The syntax-morphology interplay. Focus on southern Italo-Romance verbal inflection

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1. INTRODUCTION - Cross-linguistic studies have revealed that the overt marking of the person feature (henceforth P) on verbs in a wide set of languages tends to follow the same pattern, inasmuch as 1st and 2nd person are commonly overtly expressed, as opposed to 3rd person, which is instead generally not morpho-phonologically realized (cf. Forchheimer 1953: 6). Within the Indo-European family, this situation is commonly attested for a large group of languages, amongst which Romance (cf. Italian: parl-**o** / parl-**i** / parla-Ø / parla-**mo** / parla-**te** / parla-**no** 'speak-IND-PRES-1SG / speak-IND-PRES-2SG / speak-IND-PRES-3SG / speak-IND-PRES-1PL / speak-IND-PRES-2PL / speak-IND-PRES-3PL'). Not all Romance languages, however, seem to follow this pattern, as is the case of a set of southern Italo-Romance dialects. These facts are illustrated by means of the singular paradigms in (1) and (2), and refer to a variety documented in Torcolacci (2015).

(1) a-ɟɟ 'fatt   have-IND-PRES-1SG done   (2) 'dorm   sleep-IND-PRES-1SG

 a 'fatt   have-IND-PRES-2SG done   'd**u**rm   sleep-IND-PRES-2SG

 a f'fatt   have-IND-PRES-3SG done   'dorm   sleep-IND-PRES-3SG

The overt marking of P in the paradigms in (1) and (2) seems to be asymmetrical. While in (1) the overt marking of P instantiates only when auxiliary *have* bears 1st and 3rd person, in (2) the overt marking of P takes place only when the lexical verb *sleep* encodes 2nd person. As for *have*, the overt marking of 1st person is obtained by means of a morpheme, e.g. /ɟɟ/, realized at word-final position, while the overt marking of 3rd person is expressed through a double consonant, e.g. /ff/, occurring at word-initial position of the past participle, e.g. /f'fatt/ (cf. Torcolacci 2014 & 2015). Word-initial double consonants in Italo-Romance dialects are generally considered to be instances of *Raddoppiamento Fonosintattico*, or syntactic doubling (cf. Loporcaro 1997). As for (2), instead, the overt marking of P targets the 2nd person verb only, with the exclusion of the 1st and 3rd person one, and results by means of metaphony, i.e. a phonological process of vowel heightening (cf. Savoia & Maiden 1997) that targets the stressed vowel of the verb, e.g. /'durm/.

2. ANALYSIS – I propose that the overt marking of P on auxiliary *have* and the lexical verb *sleep* in the dialect in (1) and (2), as well as in the rest of varieties spoken in a geolinguistic area of southern Italy, is not determined by the interaction of phonological factors that were active in diachrony (cf. Maiden 2009), but rather dependent on morphosyntactic requirements, i.e. the interplay of principles of markedness that operate in the syntactic and morphological components of the grammar. In order to clarify this, let us observe the syntactic structures in

(3) and (4), the former attested in the case *have* and the latter, conversely, in the case of the lexical verb *sleep*.

(3) InflP
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        InflP
       /    \
    Infl°    AspP
      ↑      /   \
      |___ Asp°   ...
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(4) InflP
```
        InflP
       /    \
    Infl'    Infl'
    V+v     /   \
     ↑   Infl°   …
     |____|
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In (3), the auxiliary *have* externally merges in Asp°, which corresponds to the syntactic locus where viewpoint aspect is encoded (cf. Dik 1997). Based on the Distributed Morphology, or DM, model (cf. Halle & Marantz 1993, 1994), I claim that Asp°, i.e. a functional head, corresponds to an f-morpheme. Infl°, which is also a functional head, i.e. an f-morpheme, attracts Asp°. The overt realization of 1st and 3rd person on auxiliary *have*, i.e. of [Speaker] and [Minimal] (cf. Harley & Ritter 2002), is here claimed to be determined by a principle of markedness that is active in the morphological component of the grammar (cf. DM). Precisely, I propose that [Speaker] and [Minimal], which according to Harley & Ritter (2002) correspond to default syntactic features, are promoted for being overtly realized on *have* in phonology because *have* is composed of only f-morphemes. In (4), the V+v complex does not internally merge in Infl°. This depends on the fact that V+v contains a root, namely an l-morpheme (cf. DM), which cannot be incorporated into Infl° because of not sharing the same morphemic nature with Infl°, namely an f-morpheme. As a consequence, the V+v complex adjoins to Infl'. In morphology (cf. DM), the different morphemic nature attested within the [v+V [Infl°]] complex – recall that V is an l-morpheme and Infl° is an f-morpheme – is here claimed to trigger the phonological marking of 2nd person only, namely [Addressee], which according to Harley & Ritter (2002) is a marked syntactic feature.

3. SUMMARY – Here, I have proposed that the uniformity of morphemes contained within a verbal element corresponds to the trigger for the overt marking of P in a set of southern Italo-Romance varieties. This markedness convention relies on the *Default Marking* operation discussed in Torcolacci (2015), and builds upon the theory of syntactic markedness proposed by Roberts & Holmberg (2010), according to which a default syntactic operation is obtained only if all functional heads within a clausal spine are uniform in terms of the EPP value they inherit: if all functional heads encode a + or - EPP feature, then a default configuration is obtained. Conversely, if some functional heads encode a + and some others a – EPP feature, then a marked configuration is attested.