Voice clashing with aspect: the case of Italian Passives

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This article deals with the morphological gap of the Italian *venire* 'come' Passive, whose paradigm does not allow the combination with the Perfect and the other compound forms. Such a clash between aspect and voice will be demonstrated as due to the same condition governing the aspectual behaviour of the Italian *essere* 'be' Passive, providing a functional unifying treatment of the two phenomena. In the analysis here proposed a major role in the interaction between aspect and voice is played by the actional value (*Aktionsart*) of the two auxiliaries involved. Similar results are also provided by a comparison with the behaviour of the Passive auxiliaries in Dutch and Norwegian.

1. Introduction [1]

Aspect and voice can be confidently deemed distinct categories, the former belonging to the realm of semantics and referring to the way of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation (Comrie 1976), the latter being responsible for the syntactic encoding of the argumental structure. Nonetheless, these two independent categories are often found to interact in different ways. [2] Elaborating on this point Comrie (1981) has demonstrated the correlation between aspect and voice in Perfects and Resultatives, showing that an aspectual category, such as that expressed by the Armenian Resultative, is not neutral to voice distinctions: with two-place predicates the Armenian Resultative productively only occurs in the passive form. Since Comrie (1981:73) considers the perfect as one of the possible meanings of the Armenian Resultative, these data can be interpreted as providing evidence for a positive correlation between the perfect and the passive voice.

The mutual interaction among passive, perfect and resultative is also emphasized in wide-range typological research on the resultative (see Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988:15-18, 37-49, Maslov 1988 and the other articles on the typology of resultatives contained in Nedjalkov 1988 often discussing the issue). While Nedjalkov & Jaxontov (1988:17) maintain that the resultative is 'voice-neutral', they also recognize the frequent formal and functional interaction with passive voice. This quite prominently occurs in languages such as English

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(Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988:47), where one and the same form has both a resultative function (*the door was shut*), denoting the state resulting from a past action, and a passive function (*when it was shut*):

(1) When I came at five, the door was shut, but I do not know when it was shut

In some cases the difference between passive and resultative is neutralized so that, even in languages where they are expressed by different forms, they can be interchangeable in the same contexts. Consider the following German example (Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988:50):

(2) Ich kann Ihnen ein Buch darüber geben, es ist von einem Arzt verfaßt (ist verfaßt worden)
'I can give you a book about this, it is written (has been written) by a physician'

The relationship between passive and resultative has also often been recognized by traditional grammarians, who distinguish between stative and dynamic passive. Some occurrences of stative passive, particularly those where the lexical verb is telic, correspond to what in typological research is called 'resultative' (see Thieroff 1994 discussing this point). For instance in German grammatical tradition the form occurring in (2) (*ist verfaßt*) is called *Zustandspassiv* 'stative Passive' in order to keep it distinct from the dynamic Passive (*ist verfaßt worden*).

Nedjalkov & Jaxontov (1988:49) also point out the genetic relationship between passive and resultative, the latter being one of the possible sources evolving into a passive. In a study devoted to the evolution of passive constructions across languages, Haspelmath (1990:38-40) lists the combination between an inactive auxiliary and a resultative participle as one of the sources of passive morphology.

In this work the interaction between aspect and voice will be elaborated on, major attention being paid to the case of perfects and passives and to the role of resultativity in the relationship between the two. With respect to Comrie's conclusion concerning the positive interaction between perfects and passives, other cases will be presented, showing an attrition between the dynamic reading of the passive and the stative/resultative value of the perfect.

In fact, it will be shown that the results reached in this work do not actually challenge Comrie's generalization, which can be saved if the distinction between resultative and dynamic passive is taken into account.

2. *Italian Passives*

Standard Italian, along with several dialects of Italy and Romansh, are traditionally reported as the only Romance languages where an analytic construction formed with the Past Participle and the auxiliary 'come' (Italian *venire* /Romansh*(ve)gnir*) [3] occurs as full-fledged Passive. Even if a 'come' construction also occurs in other Romance languages (see Green 1982 for Spanish data), [4] the Italian and Romansh forms are considered as more grammaticalized passive morphemes.

In some varieties of Romansh the 'come' form is the only passive construction reported in the descriptions (see the case of Surselvan presented below), having completely ousted the common Romance Passive with the auxiliary *esser* 'be'. On the contrary, in Italian 'come' + Past Participle still coexists with *essere* 'be' + Past Participle. [5] As repeatedly pointed out in the literature, the two coexisting passive paradigms should not be regarded as equivalent. Some basic differences between the two have been noted, both on a morphological and a functional basis.

2.1. *Morphology*

As for the morphology of the Italian form, a prominent difference between the *venire* and the *essere* Passives concerns the compatibility with compound forms (Ambrosini 1982:31). Whereas both *essere* and *venire* can be combined with simple tenses, including Present, Future, Imperfect, Preterit, the compound forms of the Perfect, Pluperfect, Future Perfect are only allowed with *essere*, whereas the *Trapassato Remoto* (Pluperfect 2), a compound tense formed with the Preterit of the auxiliary, is barred both with *essere* and *venire*. Table 1 provides a synoptic presentation of the two passive paradigms in Italian, showing the different behaviour with respect to compound forms. Only a selection out of the complete set of forms is presented here, including those which are mostly relevant for the purpose of this work. [6]

Table 1. Italian Passives (verb: *costruire* 'build')

	essere + Past Participle	*venire* + Past Participle
Present	*è costruito*	*viene costruito*
Future	*sarà costruito*	*verrà costruito*
Perfect	*è stato costruito*	*
Preterit	*fu costruito*	*venne costruito*
Imperfect	*era costruito*	*veniva costruito*
Pluperfect	*era stato costruito*	*
Pluperfect 2	*	*
Future Perfect	*sarà stato costruito*	*

The morphological gap of the *venire* Passive seems to cut across aspectual oppositions. In order to clarify this point, the aspectual semantics of the Italian Present Perfect has to be taken into account. It is well known that its distribution varies along the geographic as well as the stylistic dimensions (see among others Bertinetto 1986; Bertinetto & Squartini 1996). There are vast areas where it cannot be considered as restricted to purely perfectal functions, also occurring in aoristic perfective contexts. A clear clue of this behaviour is the possibility to collocate with past punctual temporal adverbials as in:

(3) L'impresa ha costruito questo edificio nel 1988
'The company built (lit. has built) this building in 1988'

Nonetheless, the possibility of the Perfect to occur in purely aoristic perfective contexts does not seem to affect the morphological gap of the *venire* Passive. Even when the Perfect has an aoristic function, the *venire* form is still ungrammatical (4), the only form being admitted is the *essere* Passive (5):

(4) *Questo edificio è venuto costruito nel 1988
'This building was built (lit. has come built) in 1988'

(5) Questo edificio è stato costruito nel 1988
'This building was built (lit. has been built) in 1988'

It can be concluded that the restrictions of the *venire* Passive are

not consistent with the aspectual distinction aoristic vs. perfect aspect. [7] There are some aoristic forms, such as the Preterit, which are quite acceptable with the *venire* Passive, whereas with a form such as the Perfect both its aoristic and perfectal functions are barred. [8] In this respect, it can be added that there are other Italian analytic forms whose morphological gaps are quite consistent with aspectual oppositions. Consider the case of the Italian Progressive, a periphrasis only accepting imperfective tenses (6-7), and barring all the tenses expressing aoristic and perfect aspect: the compound forms Present Perfect, Pluperfect (9) as well as the Preterit (8).

(6) Paolo sta aspettando
'Paolo is waiting'

(7) Paolo stava aspettando
'Paolo was (IP) [9] waiting'

(8) *Paolo stette aspettando
'Paolo was (P) waiting'

(9) *Paolo è stato aspettando
'Paolo has been waiting'

From a comparative point of view it can be observed that the paradigmatic distribution sketched out in Table 1 cannot be extended to Romansh, where the 'come' Passive has no morphological restrictions, being accepted both with simple and compound tenses, and even with supercompound tenses (*El ei staus vegnius pigliaus* 'He was taken (lit. has been come taken)' reported by Ulleland 1964:288 for Surselvan). The occurrence of the *(ve)gnir* Passive with compound tenses has been documented since the oldest Romansh texts (Ettmayer 1921), when a double paradigm of passive markers (both with *(ve)gnîr* and *esser)* was used. Nowadays the distribution has changed and in this respect contemporary Romansh shows dialectal variation. Whereas in western Romansh (on Surselvan see Liver 1991:64-65; Wunderli 1993:264) *esser* has completely disappeared as passive marker, in the eastern Romansh area (on Vallader see Arquint 1964:99; Liver 1991:64-65) some residual forms of it are still admitted. Nonetheless, also in Vallader *esser* + Past Participle has no complete paradigm, only occurring in the compound tenses, and even in these cases it is reported as not frequently used in present-day informal speech (Kirstein 1974:130-132). What these diachronic and dialectal data show is that, even if in Romansh the *essere* Passive has

been ousted by the *(ve)gnir* construction, this process has been gradual and the compound tenses seem to play a fundamental role, being the last stronghold of resistance of the *esser* form.

2.2. Functional distribution

As to the functional distribution of the two Italian Passives, the descriptions available (see basically Ambrosini 1982:31-39; Salvi 1988:87-92) often point out that they are not always interchangeable. The restrictions of the *essere* Passive are often accounted for emphasizing the interaction with aspectual values (Ambrosini 1982; La Fauci 1985). This is particularly apparent in the imperfective forms of the *essere* Passive (Present and Imperfect), which often occur as Resultatives, denoting a state resulting from an earlier event rather than a dynamic passive. This phenomenon is often referred to as the ambiguity of the *essere* form with respect to the consistent passive function of the *venire* form. A case such as (10) is defined as ambiguous between stative and dynamic reading, while (11) can only be interpreted as dynamic.

(10) La porta è chiusa
'The door is shut'

(11) La porta viene chiusa
'The door is shut (lit. comes shut)'

As pointed out in Salvi (1988:88) (10) is only theoretically ambiguous, for, as such, without any contextual addition, it is only interpretable as stative. [10] In fact, it is not only a question of contextual improvement, since the imperfective forms of *essere* are never acceptable in some given passive contexts, where the *venire* form is mandatory. [11] This point will not be dealt with in detail, further research being required in order to reach a comprehensive description of the distributional pattern. [12] Suffice it to note that in some cases the unacceptability of *essere* is quite prominent and the reason for that lies in the competition between stative and dynamic meaning. This is particularly apparent with achievements and accomplishments in imperfective contexts, where *venire* is the only admitted choice, for the stative meaning of *essere* impinges on the possibility of being interpreted as denoting a dynamic event (see also Milan 1985:252-261). [13] Consider (12-15), where the dynamic reading in an habitual context is forced by means of a temporal adverbial locating the Event

Time (at 9 o'clock). [14] Here the *venire* form is the most natural choice (14-15), the acceptability of *essere* being highly questionable (12-13):

(12) ??Il giovedì il portone è chiuso alle 21
'On Thursdays the main door is closed at 9 p.m.'

(13) ??Il giovedì il portone era chiuso alle 21
'On Thursdays the main door was (IP) closed at 9 p.m.'

(14) Il giovedì il portone viene chiuso alle 21
'On Thursdays the main door is closed (lit. comes closed) at 9 p.m.'

(15) Il giovedì il portone veniva chiuso alle 21
'On Thursdays the main door was closed (lit. came (IP) closed) at 9 p.m.'

As for progressive contexts consider the following examples where a dynamic reading is triggered by *venire* (16), while *essere* only admits the stative interpretation (17):

(16) In quel momento veniva chiuso il portone
'At that moment the main door was being closed (lit. came (IP) closed)'

(17) In quel momento era chiuso il portone
'At that moment the main door was closed'

As far as activities are concerned, the contrast between *venire* and *essere* seems to be less prominent and both can be accepted in habitual (18-19) and progressive contexts (20-21):

(18) Il giovedì la cena era servita dalle 5 alle 6
'On Thursdays dinner was (IP) served from 5 to 6'

(19) Il giovedì la cena veniva servita dalle 5 alle 6
'On Thursdays dinner was served (lit. came (IP) served) from 5 to 6'

(20) In quel momento era servita la cena
'At that moment dinner was being served (lit. was (IP) served)'

(21) In quel momento veniva servita la cena
'At that moment dinner was being served (lit. came (IP) served)'

The different behaviour of activities with respect to achieve-

ments and accomplishments can be easily explained by taking into account the fact that only the latter can trigger a resultant state. Activities, lacking a resultant state, do not trigger the stative reading which encroaches on the dynamic interpretation, so that the usage of the *essere* Passive is not obstructed.

The comparison between *essere* and *venire* Passives in imperfective forms will not be pursued any longer here. What has been observed so far only aimed at pointing out a well known fact, namely the competition between stative and dynamic reading. Such a competition is the main factor limiting the possibility of *essere* to act as a passive morpheme. It was shown that the dynamic passive reading is particularly impinged on with achievements and accomplishments, which trigger a resultant stative reading. This observation will be capitalized on in the next sections in order to provide a functional explanation of the piece of data which was the starting point of the present discussion, namely the morphological gap of the *venire* Passive.

2.3. Morphological and functional explanations

The morphological gap of *venire* and the functional restrictions of *essere* have been traditionally assumed and explained as independent phenomena. Actually, only the latter phenomenon has been really treated and discussed, while the morphological gap of *venire* has simply been referred to and until recently no explanation has been proposed in the literature. Some hints for a morphological treatment of the phenomenon can be drawn from a cursory observation by Maiden (1995:157), who notes that the gap of the *venire* Passive is reminiscent of similar morphological restrictions in the Italian verb system. Maiden points out the behaviour of the Italian *Trapassato Remoto* (Pluperfect 2) (22), which, unlike the French *Passé Antérieur*, does not admit the substitution with a supercompound tense, formed with the Perfect of the auxiliary (23):

(22) Appena lo ebbe salutato, Paolo partì
'As soon as he had (P) said good-bye to him, P. left'

(23) *Appena lo ha avuto salutato, Paolo è partito
'As soon as he had said (lit. has had said) good-bye to him, P. left'

Due to (23), it could be concluded that a sequence of two Participles tends to be avoided. The ungrammaticality of the Passive

Trapassato Remoto even with the *essere* form (**fu stato mosso*), pointed out in Ambrosini (1982:56-61) and Bertuccelli Papi (1980:39), also seems to confirm the tendency to avoid a sequence of two Participles. [15] As a confirmation of the morphological hypothesis it could also be mentioned that a language where the *venire* Passive admits the Perfect, such as Romansh, also has supercompound forms. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that in Italian a sequence of two Participles is not always barred. The Perfect of the *essere* Passive (*La casa è stata costruita* 'The house has been built') shows such a sequence, thus challenging a general morphological principle.

To the best of my knowledge, the first functional account of the *venire* morphological gap can be found in Giacalone Ramat (1999), where a comprehensive presentation of the grammaticalization process of Italian motion verbs in several periphrastic constructions is provided (see also Giacalone Ramat 1995, 1998). Among these constructions, the author also discusses the behaviour of *venire* + Past Participle. In such a context a unifying functional explanation concerning both the morphological gap of the *venire* Passive and the functional restrictions of the *essere* Passive is suggested.

Giacalone Ramat (1999) elaborates on the traditional claim that the *venire* Passive can be considered as a way of solving the ambiguity of the *essere* Passive. She observes that *essere* is not ambiguous in the Perfect (24):

(24) Le porte sono state aperte alle 4
'The doors were opened (lit. have been opened) at 4'

Since (24) is not ambiguous, [16] Giacalone Ramat argues, *venire* is not required to solve the ambiguity and this is why the form of the Perfect with *venire* does not exist.

In what follows Giacalone's proposal will be developed and a new perspective will be added to it. It will be shown that the ungrammaticality of the *venire* Perfect Passive is not only due to the fact that the Perfect of the *essere* Passive is not ambiguous. If the latter were the only factor involved, it couldn't be explained why the *venire* Passive can be found as fully grammaticalized in those tenses where there is no ambiguity to be solved. This is the case with the Preterit (25), where the *essere* form is not ambiguous between stative and dynamic reading. Even with an achievement, *essere* at the Preterit does not require any contextual removal of disambiguity in order to be interpreted as denoting an action and not a state: [17]

(25) Le porte furono aperte alle 4
'The doors were (P) opened at 4'

Even if in (25) there is no ambiguity to be solved the *venire* Passive is well accepted:

(26) Le porte vennero aperte alle 4
'The doors were opened (lit. came (P) opened) at 4'

Given the grammaticality of (26), it must be admitted that the ungrammaticality of the *venire* Perfect Passive is not only due to the fact that there is no ambiguity to be solved. Other factors must also be responsible for the clash between Perfect and Passive in the case of *venire*. A solution will be proposed here recognizing an obstructing element in the paradigm of *venire* itself. Following the spirit of Giacalone's analysis the solution will be sought in the functional interplay between stative-resultative and dynamic readings, maintaining that the gap in the morphological system of the *venire* Passive is due to the attrition between the two.

My basic claim is that the same factor impinging on the usage of the *essere* Passive as a full-fledged passive marker also accounts for the morphological gap in the paradigm of *venire*, thus providing a unifying functional treatment of both phenomena.

2.4. The interaction between stative and dynamic meaning

As mentioned in section 2.2 and as often maintained in the literature, the main factor responsible for the ambiguity of the *essere* Passive is the attrition between stative and dynamic meaning. As shown above (see 10-17), the forms where the so-called ambiguity of *essere* mostly occurs are those having an imperfective value (Imperfect and Present). It was also mentioned above that the ambiguity between stative and dynamic reading is much less apparent with the other forms of the verb paradigm of *essere* (Perfect, Pluperfect, Preterit, etc.). [18]

Given such a distribution it can be concluded that the usage of *essere* as passive marker is impeded whenever the situation is visualized as holding at a given reference time and such a visualization is aspectually marked as imperfective, because in this case the stative-resultative meaning prevails. On the contrary, when the situation is visualized as a whole, namely perfectively, the attrition between stative meaning and passive does not obstruct the full functioning of the

form as passive marker. [19] The condition governing the behaviour of *essere* as passive marker can be formulated as follows:

Condition (a)
The usage of essere *as passive marker is obstructed whenever the situation referred to is an imperfective state.*

Now, the move that will be attempted is to extend Condition (a) to the case of *venire*. The main element involved in Condition (a) is the requirement of a state holding at some given reference time, as can be found with the imperfective form of *essere*. What must be looked for now is whether in the paradigm of *venire* there is any form triggering an imperfective state holding at some given reference time. In order to check this point the *Aktionsart* or actional value of the auxiliaries *essere* and *venire* has to be taken into account, which has not yet been done in treating the grammaticalization of passive constructions.

Indeed, the two auxiliaries involved in Italian Passive are quite different as far as actionality is concerned: while *essere* belongs to the class of states, *venire* is an achievement in Vendler's traditional classification. Nevertheless, there is a point in the aspectual paradigm of an achievement which is quite strictly connected with states. It is a well known fact that the Perfect of an achievement can be interpreted as denoting not only the achievement, but also the state resulting from the achievement. By means of tests based on compatibility with temporal adverbials it can be demonstrated that the state triggered by the Perfect of an achievement is an imperfective state.

Consider (27-29) where the different behaviour of the verbs *essere* and *venire* with the Italian adverbial *da* X TIME is tested: *da* X TIME (lit. 'since X TIME') measures the temporal span between a reference time and a previous time point and corresponds to the English *for* X TIME in a context such as *Paul has been at home for two hours*. An important difference with respect to English is that in such a case Romance languages require an imperfective tense, instead of the Present Perfect (Italian *P. era a casa da due ore* '(lit.) P. was (IP) at home for two hours = P. has been at home for two hours'). The interesting point here is that in Italian states and achievements behave differently in respect of the compatibility with *da X TIME*. With states the adverbial is only compatible with an imperfective tense such as Present or Imperfect (27), but not with the Perfect (28), while with an achievement (*venire*) the Perfect is acceptable (29). This shows that the Perfect of the achievement *venire* behaves as the imperfective tenses of *essere*.

(27) Marco è/era in casa da due ore
'M. has been/had been (lit. is/was (IP)) at home for two hours (lit. since two hours)'

(28) *Marco è stato in casa da due ore
'M. has been at home for two hours (lit. since two hours)'

(29) Marco è venuto a Milano da pochi giorni
'M. came to Milan few days ago (lit. has come to Milan since few days)'

These data demonstrate that the imperfective tenses of a state and the Perfect of an achievement can be lumped together, and the reason is that the latter triggers a resulting state, having the same behaviour as imperfective states. Thus, it can be maintained that there is a point in the paradigm of *venire* (the Perfect) where the situation referred to can not only be the achievement itself, but an imperfective state.

Another test whose result supports this conclusion is the following, where the implicature of a resultant state is verified. While the Perfect of a state (30) and an imperfective state (32) have no reciprocal relation of implicature, the Perfect of an achievement (31) has the imperfective state (32) as a possible implicature.

(30) Marco è stato qui
'Marco was (lit. has been) here'

(31) Marco è venuto
'Marco has come here'

(32) Marco è qui
'Marco is here'

Note that (30) does not allow (32) as an implicature, for, as mentioned above, in Italian, unlike English, the Perfect of a state does not extend the state until the Speech Time. Thus, the Italian Perfect, when occurring with a state, refers to a situation which is over at the Speech Time and does not have the present state as an implicature. On the contrary a resultant state is a possible implicature of the Perfect of an achievement. This is only a conversational implicature, since it can be cancelled (33):

(33) Marco è venuto, ma se ne è già andato
'Marco came (lit. has come) here, but he has already gone away'

These data confirm that an achievement such as *venire* can trigger a stative resultative reading with the Perfect, thus explaining why the grammaticalization of the *venire* Passive is blocked with the Perfect and the other compound forms. The structural factor involved is the same impeding the usage of the imperfective forms of *essere* as a full-fledged Passive. The different actional value of *essere* and *venire* explains why the same factor shows its effects in different points of the paradigm of the *essere* and the *venire* Passives. The Perfect of an achievement, denoting an imperfective state, delivers the same structural conditions as the Present and Imperfect of a state.

Thus, Condition (a) can now be extended to the case of *venire*:

Condition (a')
The usage of venire *and* essere *as passive markers is obstructed whenever the situation referred to is an imperfective state.*

2.5. The predicative venire *construction*

The solution here proposed is based on the assumption that stativity plays a role not only in the *essere* Passive, but also in the *venire* form. As shown above, this is sustained by the actional character of *venire*, which, being an achievement, if combined with the Perfect, can trigger a stative reading. Apart from the general property of achievements to trigger a resultative stative reading, a special fact concerning Italian *venire* can be mentioned, which supports the hypothesis that the main factor involved is stativity. In Italian *venire* does not only occur as independent motion verb and as auxiliary of the Passive; it can also appear followed by a predicative Participle or adjective. This construction coexists with the occurrence of *venire* as Passive and in this case no morphological gap can be found, the Perfect and the compound forms (with the exception of the *Trapassato Remoto*) being admitted. [20] What is mostly relevant for the purpose of the present analysis is that this predicative construction with *venire* has a stative-resultative reading, thus confirming the role of stativity even with an achievement such as *venire*.

Consider the following examples, where *venire* is construed with Past Participles and adjectives in predicative function.

(34) Il caffè è venuto ristretto
'The coffee has come out extra strong'

(35) Il pavimento è venuto pulito
'The floor has come out clean'

(36) Il manifesto è venuto scritto bene
'The poster has come out well written'

In these cases the construction with *venire* has a resultative meaning, denoting the state resulting from a previous action. This can be demonstrated by considering the collocation with adverbials which can only modify an event (for instance *suddenly*). The predicative construction disallows such a modifying adverbial (39-40), thus paralleling the behaviour of states (37-38), whereas a real event (41-42) can be compatible with the adverbial: [21]

(37) Stavolta la torta è alta
'This time the cake is big'

(38) *Stavolta la torta è alta all'improvviso
'This time the cake is suddenly big'

(39) Stavolta la torta è venuta alta
'This time the cake has come out big'

(40) *Stavolta la torta è venuta alta all'improvviso
'This time the cake has come out suddenly big'

(41) Stavolta la torta è cresciuta
'This time the cake has risen'

(42) Stavolta la torta è cresciuta all'improvviso
'This time the cake has suddenly risen'

The occurrence of these predicative contexts demonstrates that it is not only *essere* + Past Participle but also *venire* + Past Participle that is used as resultative construction, thus strengthening the hypothesis of the attrition of a stative-resultative reading and the dynamic reading not only in the grammaticalization of *essere* but in the case of *venire* as well. [22]

3. Comparative data

Quite a compelling argument for the hypothesis here proposed is provided by cross-linguistic comparison. Interesting cases to compare

are those languages where two different passive forms occur and the two auxiliaries have a different actional value. Several Germanic languages show such a pattern with both the verb 'be' and a verb belonging to the semantic sphere of 'become' occurring as auxiliary. This is for instance the case in German where two different passive forms are used: the so-called *Zustandspassiv* ('stative Passive') with the auxiliary *sein* 'be' and a dynamic Passive with the auxiliary *werden* 'become'. In English too the verb *get* is described as being used as a concurrent form of the 'be' Passive, even if its occurrence is still submitted to semantic, syntactic as well as stylistic restrictions. What is mostly interesting for a comparison with the Italian case is the distribution of Norwegian and Dutch Passives.

3.1. Dutch

Dutch not only has two Passives like the other Germanic languages, but also shows a morphological gap which is comparable to the Italian distribution. The Passive with *worden* 'become' (the dynamic Passive corresponding to Italian *venire* Passive) is defective, lacking all the compound forms. Consider Table 2, which is a modified version of Table 11 in Thieroff (1994), showing the morphological distribution of the Dutch passive forms. Note that such a distribution is the result of a diachronic process, for Dutch used to admit the Perfect of the dynamic Passive, this construction having become ungrammatical in the course of time. From this point of view Dutch differs from Italian, where, as far as we know, the compound forms of the *venire* Passive have never been documented (but see the northern Italian data in fn. 8).

Table 2. Dutch Passives (verb: *sluiten* 'close')

	zijn + Past Participle	*worden* + Past Participle
Present	*is gesloten*	*wordt gesloten*
Future	*zal gesloten zijn*	*zal gesloten worden*
Present Perfect	*is gesloten geweest*	*
Preterit	*was gesloten*	*werd gesloten*
Pluperfect	*was gesloten geweest*	*
Future Perfect	*zal gesloten zijn geweest*	*

The interesting point now is that in Dutch such a distribution

has led to a neutralization between the Present of the 'be' form and the Present Perfect of the 'become' form, so that the former can occur both as Present and Perfect Passive. [23] The same holds true for the other compound forms as well, so that for instance the Preterit of the 'be' form can also occur as Pluperfect Passive. Consider the following three pairs of examples (from Thieroff 1994):

(43) De misdadiger is gezocht
'The criminal is searched for'

(44) Es is al vaker naar de misdadiger gezocht
'The criminal has been searched (lit. is searched) for several times'

(45) Het huis is bewaakt
'The house is controlled'

(46) Het huis is gisteren door deze politieman bewaakt
'The house was controlled (lit. is controlled) yesterday by this policeman'

(47) De president is door een lijfwacht omringd
'The president is surrounded by lifeguards'

(48) De president is vanmorgen door een lijfwacht omringd
'The president has been surrounded (lit. is surrounded) by lifeguards this morning'

In these cases one and the same form is used with two quite different functions: in (43, 45, 47) it refers to a current state, while in (44, 46, 48) the temporal adverbials (*several times, yesterday, this morning*) make clear that the situation referred to is located in the past. In these cases the Present form of the 'be' Passive has the same function as a Perfect Passive.

3.2. Norwegian

Similar data are also reported by Thieroff (1994:13-15) for the Norwegian Passive. In this case, unlike Dutch, the Perfect of the *bli* 'become' Passive does occur, but the Past Participle of the auxiliary *bli* can be omitted, so that the Perfect of the *bli* Passive coincides with the Present of the *være* 'be' Passive. What in Dutch is the only possibility, in Norwegian is an optional form. Consider the following example which can be interpreted both as the Present of the 'be' Passive or the Perfect of the 'become' form.

(49) Byen er erobret
'The town is captured'

The perfect reading can be shown by means of contextual additions forcing a dynamic interpretation. Nonetheless, the form used can be the same as the one denoting the current state reading:

(50) Byen er tre ganger erobret av romerne
'The town has been captured (lit. is captured) three times by the Romans'

It can also be added that such a neutralization holds in Norwegian for telic verbs only (Thieroff 1994), while activities and state admit compound forms both with the 'be' and the 'become' Passive. This demonstrates that the starting point of such a neutralization can be traced back to the presence of a resulting state, which is only triggered by telic verbs. In Dutch (Thieroff 1994), the process has gone further so that the same neutralization also occurs for activities and states (as shown in 43-48).

With respect to the question discussed in this work, these Dutch and Norwegian data are quite relevant for different reasons. First of all, they show that the morphological gap of the Italian form is not an isolated phenomenon, being comparable with similar formal distributions in other languages where two passive forms (a stative and a dynamic form) can be found. Moreover, and this is the crucial point supporting the analysis here proposed, the fact that the form replacing the Perfect of the 'become/come' Passive is the Present of the 'be' Passive shows the strict semantic solidarity between the two, thus confirming my general claim that the Perfect of the Italian 'come' Passive and the imperfective forms of the 'be' Passive have something in common. In Dutch and Norwegian their functional similarity, which is the possibility to denote an imperfective state, is proved by their formal behaviour leading to a neutralization between the two. In this respect it is crucial that the neutralization can be originally traced back to the case of telic verbs, thus proving the role of the resultant state as the main factor triggering the whole neutralization process.

4. Conclusion

In this work the morphological as well as functional features of Italian Passives were analyzed as an interesting case-study concer-

ning the more general question of the correlation between perfect and passive. The behaviour of the *venire* Passive, which avoids the combination with the Perfect and the other compound forms, was mentioned as a counterexample of Comrie's (1981) generalization concerning a positive correlation between passive voice and perfect aspect, based on the behaviour of the Armenian Resultative.

In the solution here proposed in order to explain the morphological gap of the Italian form a major role is played by the distinction between stative and dynamic reading. It was shown that the stative-resultative reading of the Perfect is responsible for the morphological gap of the Italian *venire* Passive, as well as for the so-called ambiguity of the *essere* form. As in the case of the imperfective tenses of the *essere* Passive, where the stative/resultative reading negatively interacts with a dynamic reading, in the same way the stative reading triggered by the Perfect of an achievement auxiliary such as *venire* is responsible for the morphological gap. The interaction with the stative reading was particularly emphasized, for it could be proved to deliver a unifying treatment of both phenomena.

As far as the discrepancy with respect to Comrie's generalization is concerned, it must be noted that in the Armenian case a Resultative was described, namely a form which, given its definition, is bound to have a stative reading. Thus, the result of the combination with the passive morphology is a passive with stative meaning. On the contrary, the Italian case here described concerns the interaction between a passive with dynamic meaning (the *venire* form) and a Perfect. In this case the resultative value of the Perfect clashes with the dynamic reading of the passive form, delivering a semantic incoherence resulting in a morphological gap. Thus, the inconsistency with respect to Comrie can be saved, if the distinction between stative and dynamic reading of the passive is taken into account. His generalization on the positive correlation between perfect and passive can be proved correct as far as the stative-resultative reading of the passive is concerned, but when a dynamic passive is dealt with, the Italian case shows that a clash with the resultative value of the Perfect can be observed.

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Notes

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[2] In some cases (see in particular Beedham 1982) the role of aspect in the interaction with voice has been overemphasized, even considering the Passive to be a morphological expression of aspect.

[3] Actually in Romansh the verb *(ve)gnir* is not only restricted to the meaning of 'come', also covering the whole semantic area corresponding to English 'become'.

[4] A passive with 'come' as auxiliary is also reported as occurring in several Swiss-German dialects lying close to the border with Romance varieties, especially in Wallis and the Upper Bernese area (Moulton 1941: 45-46, 64).

[5] It must be noted that the copular forms of 'be' and the verb 'come' are not the only passive auxiliaries occurring in Romance languages. Other auxiliaries are reported as passive markers, such as the verb derived from Latin *fieri* 'become' + Past Participle in Old Northern Italian dialects (Rohlfs 1966-1969, 3: 129-130; Kontzi 1958: 26-32), while a passive form with the auxiliary 'have' is quite uniquely documented in an Apulian dialect (Loporcaro 1988: 290-299). Several other less grammaticalized auxiliaries can be found, also including motion verbs such as 'go' in Italian and Spanish, and states such as 'remain' in Spanish, Portugal and Old Italian. On these more peripheral constructions see Green (1982) for Spanish, Setterberg-Jørgensen (1950), Kontzi (1958: 51-62), Lo Cascio (1968) for Italian and Cennamo (1997: 146-153) for Italian dialects. For a wide typological presentation of periphrastic Passives see Siewierska (1984: 126-161).

[6] Another morphological gap concerning the Italian Passive which will not be dealt with here is the combination Passive + Progressive (Italian *stare* 'stay, be' + gerund). This is described as ungrammatical in Italian (see Bertinetto 1986:138). Nonetheless, the restriction seems to be presently loosening, since a couple of example of Passive Progressives with *venire* have been found in contemporary journalistic texts:

(i) gli spazi lasciati liberi stanno rapidamente venendo occupati dalla concorrenza (*Corpus Italiano Contemporaneo*, Newspapers, from Squartini 1998:107)
'the spaces left free are rapidly being occupied by the competition'

(ii) la nave ... sta venendo evacuata (*La Repubblica* 1987, da Berruto 1987:73 fn. 15).
'the ship is being evacuated'.

[7] According to the available descriptions in Friulian the distribution of the two passive auxiliaries seems to be more consistent with respect to aspectual distinctions, for the auxiliary *jessi* 'be' is reported as only admitted with the forms expressing perfect and aoristic aspect (the compound forms and the Preterit), while *vignî* 'come' occurs with all the other imperfective forms (Marchetti 1952:156-157).

[8] It can be added that in the Italian northern varieties, where the Present Perfect most clearly shows aoristic functions, some hints of a further grammaticalization of the *venire* Perfect Passive are found. Consider the following examples mentioned in Vincent (1987:249) from a 16th c. Mantuan text written in Standard Italian by Ascanio de' Mori, where the compound forms of the *venire* Passive occur, apparently not showing the same restrictions as in contemporary Standard Italian:

(i) se fossero venute bandite tutte le belle dalla patria, ella non avrebbe corso molto pericolo
'if all the beautiful women in the country had been banished (lit. had come banished), she would not have been in any great danger'
(ii) disse esserle venuta involata ... una sua collana
'she said a necklace of hers had been stolen (lit. had come stolen)'

Further research is needed in order to ascertain the actual extension and distribution of this phenomenon.

[9] Abbreviations: IP= Imperfective Past, P=Perfective Past.

[10] As suggested by an anonymous referee the stative character of the *essere* construction can be syntactically tested by means of the compatibility with a prepositional infinitival clause. As pointed out in Cinque (1990:21-23) unergative adjectives (i), unlike Passives (ii), disallow a prepositional infinitival clause:

(i) È pericoloso (*di) sporgersi
'It is dangerous to lean out'
(ii) Mi è stato vietato *(di) fumare
'I was forbidden to smoke'

Since the imperfective forms of the *essere* construction behave like adjectives in avoiding the preposition (iii) it could be argued that the Participle has an adjectival status with the imperfective forms and a verbal function with the perfective ones:

(iii) È vietato (*di) fumare
'It is forbidden to smoke'

[11] Ambrosini (1982:47-53) points out several examples where only *venire* is grammatical, mostly with achievements, as in:

(i) ??Oggi da Carlo è offerto un libro a Luigi
'Today a book is offered by Carlo to Luigi'
(ii) Oggi da Carlo viene offerto un libro a Luigi
'Today a book is offered (lit. comes offered) by Carlo to Luigi'

[12] It can be noted that in some dialects of Italy the functional and formal complementarity between the *venire* and the *essere* form is more consistent than in Standard Italian. This is the case of Friulian mentioned in fn. 7 but also of the Apulian dialect of Altamura described in Loporcaro (1988:290-299), where the *venire* form, like in Italian, is restricted to the simple tenses, but the *essere* Passive only occurs with the perfective and perfectal forms, excluding the imperfective tenses (Present and Imperfect). Actually, the distribution of Passives in this dialect is more complex, since, as mentioned in fn. 5, another passive construction formed with the auxiliary 'have' also exists, showing a different pattern of formal restrictions (it is compatible with all tenses, but the Pluperfect). Another factor which has to be taken into account when dealing with this dialect is that the constructions 'be'/'have' + Past Participle also occur as active compound forms, the latter showing, in some tenses, a formal distinction between the active (where the stressed form of the auxiliary occurs) and the passive forms (with the unstressed forms).

[13] On the interaction of actionality (*Aktionsart*) and voice in the Romance 'be' Passive see also Vikner (1985), who focuses on the French form, showing that the ambiguity between dynamic and stative reading only arises with telic verbs. In Spanish the Passive with *ser* 'be' is also sensitive to the actional class of the predicate. As reported in Real Academia Española (1989: 452) the combination of

imperfective tenses (Present and Imperfect) with achievements is ungrammatical in a progressive reading, being only admitted in habitual contexts: *La puerta es abierta por el portero* 'The door is opened by the porter' (see also Russinovich Solé 1989).

[14] Note that, if the temporal adverbial precedes the verb phrase, the only possible interpretation is stative and the sentences become grammatical:

(i) Alle 21 il portone è chiuso
'At 9 the main door is closed'
(ii) Alle 21 il portone era chiuso
'At 9 the main door was (IP) closed'

As for the relationship between adverbial position and aspectual interpretation see Bianchi et al. (1995).

[15] Ambrosini proposes a semantic motivation for such a gap noting that the passive contrasts with the intrinsic non-durative character of the *Trapassato Remoto*.

[16] Note that the Perfect of *essere* can also be interpreted as stative (Salvi 1988: 90), but this requires a contextual adaptation, such as by inserting a durational adverbial:

(i) Le porte sono state aperte per due ore
'The doors have been open for two hours'

[17] A stative interpretation is still possible when a durative temporal adverbial is added, even if in such cases a different passive construction (*restare* or *rimanere* 'remain' + past participle) is preferred (Salvi 1988: 90):

(i) La porta fu chiusa per molti anni
'The door was (P) closed for many years'
(ii) La porta rimase chiusa per molti anni
'The door remained (P) closed for many years'

[18] As shown in fn. 16 the Perfect of *essere* can also trigger a stative reading but this is only possible with a durational adverbial delimiting the resultative state and, what is especially relevant, this does not interfere with the possibility of occurring as passive marker.

[19] This applies to the simple perfective form (Preterit) as well as to the compound forms, including the Pluperfect, which, even if etimologically formed with the the Imperfect of the auxiliary (i), has to be interpreted as a perfective form, as is demonstrated by the compatibility with temporal delimiting adverbials (ii):

(i) La casa era stata distrutta
'The house had been destroyed (lit. was been destroyed)'
(ii) La casa era stata distrutta in tre ore
'The house had been destroyed (lit. was been destroyed) in three hours'

[20] The compound forms are also admitted with other more peripheral Italian Passives (see fn. 5), such as the participial construction with *andare* 'go', which is idiomatically restricted to some verbs indicating 'loss' or 'destruction':

(i) Il libro è andato perduto
'The book has been lost (lit. has gone lost)'

The categorial status of this construction as Passive is controversial: due to the incompatibility with a superficial agent (ii), Salvi (1988: 92-93) has proposed to analyze it as a predicative construction.

(ii) Il libro è andato perduto (*da Paolo)
'The book has been lost (lit. has gone lost) (by Paul)'

The predicative character might explain why *andare* + Participle does not show the same morphological restrictions with respect to compound forms as the full-fledged *venire*-Passive.

[21] It can be added that in Romansh (at least in Vallader, the variety represented in the following examples) a similar predicative resultative usage of *(ve)gnir* can be found as well (i-ii), but here the construction can also have a dynamic reading (iii), for, as noted in fn. 3 the Romansh *(ve)gnir* can also mean 'become':

(i) La tuorta es gnüda buna quista jada
'The cake has come out good this time'
(ii) La tuorta m'es gnüda gronda quista jada
'The cake has come out big this time'
(iii) La tuorta m'es gnüda gronda in un sfrach
'The cake has become suddenly big'

[22] In Italian *venire* also occurs in another participial construction expressing the unexpected and non-volitional character of the situation, the agent being demoted to a non-subject position and expressed by dative morphology, as in:

(i) Mi è venuto detto
'I happened to say it (lit. to-me is come said)'

Nowadays this construction is idiomatically restricted to some verbs (mainly *dire* 'say', *fare* 'do', *pensare* 'think') and is mostly used in Central Italian varieties. It was more frequent in Old Tuscan texts, where it productively occurred with a greater set of predicates, always conveying non-volitionality (see Kontzi 1958; Bertuccelli Papi 1980: 61-72). As suggested by Ambrosini (1982: 31-39) and confirmed by Giacalone Ramat (1999) the construction has an intrinsic eventive character, disallowing a state-resultative reading. Lacking any attrition between eventivity and resultativity, it does not show restrictions with respect to compound tenses, as is apparent by the compatibility with the Present Perfect in (i). In this respect, it differs from the regular *venire*-Passive, where, as shown in this article, the restriction with compound forms is triggered by the attrition between eventivity and resultativity.

[23] A similar distribution, where the Present and Imperfect forms of the *essere* Passive occur instead of a Perfect is documented in Old Italian (see Brambilla Ageno 1964: 186-199, Kontzi 1958:9-16, Bertuccelli Papi 1980: 25-31). Note, however, that the diachronic development of the two phenomena is quite different: in Old Italian the usage of the Present *è fatto* instead of the Perfect is a conservative feature of the Latin Perfect (*factum est*), whereas in Dutch, and possibly in Norwegian, forms such as Dutch *is gesloten* diachronically derive from *is gesloten geworden* (Thieroff 1994: 15).

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