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PERFECTIVE AUXILIARY SELECTION IN HERITAGE ITALO-ROMANCE

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses two mechanisms of auxiliary selection (intransitive and person-driven splits) from heritage Italo-Romance varieties (Venetan, Abruzzese, and Apulo-Barese) in contact with Spanish, Portuguese, and English in the Americas. The data, obtained from 26 speakers through a completion task and integrated by spontaneous speech, present instances of auxiliary HAVE that diverge from baseline/homeland varieties. The article also presents some observations on phono-syntactic processes that may block or trigger change.

KEYWORDS: Heritage Italo-Romance, Auxiliary Selection, Split Intransitivity, Person-driven Split

INTRODUCTION: MECHANISMS OF AUXILIARY SELECTION

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.
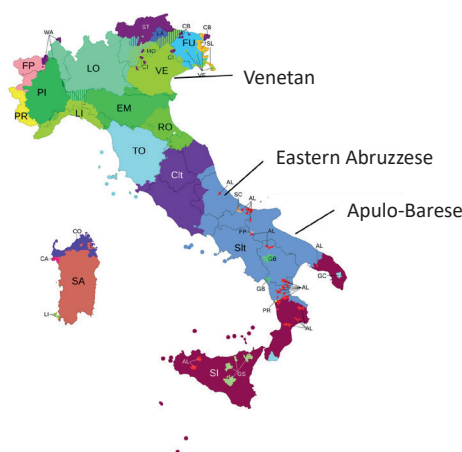
Figure 1. Varieties considered (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Italy#/media/File:Linguistic_map_of_Italy_-_Legend.svg)

This preliminary study, although involving only 26 participants, reveals some meaningful tendencies that are worth reporting, considering the significant diatopic microvariation and the small size of the language communities involved. We consider two AS systems with BE/HAVE alternation (B/H henceforth) in different contexts: split-intransitive and "person-driven" AS. The former (Perlmutter 1978) is sensitive to the argument structure of the V(erb),[1] i.e., the thematic roles of external vs. internal arguments: agentive transitive A/unergative S_A select H, while undergoer/theme subject of unaccusatives, S_O, select B (e.g., Venetan *go magnà* vs. *so'ndà* 'I ate/went'). In contrast, person-driven AS is sensitive to the 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, e.g., Abruzzese so_{1SG}–si_{2SG}–a_{3SG} *magnatə/jitə* 'I-you-(s) he ate/ went;[2] for details, see §2–3, respectively.

In contrast to our Italo-Romance heritage AS patterns 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 vs. the *ter*-periphrasis for aspectual ones. Indeed, the distribution of compound vs. simple past differs in the Italo-Romance HLs vs. dominant languages considered here: while the former experienced different degrees of aoristic drift favoring the compound form (less so in Apulo-Barese), the latter experienced the reverse and employ synthetic forms more often than their European counterparts, bar Portuguese (Bertinetto and Squartini 2016).

After introducing methodology and participants (§1.1), we discuss perfective AS in baseline and heritage Venetan (§2), as well as Abruzzese and Apulo-Barese (§3) and, in §4, we draw some generalizations on changes in AS and lack thereof, considering the relevance of the interface for change; finally, we identify some phono-syntactic cues that may prevent change.

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[1] See Burzio 1986; Sorace 2000; Bentley 2016; Loporcaro 2016; a.o.
[2] See Tuttle 1986; Kayne 1993; Ledgeway 2000; Manzini and Savoia 2005: II, §5.5 (M&S henceforth); Torcolacci 2015. Further references in Andriani 2017: ch. 5, 2018.

METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPANTS

Our corpus consists of both tested and spontaneous data from heritage speakers (HS; cf. Benmamoun et al. 2013; D'Alessandro 2021 and references therein), i.e., children of Italian emigrants who acquired the HL from their (grand)parents and only use it within a restricted group, as well as 1st-generation speakers (G1), born in Italy and emigrated to the Americas after 1960. Table 1 shows the informants we interviewed for each language pair – for more details, see Table 2 (§2) and Tables 8–9 (§3), as well as Andriani et al. (2022):

Table 1. Speakers

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

Some caution will be needed when discussing *change*: the non-official status of our minority HLs makes it hard to establish a baseline for comparison, due to the large microvariation across the homeland varieties and changes(/attrition) that might have occurred post-migration of G1 (cf. D'Alessandro et al. 2021; Andriani et al. 2022). Indeed, it was crucial to cross-check the heritage data with descriptions of the exact homeland variety from the past century, as well as with that of G1 speakers. This implies that our baseline is mostly an abstraction, a reconstructed grammar based on grammars from the migration times and G1 speakers; we do not compare the heritage varieties to the corresponding ones that are spoken in Italy nowadays (see D'Alessandro, Natvig & Putnam 2021 for a discussion of this methodology).

The data presented were collected from our 26 informants by using audio stimuli recorded in their Italo-Romance varieties. The completion task involved 12 sentences testing AS with 4 predicates (transitive 'eat', unergative 'work', unaccusative 'arrive', and direct reflexive 'wash oneself')[3] in the [1-2-3s] persons. Speakers listened to instructions and a biclausal sentence, the first clause containing the relevant predicate in the present and the second a gap to be filled with the past form. Aided by temporal adverbs, speakers were prompted to produce the compound past in the grammatical person expressed by the overt subject, e.g., 'you' in (1) 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'

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[3] Here we limit our overview of AS to core transitive/unergative vs. unaccusative predicates, i.e., the two poles of the split-intransitive *continuum*; hence, the highly varied (and unstable) behaviour of reflexive AS is left for future research.

We integrated the test results with data from semi-guided spontaneous conversations (*microcontact.sites.uu.nl/atlas*), collected prior to the test, in which speakers converse with the interviewer on their sociolinguistic background and experience, a.o. Not only did this serve as control for the AS of the tested verbs, but also to reveal the AS of other verbs.

SPLIT INTRANSITIVE AS IN VENETAN

Homeland Venetan AS broadly operates according to V-type: transitives/unergatives select ʜ, e.g., ***go magnà*** 'I have eaten', while unaccusatives select ʙ, e.g., ***son ndà*** 'I have (lit. am) gone'. However, ʙ/ʜ-alternation does surface with some unaccusative, reflexive, and impersonal verbs (Belloni 1991; Benincà 1994: 67–87; Marcato 1998: 251–254; M&S 2005: II, 107, 628–629, i.a.).

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), we mainly found 2nd-generation HSs in Argentinian cities, while 3rd or 4th generation HSs in southern Brazil. Therefore, comparison with the relevant baseline was not always possible due to dialectal levelling which took place across Venetan (and other Italo-Romance) varieties; nonetheless, we observed similar tendencies across these different HS populations. The Br. Venetan spoken in and around Caxias do Sul is described a.o. by Frosi and Mioranza (1983) as a *koine* based on Central Venetan varieties (i.e., Paduan/Vicentino; Zamboni 1974: 7), with some intrusion of Feltrino-Trentino or Lombard morphology and lexis. However, in what follows we try to distinguish the place of origin of our HSs' families to control for potential microvariation.

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 and Mioranza (1983: 54–75) and Faggion (2013), and, more recently, by D'Alessandro and Frasson (2023) and D'Alessandro et al (2025) for different Venetan-speaking enclaves. Faggion (2013: 140) reports the presence of ʜ with unaccusatives in speakers born after 1970, linking this to transfer from Portuguese *ter* 'have', while older ones select ʙ. Cordin and Degasperi (2020) report a similar tendency for Brazilian Trentino, which they too relate to *ter*.[4]

In contrast to these tendencies, D'Alessandro and Frasson (2023) discovered a new grammaticalization in Br.Venetan AS involving the specialization of three forms of [3] person ʙ: *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 ʙ seems to resist at least in [3] person and innovate in

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⁴ That the expansion of ʜ is due to transfer from Portuguese is not entirely convincing, as the distribution of the synthetic vs. analytic past and relative temporal vs. aspectual functions do not match (cf. §1).

a different direction. From the database used by these same authors, we now consider evidence in which some Venetan HSs employ н in unaccusative contexts.

We elicited the data 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 test[5] and spontaneous conversations for unaccusatives, the prototypical BE-domain where also н can surface. In contrast, all transitives/unergatives consistently select *gavér* 'have'. Table 2 integrates the task results with the spontaneous production ones (the latter highlighted in bold), which include [1P]/[3P] contexts, while [2P] was never produced.

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 в, all Venetan HSs, irrespective of the country, favor н in [1s][6] and [2s], except HS#12 who selects в in [2s]. In [3s] the three Argentinian respondents all select в but HS#3 (however, see fn.6).

The neat picture just mentioned does not match the one from the spontaneous speech of HSs, where в surfaces more often than н with some unaccusatives, as in 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	**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	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**

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[5] 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 <u>oneself</u>'.

#	Country_Generation_Gender_Age	Origin	1s	2s	3s	1P	3P
12	B_H2_M_55	Vicenza	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		

2nd generation Paduan HSs in Argentina #1-4 show the consistent selection of ʙ with unaccusative 'leave, come, go, enter, be born, die', the same detected for G1 speakers. In contrast, ʜ seems to systematically surface with the tested predicate 'arrive' (and psych-verb 'like'). Only HS#3 shows ʙ/ʜ alternation in [3s] even when using the same verb 'enter' (while [2s] is never produced). It appears that the generalized ʜ 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 ʜ to most unaccusative contexts (2b-h), while ʙ is selected in one single instance: [1s] 'go' (2a):

(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 città*
                                                              de che ***i ga vegnesto***
        3P=has   come.M.S

   e.   *ma quando*   ***i***   ***ga***   ***rivato***   *qua in Brasile*
                    3P=has   arrived.M.S

   f.   *e qua* ***i***   ***ga***   ***rivà***
                    3P=has   arrived

    g. *e là **ga** **nasesto**   V. e V.*
          has(.3P) born.M.S

    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 в/н-alternations. HS #13 tends to select в with unaccusatives, however, в/н-alternation shows up in [3s] 'arrive' (3a) and [3P] 'come' (3d), while impersonal 'happen' only selects н (3b):

(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 taliani*
       3P=are come.M.P   3P=has come.M.S

    e. *i   ze   **rivài***
       3P=are   arrived.M.P

HS#17 shows an even more complex pattern, in which в/н-alternation only appears in grammatical persons [1s] (4a) and [3P] (4d-e):

(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=has arrived.M.P

    e. ***i***   ***ga***   ***rivà***
       3P=has arrived

Further evidence (5) comes from HSs of other Br.Venetan varieties, showing ʜ with 'come/go' in [3s]:

(5)   Heritage Br.Venetan #10

    a. *el* ***ga***   ***vegnesto*** *come se fose na roba de n'altro mondo*
                  has   come

    b. *la̱ mia̱ sorela̱* ***ga***   ***andato̱*** *5 ani fa*
                         has   gone.ᴍ.ꜱ

In sum, in line with some literature, the presence of ʜ could be considered as characteristic of Br.Venetan, but not (yet) of the Argentinian one, where transfer of *haber*+participle could be expected. Venetan HSs in Brazil produce ʜ in minimal areas of unaccusative syntax[8], mainly with motion verbs (i.e., the prototypical ʙ-selecting verbs in Sorace's (2000) hierarchy) and in certain grammatical persons. This can have two explanations: either ʜ is the "conservative" option of G1 migrants arrived between 1800 and 1900, or it started spreading for independent, endogenous reasons (§4).

PERSON-DRIVEN AS IN ABRUZZESE AND APULO-BARESE

As mentioned, 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 (ʙʙʜʙʙʜ), selecting ʙ in [1–2] persons(/discourse participants) vs. ʜ in [3] persons(/non-discourse participants). Crucially, *raddoppiamento fonosintattico* (RF), a sandhi phenomenon where Word1 can be a trigger for the consonantal lengthening of the following Word2 typical of central-southern Italo-Romance (Fanciullo 1997), is present on all Barese singular auxiliaries, but absent on the Ariellese ones.

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

Table 3. Ariellese 'have fallen/worked' (D'Alessandro and Roberts 2010: 43-44)

	Aux	Unacc.	Unerg.	Aux
1s	*so*	*cascate/*	*fatijate*	**B**
2s	*si*	*cascate/*	*fatijate*	**B**
3s	*a*	*cascate/*	*fatijate*	**H**
1P	*seme*	*caschite/*	*fatijite*	**B**
2P	*sete*	*caschite/*	*fatijite*	**B**
3P	*a*	*caschite/*	*fatijite*	**H**

Table 4. Barese 'have fallen/worked' (Andriani 2018)

	Aux	Unacc.	Unerg.	Aux
1s	sɔ	**k**kadutə/	**f**fadəgatə	**B**
2s	si	**k**kadutə/	**f**fadəgatə	**B**
3s	a	**k**kadutə/	**f**fadəgatə	**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	sɔ	**v**vənutə/	**d**dərmutə	**B**
2s	a	vənutə/	dərmutə	**H**
3s	ɛ	**v**vənutə/	**d**dərmutə	**H≈B**[9]
1P	simə	vənutə/	dərmutə	**B**

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[9] Unlike authors who consider [3s] auxiliary *è* [ɛ] as a form of в (Tuttle 1986: 270; but cf. [3P] *ènnə* and It. *hanno/sono*), we consider this synchretic form to be stemming from н, witness its non-reduced counterpart [avə] when a vowel follows.

	Aux	**Unacc.**	**Unerg.**	**Aux**
2P	sitə	vənutə/	dərmutə	**B**
3P	vonnə	vənutə/	dərmutə	**H**

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

	1s	**2s**	**3s**	**1P**	**2P**	**3P**
Unerg.	aɟɟə dərˈmeutə	a dərˈmeutə	ɛ ddərˈmeutə	simə/amə dərˈmeutə	sitə dərˈmeutə	annə dərˈmeutə
Unacc.	aɟɟə vəˈneutə	si vvəˈneutə	ɛ vvəˈneutə	simə/amə vəˈneutə	sitə vəˈneutə	annə vəˈneutə

Casamassimese in Table 5 minimally differs from Barese and Ariellese for generalized ʜ in [2s] (without RF); 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., ʜ in [3]), but also show free ʙ/ʜ-alternation and sensitivity to V-type in individual cells (split intransitivity in [2s]; Italian-AS influence should also never be excluded, as all these speakers are bilingual). 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)

	1s	**2s**	**3s**	**1P**	**2P**	**3P**
Unerg./ Unacc.	B(/H)	B(/H)	B≈H	B/H	B/**H**	H

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

Similarly, ʙ is the only [2s] auxiliary for all V-types in some Abruzzese varieties, e.g., Introdacqua AQ:

(6)   'have eaten' Introdacqua AQ (Bentley & Eyþórsson 2003: 465)
    1s   ɛjjə   maɲɲatə
    2s   ši   maɲɲatə
    3s   à   maɲɲatə
    1P   avɛmmə   maɲɲétə

In contrast, some of the neighbouring varieties show what has been argued to be a conservative diachronic stage of AS (Giammarco 1960, 1973) where generalized ʜ occurs in all grammatical persons of all V-types (similarly to Spanish). Among these varieties, we find the Abruzzese dialect from Orsogna (CH), which also features in our database (cf. Table 8; for Apulo-Barese varieties, M&S 2005: II, §5.5). Hence, the peculiar person-split AS paradigms constitute 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 in Abruzzo and Lazio and argues that, from an initial stage of generalized ʜ across all V-types (e.g., Orsognese), ʙ gradually spread into the realm of transitive syntax following a specific order, starting from [2s] as in (6). Other varieties extended ʙ further, allowing free ʙ/ʜ-alternation in [1–2] until ʙ becomes the sole auxiliary. This yields the ʙʙʜʙʙʜ pattern (Tables 3–4), a 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 ʙ in [1s] and never [2s].

HERITAGE ABRUZZESE AND APULO-BARESE

To our knowledge, research in Italo-Romance HL contexts has never addressed person-driven AS. In our small data sample, we find a 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	1ᴘ	3ᴘ
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	1ᴘ	3ᴘ
1	US_H1_M_50	Casamassima BA	B	H	H	B	H
2	US_H1_F_59	Bitetto BA	B	B	H	**H**	**H**
3	US_H1_F_49	"		B	H	**H**	**H**
4	US_H1_F_38	"	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**

In the two dialect groups, a first clear tendency is that н remains 'default' in [3] persons. In [1–2] persons, we also observe the loss of в/н 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 н 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 н 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] н is Italian [ɔ] – which triggers the RF, unlike the "indigenous" form [aɟɟə]:

(7)   Heritage US Apulo-Barese #4
       ɔ   **m**mandʒətə/ 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 в in [1s] instead of the conservative н 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).

AS IN HERITAGE ITALO-ROMANCE: SOME OBSERVATIONS

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

Such a resilience to change characterizes specific paradigmatic cells, crucially, those involved in some syntactic phenomenon of disambiguation, as multifunctional elements might be problematic for HS (see Montrul 2004 et seq. on the loss of DOM in US Spanish). In Romance, в can act both as copula and auxiliary; however, D'Alessandro & Scheer (2015) show that Abruzzese displays different phonosyntactic behaviors in the two contexts, since в 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; cf. also Table 3):

(8)   a. *so   frecate*   'I've cheated'
      b. *so   ffrecate*   'I'm screwed'
          am   cheated

(9)   a. (*me/te*)   *so/si*   *morte*   'I/you died'
      b. *so/si*   *mmorte*   'I'm/you're dead'
          REFL   am/are   dead

Similarly, 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 morpho-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 observation:

HAVE tends to expand, except when blocked by salient morpho-phonological cues, such as RF.

This is a well-known tendency in the (early modern) history of other (Italo-)Romance varieties which gradually generalized H in all contexts (e.g., Neapolitan, Sicilian, Spanish), thus losing the split-intransitive AS attested in all early Romance varieties (cf. Ledgeway 2012: 334–335). A recent example of the spread of H can also be observed in "popular" French (Tuttle 1986: 268, fn. 65). Diachronically, this move towards H has been seen as the completion stage of a typological shift from an early Romance unaccusative split to a nominative-accusative one in the verbal domain: H now marks all Nominative subjects ($A/S_A/S_O$) distinctly from objects, which weaken or lose their agreement with participles. A further development of such a marking in the verbal domain is represented by the more recent person-driven AS (§3), in which B/H-alternations are allegedly restored but are sensitive to specific person 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 and Degasperi 2020: 57; for Campanian varieties, Cerullo and Izzo 2023). While both generalizations point to simplification in the loss of AS, the selected auxiliary differs, with possible implications for analysis of complexity.

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