

**(Beyond) Force, Mood and Modality:
matrix complementisers in Italian dialects**

Valentina Colasanti (vc314@cam.ac.uk), Giuseppina Silvestri (gs486@cam.ac.uk)
University of Cambridge

While the main function of complementisers is to introduce subordinate clauses, in Romance varieties they can also introduce main clauses as well, i.e. declaratives, exclamatives, adhortative/exhortative clauses and interrogatives (cf. a.o. Etxepare 2008; Demonte&Fernández Soriano 2014; Corr 2016). Several studies have highlighted how complementisers in root clauses signal a special function or value of the clause (D'Alessandro&Ledgeway 2010; Ledgeway 2000, 2005). In this respect, in Italo-Romance the presence of overt complementisers in root clauses has been already noticed. In modern Abruzzese complementisers are spelt out at the beginning of declaratives and seem to express the speakers' assessment of the evidence for their statement (D'Alessandro&Di Felice 2015; cf. 1):

- (1) a. **Ca** nin chischə!
that not fall.2SG
'You won't fall!' [Don't worry. It is the case that you will not fall]
- b. **Chi** nin chischə!
that not fall.2SG
'You might fall!' [Watch out! It is the case that you might fall] *modern Abruzzese*

We aim at discussing previously unexplored evidence from Italo-Romance revealing that the distribution of matrix complementisers in main clauses is sensitive to three strictly related variables, namely (i) (Beyond) Force; (ii) Mood; and (iii) Modality. Specifically, (i) the illocutionary force of the sentence and its related syntactic position in the split-CP (i.e. Force; Rizzi 1997), together with the speech-act material that can be found 'beyond' the CP (i.e. particles, interjections); (ii) the morphological mood in the TP (viz. indicative vs subjunctive); and (iii) the realis vs irrealis modality of the sentence.

In the upper-southern Italian variety of Santa Maria del Cedro the complementiser *ca* can be dropped either in jussive (cf. 2a) and optative (cf. 3a) matrix clauses when there is no speech-act material beyond Force (i.e. the interjections *oh!* and *ih!*; cf. 2b, 3b):

A) Jussives

[Discourse context: Mario does not want to go somewhere and the speaker wants to force him to go.]

- (2) a. (**Ca**) (Màriə) vinissədə (Màriə)!
ca Mario come. 3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario
'Mario had better come!'
- b. Oh ***(Ca)** (Màriə) vinissədə (Màriə)!
oh ca Mario come. 3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario
'Mario had better come!' *Santa Maria del Cedro*

B) Optatives

[Discourse context: the speaker curses the listener.]

- (3) a. (**Chə**) ti ruppissə nu vrazzə!
chə self= break.2SG.PST.SUBJ an arm
'May you break your arm!'
- b. Ih ***(chə)** tə vo piglià nu lampə!
ih chə you.OBJ want.3SG.PRS take.INF a lightning
'May lightening strike you!' *Santa Maria del Cedro*

However, it is not possible to drop the complementiser in optatives when no irrealis morphological mood (viz. subjunctive) is selected in the TP and, at the same time, the modality of the action is still irrealis:

- (4) ***(Chə)** tə vo piglià nu lampə! [optative]
chə you.OBJ want.3SG.IND.PRS take.INF a lightning
'May lightening strike you!' *Santa Maria del Cedro*

Moreover, it seems that in jussives (cf. 2) there is an apparent optionality linked to the pre- or post-verbal position of the subject (cf. Giorgi&Pianesi 2004; Cocchi&Poletto 2002), which provides cues for the exact position of the complementiser in the split-CP. In concessive matrix clauses the subject has to be obligatorily post-verbal (5). The complementiser *ca* - if not dropped - has to lexicalise in the closest position to the selected irrealis embedded verb *vinissədə*:

- (5) (Ca) (*Màriə) vinissədə (Màriə) [concessive]
 ca Mario come.3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario
 ‘Mario may come’ *Santa Maria del Cedro*

What is the relationship, if any, between these overt complementisers and clause-typing and/or illocutionary force? In short, are the complementisers (e.g. *ca/chə*), which mark different sentence values, the same complementisers in all cases or can the same or different lexical items lexicalise distinct positions within the CP?

The distribution of matrix complementisers in Italian dialects will be analysed through a dynamic/variable phase-based approach (see a.o. Bobaljik&Wurmbrand 2005; Wurmbrand 2013; Harwood 2015) of the split-CP together with Wiltschko&Heim (2014)’s idea of *grounding layer*. Specifically, a unified analysis of jussives, concessives and optatives will be proposed. Although the idea of a split-CP and phase theory seem to be considered antithetic (cf. Rizzi 2005; Kidway 2010), evidence from Italo-Romance will demonstrate that they are not. Following Wurmbrand (2013) and Bošković (2013, 2014) the size of phases can vary depending on the functional projections involved in the derivation. Specifically, while it has been largely demonstrated the existence of different functional heads in the CP (Rizzi 1997), it has been proved difficult to argue that these positions are *always* activated (pace Rizzi 1997, 2016; Cinque & Rizzi 2008). In the case of matrix clauses in Italo-Romance, arguably different positions are not all activated at the same time. In more general terms, this would be able to demonstrate not only that phase size is subject to cross linguistic variation but also that phase boundaries remain (mostly) where originally postulated.

For the sake of illustration, in jussives (2b) and optatives (3b) the utterance of the interjections (i.e. *oh!*, *ih!*) is *strictly* related to the presence of the complementisers *ca/chə*, respectively. Moreover, any other functional projection can be activated between the complementiser and the speech-act particle. Hence, it seems that interjections are not part of the CP but can be considered structural ‘material’ outside the CP, namely *beyond* the higher position *Force*. The relation between this structural ‘material’ and *Force* will prove that the higher projection *Force* can be considered a phase head that holds a strong relationship at the edge with the higher structure outside the CP. We will put forward the idea of *Force* being not only the locus of clausal-typing information but also a phase head able to communicate with the ‘outside’ of the sentence, namely the domain of speech-act related projections (Wiltschko 2015). Moreover, the phonetic nature of the non-lexical interjections inserted in pragmatically marked utterances among Italian dialects poses new questions concerning the syntax-phonology interface (Bocci 2014; Munaro 2016). In Romance, intonation is strictly related to clausal-type, which in turn seems to be related to speech-act particles. Finally, we disclose novel evidence that clausal-type and speech act markers in Italo-Romance closely depend on the selection of matrix complementisers.

While no consensus has been reached concerning the exact relationship between a more elaborated hierarchical structure and phase identity, the wealthy linguistic micro-variation in the discourse-domain and beyond, across the varieties spoken in the Italian peninsula, represents a solid testing-ground for striking insights on this long-standing issue.

Selected references

- Bošković, Željko. 2013. Phases beyond clauses. In Nominal constructions in Slavic and beyond, eds. Lilia Schürcks, Anastasia Giannakidou, Urtzi Etxeberria, and Peter Kosta. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Bošković, Željko. 2014. Now I’m a phase, now I’m not a phase: on the variability of phases with extraction and ellipsis. *Linguistic Inquiry* 45: 27–89.
- Bobaljik, Jonathan David, Susi, Wurmbrand. 2005. The domain of agreement. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 23(4). 809–865.
- Ledgeway, Adam, 2000. *A comparative syntax of the dialects of southern Italy: a minimalist approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ledgeway, Adam, 2005. 'Moving Through the Left Periphery: The Dual Complementiser System in the Dialects of Southern Italy'. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 103: 336–96.
- D’Alessandro, Roberta, Di Felice, Claudio. (2015). The diachrony of Abruzzese complementation. *Revue roumaine de linguistique* (1-2), 129-145.

- Harwood, William, 2015. Being Progressive Is Just A Phase: celebrating the uniqueness of progressive aspect under a phase-based analysis. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 33 (2), 523-573.
- Wiltschko, Martina, Heim, Johannes, 2014, The syntax of sentence-peripheral discourse markers. Paper presented at the Workshop 'Outside the clause', 4th-5th July, Vienna.
- Wurmbrand, Susi. 2013. QR and selection: covert evidence for phasehood. In North Eastern Linguistics Society (NELS) 42, eds. Stefan Keine and Shayne Sloggett, 277–290. Amherst: University of Massachusetts, GLSA.