

Adverbial clauses between subordination and coordination
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*Left-right asymmetries in conditional clause attachment
and multiple complementizers*

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1. Introduction

Capitalizing on the basic distinction between central and peripheral adverbial clauses proposed by Haegeman (2012) (but see the more recent classification of adverbial clauses in Badan & Haegeman (2022)), the aim of this work is to shed some light on certain left-right asymmetries in the distributional properties of conditional clauses in standard Italian, drawing evidence from multiple complementizer constructions in (early) Romance.

The general theoretical framework of my account is the cartographic project (cf. Cinque & Rizzi (2010)), where the sequence of functional projections which constitute the structural layout of the clause are associated to formal features ultimately responsible for the crosslinguistically parametrized lexicalization of specific functional heads as well as for the displacement of lexical material.

My account will also crucially rely on a series of recent studies which, following the seminal proposal of Speas & Tenny (2003), have developed an innovative view of different aspects of the interface properties characterizing the relationship between utterance and discourse, enriching the basic sequence of Rizzi (1997) with additional functional positions where the relevant interpretive factors can be codified. As to the nature of the interface between utterance and discourse, I will submit that, much in the spirit of the cartographic approach, this relation is encoded in the feature inventory of single functional projections of the left-peripheral functional spine, namely in the structural area devoted to connecting the propositional content to the context, that is, to the linking with the conversational or situational background.

I will show that preposed central adverbial clauses could occupy in early Italo-Romance different specifier positions within the left periphery of embedded clauses; more precisely, I will explore the distribution of central conditional clauses in multiple complementizer constructions in Old Italian and other early Italo-Romance varieties, arguing that this kind of adverbial clauses could occupy more than one left-peripheral specifier position; this possibility has been lost over the centuries and is no more attested in modern Italian, where preposed central conditional clauses target just one structural position, namely the specifier of a high functional projection within the

Topic field.

I will propose that non-integrated conditional clauses should instead be analyzed as sentential speech act modifiers generated within the specifier of a speech-act related projection in the left-periphery of the main clause, which accounts for their peculiar distributional properties.

2. The puzzle

In modern standard Italian, both a non-integrated peripheral conditional (1b) and a central conditional (1a) can freely appear at the right periphery of a clause:

- (1) a. Mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni, se il tuo collega non verrà alla riunione.
'They told me that we will have to speak with John, if your colleague will not join the meeting.'
- b. Mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni, se proprio vuoi saperlo.
'They told me that we will have to speak with John, if you really want to know.'

However, the situation is much more intricate when the conditional clause appears at the left of the embedded clause; a central conditional clause interpretively associated to the embedded clause follows generally the subordinating complementizer *che* (2a), while its positioning between the embedding predicate and the complementizer (2b) or before the main clause (2c) yields deviant or ungrammatical sequences, as witnessed by the following contrast:

- (2) a. Mi hanno detto che, se il tuo collega non verrà alla riunione, dovremo parlare con Gianni.
'They told me that, if your colleague will not join the meeting, we will have to speak with John.'
- b. ??Mi hanno detto, se il tuo collega non verrà alla riunione, che dovremo parlare con Gianni.
'They told me, if your colleague will not join the meeting, that we will have to speak with John.'
- c. *Se il tuo collega non verrà alla riunione, mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni.
'If your colleague will not join the meeting, they told me that we will have to speak with John.'

Interestingly, the grammaticality pattern is exactly the reverse with a peripheral conditional clause, which preferably precedes the main clause (3c), while its occurrence after the embedding predicate (3b) or after the embedding complementizer (3a) results in a deviant structure:

- (3) a. ??Mi hanno detto che, se proprio vuoi saperlo, dovremo parlare con Gianni.
'They told me that, if you really want to know, we will have to speak with John.'
- b. ?Mi hanno detto, se proprio vuoi saperlo, che dovremo parlare con Gianni.
'They told me, if you really want to know, that we will have to speak with John.'
- c. Se proprio vuoi saperlo, mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni.
'If you really want to know, they told me that we will have to speak with John.'

Exactly the same syntactic behavior is attested with (alternative) concessive conditionals, which are expressed by a disjunction of a conditional and its negation and entail that the consequent holds independently of the value of the antecedent condition (cf. Quer (1998)). So both a central (4a) and a peripheral (4b) alternative concessive conditional can appear at the right of the embedded clause:

- (4) a. Mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni, che il direttore voglia o non voglia.
 ‘They told me that we will have to speak with John, whether the director wants or not.’
 b. Mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni, che tu ci creda o no.
 ‘They told me that we will have to speak with John, believe it or not.’

As above, a central concessive conditional is preferably placed immediately after the embedding complementizer (5a), while a peripheral concessive conditional tends to precede the main clause (6c); alternative solutions give rise to severely marginal or even ungrammatical sequences:

- (5) a. Mi hanno detto che, che il direttore voglia o non voglia, dovremo parlare con Gianni.
 ‘They told me that, whether the director wants or not, we will have to speak with John.’
 b. ??Mi hanno detto, che il direttore voglia o non voglia, che dovremo parlare con Gianni.
 ‘They told me, whether the director wants or not, that we will have to speak with John.’
 c. *Che il direttore voglia o non voglia, mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni.
 ‘Whether the director wants or not, they told me that we will have to speak with John.’
- (6) a. ??Mi hanno detto che, che tu ci creda o no, dovremo parlare con Gianni.
 ‘They told me that, believe it or not, we will have to speak with John.’
 b. ?Mi hanno detto, che tu ci creda o no, che dovremo parlare con Gianni.
 ‘They told me, believe it or not, that we will have to speak with John.’
 c. Che tu ci creda o no, mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni.
 ‘Believe it or not, they told me that we will have to speak with John.’

I will try to account for these at first sight puzzling distributional properties below, after presenting some empirical evidence on multiple complementizer structures in old Italo-Romance and on recomplementation in modern Ibero-Romance.

3. Multiple complementizers in older stages of Italo-Romance

In Old Italian - by which I essentially mean 13th century Florentine - a central conditional clause usually followed the subordinating complementizer *che*:

- (7) ...pensando *che* se sarà compagno di Dio nelle passioni, Ø sarà suo compagno nelle consolazioni.
 ‘...thinking that if he will be God’s companion in the sufferings, he will be his companion in the consolations.’
 (Bono Giamboni, *Libro*, chap.7, par.12)

We can schematically represent the structure of (7) as in (8), where the subordinating complementizer *che* lexicalizes the head Force[°], while the preposed adverbial clause targets the specifier of a Topic projection whose head is phonetically empty:

(8) Main clause [ForceP [Force[°] *che*] [TopicP conditional clause [Topic[°] Ø] ...]]

Beside the ordinary structure in (7) with one complementizer introducing the embedded clause, in Old Italian we can find numerous examples where the protasis appears sandwiched between two instances of the complementizer *che*, one preceding and one following the preposed clausal adverbial associated to the embedded clause:

- (9) a. ...però vi priegho in lealtade e fede *che*, se ttue vuoi del mio avere, *che* ttu ne tolghi
 ‘...therefore I ask you in loyalty and faith that, if you want my belongings, that you take some...’
 (*Libro della distruzione di Troia*, p.155, ll. 26-27)
- b. ...ti priego *che*, se egli avviene ch’io muoja, *che* le mie cose ed ella ti sieno raccomandate.
 ‘...I ask you that, if it happens that I die, that my things and she be entrusted to you.’
 (*Decameron*, 2,7,84)

Ledgeway (2005) - discussing some similar examples of complementizer doubling from Southern Italian varieties of the 14th-15th century - interprets the first occurrence of *che* as the lexicalization of Force[°] and the second one as the phonetically realized trace left in the intermediate landing site Topic[°] by the complementizer raising from Fin[°] up to Force[°]. In the same vein, Paoli (2005), discussing some cases of complementizer doubling in early Romance, takes the second occurrence of *che* to head the TopicP projection, which hosts the topicalized adverbial clause in its specifier:

(10) Main clause [ForceP [Force[°] *che1*] [TopicP conditional clause [Topic[°] *che2*] ...]]

In her view, the overt realization of the complementizer in Topic[°] is taken to reflect a spec-head agreement relation between Topic[°] and the clausal constituent occupying Spec,TopicP.

From these data we can conclude that in early Italo-Romance varieties *if*-clauses – and adverbial clauses in general – were among the most plausible candidates to fill the position sandwiched between the two occurrences of the complementizer, the higher one heading Force[°], the lower one heading a Topic projection.

In early Italo-Romance a further possibility was sporadically attested, namely the presence of three complementizers, with topicalized lexical material appearing between them. Vincent (2006) reports the following example, where a central conditional clause occurs between the highest *che* and the intermediate *che*, while a heavy topicalized constituent, the subject of the embedded clause, appears between the intermediate *che* and the lowest *che*:

- (11) Ancora statuemo e ordenamo *che* se alcuna persona de la dita Confraria fosse maroto
che subitamente quello chi saverà de quello ditto fraello maroto *che* ello lo debia denuntiar a
 lo prior
 ‘We further establish and order that, if any person of the mentioned Company died, that
 soon who will know about that dead brother, that he should announce it to the prior’
 (*Statuti della Compagnia dei Caravana del porto di Genova*, 1340)

Capitalizing on the recursive nature of Topic projections postulated by Rizzi & Bocci (2017), we could analyze this example as follows, namely with the second and the third instance of the complementizer lexicalizing the heads of recursive Topic projections, where the topicalized conditional clause occupies a specifier position higher than the one targeted by the topicalized subject:

- (12) Main clause [ForceP [Force° *che1*] [TopicP conditional clause [Topic° *che2*] [TopicP topicalized constituent [Topic° *che3*] ...]]]

On the other hand, Ledgeway (2005) reports the following example of complementizer tripling where the relative order of conditional clause and heavy topicalized constituent is reversed with respect to (11):

- (13) Pregove, madama, per l'amor di Dio, *che* de chilli dinare che eo agio vostri *che* si non vi fusse troppo sconço *che* mi 'ndi impristiti una unça.
 pray-you, madam, for the love of God, that of that money that I have yours that if not you-were too-much inconvenience that me-cl-lend an 'uncia'
 'I ask of you, my lady, for the love of God, that, from that money of yours that I hold, that, if you were not to find it too inconvenient, that you should lend me an 'uncia' of it.'
 (*Lettera del tesoriere Tommasino da Nizza a Lapa Acciaiuoli*, 1353)

As one can clearly see, in this case the conditional clause appears between the intermediate and the lowest *che* and follows the topicalized prepositional phrase, therefore it arguably occupies the specifier of a lower Topic projection, as represented in (14):

- (14) Main clause [ForceP [Force° *che1*] [TopicP topicalized constituent [Topic° *che2*] [TopicP conditional clause [Topic° *che3*] ...]]]

If this analysis is on the right track, it provides evidence for a possible location of the conditional clause in a relatively low Topic position within the left periphery of the embedded clause in early Italo-Romance.

We can safely conclude that in multiple complementizer constructions the function of the highest complementizer is to lexicalize the subordinating head Force°, while the lower occurrences of the complementizer mark the boundary of the two Topic subfields into which the Topic layer can be split, along the lines of Benincà & Poletto (2004); moreover, whenever an embedded clause is introduced by a single complementizer, this invariably lexicalizes Force° (the optionality in the lexicalization being restricted to the lower Topic heads).

From a diachronic perspective, it is therefore possible to determine a direct relation between the presence of complementizer doubling on the one hand and the relative freedom of placement of central conditional clauses on the other (the situation of early Italo-Romance and modern Ibero-Romance); the loss of complementizer doubling in most modern Italo-Romance varieties entails a gradual shift to a stricter localization of central conditional clauses within the left periphery.

4. Recomentation in modern Ibero-Romance

Within the Romance domain, the possibility for a topicalized constituent or an *if*-clause to intervene between two instances of *que* is robustly attested in modern Ibero-Romance, as witnessed by the following examples:

- (15) a. Acho *que* se lhe ligasses *que* tudo se resolveria.
think that if him/her called that all itself-solve
'I think that if you called him/her everything would turn out fine.'
b. Espero *que* a Ana *que* traga o livro.
hope that the Ana that brings the book
'I hope that Ana brings the book.'
European Portuguese (from Mascarenhas (2007))
- (16) a. Me dijeron *que* si llueve, *que* viene Guillermo.
me told that if rains that comes William
'They told me that if it rains, William will come.'
b. Susi dice *que*, a los alumnos, *que* les van a dar regalos.
Susi says that to the students that cl-go to give presents
'Susy says that they are going to give the students presents.'
Spanish (from Villa-García (2012))
- (17) a. La secretària em va dir *que* si pagava l'import abans d'una setmana, *que* encara em podia matricular.
the secretary me told that if paid the amount before a week that still me could register
'The secretary told me that if I paid the amount before a week I could still register.'
b. Ha dit *que* els convidats, *que* estan asseguts a taula.
has said that the guests that stay seated at table
'(S)he has said that the guests are seated at the table.'
Catalan (from González i Planas (2013))

According to Mascarenhas (2007), Villa-García (2012), and González i Planas (2013), in the complementizer doubling structures in (15)-(17) *que1* lexicalizes the Force^o head, while *que2* lexicalizes a Topic^o head which hosts the topicalized adverbial clause or the topicalized phrase in its specifier, as schematically represented in (18):

- (18) Main clause [ForceP [Force^o *que1*] [TopicP adverbial clause/topicalized constituent [Topic^o *que2*] ...]]

If we accept the correctness of this approach, then the fact that preposed protases can easily enter the complementizer doubling construction can be seen as an empirical argument in favour of the hypothesis that they belong to the Topic field of the associated (embedded) clause, as independently proposed by Munaro (2005).

Villa-García (2012) also discusses the following example, where a central conditional clause

follows *que2*, and a topicalized argumental prepositional phrase appears sandwiched between *que1* and *que2*:

- (19) Me dijeron *que* a la fiesta, *que* si llueve, no van a ir.
me said that to the party that if rains not go to go
'They told me that they are not going to the party if it rains'

According to Villa-García, the structural representation of (19) is the following, where the conditional clause occupies the specifier of the lower Topic projection (a possibility that was attested in Old Italian), whose head remains phonetically unrealized:

- (20) Main clause [ForceP [Force° *que1*] [TopicP a la fiesta [Topic° *que2*] [TopicP si llueve [Top° Ø] ...]]]

Both in Spanish and in European Portuguese are also attested cases of complementizer tripling, like the following, where between each pair of complementizers appear topicalized constituents interpretively linked to the embedded clause:

- (21) a. Dijo *que* el dinero, *que* a Juan, *que* se lo mandaban por correo.
said that the money that to Juan that cl-cl sent for mail
'He said that they were sending John the money through the mail.'
Spanish (from Escribano (1991))
- b. Acho *que* amanhã *que* a Ana *que* vai conseguir acabar o trabalho.
think that tomorrow that the Ana that will manage to finish the assignment.
'I think that tomorrow Ana will manage to finish the assignment.'
European Portuguese (from Mascarenhas (2007))

For an example like (21b) Mascarenhas (2007) proposes that the second and the third complementizer lexicalize the heads of recursive Topic projections:

- (22) Acho [ForceP [Force° *que*] [TopicP amanhã [Topic° *que*] [TopicP a Ana [Topic° *que*] ...]]]

This can be interpreted as indicating that, excluding the highest complementizer, which uncontroversially lexicalizes Force°, the function of the two following complementizers is to mark the lower boundary of the two main Topic subfields identified above, namely the higher one, endowed with scene setting properties, and the lower one, devoted to the thematization of argumental constituents.

5. An explanatory proposal

Going back now to the grammaticality asymmetry between (2)/(5) and (3)/(6) above, I will argue that it is essentially due to the different levels of attachment of integrated vs non-integrated conditionals.

More specifically, my point of departure will be Speas & Tenny's (2003) claim that basic syntactic principles constrain projections of pragmatic force as well as the inventory of grammatically relevant pragmatic roles. In particular, I will adopt the implementation of this approach proposed by Haegeman & Hill (2013), who postulate a recursive SpeechAct layer, articulated in a higher SpeechAct2, encoding the setting up of the discourse layer with an 'attention seeking' attitude of the speaker, and a lower SpeechAct1 with a 'bonding' function, encoding the consolidation of the discourse relation and anchoring the associated clause to the discourse.

Given their strong allocutive flavour, i.e. their addressee-oriented pragmatic function, I submit that non-integrated peripheral conditional clauses such as the ones present in examples (1b), (3), (4b), and (6) above, should be analyzed as sentential speech act modifiers occupying the specifier of Haegeman & Hill's (2013) SpeechAct2 projection, which is merged at the left of ForceP (cf. the FrameP postulated in Greco & Haegeman (2020) as a possible alternative candidate for hosting non-integrated conditional clauses).

On the other hand, central conditional clauses, which modify the propositional content of the associated clause, are merged in a much lower structural slot (presumably adjoined to vP), but - as extensively argued above - can nonetheless undergo a displacement process targeting the specifier of a Topic projection of the embedded clause - much as in Munaro (2005) - yielding the sequence in (2a)(5a):

- (23) [TP Mi hanno detto [ForceP [Force^oche] [TopP [CP se il tuo collega non verrà alla riunione]_x [Top^o] [FinP [TP dovremo parlare con Gianni] t_x]]]]

Under this approach, the two sequences in (1a)-(1b) and (4a)-(4b) are produced, despite deceptive appearance to the contrary, by two radically different syntactic derivations: while (1a)/(4a) arguably reflect the basic word order with the central conditional clause adjoined to the right of the TP/vP of the embedded clause, as represented in (24), (1b)/(4b) are derived by topicalizing the whole chunk formed by main and embedded clause to the left of the peripheral conditional clause sitting in the specifier of SpeechActP2 inside the left periphery of the main clause, as in (25):

- (24) [TP Mi hanno detto [ForceP [Force^oche] [FinP [TP dovremo [vP parlare con Gianni [CP se il tuo collega non verrà alla riunione]]]]]]]

- (25) [XP [TP Mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni]_x [X^o] [SA2P [CP se proprio vuoi saperlo] [SA2^o] [ForceP [Force^o] [FinP [Fin^o] t_x]]]]]]

As for (3c), it instantiates the alternative basic word order, with the peripheral conditional inside the specifier of SpeechAct2P of the main clause:

- (26) [SA2P [CP Se proprio vuoi saperlo] [SA2^o] [ForceP [FinP [TP mi hanno detto che dovremo parlare con Gianni]]]]]

The basic assumptions underlying this analysis allow to derive all (and only) the fully grammatical sequences discussed in section 2 above.

6. Summary

Capitalizing on the basic distinction between integrated and non-integrated adverbial clauses (cf. Badan & Haegeman (2022)), in this work I have tried to account for certain left-right asymmetries in the distributional properties of conditional clauses in standard Italian, drawing evidence from multiple complementizer constructions across (early) Romance.

Adopting a cartographic approach to the structure of the left-periphery along the lines of Rizzi (1997)/Rizzi & Bocci (2017), and following previous diachronic studies on the distribution of conditional clauses in multiple complementizer constructions (Ledgeway (2005), Paoli (2005)/(2007), Munaro (2016a-b)/(2018)), I have shown that preposed conditional clauses could occupy in early Italo-Romance varieties different specifier positions within the left periphery of the embedded clause; I have assumed that in multiple complementizer structures the highest complementizer invariably lexicalizes the head Force^o, while the other occurrences of the complementizer mark the lower boundary of the main two Topic subfields.

After exploring the distribution of central conditional clauses in multiple complementizer constructions in Old Italian and other early Italo-Romance varieties, I have argued that this kind of adverbial clauses could occupy more than one specifier position within the left periphery of embedded clauses; this possibility has been lost over the centuries and is no more attested in modern Italian, where central conditional clauses target arguably just one dedicated position, namely the specifier of a high functional projection within the Topic field (cf. Munaro (2005)). Modern Ibero-Romance, where complementizer doubling is still attested, patterns instead with early Italo-Romance.

The proposed account relies crucially on the hypothesis that basic syntactic principles constrain projections of pragmatic relevance as well as the inventory of grammatically encoded pragmatic roles, and that non-integrated peripheral conditional clauses should be analyzed as sentential speech act modifiers generated in the left periphery of the main clause.

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