The syntax of complementizers: a revised version
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[joint work with Rita Manzini]

1. Setting the scene

A clarification: why 'a revised version'
Roussou (1994), *The syntax of complementisers* – the investigation of three basic constructions:
(a) factive complements and extraction, Greek *oti* vs factive *pu* – a definite C
(b) *that*-complements and subject extraction, an agreeing null C
(c) *na*-complements in Greek and the subject dependency (control vs obviation)

- *Assumptions back then:*
-- *that* is an expletive element (Lasnik & Saito 1984, Law 1991) – complementizers in general are expletives
-- But in some cases, as in factives, they may bear features for familiarity (Hegarty 1992) or definiteness, or license a definite operator (Melvold 1991) [*that*-factives are weak islands, *pu*-factives are strong islands]

Some questions
a) What is a complement clause?
b) What is a complementizer?
c) What is the role of the complementizer?
d) How is complementation achieved if there is no complementizer?

Some potential answers to the questions above
a) complement clauses are nominal (the traditional grammarian view): mainly objects, but also subjects; it is a complement or a relative (?)
b) not so clear: the lexical item that introduces a clause or the syntactic head C (Bresnan 1972) – in the latter reading, C can be realized by a variety of elements including conjunctions (*that*, *oti*, *pu*, *che*, etc.), prepositions (*for*, *di*, etc.), verbs (V2 in German, residual V2 in English), or just abstract features with no PF realization;
c) the complementizer facilitates embedding, or turns the clause to an argument (Kayne 1982);
d) it depends on how we define complementizers, what the selecting predicate is, what the inflectional properties of the embedded clause are, …

Outline of the talk
- Pronouns as complementizers: pronominal variation and selection by the predicate
- The structure of complement clauses and relativization
- The pronominal series as complementizers
- Loose ends
- Conclusions

2. Pronouns as complementizers

(1)   English
  a.   I think *that* John has bought *that* book
  b.   I read the book *that* John has bought _

(1a): first *that* is a complementizer (phonologically reduced; Radford 2004); second instance is a (distal) demonstrative; two separate entries?
(1b): *that* is a complementizer functioning as a relativizer or a (relative) pronoun (van der Auwera 1985); two or three entries?

(2)   Italian (and Romance in general)
  a.   So   *che*   fai   questo
          know-1s   that   do-2s   this
          'I know *that* you do this'
  b.   Il   lavoro *che*   fai   è   noto
          the   work   that   do-2s is   known
          'The work *that* you do is well-known'
  c.   *Che*   fai?
          what   do-1s?
          'What are you doing?'

(2a): *che* is a complementizer
(2b): *che* is a complementizer/relativizer
(2c): *che* is a wh-pronoun 'what'; two or three entries then?

A more complex picture:
(3)   Greek (Christidis 1982, Roussou 1994, Varlokosta 1994)
  a.   Nomizo   *oti/pos*   eɣrapse   ena   vivlio
          think-1s   that   wrote-3s   a   book
          'I think *that* she wrote a book'
  b.   Xerome   *pu*   eɣrapse   ena   vivlio
          be.glad-1s   that   wrote-3s   a   book
          'I'm glad that she wrote a book'
  c.   Aɣorasa   to   vivlio *pu/*oti/*pos*   eɣrapse
          bought-1s   the   book   that   wrote-3s
          'I bought the book *that* she wrote'

(3a): *oti* and *pos* are complementizers – the selecting verb is epistemic
(3b): *pu* is a complementizer – the selecting verb is factive emotive
(3c): *pu* is a complementizer functioning as a relativizer; *oti/pos* are excluded

 (4)   a.   Arxiothetisa   *oti/*pu/*pos*   eɣrapse   [Free relative]
                filed-1s   what   wrote-3s
                'I filed what she wrote'
        b.   *Pos*   arxiothetises   to   vivlio?
                how   filed-2s   the   book
                'How did you file the book?'
        c.   *Pu*   arxiothetises   to   vivlio?
                where   filed-2s   the   book
                'Where did you file the book?'

(4a): *oti* as a free relative pronoun (o,ti = the what) – inanimate referent
(4b): *pos* as a wh-pronoun 'how'
(4c): *pu* as a wh-pronoun 'where' (locative or dative; Michelioudakis 2012 on the latter)

-- How many *oti*? How many *pu*? How many *pos*?

Even English is more complex: *how* is a wh-pronoun, but may also be a complementizer (Legate 2010, Nye 2013, 2018):

(5) a. *How* did you fix it?
     b. She told me *how* she hadn't seen her husband for 3 months
     c. John forgot *how* Mary was never late   (Nye 2013: 122)

Nye (2013): selection of *how* relates to factive (but unlike Greek *pu*, *how* is not selected by factive emotive predicates).

Further variation: Central and Southern Italian varieties (see Calabrese 1993, Ledgeway 2003, 205, Manzini & Savoia 2005, 2011)
(6) Guglionesi
     a. m   ɔnnə   dəttə *ka* vɛ   krɛ
         to.me have-3p   said   that come-3s   tomorrow
         'They told me that he will come tomorrow'
     b. vujjə   *kə*   vi   krɛ
         want-1s   that   come-2s   tomorrow
         'I want you to come tomorrow'
     c. *kə*   ffi?
         what   do-2s
         'What are you doing?'
     d. ɛ   kkullə *kə*   vvadə sɛmprə
         is   that   that   see-1s always
         'He is the one that I see all the time'

-- A double complementizer system depending on mood/mood particle:
Romanian că vs ca+să; Albanian se vs *që + të*

Some observations
(i) the resemblance between pronouns (demonstratives, interrogatives/relatives) and complementizers is attested cross-linguistically and cannot be treated as accidental (e.g., Manzini & Savoia 2003, Roussou 2010, Kayne 2010, Baunaz & Lander 2017, a.o.),
(ii) variation (here restricted to declarative complementizers) can take different forms and be sensitive to different properties

Another way to proceed
• Abandon the traditional approach that treats this coincidence as accidental (or at most traced back to a historical change) and take the view that complementizers are pronouns.
• Extending this further:
(i) complement clauses are embedded under a pronoun; there is variation: English has the *d*-system, Italian the *wh*-/relative system, Greek possibly both, …
(ii) complement clauses have whatever features are associated with the pronoun that introduces them; but then we need to explain how a wh-pronoun qualifies as a declarative (-wh)

complementizer (Italian, Greek, …)
(iii) 'complementizer' is functionally and not formally defined; that means that there is no C head, but there could still be a left periphery. This has all sorts of non-trivial implications. [Cartographic approaches, see Rizzi 2015]

Note: I keep the term 'complementizer' for descriptive purposes

3. Complement clauses or relatives?
[Qa: What is a complement clause?]

3.1 Some preliminaries
Let's start with a related issue: complementizers in relative clauses
(7)   a.   I read the book *that* John has bought _   [(1b)]
      b.   Il   lavoro *che*   fai   è   noto   [(2b)]
           the   work   that   do-2s   is   known
           'The work *that* you do is well-known'
      c.   ε   kkullə *kə*   vvadə   sɛmprə   [(6d)]
           is   that   that   see-1s always
           'He is the one that I see all the time'

Kayne (1976): French *que* in relative clauses is a complementizer and not a relative pronoun
Sportiche (2011): French *que* (and also *qui*) in relative clauses is a weak pronoun
Kato & Nunes (2009): Brazilian Portuguese *que* in relative clauses is a pronoun
Rinke & Aßmann (2017): *ditto* for European Portuguese
Poletto & Sanfelici (2018): *ditto* for Italian varieties

- 'Complementizer' as Relativizer = a pronoun and not a complementizer (demonstrative *that*, interrogative *que/qui, che*, etc.); it binds (or somehow participates in binding) an individual variable inside the relative clause [implementation depending on the assumptions regarding the analysis of relatives, i.e., modification, raising, matching].

- What about complementizers in complement clauses?
(i) Arsenijević (2009): Finite Complement Clauses (FCC) modify a nominal head incorporated in the selecting predicate.

(8)   a.   The claim that John kissed Mary
      b.   [DP the claim [ForceP [Var][Force' that[Λ] [IP John kissed Mary]]]

The complement clause is analyzed as a restrictive relative clause – the head of the relative is either overtly expressed as in (8a) or incorporated/null as in *John claimed that he had kissed Mary*. Still, *that* could be a complementizer and not a pronoun
(ii) Kayne (2010): *that* is a pronoun, the demonstrative *that*
(iii) Moulton (2009, 2015), after Kratzer (2006): the *that*-clause modifies the Content argument of the propositional attitude verb. Still, *that* could be a complementizer (as in predicative relative clauses).

- Another reasoning: (a) complement clauses are (hidden) relatives, (b) the relativizer is a pronoun and not a complementizer. What we expect: (c) the same element in complement clauses is also a pronoun (on the latter see Manzini & Savoia 2003 for an early account).

- If the pronoun *that*/*che* etc. binds an individual variable in relatives (or in interrogatives or in demonstratives), what does it bind in complement clauses? Manzini & Savoia (2003, 2011): the pronoun ranges over situations/possible worlds (also Roussou 2010).

(9)   a.   [*che/that x*   [I do *x*]]
      b.   [*che/that x*   [*x*: I do this]]

- Are complement clauses some version of restrictive relative clauses, modifying a (null) head?

Kiparsky & Kiparsky (1971) on factive complements:
(10)   I regret that I left = I regret the fact that I left

[See Kratzer (2006) on the CONTENT argument; Arsenijević (2009) on the incorporated nominal; variations on the structure of factives as DPs, e.g., Kastner 2015, a.o.]

- Back to complementizer variation

Language	Pronoun (C)	Declarative	Restrictive Relative
English	that	OK	OK
	how	OK (factive)	*
Italian	che	OK	OK
Guglionesi	ka	OK	*
	kə	OK	OK
Greek	oti	OK	*
	pos	OK	*
	pu	OK (factive)	OK

Table 1 *Pronominal complementizers in restrictive relative clauses*

-- If complement clauses are restrictive relatives, we would expect the same element (*that*, *che*) throughout.
-- But Table 1 shows variation: Greek *pu* vs Italian *che*/English *that* vs Guglionesi *ka*

(11)   John forgot [NP [how Mary was never late]]
       John believes [NP [that Mary is never late]]   (!) Why not the same?

(i) The choice of *how* vs *that*, or *pu* vs *oti/pos* is sensitive to selection. Why can we only see this variation with a null nominal?
(ii) Selection is not a property of restrictive relative clauses

- But selection can (somehow) interfere in another type of relative clauses…

3.2 Complement clauses as free relatives
Manzini (2014): complement clauses are closer to free relatives

(12)   a.   John ate [what I had cooked _].
       b.   John ate [the thing (food) [that I had cooked _]

Greek *oti* is possible in free relatives: *oti* = 'what' in free relatives

- The internal structure of free relative pronouns (Greek):
  prefix *o*+wh-pronoun: o-pjos, o-ti, o-pu
- English: free relative pronouns the same as wh-pronouns; cf. *oti* vs *ti* in Greek
- Italian: quello che 'which that', but otherwise free relative pronouns are the wh-ones

- Two basic trends in the structure of free relatives: a) headless (Bresnan & Grimshaw 1978), b) headed (Groos & van Riemsdijk 1981)
[see van Riemsdijk 2006 for an overview; Gračanin-Yuksek 2008 for a combined account]

(13)   a.   [$_{NP}$ wh [$_{CP}$ …. pro]]   (CP = S')
        b.   [$_{NP}$ $\varnothing$ [$_{CP}$ wh C [$_{IP}$ … ~~wh~~]]]

(13b) faces the problems already pointed out, regarding complementizer selection.
(13a) takes the pronoun itself as the head of the relative clause; Bresnan & Grimshaw (1978): free relatives distribute like NPs, APs, or like PPs, AdvPs when adjuncts – 'category matching').

Case matching or case attraction is possible: accusative instead of nominative (*opjon* vs *opjos*) [same in German]

(14)   Sinandisa   *opjon*   me   simpathi
        met-1s   who.ACC   me.ACC   like-3s
        'I met whoever/the one that likes me'

In current terms: the pronoun merges in the object (argument) position of the main verb (it can be sensitive to selection by the verb; cf. 'category matching').

- Where does this take us with respect to complementation? The pronoun ('complementizer') merges with the matrix predicate, along with the clause it embeds (for the reverse order see Angelopoulos 2019)

(15)   I believe [that [$_{XP}$ this author published a monograph]]

(i) The predicate selects the pronominal complementizer ('category matching').
(ii) The pronoun saturates the CONTENT argument

4. The pronominal series
[Qb: What is a complementizer?]
Complementizers = pronouns
Complement clauses = projections of these pronouns

A complement clause headed by *that* is a *that*P, by *che* is a *che*P, etc.
(a) *d*-pronouns (English, Germanic: that, *daß*, possibly Greek *oti*) – realizations of D
(b) *wh*-pronouns (Italian *che*, English *how*, Greek *pos/pu*) – realizations of Q (Quantifier) (see Manzini & Savoia 2011, Manzini 2014)

(16)   a.   [$_{DP}$ that [$_{XP}$ [$_{IP}$ did this]]
        b.   [$_{QP}$ che [$_{XP}$ [$_{IP}$ fai questo]]]
        c.   [$_{DP}$ oti [$_{XP}$ [$_{IP}$ ekana afto]]
        d.   [$_{QP}$ pos [$_{XP}$ [$_{IP}$ ekana afto]]

-- The D vs Q status could possibly give rise to further microvariation [to be explored]
-- Poletto & Sanfelici (2020) on complement clauses as relatives (matching analysis): *che* is the external head (that is, it raises to the external head), while *daß* in German realizes the internal head.
-- In standard (C) approaches complementizers may realize different features and occupy different positions, e.g., Force or Fine in carthographic approaches:

(17)   [Force *that* [… [Fin (*that*) [IP …]]]]   (Rizzi 1997)

-- Abstract features which do not necessarily match their internal structure

(At least) two remaining questions
Q1: the pronominal complementizers of the Q (wh-) series also have an interrogative reading, which is incompatible with a declarative context. Two options:
(a) a double entry: we've ruled it out
(b) the wh-feature is not inherent

Under (b), these pronouns are indefinites construed as wh- in the scope of a +Q operator, i.e., when they Agree with +Q (Manzini 2010, Roussou 2020).

- Indefinites/interrogatives in Ancient Indo-European languages: Classical Greek *tis/ti*, Latin *quis/quod*: they are construed as either indefinites (unaccented) or interrogatives (preposed, accented) [Baunaz 2015]

Recall: Modern Greek interrogative pronouns are the basis for the formation of other pronouns:

'Interrogative'	Existential	Free relative	Relative
pjos	ka-pjos	o-pjos	o o'pios
ti	ka-ti	o-ti	to o'pio
pu	ka-pu	o-pu	o-pu
pos	ka-pos	o-pos	o-pos

Table 2 *Some pronominal series in Modern Greek*

- A possible modification of (16)
(18)   a.   [DP [NP che [XP [IP fai questo]]]
        b.   [DP [NP pos [XP [IP ekana afto]]]

-- A uniform label (D) to all elements that function as complementizers, attributing eventual differences to their internal syntactic structure as realizing D or only N.

Q2: as pronouns these elements may be sensitive to features like [+/-human], [manner], or [location]: *how* and Greek *pos* are manner adverbials, but they lack this reading as declarative complementizers; *pu* is a locative/dative in interrogatives, but no such interpretation arises in interrogatives or relatives.

(19)   Paratirisa   POS   jirizi   o   troxos
        noticed-1s   how   spin-3s   the   wheel
        'I noticed how the wheel spins'
        a.   paratirisa [*pos* jirizi o troxos ~~pos~~]   [Internal merge, two copies, stressed]
        b.   paratirisa [*pos* [jirizi o troxos]   [External merge, one copy, unstressed]

- A generalization: once a subclass of pronouns acquires the function of a complementizer (propositional operator), they retain their pronominal (wh-) status, but other properties that lexically distinguish them within their paradigm may not hold.

-- Italian *che* as a pronoun inflects for case, e.g., *cui*; but it behaves differently in the two uses, as with prepositions (inflected vs uninflected):

(20) a. La   crisi   dopo cui   mi   sono   dimesso …
        the   crisis after which myself have-1s   resigned
        'The crisis after which I resigned …'

     b. Dopo che   mi   sono   dimesso ..
        after that myself have-1s   resigned
        'After I resigned …'

4. Loose ends

- The pronoun as complementizer account can give a different perspective to old issues, but also open new ones.

(a) *What is in the left periphery of the clause?*
-- The clause is not defined as the projection of the 'complementizer' (i.e., a CP)
-- Force and Fin in Rizzi's (1997) terms will have to be construed as V-related (scope) positions
-- Implications for free relatives vs pseudo-interrogatives vs true embedded interrogatives

(21) Greek
     a. ksero   opjon   prospathi   na   fiji
        know-1s   who.ACC   try-3s   PRT   leave-3s
        'I know whoever tries to leave'
     b. ksero   pjos   prospathi   na   fiji
        know-1s   who.NOM   try-3s   PRT   leave-3s
        'I know who is trying to leave'
     c. anarotjeme pjos   prospathi   NA   fiji
        wonder-1s   who.NOM   try-3s   prt   leave-3s
        'I wonder who is trying to leave'

(b) *What about complementizer deletion (drop)?*
-- No PF deletion
-- Embedding without the mediation of a pronominal
(22) a. *English*
        John said/believed [Mary had left]
     b. *Greek*
        O Janis lei/nomizi   [efije i   Maria]
        the John say-3s/think-3s left-3s the Mary
        'John says/thinks Mary left'
     c. *German*
        Er   glaubt [diesen Film   haben   die Kinder gesehen]
        he   think-3s this   film   have-3p the children seen
        'He thinks the children have seen this film'   (Vikner 1995)

-- Why not PF-deletion? There are syntactic constraints: bridge verbs, tense or mood selection (Giorgi 2010), choice of the complementizer, …Koopman (2000): the equivalent of restructuring in finite contexts

(c) *What about extraposition/clause prolepsis?*
(23)   *Greek and English*
      a.   to#pistevo   *oti/pos* efije
              it believe-1s   that   left-3s
              'I believe it that he left'
      b.   ton#pistevo   ton   Jani
              him believe-1s the   John
              'I (do) believe John'

-- The Greek example is an instance of clitic doubling: whatever account holds for DP clitic doubling could extend to clausal doubling.
-- English has no clitics and no clitic doubling, so a different account is required; (perhaps) closer to a correlative construction

(24)   [believe *it*] [*that John left*]

There is an anaphoric dependency between *it* and the *that*-clause.

5. Concluding remarks
- The complementizers under consideration are pronouns – we dispense with the syntactic category C
- Complement clauses are headed by a pronominal selected by the matrix predicate (s-selection, while c-selection does not seem to play a role)
- Complementation as an instance of nominalization
- Complement clauses like free relatives
- Different features associated with the pronouns as complementizers can perhaps give us some insight regarding further variation

Limitations: the set of data under consideration has been restricted to declarative complement clauses (of the Indo-European family)
Implications: for a wide class of phenomena and types of complementation

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