

## Left-right asymmetries in conditional clause attachment and multiple complementizers

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Capitalizing on the basic distinction between central and peripheral adverbial clauses proposed by Haegeman (2012), and slightly revised in Badan & Haegeman (2022), here I intend 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 Romance. In doing so, I will adopt the basic view of the cartographic project (cf. Cinque & Rizzi (2010)), according to which the sequence of functional projections which constitute the structural layout of the clause is associated to formal features ultimately responsible for the lexicalization of specific functional heads as well as for the displacement of lexical material; moreover, I will argue for the necessity of a syntactic encoding, within the clausal edge, of information pertaining to the interface between utterance and discourse. In modern standard Italian, both a non-integrated peripheral conditional (1a) and a central conditional (1b) can freely appear in the sentential right periphery:

- (1) a. 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.'  
b. 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.'

However, the situation is more intricate when the conditional clause precedes 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 sequences:

- (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 marginal 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.'

Adopting a cartographic approach to the functional layout of the left-periphery along the lines of Rizzi & Bocci (2017), and following previous studies on the distribution of conditional clauses in multiple complementizer constructions (Ledgeway (2005), Paoli (2007)), I will show that preposed adverbial clauses could occupy in early Italo-Romance varieties different specifier positions within the left periphery of the host clause; this possibility is no more attested in modern Italian, where preposed central conditional clauses target the specifier of a high functional projection within the Topic field. In Old Italian we can find numerous examples where the protasis appears sandwiched between two instances of the complementizer *che*:

- (4) 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 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century - interprets the first occurrence of *che* as the lexicalization of Force<sup>o</sup> and the second one as the phonetically realized trace left in the intermediate landing site Topic<sup>o</sup> by the complementizer raising from Fin<sup>o</sup> up to Force<sup>o</sup>. In the same vein, Paoli (2007), analyzing 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:

(5) Main clause [ForceP [Force<sup>o</sup> *che*1] [TopicP conditional clause [Topic<sup>o</sup> *che*2] ... ]]

The possibility for (a topicalized phrase or) an *if*-clause to intervene between two instances of *que* is still robustly attested in modern Ibero-Romance; according to Villa-García (2012) and González i Planas (2014), recomplementation structures should be analyzed as in (5). We can safely conclude that in double complementizer constructions the function of the higher complementizer is to lexicalize the subordinating head Force<sup>o</sup>, while the lower occurrence of the complementizer marks the boundary of one of the Topic subfields (cf. Benincà & Poletto (2004)). From a diachronic perspective, it is possible to detect a direct correlation between the presence of complementizer doubling and the relative freedom of placement of preposed central conditional clauses (the situation of early Italo-Romance and modern Ibero-Romance).

Going back now to the grammaticality asymmetry between (2) and (3) above, I will argue that it is due to the different levels of attachment of integrated vs non-integrated conditionals. Following Haegeman & Hill (2013), I 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, anchoring the associated clause to the discourse; in particular, I submit that non-integrated peripheral conditionals should be analyzed as sentential speech act modifiers occupying the specifier of the SpeechAct2 projection, which is merged at the left of ForceP. Central conditionals are instead merged at a much lower structural level, but - as argued above - can nonetheless undergo a displacement process targeting the specifier of a Topic projection of the embedded clause, yielding the sequence in (2a). Under this approach, the two sequences in (1a) and (1b) are produced, despite appearance to the contrary, by two radically different syntactic derivations: while (1b) arguably reflects the basic word order with the central conditional clause adjoined to the vP of the embedded clause, (1a) is derived by topicalizing the whole chunk formed by main and embedded clause to the left of the peripheral conditional sitting in the specifier of SpeechAct2P inside the left periphery of the main clause.

## References

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