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*Is there a partition in the present indicative of Italian regular verbs?**

Introduction

Models of morphological analysis inspired by the *Morphology by itself* framework of Aronoff (1994) recognize the possibility that inflectional paradigms are internally organized in such a way that they display partition classes.

The term «partition class» has been proposed by Pirrelli – Battista (2000) to designate the set of cells in a paradigm that contain inflected forms built on the basis of the same stem.

Substantial evidence has been collected regarding partition classes in the Romance verbal paradigms, and in Italian verbal paradigms in particular (see Dressler – Thornton [1991]; Maiden [1992; 1995; 2003; 2004; 2005]; Pirrelli – Battista [2000]; Pirrelli [2000]).

Martin Maiden (2004; 2005) has devised a clever system for labelling at least some of the patterns that partition classes give rise to in Romance verb systems, by means of associating each pattern with the name of a letter of the alphabet. Two of the classes he has baptized, the L pattern and the U pattern, are shown in (1) and (2):

(1) The L-pattern

Example: Portuguese *tenho* ‘I have’ (Maiden [2005, 147])

	1st singular	2nd singular	3rd singular	1st plural	2nd plural	3rd plural
Present Indicative	tenho	tens	tem	temos	tendes	têm
Present Subjunctive	tenha	tenha	tenha	tenhamos	tenhais	tenham

(2) The U-pattern

Example: Old Italian *vaglio* ‘I am worth’ (Maiden 2005, 147)

	1st singular	2nd singular	3rd singular	1st plural	2nd plural	3rd plural
Present Indicative	vaglio	vali	vale	valemo	valete	vagliano
Present Subjunctive	vaglia	vaglia	vaglia	vagliamo	vagliate	vagliano

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As is probably obvious, and as Maiden (2005, 170, fn. 10) observes, «These labels are (perhaps rather fancifully) suggested by the distribution of the relevant cells of the paradigm in conventional paradigmatic distributions».

A third basic partition, which Maiden (2004) calls «the N pattern», has the shape in (3). In this pattern, the three singular forms and the third person plural form share a stem, which is different from the one employed in first and second person plural forms:

(3) An Italian present indicative partition («the N pattern» of Maiden [2004])

1st singular	2nd singular	3rd singular	1st plural	2nd plural	3rd plural
stem 2	stem 2	stem 2	stem 1	stem 1	stem 2

The etymology of the name of this partition is less obvious. Maiden (2004, 249, fn. 7) explains it by observing that «If the paradigm is laid out in the appropriate way, the N-pattern forms assume a shape somewhat reminiscent of an ‘N’ in Morse Code!». Indeed, in Morse Code the letter N is signalled by a line followed by a dot.

The N pattern is represented in Italian in a number of different kinds of verbs, such as verbs which alternate a stem 2 containing a diphthong with a stem 1 containing only the corresponding vowel, like SEDERE ‘to sit’ (4a), or verbs with lexeme-specific allomorphies, like UDIRE ‘to hear’ (4b)¹:

(4) Present indicative of SEDERE ‘to sit’ UDIRE ‘to hear’ FINIRE ‘to finish’ and ANDARE ‘to go’

	1st singular	2nd singular	3rd singular	1st plural	2nd plural	3rd plural
a. SEDERE	siedo	siedi	siede	sediamo	sedete	siedono
b. UDIRE	odo	odi	ode	udiamo	udite	odono
c. FINIRE	finisco /fi'nisko/	finisci /fi'niffi/	finisce /fi'niffje/	finiamo /fi'njamo/	finite /fi'nite/	finiscono /fi'niskono/
d. ANDARE	vado	vai	va	andiamo	andate	vanno

The same pattern underlies more complicated partitions, which furtherly subdivide the areas where a stem 2 appears, such as the ones displayed by verbs which have the *-sk-* infix, like FINIRE ‘to end, to finish’ (4c), or the highly suppletive verb ANDARE ‘to go’ (4d).

Other verbs present different partitions, like «the U pattern» of Maiden (2004), represented by a verb such as CONOSCERE ‘to know’, whose present indicative is shown in (5):

¹ PIRRELLI – BATTISTA (2000, 326) label this pattern «The UDIRE schema», and observe that «This schema holds for 2 base verbs only, namely SEDERE ‘sit’ and UDIRE ‘hear’».

(5) Present indicative of CONOSCERE ‘to know’

	1st singular	2nd singular	3rd singular	1st plural	2nd plural	3rd plural
CONOSCERE	conosco /ko'nosko/	conosci /ko'noʃʃi/	conosce /ko'noʃʃe/	conosciamo /konof'ʃamo/	conoscete /konof'ʃete/	conoscono /ko'noskono/

An open question, which will be addressed in the present paper, is the following: do regular verbs display some kind of partition in the present indicative, or are their present indicative forms all realized on the base of a single stem?

Dressler – Thornton’s proposal

Maiden (2005) seems to think that regular verbs (that is, in Italian, virtually all verbs in the first conjugation) do not display the N pattern or any other of the patterns he has identified so far.

On the contrary, in an early analysis, developed in the pre-Morphology by itself era, Dressler – Thornton (1991) have maintained that in Italian even regular verbs display what is now called «the N pattern». They proposed that present indicative forms of Italian verbs belonging to the two partition classes in the N pattern were built respectively on the basis of a «radical base» and a «thematic base»: the radical base (\cong root) has stress on the root (i.e., is «rhyzotonic», in the traditional terminology of Romance linguistics) and contains no theme vowel, while the thematic base contains a stressed thematic vowel, and therefore the root is unstressed («arhyzotonic»). The radical base occupies the slots marked as stem 2 in (3) above, while the thematic base occupies the slots marked as stem 1 in (3) above, as shown in (6). The analysis is exemplified by the present indicative of the regular first conjugation verb AMARE ‘to love’, built on the two bases shown in (7):

(6) Distribution of Dressler – Thornton’s (1991) two bases (to be compared with [3] above)

1st singular	2nd singular	3rd singular	1st plural	2nd plural	3rd plural
Radical base	Radical base	Radical base	Thematic Base	Thematic Base	Radical base

(7) Bases and Present Indicative inflection of the regular verb AMARE ‘to love’

Radical base: 'am-
Thematic base: a'ma-

Present indicative of AMARE ‘to love’ (radical base = 'am-, thematic base = a'ma-)

	1st singular	2nd singular	3rd singular	1st plural	2nd plural	3rd plural
AMARE	'amo	'ami	'ama	a'mjamo	a'mate	'amano

Another aspect of Dressler – Thornton’s analysis that must be borne in mind is that it was formulated with the aim of reanalyzing the traditional classification of Italian verbs in conjugation classes.

Traditionally, the three conjugation classes shown in (8) are recognized in Italian. Verbs are classified in the different conjugations according to the thematic vowel they display in certain forms, notably the infinitive forms. Dressler – Thornton, on the contrary, chiefly on the base of the distribution of certain endings, maintain that Italian verbal inflection is organized in two macroclasses, corresponding respectively to the traditional I conjugation and to the set of all the other conjugations. Some of their arguments for this choice will come up in the following discussion.

(8) Conjugations in Italian verb inflection (traditional analysis)

	I conjugation	II conjugation	III conjugation
infinitive	am- a -re 'to love'	tem- e -re 'to fear'	sent- i -re 'to hear'

Dressler – Thornton’s analysis of the formation of Present Indicative forms has a number of advantages, but also quite a few shortcomings.

The main advantage of this analysis is that it allows to encompass in a common pattern both so called “regular” verbs, and verbs which display a number of different allomorphies, such as the ones seen in (4) above. The analysis postulates the same partition (i.e., the N pattern) both in the present indicative of regular verbs and in the present indicative of a number of different kinds of irregular verbs, the ones listed in (9) and exemplified in (10):

- (9) verbs with the so-called alternating diphthong, like SEDERE ‘to sit’
 verbs with the so-called -sk- infix, like FINIRE ‘to finish’
 suppletive verbs, like USCIRE, UDIRE, ANDARE ‘to go out, to hear, to go’

(10)	1st singular	2nd singular	3rd singular	1st plural	2nd plural	3rd plural
SEDERE	siedo	siedi	siede	sediamo	sedete	siedono
FINIRE	finisco	finisci	finisce	finiamo	finite	finiscono
USCIRE	esco	esci	esce	usciamo	uscite	escono
UDIRE	odo	odi	ode	udiamo	udite	odono
ANDARE	vado	vai	va	andiamo	andate	vanno

There are, however, two disadvantages in Dressler – Thornton’s analysis.

First, the analysis is empirically inadequate to predict the 1st person plural forms. These should be based on the thematic base, that is, they should display a stressed thematic vowel, a different one in each of the three conjugations, and should have the form in (11c); instead, they are like the ones in (11b): in all conjugations, they display a palatal glide /j/ followed by a stressed /a/, a vowel which is equal to the thematic vowel in the first conjugation².

The second problem concerns the 3rd person plural forms: these should be based on the root, and should appear as the forms in (12b), but instead they appear as in (12a).

(11)		I conjugation	II conjugation	III conjugation
a.	infinitive	am-à-re	tem-é-re	sent-ì-re
b.	1st plural	am-jà-mo	tem-jà-mo	sent-jà-mo
c.	not:	°am-à-mo	°tem-é-mo	°sent-ì-mo

(12)		I conjugation	II conjugation	III conjugation
a.	3rd plural	àm-a-no	tèm-o-no	sènt-o-no
b.	not:	*àm-no	*tèm-no	*sènt-no

The forms in (11c) are actually attested in many non-standard varieties of Italian, while the ones in (12b) are totally ill-formed phonotactically and have never been attested.

Of course Dressler – Thornton propose an explanation for the existence of forms such as the ones in (11b) and (12a), instead of the forms in (11c) and (12b) predicted by their analysis.

For the first person plural, the explanation proposed is the following:

La vocale tematica [...] viene cancellata dagli indicatori superstabili *-iamo* [...] e *-iate* [...]. *-iamo*, *-iate* sono indicatori superstabili perché valgono per ambedue le macroclassi: la cancellazione della vocale tematica davanti ad essi segnala la neutralizzazione dell'opposizione tra le due macroclassi in queste forme (Dressler – Thornton [1991, 8])³.

It is important to observe that the deletion of the theme vowel in first person plural forms invoked by Dressler – Thornton (1991) is not an instance of the ubiquitous Italian vowel deletion rule (13) identified by Scalise (1984), because the regular VDR deletes unstressed vowels, while the

² In (11) and (12) I have not given IPA transcriptions, to enhance readability; primary word stress is represented, when necessary, by a stress mark on the vowel; following a tradition in Italian linguistics, <é> represents stressed /e/, <è> represents stressed /ɛ/.

³ «The thematic vowel [...] is deleted by the superstable markers *-iamo* [...] and *-iate* [...]. *-iamo*, *-iate* are superstable markers because they apply in both macroclasses: deletion of the thematic vowel before them signals the neutralization of the opposition between the two macroclasses in these forms». *-iate* is the ending of the second person plural in the present subjunctive. We do not address the analysis of the subjunctive forms in the present paper.

thematic vowel present in thematic bases according to Dressler - Thornton's analysis is crucially stressed.

(13) Italian Vowel Deletion Rule (Scalise [1984, 68], fn. 2)

$$V \rightarrow \emptyset / \text{___} + V$$

[- stress]

So Dressler – Thornton's analysis of the first person plural appears quite ad hoc; in any case, the fact remains that first person plural forms in the present indicative of Italian verbs do not display the same stem ending in a stressed thematic vowel that we find, for instance, in the second person plural, and that we would expect if the present indicative forms of Italian regular verbs were built according to some version of the N pattern, which has the same stem in first and second person plural forms.

The other problem with Dressler – Thornton's analysis concerns the third person plural.

If the forms of Italian present indicatives are built according to the N pattern, or its precursor in (6), third person plural forms should be built on the root, and this is what Dressler – Thornton dutifully assume. But concatenation of the ending *-no* to the root in third person plural forms almost always yields phonotactically inadmissible sequences, like the ones listed in the third column in (14), as we have already seen in (12b):

(14)	Verb	root	root + <i>-no</i>	actual third person plural form
a.	amare 'to love'	am-	*am-no	amano
b.	portare 'to carry'	port-	*port-no	portano
c.	vedere 'to see'	ved-	*ved-no	vedono
d.	sentire 'to hear'	sent-	*sent-no	sentono
e.	finire 'to finish'	finisc-	*finisc-no	finiscono

To repair the inadmissible sequence, Dressler – Thornton assume a vowel insertion. The inserted vowel is /a/ in the first macroclass, and /o/ in the second macroclass. The insertion is not determined by phonology: the quality of the inserted vowels is different from that of phonologically inserted epenthetic vowels, which are always front vowels in Italian (cf. Dressler – Thornton [1991, 8, fn. 5]), and does not depend on the phonological context, as the contrast between (14b) and (14d) shows⁴. Dressler – Thornton maintain that the insertion is of morphological nature, and the

⁴ «L'aggiunta diretta della desinenza *-no* alla radice nella terza persona plurale del presente indicativo produce quasi sempre nessi consonantici fonotatticamente inammissibili, p. es. in */am-no, parl-no, port-no, agit-no, caric-no, ved-no, sent-no, finisc-no/. Per evitarli si inserisce (morfologicamente) una vocale *-o-* nella seconda macroclasse, una vocale *-a-*

difference between the two vowels signals the opposition between the two macroclasses of conjugation in Italian verbs. They defend the vowel insertion analysis by appealing to the fact that insertion rules are more natural than deletion rules according to the parameters of Natural Morphology, because deletion rules diminish the iconicity of a base form, and the transparency of a morphologically complex form:

Le regole di inserzione sono più naturali di quelle di cancellazione perché queste ultime diminuiscono (e talvolta distruggono) l'iconicità e la trasparenza di una forma base, importanti parametri della Fonologia e della Morfologia Naturali (Dressler – Thornton [1991, 4ff.])⁵.

To sum up, Dressler – Thornton's analysis, which is explicitly coached in an Item-and-Process (IP) model, paradoxically proposes, contrary to the main tenet of an IP model (that of the derivability of all complex forms from a unique underlying representation), that present indicative forms of Italian regular verbs are built on two different stems, distributed according to the pattern now called the N pattern. The problems that arise with first and third person plural forms, which on the surface do not present the expected stem, are solved by non-phonological deletion or insertion rules, i.e, highly ad hoc processes, motivated by appeal to the superior interest of signalling inflection class, a concept extraneous to the IP model, and more at home in a Word-and-Paradigm (WP) model of morphological analysis.

Pirrelli's proposal

A different proposal for the analysis of Italian present indicative forms has been put forward by Vito Pirrelli in his (2000) book. Pirrelli's proposal stems out of an application of Aronoff's Morphology by Itself framework to Italian. Contrary to Dressler – Thornton, and paradoxically for an author who is well-known for having described in detail all the partitions in Italian verbal inflection, Pirrelli repeatedly observes that the forms of Italian regular verbs can be analyzed as all built on one and the same stem, and consequently that there is no partition in the present indicative of Italian regular verbs:

La coniugazione regolare necessita [...] di una sola base tematica.

[...]

L'unicità della base tematica è una proprietà che caratterizza i verbi regolari dell'italiano nel loro complesso (Pirrelli [2000, 14])⁶.

nella prima. Questa inserzione non è di ordine fonologico perché la qualità della vocale inserita non è determinata dal contesto fonologico ma dalla classe morfologica» (DRESSLER – THORNTON [1991, 7ff.]).

⁵ «Insertion rules are more natural than deletion rules because these diminish (and sometimes destroy) the iconicity and transparency of a base form, which are important parameters of Natural Phonology and Morphology».

In Pirrelli's analysis, the single basic stem used to build the present indicative forms of regular verbs is called B1, where B stands for Italian *base* "base", which translates "stem". In Pirrelli – Battista's (2000) paper in English the same formal object is called S1, where S stands for Stem. As Pirrelli – Battista (2000) do not develop the analysis of present indicative forms we are interested in, I will follow Pirrelli's (2000) book, which is written in Italian, and use B1 as short for the single present indicative stem he poses for Italian regular verbs.

B1 is phonologically equal to the lexical root of a verb. For example, the verb AMARE would have *am-* as its B1, as shown in (15):

(15) AMARE "to love" B1 = am-

The root is then always followed by a thematic vowel, which is different for different conjugations, as we can see in (16); the thematic vowel is normally assumed to be the vowel present, for instance, between the root and the infinitive ending.

(16) Thematic vowels (in **bold**) of Italian verbs in different conjugations

infinitive	am- a -re	tem- e -re	sent- i -re
	'to love'	'to fear'	'to hear'

Another aspect of Pirrelli's analysis concerns the position of stress: he thinks that the position of stress in the stems (whether on the root or on the thematic vowel) must be stipulated, as a property of the paradigmatic cells involved. His formulation of the stipulation of stress distribution on the thematic vowels in the present indicative forms is given in (17):

(17) Pirrelli's rules for the distribution of stress in Italian present indicative forms
(translated from Table 2.3 in Pirrelli [2000, 12]).

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{ThV} \\ \text{- stress} \end{array} \right\} / [[X]_{\text{V root}} _____]_{\text{V THEME INDICATIVE-PRESENT } \alpha}$$

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{ThV} \\ \text{+ stress} \end{array} \right\} / [[X]_{\text{V ROOT}} _____]_{\text{V THEME INDICATIVE-PRESENT}}$$

$\alpha = \{1s, 2s, 3s, 3p\}$

ThV = thematic vowel

⁶ «Regular conjugation needs [...] only one basic stem». [...] «A unique basic stem is a property that characterizes all Italian regular verbs».

Pirrelli's proposal also invokes Scalise's vowel deletion rule ([13] above), that will regularly apply wherever its context is met, to delete an unstressed thematic vowel.

Pirrelli's analysis of the formation of present indicative forms is given in (18):

(18) Paradigmatic pattern of regular verbs Present Indicative (Pirrelli [2000, 24, Table 2.4])

1st singular	B1-o
2nd singular	B1-i
3rd singular	B1-vt
1st plural	B1-jamo
2nd plural	B1- vt -te
3rd plural	B1 -{vt, o}-no

bold = stressed; vt = thematic vowel

In (19) I show how Pirrelli's system predicts the output verbal forms.

(19) Derivations in Pirrell's analysis

	underlying representation (following from (17))	rules	output
1st singular	B1-vt-o	VDR (13)	B1-o
2nd singular	B1-vt-i	VDR (13)	B1-i
3rd singular	B1-vt	dna	B1-vt (●* in III conjug.)
1st plural	B1- vt-jamo	dna	B1- vt-jamo ●*
2nd plural	B1- vt-te	dna	B1- vt-te
3rd plural	B1 -{vt, o}-no	dna	B1 -{vt, o}-no

dna = does not apply

In this analysis, there isn't any partition in the present indicative of regular verbs; the alternation between rhyzotonic and arhyzotonic forms, which was analyzed as the result of a partition by Dressler – Thornton, is stipulated; the presence vs. absence of a thematic vowel in the different forms, also analyzed as resulting from a partition between cells containing a bare root and cells containing a stem in Dressler – Thornton's analysis, in Pirrelli's analysis is taken care of by means of the vowel deletion rule.

Unfortunately, however, Pirrelli's analysis suffers from empirical inadequacies, as we will now show.

The first problem concerns the third person singular form of the verbs belonging to the III conjugation. The schema in (18) fails to predict the correct third person singular form for the verbs belonging to the III conjugation. Pirrelli thinks that the vowel following B1 in third person singular forms is the thematic vowel, rather than a monovocalic ending. But this is plainly false in III conjugation verbs, as we can see in (20). The hypothesis of a vocalic ending for the third person

singular, however, is compatible with Pirrelli's analysis at no extra cost, given that vocalic endings and the consequent application of the VDR are already postulated for first and second person singular forms. So the misanalysis of third person singular forms is just a slip in Pirrelli's model, which can easily be amended, as shown in (21).

- (20) Second person plural and third person singular forms of regular verbs of the three conjugations

verb and conjugation	I amare 'to love'	II temere 'to fear'	III sentire 'to hear'
infinitive	am-a-re	tem-e-re	sent-i-re
third person singular	am-a	tem-e	sent-e / *sent-i

- (21) Analysis of first and third person singular forms based on stems (root + thematic vowel)

input string	[ama] _{STEM} + [o] _{1S}	[senti] _{STEM} + [o] _{1S}	[ama] _{STEM} + [a] _{3S}	[senti] _{STEM} + [e] _{3S}
VD rule (13)	∅	∅	∅	∅
output	amo	sento	ama	sente

A further problem with Pirrelli's analysis concerns the first person plural form.

From (17), we gather that this form is supposed to have a stressed thematic vowel. But from (18) we see that the stressed thematic vowel has disappeared. This absence is elsewhere attributed, by Pirrelli himself, to the VDR. Pirrelli (2000, 11) observes that the front glide /j/ should be included in the context of application of the VD rule, exactly because the rule appears to have applied in first person plural forms such as *amiamo* [a¹mjamo]. But if the thematic vowel is (stipulatively) stressed, as follows from (17), it does not meet the conditions for the VDR to apply⁷.

Therefore, the first person plural, which was already a problem in Dressler – Thornton analysis, is still a problem in Pirrelli's analysis, and for the same reason: it should present a stressed thematic vowel, but this vowel is not there.

A third problem with Pirrelli's analysis concerns the third person plural forms.

These forms are analyzed by Pirrelli as formed by the root, followed by the thematic vowel in first conjugation verbs but by the vowel /o/ in other conjugations, and finally by the ending *-no*. The vowel /o/ which appears in non-first conjugation third person plural forms is different from the thematic vowels in these conjugations, which are /e/ and /i/, as we have seen in (16) and (20) above.

⁷ In the representation of the first person plural in (18), Pirrelli represents the stressed /a/ in *-jamo* in bold, using the same convention he uses to represent stressed thematic vowels. However, this should not be taken to imply that in Pirrelli's view this /a/ is the thematic vowel in first person plural forms: no "vowel-hopping" mechanism is proposed by Pirrelli, and the presence of a stressed thematic vowel immediately after the base in Pirrelli's analysis follows from (17).

The substitution of the thematic vowel by /o/⁸ is as arbitrary in Pirrelli’s system as it was in Dressler – Thornton’s analysis, or even more so, as Pirrelli does not take the non-first conjugation verbs to form a specific macroclass.

So we have seen that Pirrelli’s analysis, which, in contrast to Dressler – Thornton, moves from the hypothesis that there is no partition in the present indicative of Italian regular verbs, meets with exactly the same problems that were encountered by Dressler – Thornton, who hypothesized an N-pattern distribution.

A new proposal

Now I will propose an analysis which returns to Dressler – Thornton’s original intuition that even Italian regular verbs display a partition in the present indicative, and I will try to overcome the problems encountered by our original analysis by exploiting some of the theoretical tools offered by WP approaches to morphology⁹, and also by considering some additional data from non standard varieties of Italian that can shed light on the analysis of third person plural forms.

In my present analysis, I propose that the present indicative of Italian regular verbs does display the N pattern, i.e., it is partitioned in two classes, one containing the three singular cells and the third person plural cell, and one containing the other two cells, as illustrated in (22).

(22) Partition of the present indicative of Italian regular verbs

	1st singular	2nd singular	3rd singular	1st plural	2nd plural	3rd plural
REGULAR VERBS	root	root	root	theme	theme	root

The forms in the first class (the “gray class”) are built on the verb’s root, devoid of thematic vowel, like in Dressler – Thornton’s original analysis; in these forms, the root is always followed by vowel initial endings.

The cells in the other class (the “white class”, or the “colorless class”) are not indexed to contain a specific stem of the Italian verb, and therefore should host forms built on the most basic (“default”) stem, that is the theme, formed by the root followed by a thematic vowel (again, like in Dressler – Thornton’s original analysis).

⁸ «[N]ella 3P del PRESENTE INDICATIVO, la vocale tematica può, in alcune classi di verbi, essere rimpiazzata da una [o]» (PIRRELLI [2000, 21]). (In the third person plural of present indicative, the thematic vowel, in some verb classes, can be replaced by [o]).

⁹ Dressler – Thornton’s analysis was consciously framed in an IP model (DRESSLER – THORNTON [1991, 4]).

The first person plural cell, however, is preempted from being filled by a form built on the verb stem because it falls under the scope of a rule of referral, whose effect is to fill this cell with a form identical to the first person plural of the present subjunctive.

I give a rough formulation of this rule in (23).

(23) Rule of referral for the first person plural

Verb_{[person : 1.pl] [tense : present] [mood: indicative]} → Verb_{[person : 1.pl] [tense : present] [mood: subjunctive]}

The referral analysis seems the most compatible with the historical developments which have brought about the identity of the indicative and subjunctive first person plural forms.

Common accounts of this fact (e.g. Rohlfs [1968, §530]) talk about a change of ending from the subjunctive to the indicative, favoured by the semantic overlap between contexts in which the first person plural subjunctive is used as an imperative or hortative form, and interrogative contexts of use of the indicative form.

Vincent (1980), however, on the basis of data like the ones in (24), observes that at least for the verbs in (24) the change must have been a substitution of the whole first person plural indicative word form (24a) by the corresponding subjunctive form (24b), because if the change had been just a substitution of the indicative ending by the subjunctive ending, it would have yielded forms like the ones in (24d), which are not attested at all.

(24)	a. Old It.	b. Old It.	c. Modern It.	d. Unattested
	Indicative	Subjunctive	Indicative	Indicative
FARE	facemo	facciamo	facciamo	*facciamo
AVERE	avemo	abbiamo	abbiamo	*aviamo
DOVERE	dovemo	dobbiamo	dobbiamo	*doviamo
VOLERE	volemo	vogliamo	vogliamo	*voliamo
SAPERE	sapemo	sappiamo	sappiamo	*sapiamo

Glosses: *fare* ‘to do’, *avere* ‘to have’, *dovere* ‘must, to have to’, *volere* ‘to want’, *sapere* ‘to know’.

In fact, Vincent proposes that while for irregular verbs like the ones in (24) the change has been a “word substitution”, for regular verbs the change has been a replacement of the indicative ending with the subjunctive ending. He bases this claim on data such as those in (25a-c):

(25)	a. Old It.	b. Old It.	c. Modern It.	d. Modern It.
	Indicative	Subjunctive	Indicative	Subjunctive
VEDERE	vedemo	veggiamo	vediamo	vediamo

The form *vediamo* (25c) cannot have arisen out of a whole-word replacement of the form *vedemo* (25a) by *veggiamo* (25b): it appears to have arisen from concatenation of the Indicative stem of the form in (25a) with the Subjunctive ending of the form in (25b). What Vincent fails to remark, however, is that in Modern Italian the form of the Subjunctive is no longer the one in (25b): it is the one in (25d), which is identical to the form of the indicative.

So, even if Vincent's account may well be correct historically, in that verbs like the ones in (24) underwent a «replacement at the level of the word» (Vincent [1980, 389]) while verbs like the one in (25) underwent replacement «at the level of the individual morpheme» (Vincent [1980, 389-390]), i.e., of the ending, subsequent developments brought about a condition of identity between whole word-forms in the first person plural of Present Indicative and Present Subjunctive, not just between their endings. This state of affairs is best captured by means of a rule of referral relating the two cells in the paradigm, or by a *Paradigmenstrukturbedingung* à la Wurzel.

Let us now turn to the other problematic form, the third person plural.

For the third person plural, I revise Dressler – Thornton's analysis by proposing that the vowel which appears after the root is not an inserted vowel, nor the thematic vowel, not even in the first conjugation. Rather, it is part of the ending.

The idea that this vowel is part of the ending is unwelcome, and as we have seen was rejected without discussion in previous analyses, because the *-no* string appears in the third person plural ending in many tense / mood combinations in Italian, as we can see in (26). In a previous attempt to revise some of the problems encountered by Dressler – Thornton's original analysis, I myself have argued in a (1999) paper that third person plural forms could be analyzed as formed by agglutination of the ending *-no* to the third person singular word forms.

(26)	Tense / Mood	third person singular	third person plural
	Present Indicative	ama	ama-no
	Imperfect Indicative	amava	amava-no
	Future Indicative	amerà	amerà-nno
	Present Subjunctive	ami	ami-no

The main advantage of this analysis was morphosemantic rather than morphological; it allowed to analyze third person plural forms as “real plurals” of third person singular forms, following Benveniste's observations on the status of third person as opposed to first and second person.

But obviously this analysis fails to apply to the third person plural forms of the non-first conjugation (the second macroclass of Dressler – Thornton), which, if anything, seem to be

agglutinatively built not on their third person singular counterparts, but on the semantically highly inappropriate first person singular forms! See the data in (27):

(27)

a. **first person singular**

conosco, tengo, temo, sento, finisco
'I know, I keep, I fear, I hear, I finish'

third person plural

(= first person singular # no)

conoscono, tengono, temono, sentono, finiscono
'they know, they keep, they fear, they hear, they finish'

b. **third person singular**

conosce, tiene, teme, sente, finisce
's/he knows, s/he keeps, s/he fears,
s/he hears, s/he finishes'

possible but non-existing third person plural¹⁰

(= third person singular # no)

*conosceno, *tieneno, *temeno, *senteno,
*finisceno
'they know, they keep, they fear, they hear, they finish'

These facts can be captured by an analysis that maintains that the present indicative of regular Italian verbs conforms to the N pattern only if one postulates that the third person plural forms are, like the first person singular forms, built on the root followed by a vowel initial ending. The analysis is the one in (28):

(28) Analysis of the third person plural forms

a. I conjugation
(I macroclass)

root + ano

examples am+ano

b. II conjugation + III conjugation
(II macroclass)

root + ono

tem+ono, ved+ono, sent+ono, finisc+ono

This analysis of course sacrifices the hypothesis of a unitary ending *-no* for third person plural forms, which seemed so appealing by observing the data in (26) above.

At present, I think that the analysis in (28) is the correct one. Evidence comes from a phenomenon present in the Florentine variety and in most other Tuscan varieties of Italian. Florentine, the dialect of Florence, is the variety on which standard Italian is based. But since the codification of a standard written variety of Italian, based on 14th century Florentine, Florentine has evolved in its own way, and nowadays differs in several aspects from Standard Italian. One of the

¹⁰ Actually, forms such as these are attested in some dialectal and ancient varieties of Italian: cf. ROHLFS (1968, § 532).

main differences, present in the speech of all speakers, even highly cultivated ones, concerns exactly the present indicative third person plural forms. The ending *-ano*, appearing only in the first conjugation in Standard Italian (cf. the data in [27]), has spread to all other conjugations in most Tuscan varieties (Rohlf's [1968, § 532]; Giannelli [1976; 1988]). The Standard Italian third person plural forms of several second macroclass verbs, both regular and irregular, are given in (29), and the corresponding Florentine forms are in (30):

- (29) Present Indicative third person plural forms of several second macroclass verbs in Standard Italian

temono, vedono, sentono, dicono, vengono, siedono, finiscono, escono, odono...

- (30) Present Indicative third person plural forms of the verbs in (29) in Florentine

temano, vedano, sentano, dicano, vengano, siedano, finiscano, escano, odano...

It is important to stress the fact that what has spread from the first macroclass to the other one is exactly the third person plural ending *-ano*, not the thematic vowel /a/: Florentine shows no tendency to use hypothetical infinitives or second person plural forms like the starred ones in (31), which we would predict to arise if just the thematic vowel, and not the whole third person plural ending, had spread to the other classes:

- (31) Existing and non-existing forms in Florentine

verb	third person plural	infinitive	second person plural
temere	temano	temere, *temare	temete, *temate
sedere	siedano	sedere, *sedare	sedete, *sedate
finire	finiscano	finire, *finare	finite, *finate
udire	escano	udire, *udare	udite, *udate

Florentine speakers, then, analyze third person plural forms as based on a stressed root followed by a vowel initial disyllabic ending, and they have spread the ending of the first conjugation to second and third conjugation verbs¹¹.

I take the Florentine data to show that the present indicative of Italian regular verbs presents a partition that conforms to the N pattern, obscured only by the fact that the first person plural cell is filled by a rule of referral rather than being built on the stem formed by root+thematic vowel. There are actually both ancient and dialectal varieties of Italian in which the rule of referral is not present,

¹¹ Spreads in the opposite direction (yielding forms like *lavono* for *lavano*) are also attested in older varieties of Tuscan dialects.

and these display regular second person plural forms based on the stem, like the ones in (11c) above. An example is the verb VALERE in Old Italian whose paradigm was given in (2).

To sum up, the analysis of the present indicative forms of Italian regular verbs I propose is given in (32):

(32) Analysis of Italian present indicative forms

1	root- <i>o</i>
2	root - <i>i</i>
3	root { <i>-a / -e</i> }
4	Rule of referral (23)
5	theme- <i>te</i>
6	root { <i>-ano / -ono</i> }

There are different endings for the two macroclasses only in third person forms, and in contemporary Florentine the distinction is lost in the third person plural.

Discussion and conclusion

One final point that deserves discussion is the following: do we need all this?

In other words: can't we just generate the same output with an appropriate cooperation between well-chosen underlying representations and well-defined phonological rules? Descriptively adequate accounts of the Italian present indicative forms based on unique URs and a number of minor phonological rules have been available for a long time (from Wanner [1972] to Vogel [1993]).

One could contend that the choice between two alternative lines of reasoning, sometimes called the «syntagmatic» (Pirrelli) or «phonologizing» (Maiden [2004, 239]) approach and the «paradigmatic» or «morphologizing» approach, when they yield results which are equally adequate at the descriptive level, is a matter of faith¹².

I believe, however, that there are two classes of good reason to pursue the paradigmatic account outlined here.

First, even if syntagmatic or phonologizing accounts are available for the Standard Italian data I have presented, if one widens the field to include other Romance varieties, as Maiden has done in a number of contributions over the last few years, one discovers data that cannot be equally well expressed in a syntagmatic or phonologizing account. For example, a phonologizing account maintains that in Sicilian varieties the two suppletive alternants of the verb meaning “to give”,

¹² Maiden (2005, 160 ff.) also discusses this point.

which go back to the two Latin lexemes DARE and DONARE, are distributed according to stress: forms derived from DONARE would appear where the root is stressed, forms from DARE elsewhere. But Maiden (2004, 251) shows that the second singular imperative form, which is stressed, is *da*, i.e., it goes back to DARE, not to DONARE.

Second, if morphomic partition classes are properties of some inflectional systems (and a considerable body of evidence has been accumulated by authors such as Aronoff, Maiden and Stump to prove this), they must be universally available to all languages, i.e., they must be allowed by UG. If this is true, it is possible that even apparently uncomplicated data such as the Italian data presented above arise as an effect of the existence of morphomic partition classes in the language, and not just of the interaction between unique URs and phonological rules.

A similar position is taken by Maiden (2005), who observes:

the Romance languages display [...] morphological changes which appear, at first sight, to be ‘common or garden’ analogical levellings of allomorphy, ostensibly extramorphologically motivated by iconic matching of form and lexical meaning. [...] But could we exclude an autonomously morphological, ‘morphomic’, alternative, namely that there is a ‘fourth morphome’ which happens to specify *every* cell of the paradigm as its distribution? The implication would be profound, for it would open up the possibility that in general, across the world’s languages, analogical levelling of allomorphy could have an autonomously morphological dimension, being a specification about the shape of paradigms, rather than a direct signalling of lexical meaning (Maiden [2005, 164-165]).

Maiden seems to believe that the Standard Italian Present Indicative forms of regular verbs are based on a unique stem, but claims that this paradigm structure condition is still evidence of the existence of a specific partition of the paradigm, what he calls a «fourth morphome». I have proposed an analysis which differs in details from Maiden’s, but agrees with it in spirit. I have proposed that Standard Italian Present Indicative forms of regular verbs can be reduced to the N pattern which is observed in a number of so-called irregular verbs, rather than coming about through the operation of a fourth morphome.

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