Temporal information marks person in a Northern Lazio Italian variety

Melissa A. Redford & Sara Pacchiarotti
Background

• In central non-standard Italian (CiT), the perfect conveys past meaning.
• The auxiliaries are essere (‘to be’) and avere (‘to have’).
• 3\textsuperscript{rd} person avere is ha /a/; 2\textsuperscript{nd} person avere is hai /ai/.
• The consonantal onset of the participle is purportedly geminated in 3\textsuperscript{rd} person, but not in 2\textsuperscript{nd} person.
Raddoppiamento Sintattico

• An external sandhi phenomenon (i.e., cross word boundary modification) subject to prosodic constraints.
  – Phonological: triggered by preceding stressed vowel.
  – Lexical: triggered by specific lexical items

• CiT has both types of RS.

• ha /a/ environment is very nearly analogous to the prepositional phrase environment that triggers RS (e.g., a casa [ak:asa]).

• So, another instance of lexically-determined RS, albeit an unusual one?
The Twist

• In running speech, *avere* is often reduced in 2\textsuperscript{nd} person from \textless hai\textgreater{} to [a], rendering it homophonous with 3\textsuperscript{rd} person \textless ha\textgreater{} /a/.

• Full independent pronouns are usually dropped in casual speech, thus doubling conveys person marking (i.e., it has specific meaning).

• Specific meaning results in lexicalization (e.g., *a bórd* ‘on board’ \textrightarrow{} *abbórdo* ‘I accost’).
Study Questions

1. Is this a prosodic pattern?
2. If not, how do we want to think about the form representations? Lexical entries or more abstract?

Working hypothesis: Doubling helps mark a contrast between 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} person in CiT and so is stored in the lexicon as part of the perfect construction.
Predictions

1. Is this a prosodic pattern?
   - No. Not subject to blocking.

2. If not, how do we want to think about the form representations? Lexical entries or more abstract?
   - More abstract: (a) no effect of verb frequency; (b) not the same as the phonemic pattern.
Participants

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### Speech Materials

#### Avere Verbs (Participles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>initial C</th>
<th>low frequency</th>
<th>high frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/f/</td>
<td>falsato ‘falsified’</td>
<td>fatto ‘done’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ferito ‘wounded’</td>
<td>fermato ‘stopped’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>filato ‘spun’</td>
<td>finite ‘finished’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>salato ‘salted’</td>
<td>saputo ‘known’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>segato ‘sawn’</td>
<td>sentito ‘heard, felt’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solcato ‘dug (a groove)’</td>
<td>sognato ‘dreamed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>macchiato ‘stained’</td>
<td>mangiato ‘eaten’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>menato ‘beaten’</td>
<td>messo ‘put’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mondato ‘cleansed’</td>
<td>mostrato ‘shown’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n/</td>
<td>nappato ‘poured (a sauce)’</td>
<td>nascosto ‘hidden’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negletto ‘neglected’</td>
<td>negate ‘denied’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>normato ‘regularized’</td>
<td>notato ‘noticed’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Speech Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>medial C</th>
<th>singleton</th>
<th>geminate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/f/</td>
<td>Afete ‘Greek town’ grafì ‘graphs’ rifare ‘do again’</td>
<td>affette ‘affected. FEM.PL’ graffi ‘scratches’ riffare ‘raffle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>casone ‘big house’ rosa ‘pink. FEM.SG’</td>
<td>casse ‘boxes’ cassone ‘big box’ rossa ‘red. FEM.SG’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>andiamo ‘we go’ coma ‘coma’ some ‘burden’</td>
<td>andammo ‘we went’ comma ‘provision, subsection’ somme ‘sums, amounts’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n/</td>
<td>nona ‘ninth. FEM.SG’ pane ‘bread’ sano ‘healthy. MASC.SG’</td>
<td>nonna ‘grandmother’ panne ‘breakdown’ sanno ‘they know’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elicitation & Design

- Frame sentence
  - pronoun included
  - (usually) phrase medial target

- Target items (verbs)
  - 2nd vs. 3rd person
  - high vs. low frequency
  - comparator items (singleton vs. geminate)

- Broad and narrow focus
Dependent Variables

hai negato

V1  C  V2

sonorant

Visible part 1.071330 seconds
Verb Phrase Results

• Absolute C duration
  – Effects of PERSON and CONSONANT.
  – NO effect of focus or verb frequency.
  – NO interactions.

• Relative C duration
  – Effects of PERSON, FOCUS, CONSONANT.
  – Interaction between PERSON and FOCUS as well as PERSON and CONSONANT.
  – NO effect of verb frequency.
Person Marking

![Graph showing duration in milliseconds for 2nd and 3rd segments with focus on broad and narrow focus with error bars indicating 95% CI.](image)
Comparison w/ Phonemic Contrast

• Absolute C duration
  – Effects of CONTRAST and LENGTH.
  – Interactions between CONTRAST and LENGTH and between LENGTH and CONSONANT.
  – NO effect of focus.

• Relative C duration
  – Effects of CONTRAST, LENGTH, FOCUS, and CONSONANT and interactions between these factors.
Comparison w/ Phonemic Length
Discussion

1. Not subject to blocking. ✔
   * Caveat

2. Regarding representation:
   a. no effect of verb frequency ✔
   * Caveat
   b. not the same as the phonemic pattern ✗
Conclusion

Data like these are tantalizing for what they might suggest about the representation of temporal information.

– Whereas temporal information that is prosodic can be thought of as modulatory; this pattern is different.

– How should we think of “constructions” (if at all) with respect to form representation?

– How might we incorporate a construction grammar approach to morpho-syntax into a theory of speech-language production?