourselves to some meaningful observations on the tendencies we detected. The first observation is that H seems to be expanding in many Italo-Romance heritage situations, both in *microcontact* with other Romance languages and dyadic contact with English. However, the expansion of H is not attested across the board, and B is preserved in [1-2S] persons by Abruzzese and Apulo-Barese HSs with person-driven AS, while in Venetan [3] it undergoes a type of hyperspecialization not attested in the homeland variety.

Such a resilience to change characterises specific paradigmatic cells, crucially, those involved in some syntactic phenomenon of disambiguation. In Romance, B can act both as copula and auxiliary; yet, multifunctional elements might be problematic for HS (see Montrul 2004 *et seq.* on the loss DOM-marker *a* in US Spanish). However, [1-2S] B in Abruzzese shows different phonosyntactic behaviors in the two contexts. RF (cf. §3), a sandhi phenomenon where Word₁ can be a lexical or phonological trigger for the consonantal lengthening of the following Word₂, is largely attested in central-southern Italo-Romance (Fanciullo 1997). D’Alessandro & Scheer (2015) show that B only triggers RF in [1-2S] when used as a copula (8b) or in the passive (9b), but not as an active auxiliary (8-9a):

- (8) a. *so frecate* ‘I’ve cheated’
 b. *so ffrecate* ‘I’m screwed’
 am cheated
- (9) a. (*me/te*) *so/si morte* ‘I/you’ve died’
 b. *so/si mmorte* ‘I’m/you’re dead’
 REFL *am/are dead*

Likewise, Torcolacci (2015) shows that the distribution of B/H in some southern varieties interacts with RF, which contributes to mark person in concert with AS. We wish to argue that this RF disambiguation via phonological cues helps preserving the *status quo* in the persons that participate in these phono-syntactic processes.

In the case of Venetan, we witness traces of the extension of H, except for the specialization of B in [3] by means of incorporation of different clitic forms (D’Alessandro & Frasson 2023). Different B-forms are selected according to preverbal or postverbal subject position and subject features. This other type of disambiguation, we wish to claim, has managed to prevent change.

Our novel heritage data on Italo-Romance AS in contact allow us to draw the following generalization:

HAVE tends to expand, except when blocked by salient phono-syntactic cues, such as RF, which block change.

Diachronically, this is a well-known tendency in the (early modern) history of other (Italo-)Romance varieties which generalized H to all contexts (e.g. Neapolitan, Sicilian, Spanish), hence losing their split-intransitive AS system attested in all early Romance varieties. The spread of H started in specific modal contexts and could then take over unaccusative syntax (cf. Ledgeway 2012:334-335 and references therein). A recent example of the weakening of split-intransitive AS is “popular” French (Tuttle 1986:268, fn.65). From a diachronic perspective, this move towards H has been seen as the completion stage of a typological shift in the verbal domain from the early Romance unaccusative split to a (paradoxically, “conservative”) nominative-accusative split, since H marks all Nominative subjects (A/S_A/S_O) distinctly from Objects. An additional development of this subject marking in the verbal domain is represented by the person-driven AS (§3), where allegedly B regains its person-driven cells.

Our cases of AS in contact mirror the historical development of some (Italo-)Romance AS systems, which extended H. However, the same varieties in Italy have been steering towards the extension of B (for Abruzzese, Tuttle 1986, for Veneto, Belloni 1991; on younger Trentino speakers, Cordin & Degasperi 2020:57; for Campanian varieties, Izzo & Cerullo 2023; cf. also §3). While both generalizations point to simplification in the loss of AS, the selected auxiliary differs, with possible implications for analysis of complexity (cf. D’Alessandro & Terenghi, *in press*).

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