

On the intra-paradigmatic distribution and function of the -ISC- augment in some dialects of Italy

Pamela Goryczka & Irene Fally
University of Vienna

Introduction. In recent years, research on the Romance verbal system has often focused on providing evidence for the presence of paradigmatic patterns known as morphemes (Maiden 2018). From this perspective, Italian third conjugation verbs displaying the -ISC- augment represent the type of distributional regularity expressed by one of the most prominent morphemes in Italian verb morphology known as the *N-pattern*: the augment appears only in the Present Indicative and Subjunctive forms – except for the 1pl and the 2pl – as well as the 2sg Imperative.

However, while this approach holds true for standard Italian, some Italo-Romance varieties, such as Ligurian, can give a more varied and contrasting picture of the intra-paradigmatic distribution of -ISC-, thus dispersing the original pattern of distribution: in Table 1, the variant /iʃ/ has been extended to all person and number cells of the Present Subjunctive. The same pattern can also be observed in many Lombard dialects (e.g., Ticinese), in Upper Engadinian and is additionally found in Corsican and in related dialects in northern Sardinia (Meul 2010: 14).¹

	Ligurian: <i>patí</i>	
	pres. ind.	pres. subj.
1sg	pat-isci-u	pat-isce-∅
2sg	pat-isci-i	pat-isci-i
3sg	pat-isce-∅	pat-isce-∅
1pl	pat-i-mu	pat-isci-mu
2pl	pat-i-∅	pat-isci-i
3pl	pat-isce-∅	pat-isce-∅

Table 1 *patí* 'to suffer' (Meul 2010: 14)

Aims of the paper. This study sets out to analyse the function of the -ISC- augment based on its distribution in the dialectal data provided above, i.e. considering dialects wherein the augment has spread to all person and number cells of the Subjunctive. As can be seen from Table 1, compared with the standard Italian variants /isk/ (1sg, 3pl) and /iʃ/ (2sg, 3sg), it is assumed that in the given dialects a single underlying phonological realisation is sufficient to occupy the theme position in the verbal structure, e.g., Lig. /iʃi/.² Rather than accounting for the presence of the augment as an exponent of the morphomic *N-pattern* (Da Tos 2013), as part of the stem that gets deleted when not stressed (Vogel 1993) or as a case of suppletion (Calabrese 2019), it will be argued that the augment is situated in the theme-position of the verbal structure, a position traditionally occupied by the theme vowel (TV), thus designating it in traditional terms as an allomorph of the TV /i/.

Methodology. Adopting the theoretical framework of Distributed Morphology (DM), our study aims to provide an in-depth formal analysis of the -ISC- augment that will shed light on its function in Ligurian and in related dialects that share the same distributional pattern. Previous analyses have only ever taken into account the standard Italian variant (Embick 2016, Calabrese

¹ In some varieties of Friulan and Lombard the augment also appears optionally in the Future and in the Conditional (e.g., Milanese *cap-i-róo* / *cap-iss-a-róo* 'I will understand'). It has been argued that in these cases the presence of the augment goes together with the generalization of the first conjugation thematic vowel /a/. In this study we will however focus on dialects that comply with the distributional pattern shown in Table 1.

² The absence on the surface of the second vowel (*-isci-*) in the 2sg (Indicative) and 2pl (Indicative, Subjunctive) is due to the ubiquitous Italian vowel deletion rule wherein an unstressed vowel is deleted if followed by another vowel. As for the 1sg (Subjunctive), the 3sg (Indicative, Subjunctive) and the 3pl (Indicative, Subjunctive), an additional lowering rule ensures that the variant *-isce-* is formed.

2019), treating the presence of -ISC- as a mere root suppletion phenomenon. In DM, the lexicon is assumed to be distributed over several lists. Morphosyntactic processes derive hierarchical structures from roots and functional elements. Furthermore, morphological operations precede morphophonological realizations, by which Vocabulary Items (VI) are inserted in terminal nodes previously created by syntax.

Proposal. In our analysis, theme allomorphy is accounted for in terms of Fusion.³ In the Present Tense forms, the Tense (T⁰) and Agreement (φ) nodes fuse, which means that only one VI is eligible for insertion into the position, i.e. the Present Tense encodes a semantically unmarked Tense feature and is therefore morphophonologically never realised (cf. Oltra-Massuet 1999 for Catalan, Pomino & Remberger 2019, inter alia, for Italian and Spanish). Due to Fusion, the φ-features are more local to the root than before and, being in the sister node of v⁰, may have an impact on all elements contained in v⁰ (cf. Figure 1). For the Ligurian example shown in Table 1, we can thus provide the following Vocabulary Items:

- (1) Vocabulary Items for the theme-position (only the third conjugation is considered here)⁴
- a. /iʃi/ ↔ [-γ] / T[-past]
 - b. /iʃi/ ↔ [-γ] / T[-past, +sbj]
 - c. /i/ ↔ [+α]
- (2) Vocabulary Items for φ
- a. /mu/ ↔ [1pl]
 - b. /u/ ↔ [1] / T[-past, -sbj]
 - c. /i/ ↔ [2]
 - d. There are no VIs for 2pl (Ind.), 3sg and 3pl (= ∅)

The derivation of the sg forms and the 3pl in the Present Indicative is exemplified in Table 2.

<i>Output Syntax</i>	√ _[+α]	v ⁰		T ⁰ [-past]
Well-formedness Condition: TV	√ _[+α]	v ⁰	TV	T ⁰ [-past] TV
Well-formedness Condition: φ	√ _[+α]	v ⁰	TV	T ⁰ [-past] TV φ [3sg]
Fusion	√ _[+α]	v ⁰	TV	T ⁰ [-past]/ φ [3sg]
Full Specification	√ _[+α,+β,-γ]	v ⁰ _[+α,-β,-γ]	TV	T ⁰ [-past]/ φ [3sg]
Vocabulary Item v ⁰	√ _[+α,+β,-γ]	∅	TV	T ⁰ [-past]/ φ [3sg]
Vocabulary Item TV (1a)	√ _[+α,+β,-γ]	∅	/iʃi/	T ⁰ [-past]/ φ [3sg]
Vocabulary Item φ (2d)	√ _[+α,+β,-γ]	∅	/iʃi /	∅
Phonological Readjustment ⁵	√ _[+α,+β,-γ]	∅	/iʃe/	
Output	/patiʃe/			

Table 2 Derivation of 3sg *patisce* 's/he suffers' (similar for 1sg, 2sg and 3pl)

³ Since Fusion is a subject of debate in recent DM research, in our oral presentation, we will also discuss an alternative approach, i.e. spanning (Svenonius 2012).

⁴ Following Oltra-Massuet (1999), it is assumed that the different conjugations are hierarchically interrelated according to their degree of markedness. This approach allows us to express the interrelations among the different conjugations based on binary features, i.e. *-ire*-verbs are specified with the features [+α,+β] in order to distinguish them from *-are*-verbs ([-α]) and *-ere*-verbs ([+α,-β]). In order to separate the ones presenting the augment from those that don't, the additional feature γ is introduced, i.e. [+α,+β,+γ] are verbs that don't show the augment, verbs with augment are specified with [+α,+β,-γ]. Some redundancy rules ensure the reduction of the complexity of the specifications, e.g. [-γ] entails [+α,+β,-γ].

⁵ This lowering rule applies only on final unstressed vowels.

As for the 1pl (and the 2pl), we argue that the process of Fusion is preceded by the Impoverishment of [-past], thus preventing the selection of /iʃi/ and triggering the insertion of the default VI /i/ instead (cf. Figure 1). In the Present Subjunctive, the reason for inserting /iʃi/ instead of /i/ is related to the feature [+sbj] that is active throughout all person and number cells.

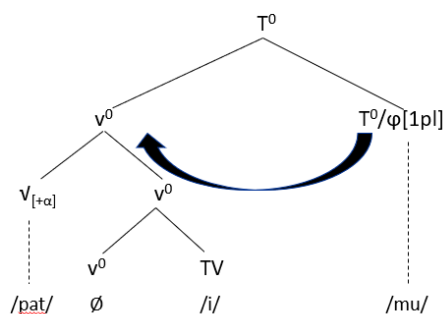


Figure 1 Structure of 1pl of *patir* 'to suffer'

Conclusions. The presence of -ISC- in some dialects depends on the information encoded in T and φ. While TAM-triggered allomorphy is linked to the specification of the VI in question, it became apparent that through morphological processes like Fusion φ-features can directly cause allomorphy.

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