Marking the default : auxiliary selection in Southern Italian dialects

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Chapter 6

Conclusions and questions for future research

This dissertation has explored the morpho-phonological markedness of φ realized on perfective auxiliaries, lexical verbs and definite D-elements in USIDs. In this chapter, we will both provide a summary of the core findings outlined in this work (cf. §1) and present some research questions of use for future investigations (cf. §2).

6.1 Summary of the core findings of this dissertation

In the first part of this dissertation, we considered the phonological process of RF in a particular group of USIDs. USIDs are dialects spoken in the central-southern part of the Italian peninsula. According to our classification presented in chapter 1, USIDs can be split into two macro-areas. Northern Southern Italian dialects (NSIDs) are USIDs spoken in the geolinguistic area that borders CIDs, while Central Southern Italian dialects (CSIDs) are USIDs spoken not far from ESIDs. The novel aim of this dissertation was to investigate the typology and nature of RF triggered by present perfect BE/HAVE auxiliaries in USIDs. This investigation, which seems to have been largely overlooked by linguists and dialectologists previously, has shown that RF triggered by present perfect auxiliaries cannot be understood as a purely phonological phenomenon (cf. Korzen, 1980; Chierchia, 1986; Basbøll, 1989; Sluyters, 1990; Agostiniani, 1992; Loporcaro, 1997b; a.o.). On the contrary, we argued that RF triggered by present perfect BE/HAVE auxiliaries in USIDs does not exclusively result from the application of the phonological process of regressive consonantal assimilation, or RCA, applying at word-boundaries (cf. Schuchardt, 1874; Hall, 1964; Loporcaro, 1997b; Repetti, 2001; Waltereit, 2004; Passino, 2012; a.o.). This assumption is supported by the fact that some southern Italian present perfect auxiliaries do not trigger RF despite having had a consonant in word-final position.

(1) Conversano (Apulo-Barese)

sɔ	**f'f**att	B.pr.1sg done
a	'fatt	H.pr.2sg done
a	**f'f**att	H.pr.3sg done

In (1), 1sg BE, as well as 2 and 3sg HAVE, are the relics of Latin forms SUM/*SON, *HA(BE)S and *HA(BE)T, respectively. All these forms ended in a consonant, which, according to Schuchardt (1874), Hall (1964), Loporcaro (1997b), Repetti (2001), Waltereit (2004) and Passino (2012), a.o., would have triggered the application of RCA. However, as (1) shows, RF is not attested after 2sg HAVE. For this reason, we abandoned the idea that RF triggered by present perfect auxiliaries in USIDs is the result of the outcome of the RCA rule applying at external sandhi sites. Instead, we argued that RF after present perfect auxiliaries in USIDs consists in the overt expression of a null morpheme that expresses a dedicated morphosyntactic φ feature (based on Torcolacci, 2014). This analysis was presented in chapter 3. In the case of 1sg BE, the null morpheme triggering RF expresses the feature [Speaker], whereas the null morpheme triggering RF on 3sg HAVE expresses the feature [Minimal]. [Speaker] and [Minimal] are morphosyntactic features that correspond to 1 and 3sg (cf. Harley & Ritter, 2002).

In chapter 4, we aimed to solve the puzzle connected to the absence of RF after 2sg HAVE. We observed that the non-overt expression of [Addressee], i.e. 2sg information, on 2sg present perfect HAVE is found in most CSIDs. These dialects generally select HAVE for the entire paradigm both in the present perfect and in the pluperfect. These facts are illustrated in the singular paradigms in (2) and (3), from the Apulian dialect of Mola di Bari, spoken around the area of Bari.

(2)

a**ɟɟ/i**	'fatt/par'tɯ:t	H.pr.1sg done/left
a	'fatt/par'tɯ:t	H.pr.2sg done/left
(')a	**f'f**att/**pp**ar'tɯ:t	H.pr.3sg done/left

(3)

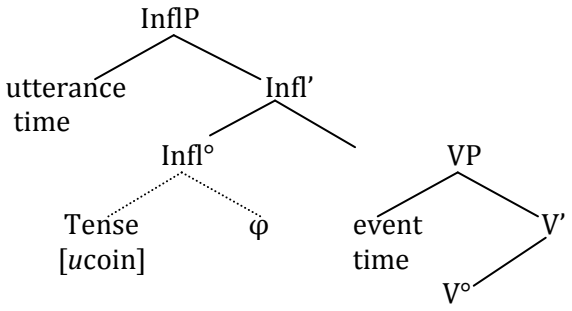
a'vɒ:v	'fatt/par'tʉ:t	'H.past.1sg done/left'
a'v**i:**v	'fatt/par'tʉ:t	'H.past.2sg done/left'
a'vɒ:v	'fatt/par'tʉ:t	'H.past.3sg done/left'

In the pluperfect construction in (3) 2sg HAVE clearly features metaphony. We considered metaphony as a way of overtly expressing [Addressee] on a pluperfect auxiliary. (2) and (3) show that the overt marking of φ features in present perfect and pluperfect auxiliaries is in complementary distribution. In (2), only [Speaker] and [Minimal] are overtly marked, whereas in (3) only [Addressee] is overtly expressed.
Given these facts, we proposed that the overt marking of [Speaker] and [Minimal] on a present perfect auxiliary, as well as the overt marking of [Addressee] on a pluperfect auxiliary, is dependent on the application of a markedness principle called *Default Marking*, which states that φ feature are overtly marked at PF only if they bear the same degree of markedness as all the other morphosyntactic features encoded on the same functional head. In our framework, *Default Marking* applies in the morphological component of the grammar. (4) provides the definition of this markedness principle.

(4) *Default Marking*
The morphological marking of a φ feature can only take place if all features bear the same markedness on the functional head that hosts them.

We proposed that perfective auxiliaries in USIDs are functional heads merged in Infl°. Based on Ritter & Wiltschko (2010), we argued that Infl° in perfective auxiliaries in USIDs is a functional head endowed with two deictic categories: Tense and Person (or φ). Furthermore, building on Ritter & Wiltschko, we assumed [*u*coin] to be a feature encoded in the category Tense, whose function is that of anchoring the event time, in Spec,VP, with the utterance time, in Spec,InflP. These facts are illustrated in (5).

(5)



The valuation of [*u*coin] expresses the interpretation of Tense. If the event time and the utterance time coincide, then [*u*coin] is valued as + and information for Present is conveyed. Conversely, if the event and the utterance time do not converge, then [*u*coin] is valued as -, and information for Past is expressed. Based on Holmberg & Roberts (2010), we assumed that uniformity of feature values triggers default configurations. According to Holmberg & Roberts, in fact, an unmarked, i.e. default, syntactic configuration is attested when all features of the same type encoded on different syntactic heads express the same value. For this reason, we considered [+coin] as a default. Indeed, in this case, in fact, the event and the utterance time converge. If [+coin] combines with [Speaker] and [Minimal], which are default morphosyntactic φ features, then another default configuration is obtained. For this reason, [Speaker] and [Minimal] are overtly marked at PF by means of the application of *Default Marking* in morphology.

In the reverse case, namely when the event and the utterance time do not converge, [*u*coin] expresses a marked value, i.e. -. In this case, only [Addressee] gets overtly expressed given the post-syntactic application of the *Default Marking* operation. The overt marking of [Addressee] is dependent on the uniformity of markedness between [-coin] and [Addressee].

In chapter 5, we established that the overt marking of [Neuter] on a singular definite determiner and demonstrative, as well as the overt marking of [Feminine] on a feminine plural definite determiner and demonstrative, is also dependent on the application of the *Default Marking* rule in (4).

(6) Airola (Central Campanian)

u l'lattə	'the.neut. milk'
e s'sɔrə	'the.fem.pl. sisters'

We took definite D-elements to be syntactic objects merged in the functional head D°. Similarly to Infl°, we assumed that D° hosts a [*u*coin] feature in the Definiteness, or D, category. If [*u*coin] on D expresses a + value, then [Neuter], which is a default, gets overtly marked. In the reverse case, namely in the presence of [-coin], [Feminine], which is marked, gets overtly expressed.

The morpho-phonological markedness of φ realized on perfective auxiliaries and definite D-elements in CSIDs demonstrated that the uniformity of markedness expressed by a number of features encoded on a given functional head triggers the application of *Default Marking*. In chapter 5, we observed that lexical verbs in the present indicative in USIDs do not allow the overt marking of [Speaker] and [Minimal], but only of [Addressee]. This is due to the fact that lexical verbs in the present indicative in USIDs are spelled-out in Infl°, through V-to-T (or V-to-Infl) movement. In this case, Infl° corresponds to a complex syntactic head (cf. Roberts & Roussou, 2003), which allows the overt marking of only marked morphosyntactic features.

6.2 Questions for future research

In this dissertation, we argued that RF triggered by present perfect auxiliaries in USIDs is morphosyntactic in nature. As observed in chapter 1, RF is not found solely in USIDs. Indeed, the presence of RF is also attested for other dialects, such as CIDs, ESIDs, Sardinian and Corsican. In all these dialects, RF is found after a subset of prepositions, such as *a* and *per*, a.o.: Rutigliano (Apulo-Barese) [a **k'k**əs] -to home-; [pə **m'm**ɛ] -for me-. At this point, we might wonder whether RF after the prepositions *a* and *per* can be taken to derive from the application of the RCA rule (preposition *a* derives from Latin AD), or, conversely, if it is the result of the overt marking of a null morpheme expressing a dedicated morphosyntactic feature.

In the previous chapters, we illustrated that CSIDs opt for two different strategies with regard to the overt marking of φ with present perfect and

pluperfect auxiliaries. More concretely, we showed that the overt marking of φ on present perfect and pluperfect auxiliaries in CSIDs is in complementary distribution and dependent on the value expressed by Tense. These facts leads us to pose the following research questions:

i. Does the information expressed by Tense influence the overt marking of φ on perfective auxiliaries only in CSIDs?
ii. Is this phenomenon found elsewhere or is it limited to CSIDs?

We claimed that the overt marking of φ on perfective auxiliaries is dependent on a post-syntactic operation called *Default Marking*. A proper understanding of *when* and *how* the operation of *Default Marking* became productive in CSIDs requires an investigation of the diachronic evolution of the system of perfective auxiliation in CSIDs. This study would shed light on the factors that have led to the emergence of *Default Marking* in these dialects.

A further valuable study would examine whether the definition of *Default Marking* in (4) is limited to the overt marking of φ or, conversely, if it can be extended to other features. More specifically, such an investigation should consider whether other morphosyntactic features can be overtly marked at PF only if they bear the same markedness as other features expressed on the same syntactic head.