In this paper, I advocate a morphological approach to ‘mixed paradigms’, i.e. mixed perfective auxiliation systems which are attested in a wide range of Italo-Romance varieties (cf. Loporcaro 2001; 2007; 2014; Manzini & Savoia 2005, among others). In these varieties, two auxiliary verbs, HABERE/ESSE (H/E), alternate within one and the same (sub)paradigm, displaying various patterns which can range from morphosyntactically motivated to apparently unmotivated distributions, which will be the core of the present paper.

I espouse the widely recognized view that auxiliary verb constructions are multi-word expressions in which the auxiliary is a functional, grammaticalized element exhibiting some peculiar properties different with respect to full lexical verbs (cf., e.g., Heine 1993; Kuteva 2001; Ledgeway 2012: 121–134). Given this peculiar behaviour, auxiliary verb constructions can be taken to be an instance of ‘inflectional periphrasis’, as defined, e.g., by Ackerman & Stump 2004; Brown et al. 2012.

Mixed paradigms in Italo-Romance exhibit alternations which have traditionally been described as ‘person-based’ (or, more precisely, ‘person-and-number-based’) or ‘person-driven’ systems (cf. D’Alessandro & Roberts 2010; Ledgeway, in press). These systems have attracted, over the past decades, much attention, especially within the generative framework (see, e.g., Bentley & Eythórsson 2001; Cennamo 2010; Legendre 2010; Loporcaro 2001; 2007; 2014; Ledgeway 2012: 317–327; in press: Sect. 3.2.; Manzini & Savoia 2005, II/III: chap. 5).

I argue that the theoretical interest of person-driven systems also lies in the fact that the attested patterns include distributions which induce remarkable splits within the periphrastic realization (cf. Corbett 2013; 2015; 2016; Štichauer 2018). Such splits – once the purely inflectional nature of such intraparadigmatic auxiliary alternation is recognized – can be described in terms of motivated as well as unmotivated, ‘morphomic’ patterns.

As is well known, morphomic splits have been demonstrated to be involved in patterns of stem alternation in Romance verbs (Maiden 2005; 2011; 2016b). However, there are some differences between the morphomic L-, N-, U-patterns defined by Maiden (2005; 2011; 2016b) and the unmotivated patterns that can be found in mixed paradigms.

First, Maiden’s morphomomic patterns involve more than one subparadigm covering a wider set of implicated cells – a ‘partition class’ (cf. Pirrelli 2000: 53–54; Pirrelli & Battista 2000: 316–318). In the case of mixed paradigms, we deal with a narrower distribution in that the unmotivated subset of cells concerns only one partial paradigm. In this sense, projecting Maiden’s patterns onto the case of auxiliary alternation is not correct. Hence, I will speak about narrower distribution schemata that hold only for a given partial paradigm (much in the vein of the ‘distribution schema’ of Pirrelli – Battista 2000: 324–325).

Second, Maiden’s morphomes have been demonstrated to be a diachronically robust phenomenon; the patterns of stem alternation are remarkably resistant to diachronic disruption and they frequently lead to morphological innovations in which these patterns serve as a model for further analogical spread (see, e.g., Maiden 2016a: 34–40 for a recent discussion of the ‘coherence’ and ‘attraction’ of such patterns).

In what follows, I aim to provide some further examples of morphomic distributions within periphrasis which, in my view, are better candidates than those discussed by Štichauer (2018: 17–20). At the same time, I also stress the importance of further diachronic evidence for the morphomic status of such mixed systems, which is an issue I must leave for future investigation. I now present two examples representing what I would call ‘mirror-image’ patterns.

In example (1), taken from the variety of Altomonte (Calabria, prov. Cosenza, southern Italy; cf. Manzini & Savoia 2005, II: 652), lavarsi ‘wash oneself’ is realized with H in the 1st
sg, 1st and 2nd pl., while the rest of the paradigm, i.e. 2nd and 3rd sg., 3rd pl. selects the auxiliary E.

(1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  m aju laˈvatu</td>
<td>n amu laˈvati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myself= I have washed.PTCP</td>
<td>ourselves= we have washed.PTCP.PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  ti si llaˈvatu</td>
<td>v ati laˈvati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yourself= you are SG washed.PTCP</td>
<td>yourselves= you have PL washed.PTCP.PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  sɛ llə laˈvatu</td>
<td>si su llaˈvati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>himself= he is washed.PTCP</td>
<td>themselves= they are washed.PTCP.PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern is striking in that there is no apparent semantic or phonological motivation for such a distribution. The collections of paradigm cells – on both sides – do not make up a natural class in morphosyntactic terms. It would be extremely hard to come up with a morphosyntactic motivation for these sets of cells (1sg + 1/2pl vs. 2/3sg + 3pl); moreover, it is also impossible to associate these cells with one or the other auxiliary. Indeed, we also find a mirror-image distribution in which the same unmotivated collection of cells is realized with the inverted selection of the auxiliary, as example (2) shows (the variety of Velo Veronese, Veneto, prov. Verona, northern Italy, cf. Manzini & Savoia 2005, II: 652):

(2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  me soŋ laˈva</td>
<td>se semo laˈve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myself= I am washed.PTCP</td>
<td>ourselves= we are washed.PTCP.PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  tɛ tɛ laˈva</td>
<td>ve si laˈve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yourself= you have SG washed.PTCP</td>
<td>yourselves= you are washed.PTCP.PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  el / la s a laˈva</td>
<td>i / le s a laˈva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he / she oneself= has washed.PTCP</td>
<td>they, M/they,F oneself= they have washed.PTCP.PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here we find the auxiliary E in the 1st sg. and 1/2 pl., while the rest of the paradigm is realized with H. Again, there do not seem to be any specific semantic or phonological reasons for such a pattern of distribution. It is nonetheless important to note that in these varieties there is a standard split between transitives/unergatives vs. unaccusatives in the auxiliary selection and that only the class of reflexives follows this intraparadigmatic distribution (cf. Manzini & Savoia 2005, II: 649-654). However, such an alternation pattern, though nested within a standard – motivated – split, is to be considered morphomic in the sense of being an unmotivated distribution pattern. Moreover, such specular distributions are particularly interesting in that they explicitly show that what is important here is not a given auxiliary, associated with a given cell (or a feature specification), but the abstract pattern of alternation, which can thus be defined in isolation regardless of the concrete forms of the alternants.

In this paper, I will adopt a morphological approach to the phenomenon of mixed paradigms, traditionally dealt with within various syntactic frameworks. The main idea here is that even auxiliary selection within paradigms can undergo a process of gradient morphologization. The result of such morphologization is that within a larger motivated split (active/stative), further splits may be nested, ranging from motivated to strictly morphomic, depending on the type of intraparadigmatic distribution of the two auxiliaries. I will discuss a number of morphomic distributions, such as those in (1) and (2), emphasizing the fact that a comparison with some of Maiden’s morphomic patterns is purely superficial, although the essential unmotivatedness of the patterns discussed is clearly visible. The diachronic stability – and, of course, the essential issue of the rise of such systems – will also be partly addressed.
References


