Complementizer Deletion and Verb Movement in Italian

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1. Introduction

In this paper I will examine a well known phenomenon in Standard Italian (cf. Rizzi (1982)), namely Complementizer Deletion (CD). I will try to put forth an analysis of this effect as verb movement to a position above AgrP which will be specified in the course of the discussion.

I will assume a combination of Cinque (1995) and Rizzi (1995) proposals about functional projections: Rizzi adopts a split CP perspective and gives arguments for at least five distinct CP projections, each of which hosts different types of elements. Cinque (1995) makes a similar move in the IP domain, providing evidence for a very fine grained functional structure on the basis of verb (past participle and inflected verb) and on adverb positions. Combining the two proposals we obtain a very rich structure of the sentence that we will use in order to explain the phenomenon of CD.

The paper is organized as follows: section 2.1 considers the extension of the phenomenon and its restrictions. Section 2.2 presents a first version of the analysis, which assimilates CD to a case of V to C movement and presents three arguments in favour of this view. In section 3, I will present three arguments in favour of the hypothesis adopted here. Section 4 and section 5 both deal with the problem of the subject position. In section 4 I will discuss the problem regarding the position of the subject in CD contexts, in section 5 I will compare CD with other constructions where V to C applies.
2. **Complementizer Deletion as V to C**

2.1. *The data*

Complementizer deletion (CD) is possible in Standard Italian under some particular condition. (1) illustrates the case in point:

1. a. *Credo che abbia già parlato con te*
   (I think that (he) have(Subjunctive) already spoken with you)

   b. *Credo abbia già parlato con te*

CD is optional and stylistically marked: the sentence in (1b) is slightly more formal with respect to (1a). CD is possible only if the embedded verb is inflected for subjunctive (Subj.) (as in (1)), future (Fut.) or conditional (Cond.) as in (2) and (3) respectively:

2. *Credo sarà interessante ascoltarlo*
   (I think it be(Fut.) interesting to listen to him)

3. *Credo funzionerebbe meglio, se lo riparassi*
   (I think (it) work(Cond.) better if (you) repaired it)

Moreover, CD is possible only if the embedded sentence occupies the basic complement position, as in (4) and not if it is left dislocated as in (5):

4. a. *Tutti credono che sia una spia*
    Everybody thinks that is a spy

   b. *Tutti credono sia una spia*

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1. For some speakers CD is possible only with a subjunctive, but not with a future or a conditional. Even for speakers who accept (2) and (3), they are stylistically more marked than (1b). This seems to suggest that there is a difference between the two types of CD.

2. Note that future morphology does not distinguish between indicative and subjunctive forms.
(5)  a.  *Che sia una spia, lo credono tutti
   That (he) be(Subj.) a spy, everybody believes it
   b.  *Sia una spia, lo credono tutti

On the basis of these examples we can conclude that CD is submitted to at least two requirements, one regarding the position of the embedded clause, and one regarding the kind of inflection on the embedded verb. Only subjunctive, future and conditional permit CD, and only when the embedded sentence occupies a complement position.

The third restriction on CD regards the selecting verb, which must be of a particular class: 3

(6)  a.  *E' pericoloso lo faccia
   It is dangerous (he) it do(Subj.)
   b.  Credo lo faccia
      (I) think (he) it do(Subj.)

Note that CD is also possible when the selecting element is an adjective or, at a higher stylistic level, a noun:

(7)  a.  Sono certo tu lo possa fare
       (I) am certain you it can do
   b.  La probabilità si tratti di uno scambio di persona, è molto remota
       The probability (it) is an exchange of person, is very remote

Thus, CD applies when three distinct conditions are satisfied:

a. the embedded clause must be in a complement position;
b. the embedded verb must be a subjunctive, a conditional or a future indicative;
c. the selecting element must be of a special class.

3. We will specify the class in question in the next section.
2.2. The analysis

The phenomenon of CD has originally been noted by Rizzi (1982), where he connects it to Aux to C structures, without explicitly arguing that CD is a case of verb movement to the C° position.

Scorretti (1991) has treated CD as a case similar to raising contexts, where the CP projection is not projected and the structure embedded under the main verb is simply an IP. Verbs like Italian credere 'believe' are similar to raising verbs in that they select an IP and not a CP as their complement. This view, though appealing, is not the one I will take here. Instead, I will capitalize on the observation that the class of Italian verbs permitting CD is the same class that in V2 languages like German (where V2 is a matrix phenomenon) permits V2 in embedded contexts.

It seems interesting to establish a connection between Italian bridge verbs and Germanic bridge verbs, hence between Italian CD and Germanic embedded V2. 4 I will therefore draw a parallel between the two following sentences:

(8)  
a. Credo sia già partito  
(I) think (he) has already gone  
b. Ich glaube er ist schon weg

Rendering more explicit the hypothesis I want to put forth, I will give arguments to show that CD can be treated as a case of V to C movement. The traditional analysis of V2 in Germanic languages as German, Dutch and mainland Scandinavian is well known: it treats V2 as a case of V to C° movement and movement of an XP into the SpecC position. The fact that V2 is in these languages essentially a matrix phenomenon is immediately captured by the fact that in embedded sentences a complementizer occupies the C° position preventing V to C° movement. What about our cases of embedded V2 selected by a special class of verbs (usually referred to as bridge verbs) in German and mainland Scandinavian (but not in Dutch)? This seems

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4. I will not discuss languages that have unrestricted V2 in embedded contexts, limiting the parallel to German, and mainland Scandinavian, which restrict the context of embedded V2 to the class of verbs we are considering. In the paper I will use German for the examples concerning Germanic languages.
to constitute a counterexample to the claim that the complementizer and the verb can occupy the same position. In the literature we find some proposals to solve this problem. Most proposals refer to the selectonal properties of bridge verbs, which are seen as "special" in some sense: it has been proposed that bridge verbs can select a "double CP" where CP recursion occurs or that they are no selectonal properties at all, as the CP projection of their complement is free from selectonal features and can host V2 exactly as matrix contexts.

We will discuss a possible analysis of this problem later on. Let's assume for the moment that embedded V2 is a case of V to C at least in the subset of Germanic languages we are considering here. Hence, we can maintain the hypothesis that all instances of V2 are cases of V to C movement. This is true even in embedded contexts, where the complementizer is not realized because the inflected verb occupies its position as in (8b).

If we want to adopt this analysis for the Italian CD phenomenon as well, we can formalize our proposal as follows the difference between (1a) and (1b) is thus of syntactic nature and precisely the one illustrated in (9):

(9) a. 

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CP
   SPEC  C'
         |        |  AGRP
         che
         SPEC  AGR'
         |  AGR  TP
         abbia
```

b. 

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CP
   SPEC  C'
         |  AGRP
         abbia
         SPEC  AGR'
         |  AGR
         t
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When the complementizer is not realized as in (9b) the inflected verb has moved to \( C^o \) and fills this position, exactly as in Germanic V2 contexts. Before this hypothesis can be applied to Italian CD, we have to solve at least two problems. If CD is a case of embedded V2:

1. why is standard Italian not a V2 language in all matrix clauses?
2. why do we find in CD contexts only half of the V2 phenomenon, namely V to \( C^o \) movement, but we do see not an XP in the SpecC position as it is the case in Germanic languages?  

As for the first problem, many authors (see among others Tomaselli (1990), and Vikner (1990)) consider V2 as a movement phenomenon triggered by a morphological feature in \( C^o \), which must attract the verb in order to be satisfied. Standard Italian is not a V2 language, so no morphological feature is realized in \( C^o \) in the normal case. Nevertheless, I will propose that only in the CD phenomenon in standard Italian there is a feature in \( C^o \) which can attract the verb to C. We will see later what kind of feature this can be. This feature must clearly be selected by the main verb. Hence I will not propose anything new with respect to the analyses that consider embedded V2 under bridge verbs as a consequence of special selectional properties of these verbs.

The second problem we have mentioned considers the second half of the V2 phenomenon, namely the movement of the XP to the SpecC position. This is clearly not possible in Italian as the following example shows:

(10) a. *Credo la mela abbia mangiato  
(I think the apple has (he) eaten

b. Ich glaube den Apfel hat er gegessen

If we consider the V2 phenomenon as a combination of two separate types of movement, namely \( V^o \) to \( C^o \) (in order to satisfy a morphological feature located in the \( C^o \) head, as we have seen above) and movement of an XP to the SpecC position, the problem disappears. In fact, it is in principle possible to have one type of movement without the other, as they are triggered by (partially) different mechanisms.

5. As for the subject position see section 4.
Therefore, I will provisionally assume that CD can be treated as a case of V to C movement, though it partially differs from Germanic embedded V2, because it does not require the movement of an XP to the SpecC position. In the next section I will provide three arguments in favour of this hypothesis.

3. Three arguments for V to C

The first piece of evidence for treating CD as a case of verb movement to C° is constituted, as we seen in the previous section, by the parallel between CD and embedded V2 in V2 languages like Standard German. The class of elements (verbs, adjectives or nouns) which permits CD in Italian is the same class which permits embedded V2 in German:

(11) a. *Ich glaube du hast es getan
    I think you have it done
b. *Credo tu l’abbia fatto
    (I) think you it have(Subj.) done

(12) a. *Es ist gefährlich, dass du es tuest
    b. *Es ist gefährlich du tuest es
    c. E’ pericoloso *(che) tu reagisca così

(13) a. Die Hoffnung, er wird es schaffen, nimmt ständig zu
    The hope, he will succeed, is increasing
b. La speranza si tratti di un errore non è ancora svanita
   The hope it is an error has not faded yet

Moreover, elements which do not select embedded V2 clauses in German do not permit CD in Italian:
(14)  a.  *Johann bereut, er konnte nicht kommen  
    John regrets he could not come  
  b.  *Mi rammarico non ti abbia parlato  
    I regret (he) not to you have(Subj.) spoken

It is interesting to note that both in Italian and in German V to C is a slightly stylistically marked phenomenon. This makes look the two constructions even more the same than it seems at first sight.

The second piece of evidence for assuming that CD is verb movement to C° is provided by adverb positions. As already mentioned in the introduction, I will assume Cinque's analysis of the number and the type of FPs which correspond to IP in more traditional terms. I will not sum up all the arguments Cinque gives for proposing such a complex structure, but will limit myself to briefly sketch the higher portion of the FPs contained in IP which will be relevant to our analysis.

The structure of the higher portion of IP as proposed by Cinque (1995) is the one illustrated in (15):

(15)  CP  
     /\  
    Eval ModP  luckily  
     /\  
    Epist ModP surely  
     /\  
    TP now  
     /\  
    MoodP perhaps  
     /\  
    RootModP necessarily  
     /\  
    TP2 already

(15) indicates the order of the FPs and the adverbs located in the specifiers position of each FP. 6

6.  I have not indicated the internal structure of each FP for space reasons.
Hence, we have a quite complex syntactic realization of mood and modality: the highest position is the one occupied by evaluative adverbs like *luckily*, located in the specifier of an evaluative modal head, the following is an epistemic modality projection which hosts epistemic adverbs. These two modal heads are followed by the TP projection where temporal adverbs are located. The following two heads are one of mood, which expresses sintactically an irrealis feature and one of root modality.

Assuming with Cinque that adverbs cannot be moved from the position where they appear (apart from topicalization, which is easily detectable) the position of adverbs with respect to the verb constitutes a good test to establish where the verb is located. As each of these projections has a head position, we could in principle expect that the verb can be found in all possible positions or only in some, perhaps depending on its inflection. 7

Let's restrict our inquiry to subjunctive, conditional and future under bridge verbs, namely the context where CD can apply. If CD does not apply, a main verb can appear lower or higher than epistemic adverbs:

\[(16) \quad \text{a. } \textit{Credo che sicuramente lo faccia} \\
\quad \text{ (I) think that surely (he) does it} \\
\text{b. } \textit{Credo che lo faccia sicuramente} \\
\quad \text{ (I) think that (he) does it surely} \]

Nevertheless, it can occur both at the right of the higher adverb *sicuramente* 'surely' (as expected) or at the left of it as (16b) shows. Following Cinque’s proposal we have to postulate that the verb can raise to the EvalMod⁰ head crossing the position of the epistemic adverb or remain below, perhaps in the epistemic head, or even lower down in the structure.

Main verbs cannot move to the left of evaluative adverbs as (17) shows: 8

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7. Cinque proposes that the verb can stop in a head position if it is marked strong for the feature corresponding to the head.

8. The adverb *fortunatamente* 'luckily' can be found in a right dislocated position, with the typical pause intonation. We will not consider this case.
(17) a. *Credo che fortunatamente lo faccia sempre
   (I) think that luckily (he) does it always
   b. Credo che lo faccia fortunatamente sempre
      (I) think that (he) does it luckily always

Again following the structure presented in (15) we can interpret the contrast in (17) as showing that the verb cannot move higher than the evaluative modal head.

Let’s now examine the same examples where CD has applied:

(18) a. *Credo sicuramente lo faccia
       (I) think surely (he) does it
   b. Credo lo faccia sicuramente
      (I) think (he) does it surely

Note that if the complementizer is deleted, the verb has to cross the epistemic adverb raising higher, while this movement is not obligatory at all in non-CD contexts. We have seen that in non-CD contexts the verb is not forced to move to the EvalMod° head leaving the epistemic adverb at its left.

However, the movement to the left of epistemic adverbs becomes obligatory when the complementizer is not present. The relevant contrast is thus the one in (19):

(19) a. *Credo che sicuramente lo faccia
       (I) think surely (he) does it
   b. *Credo sicuramente lo faccia
      (I) think surely he does it

This fact has a natural explanation following the idea I am proposing here, namely that CD is an instance of V to C movement. As the verb has to move to C°, it must occur in a higher position with respect to epistemic adverbs. Hence, it must move not only to the EvalMod head, but higher, and precisely to the C° position. This is not the case for the non-CD context, where the verb can move to EvalMod but can also remain in a lower head position.

If our claim that the verb moves to C° in CD contexts is correct, we expect that the same type of judgment is found with evaluative adverbs: they must be found at the
right of the verb which has raised to C° and cannot occur at its left as it is the case in non-CD contexts:

(20)  

a. *Credo fortunatamente lo faccia sempre  
   (I) think luckily (he) does it always  

b. *Credo lo faccia fortunatamente sempre  
   (I) think he does it luckily always

(20a) is out, but (20b) is also ungrammatical, if a dislocation intonation is excluded. It is not clear why the evaluative adverb cannot occur in (20b). One could think that this type of adverb needs a sort of Spec-head agreement relation as it is the case for other types of elements (see for example Rizzi (1991) for wh elements, Haegemann and Zanuttini (1991) for negative XPs) and that it cannot occur (apart from the right dislocated position) if the verb has not remained in the EvalMod° head. However, as this point needs a detailed discussion on this adverb type, we will leave the problem open, noting that the fact that (19a) is out already confirms our hypothesis that the verb has to raise to C° in CD contexts but not when the complementizer is overtly realized. The relevant contrast is the one between (17a) and (20a), here repeated as (21):

(21)  

a. Credo che fortunatamente lo faccia sempre  
   (I) think that luckily (he) does it always  

b. *Credo fortunatamente lo faccia sempre

The third argument in favor of CD as verb movement is given by a typological observation: Northern Italian varieties are losing all instances of V to C movement. While in the older varieties V to C is widely attested, all the modern dialects show a tendency to reduce more and more the few cases of V to C movement which are still possible.

In the modern Venetian variety for instance Aux to C and V to C in interrogatives and exclamatives are impossible:

(22)  

a. *Cossa magnelo?  
   Venetian  
   What eats+he?
b. *Avendo Nane parla' co ti
   Having John spoken with you

c. *Quanto magnelo!
   How much cats+he!

(22) shows that in modern Venetian the C position is not more available to the
inflected verb. Note that in this dialect CD is also ungrammatical:

(23)  *Credo el sia za riva'
   (I) think he be(Subject) already come

If CD is taken to be an instance of V to C movement, it is possible to treat it as a
subcase of a general tendency, which is shown by all Northern Italian dialects,
namely the tendency to lose V to C in all contexts of its application.

In all the contexts represented in (22) and (23) V to C is substituted by a
complementizer in C° or by a more complex structure: exclamatives generally show a
complementizer, interrogatives a complementizer or a cleft structure and the Aux to C
construction is translated as an embedded finite clause.

Not all the dialects are so advanced like Venetian in losing V to C movement: in
general the first cases which are lost are Aux to C and exclamative V to C, while the
interrogative case is retained, but this is a tendency more than a regularity. More
precisely, there seems to be an implication across dialects regarding the phenomenon
of subject clitic inversion: this can be found in interrogative, exclamatives and
optative clauses. The last case which is retained is always the interrogative. As for the
relation between Aux to C and interrogative V to C, it is not possible to formulate a
strict implication, but it is a fact that Northern Italian Dialects are generally losing both
constructions.\footnote{Another interesting observation is given by the fact that Old Italian has much more cases of CD
than modern Italian and in a parallel fashion V to C is more widespread see Benincà (1995) on this
point.}

Therefore, if we treat CD as a phenomenon involving V to C movement, we have
an immediate explanation of the striking crosslinguistic fact that CD and other V to C
movements are being abandoned in all the Northern Italian domain.
In this section I have discussed three arguments which support the idea that CD is a case of verb movement: the first regards the parallel between the CD contexts and embedded V2 in German, the second regards adverb positions with respect to the inflected verb. I have shown that it is impossible to leave the inflected verb in the EvalMod\(^*\) head when the complementizer is omitted, but not when the complementizer is present. The third argument is a typological observation: Northern Italian dialects are losing all instances of V2, and CD as well. In section 4, we will consider a possible fourth piece of evidence for our analysis addressing the problem of the subject position in CD contexts. Before doing this we have to refine our analysis slightly modifying Rizzi's (1995) proposal of a split CP.

3.1. Refining the proposal

We have assumed so far that CD is analogous to the verb second phenomenon in the sense that it is an instance of V to C movement. We mentioned German, and mainland Scandinavian languages, which exhibit embedded verb second under bridge verbs. We have seen that in German no complementizer appears when the verb moves to C\(^{0}\) in the context just mentioned. However, this is not true of all the Germanic languages we are considering: mainland Scandinavian languages show embedded V2 and a complementizer which appears above the CP where the verb is moved:

(24) a. Ich glaube du hast es getan
    I think you have it done

     German

     b. Hun sagde at vi skulle ikke kobe denne bog
    She said that we should not buy this book
     Danish

Vikner (1990:103) corresponding to (24b) suggests that there are two C positions in these structures. He considers the phenomenon of embedded V2 as a case of CP recursion. We do not need to postulate CP recursion as Rizzi’s Theory of a split CP provides us with the tools to account for cases as (24b).

The claim that there exists more than one C position has been put forth in a number of recent work. Hoekstra (1992) shows that in Dutch dialects three distinct C
positions are available, as three complementizer can cooccur, as illustrated in (25) (which corresponds to Hoekstra (1992): (1b)):

\[(25) \quad Dat \text{ is niet zo gek als } of \text{ dat hij gedacht had}
\]
That is not as crazy C1 C2 C3 he tought had

Hoekstra notes that it is possible to coordinate sentences at the level of the first, the second or the third complementizer, as in (26) (Hoekstra (1992):(4)):

\[(26) \quad a. \quad Als \text{ of } dat \quad hij \text{ koning is } \quad en \quad dat \quad zij \text{ koningin is}
\]
C1 C2 C3 he king is and C3 she queen is

\[b. \quad Als \text{ of } dat \quad hij \text{ koning is } \quad en \quad of \quad dat \quad zij \text{ koningin is}
\]
C1 C2 C3 he king is and C2 C3 she queen is

These examples show that the three complementizers occupy different head positions and force us to assume that the structure of the sentence above AgrP is much more complex than what is normally assumed.

Always on the basis of a Germanic variety, Alber (1994) has proposed a complex structure of the CP domain.

We can find evidence that there are at least two C positions above the IP field inside the Romance domain too. The first piece of evidence comes from Occitan varieties, which show two complementizers in embedded clauses:

\[(27) \quad quan \text{ credou que la mortu que tustabe au pordat} \quad (Ronjat (1937))
\]
when (he) believed that the death that knocked at the door

Note that one complementizer appears at the right of the subject, and the other at the left of it.

Moreover, in main clauses a complementizer is always obligatory in the dialect of Arrens:

\[(28) \quad a. \quad You \text{ que parli}
\]
I that speak

\[b. \quad *You \text{ parli}
\]
As it appears at the right of the subject, it seems plausible to assume that it is the lower one. As Ronjat (1937) notes, this lower complementizer functions as a host for object clitics, at least at the phonological level:

(29)  \textit{Yo que\'i parli}  
I that+to you speak

Another variety in which two complementizers are visible is Piedmontese. In the dialect of Turin it is possible to observe the same sequence \textit{complementizer+subject+complementizer} found in Occitan: 10

(30) a. \textit{A venta che gnun ch\'a fasa bordel}  
It needs that nobody that+cl do(Subj.) noise
b. \textit{A venta che Majo ch\'a mangia pi\' tant}  
CL need that Majo that cl eat more

As (30) shows, the subject realized at the left of the complementizer can be a Quantifier or an NP, so this cannot be a left dislocated position, as quantifiers cannot be left dislocated.

Another interesting piece of evidence found in Piedmontese that supports the idea of a split CP is the following:

(31) \textit{Ante\' ch\'a valo?}  
Where that+cl goes+he?

In main interrogative contexts the C position is filled by a complementizer. Nevertheless the inflected verb has been moved to the left of the subject clitic, which appears at the right of the verb. This means that there must be a second C position to which the inflected verb moves in main interrogative contexts in order to appear at the left of the subject clitic. 11

10. These judgments are not given by all Piedmontese speakers.

11. Note that the movement of the verb higher than AgrP also when the C position is already filled
Another Romance dialect that shows that the CP domain has to be split in more than one structural position is the Salentino variety studied by Calabrese (1991). He shows that in Salentino there are two complementizers, \textit{ka} and \textit{ku}, which occur at two different sides of the preverbal subject. \textit{Ka} is found before the subject while \textit{ku} must follow it:

\begin{enumerate}[label=(32)\alph*.,itemsep=1ex]
  \item \textit{Oyyu ka lu Marju bbene krai}
       (I) want that the Mariu comes tomorrow
  \item \textit{Oyyu lu Marju ku bbene krai}
       (I) want the Mariu that comes tomorrow
\end{enumerate}

Even tough the two complementizers do not cooccur, it is possible to exploit the difference with respect to the subject position to assume that there are two CP positions in this dialect.

All these data do not give us a precise characterization of the number and the type of CP projections we have to postulate. Rizzi (1995) proposes an analysis of the CP domain on the basis of data from several Romance and Germanic languages. He assumes that the CP projection as it has traditionally been considered has to be split in five distinct projections: \footnote{by a [+]wh] complementizer could constitute a problem for Rizzi’s theory which binds verb movement to the wh criterion. In (31) the complementizer already satisfies the \textit{Wh criterion}, but the inflected verb moves higher than in assertive clauses.}

\footnote{Rizzi assumes that these projections are present only if needed. Rizzi assumes that when the Specifier positions of these CPs are needed to host some element, then the splitting occurs, I will assume that the splitting of the CP projections occurs also when a strong feature must be realized on one specific \textit{C} head. As bridge verbs select a modal feature on their complement, this modal feature [realis] will be realized on \textit{FinP}, splitting \textit{FinP} and \textit{ForceP}.}
(33)  
\[
\text{ForceP} \\
\quad \text{Force}^\circ \quad \text{TopP} \\
\quad \quad \text{Top}^\circ \quad \text{FocusP} \\
\quad \quad \quad \text{Focus}^\circ \quad \text{TopP} \\
\quad \quad \quad \quad \text{Top}^\circ \quad \text{FinP} \\
\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{Fin}^\circ \quad \text{IP}
\]

ForceP is the projection where information about the type of clause (declarative, exclamative, relative, comparative etc.) are encoded, the two TopPs host topic elements which are old information in the discourse, while Focus P hosts focalized elements which are new information. The FinitenessP is defined as “the information facing the inside of the clause” namely the interface with IP, and differentiates between + and - finite clauses.

Rizzi notes that “languages can vary in the extent to which additional IP information is replicated in the complementizer system: some languages replicate mood distinctions, some replicate subject agreement ...”. If this is correct, we have the possibility of refining our analysis of CD as V to C movement defining precisely the C° position to which the verb moves and which type of feature is selected by the bridge verb that embeds the clause where CD applies.

Recall that CD is subject to three distinct restrictions (see section 2.):

a. the embedded clause must be in a complement position;

b. the embedded verb must be a subjunctive, a conditional or a future indicative;

c. the selecting element must be of a special class.

Note that CD is possible only if the embedded verb is a subjunctive, a future or a conditional form. These forms all have a modal quality, in the sense that they all express a possibility and not a reality. Hence they all express a [-realis] feature.
Moreover the class of selecting elements (verbs, adjectives and nouns) all express an opinion, hence plausibly select a [-realis] feature which is realized on the head of the complement. Therefore, I would like to propose that bridge verbs (adjectives and nouns) select a [-realis] CP and that this is precisely the feature that attracts the verb into the CP domain. Following Rizzi's (1995) observation that modal features are realized in some languages in the FinitnessP, I will assume that this is true for Italian too, and that in CD contexts a [-realis] feature occurs on the head Fin°. This feature must be realized by some overt element: a complementizer or the inflected verb (if this is compatible with it, hence if it can express the [-realis] feature as subjunctive future or conditional). 13 Hence, if the complementizer is not present the verb is forced to move to the lowest C° position, namely Fin°. Following this hypothesis, I must assume that the complementizer can occupy the head of Fin° in the context we are considering. Rizzi (1995) on the contrary, assumes that finite complementizers in standard Italian are realized only on the highest head, namely Force°. As an argument for this claim is considers the following sentence:

(34)  
Credo, il tuo libro, che loro lo apprezzerrebbero molto

I believe, your book, that they would appreciate it a lot

In this sentence there is a topic element (il tuo libro 'your book') which preceds the complementizer. The structure would be the following: 14

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13. Note that this analysis is compatible with the minimality framework proposed by Chomsky (1995): the feature realized in Fin° is strong and thus attracts the verb into the Fin° head. The apparent optionality of CD is not a problem, as the two initial numerations (the one with the complementizer and the one without it) are not comparable because they contain different items.

14. Recall that Rizzi proposes that the projections are present only if necessary, and in this case we do not need two TopPs and FocusP, therefore they have been left out of the structure.
As Rizzi judges this sentence ungrammatical, he concludes that a complementizer such as *che* can only occupy a head position located higher than TopP, namely the head of ForceP. However, the sentence in (34) is judged by many speakers as well formed or at most marginal, hence one could conclude exactly the opposite, namely that the complementizer can be realized in a position lower than TopP. As the data are not clear, I will leave this problem open.

Let us sum up the proposal put forth in this section: verb (adjectives and nouns) which express an opinion select a [-realis] feature located in the Fin\textdegree head inside the CP domain. This feature has to be realized by the complementizer or by the verb which moves into Fin\textdegree. This analysis could be applied to Germanic languages as well, distinguishing between the core V2 cases found in matrix clauses, where V movement would be triggered by an Agreement feature in the Comp domain (as proposed by many authors cf. section 2.), and embedded V2 under bridge verbs, which would be triggered by a [-realis] feature inside the Fin\textdegree head.

4. A fourth argument: the subject position

In this section I will discuss an issue which has not been mentioned until now, namely the subject position. If CD is a case of V to C, there should be some effects
visible on the subject.

The data regarding the subject position are rather delicate, as speakers give
different judgments. Giorgi and Pianesi (1996) show that speakers split into two
classes: those who admit only a pro subject (class I speakers) and those who admit a
lexical subject (class II speakers). 15

For class II speakers, who admit a lexical subject, it can only appear at the left of
the inflected verb:

(36) a. Credo Gianni arrivi stasera
    (I think John arrive(Subj.) tonight
    b. Credo nessuno arrivasse in tempo
    (I thought nobody arrive(Subj.) in time

No one accept sentences where the subject has inverted as in Germanic V2
contexts:

(37)  *Credo fosse Gianni arrivato
    (I thought had John arrived

We will discuss this problem in the next section. Let us concentrate for the moment
on class I speakers, who only admit a pro subject. This situation is identical to main
interrogative contexts, where no subject can intervene between the wh-element and
the inflected verb. Moreover, there is no postverbal position for the subject as in (37):

(38) a. *Cosa Gianni ha fatto?
    What John has done?
    b. *Cosa ha Gianni fatto?
    What has John done?

15. Speakers who admit a pro subject also find that the second person pronoun is possible in the
preverbal position, but this pronoun has a particular distribution in subjunctive contexts, as it is
obligatory and no pro drop is licensed. I will not pursue this matter any further, but it is clear that
the second person pronoun in these contexts is different from tonic pronouns normally found in
standard Italian.
Hence, it seems that this class of speakers treats the subject in interrogative and in CD contexts exactly in the same way: only pro drop subjects are admitted. This fact is immediately captured by our hypothesis that CD is a case of V movement into the CP domain, while it would remain unexplained if we assumed an analysis in terms of CP deletion or of empty complementizers. One problem remains concerning the second class of speakers who admit a lexical subject in CD contexts. Giorgi and Pianesi (1996) give an analysis in terms of “feature scattering”: they propose that the two class of speakers differ in the syntactic realization of the features in CP: class II speakers scatters the features on two CP projections, while class I only uses one CP projection. I will not go into this problem but I will limit myself to assume that preverbal lexical subjects in CD contexts move into the SpecC position. This may seem unplausible at first sight, but there is quite a strong argument in favor of this assumption. Let’s go back again to Northern Italian varieties: in the Piedmontese of Turin it is possible to find the subject at the left of the complementizer, as in (39):

(39)  a. *Gnun ch’a s’bogia!*
     Nobody that+a cl move(Subject)!

b. *Mario ch’a s presenta subit...*
     Mario that+a cl go(Subject) immediately

Note that the subject can be a Quantifier or an NP, so it is not possible to analyse these cases as instances of Left Disifier or Topicalization, as the subject does not receive any particular marked intonation. The same is true for Salentino and for Occitan varieties, as we have seen in section 3. Therefore, I will assume that the subject position in CD structures is SpecC. The difference between Standard Italian which do not admit sentences like (39) and Piedmontese remains to be viewed. 16

16. The sentences in (39) are the translation of the Standard Italian (i) and (ii):

(i)  *Che nessuno si muova!*
     That nobody cl. move(Subject)!

(ii) *Nessuno si muova!*
     Nobody moves!

(i) and (ii) are totally equivalent, hence the complementizer seems to be optional here too, exactly as in CD contexts. It could be possible to express the difference between (i) and (ii) in terms of verb movement to C° as in CD contexts: in (i) the complementizer occupies the C° position, while in (ii) the inflected verb has moved to C° and the subject to the SpecC position. Note that these type of sentences have imperative value, and imperative has been assumed to move to the C° position by
5. *CD and other V to C constructions*

In this section I will compare CD and other cases of V to C movement with respect to the subject position, showing that the situation is quite complex, as we expect if CP is conceived as a domain and not as a single projection: different CP projections will have different properties with respect to the licencing of a subject. As Rizzi (1995) points out, in order to account for the preverbal or postverbal position of the subject we have to assume here that Case is sensitive to the configuration of head government or to the configuration of Spec-head agreement. 17

The first case of movement to the CP domain I will examine is the Aux to C construction. In Aux to C contexts the subject is found at the right of the verb, (be it a gerund, an infinitive or a subjunctive) as (40) and (41) illustrate:

(40) a. *Avendo Gianni parlato con te,...*
    Having John spoken with you,
  b. *Per aver Gianni parlato con te,...*
    For have John spoken with you,...
  c. *Avesse Gianni parlato con te,...*
    Had(Subj.) John spoken with you,...

(41) a. *Gianni avendo parlato con te,...*
  b. *Per Gianni aver parlato con te,...*
  c. *Gianni avesse parlato con te,...*

Note that absolute past participle constructions with ergative verbs, analyzed by Belletti (1990) as V to C instances, behave like Aux to C.

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Rivero (1991) (see also Zanuttini (1996) for a discussion on verb movement in imperatives). Hence, it is plausible to assume that there is a feature in Comp that has to be realized by a complementizer or by a verb.

17. For a different view see Chomsky (1995), who eliminated from his minimalist program both the configuration of government and AgrPs projections for Case assignment, only maintaining Spec-head agreement as a structural relation between a head as $T^*$ or $V^*$ and its specifier.
(42)  a. Arrivata Maria, siamo partiti
    Come(Agreement) Mary, (we) have left
  b. *Maria arrivata, siamo partiti

Looking at the contrast between Aux to C and absolute past participial constructions on the one hand and CD cases on the other, it seems that we are in a contradiction.

We have to state that C° assigns case under government in (40) and in (42), but that it assigns case through Spec-head Agreement in CD contexts. The contrast between (40c) and CD contexts is particularly problematic, as we see that in both cases the verb is a subjunctive auxiliary, so one cannot assume that C° assigns case through government or through Spec-head Agreement depending on the type of verbal inflection which occupies C°.

We are thus left with the necessity of postulating something like (43):

(43)  a. C assigns case under government;
  b. C assigns case through Spec-head agreement.

Note that it is not possible to postulate a parameter like (43) without imposing some further restriction which explain the contrast between Aux to C and participial clauses on one side and CD contexts on the other.

Let's now and go on with the comparison between CD and other instances of V to C movement.

The second case of V to C movement I will examine is the case of interrogative contexts. As proposed by Rizzi (1991), I will assume that the following is correct:

(44) **Wh criterion:** Rizzi (1991)
    A. A wh operator must be in a Spec-head relation with a +wh head;
    B. A +wh head must be in a Spec-head relation with a wh operator.

(45) Infl is +wh in standard Italian in non embedded contexts.

In a language where (45) is chosen, the inflected verb, which is assigned the feature [+wh], must move to C in order to satisfy the Wh criterion that requires a Spec-head
relation between the wh operator and the wh head. Rizzi assumes that in Standard Italian (45) is valid both in main and in embedded interrogatives, and consequently in both cases the inflected verb with the [+wh] feature must move to C°. As noted in the previous section, sentences like (46a) and (46b) are thus ungrammatical because the inflected verb has not moved to C, violating the *Wh criterion.

(46) a. *Cosa Gianni ha fatto?
   What John has done?
   b. ??Mi chiedo cosa Gianni ha fatto
   (I) me ask what John has done

(47) a. *Cosa ha Gianni fatto?
   What has John done?
   b. *Mi chiedo cosa ha Gianni fatto
   (I) me ask what has John done

Rizzi notes that sentences like (47) are also ungrammatical, and traces back this fact to a problem in Nominative case assignment. He assumes that in Standard Italian Agr° cannot assign case under government. If the inflected verb under Agr° moves to C° in order to satisfy the wh criterion, it cannot assign case to the subject anymore. Therefore, the subject cannot appear in SpecAgr, but only in postverbal position inside the VP or in a left or right dislocated position. This applies both to main and embedded interrogatives. Note that the same effect is found also in exclamative contexts: 18

(48) *Quanto furbo è Gianni stato!
   How clever has John been!

The hypothesis which considers the ungrammaticality of (47) and (48) as an effect

18. Some Central Italian speakers accept sentences like (i):

   (i) Quanto furbo Gianni è stato!
       How clever John has been!

   In these cases it must be assumed that the verb does not move to C at all.
of a case assignment problem faces the following two problems.

First, as we have seen above, in Aux to C constructions an inflected verb, which has morphological agreement features assigns case to the subject at its right:

(49) Avesse Gianni parlato con te, ...
    Had(Subj.) John spoken with you,...

Moreover, at a higher stylistic level, it is possible to realize a subject in SpecAgr at the right of the inflected verb even in interrogative contexts:

(50) a. ?Cosa mai avrà Gianni fatto in quel frangente?
    What ever have(Fut.) John done in that occasion
b. Cosa mai avrebbe Gianni potuto fare in quel frangente?
    What ever have(Cond.) John could do in that occasion?

It is possible to solve the problem within a split CP hypothesis simply assuming that different CP projections have different Case properties: if Rizzi (1995) is right assuming that Aux to C is a movement into the Fin head, while verb movement in interrogative structures is a movement into a higher FocusP, we expect that the two projections may differ in licensing a preverbal or a postverbal subject.

Note that CP projections have effects on the position of the subject even in those cases where verb movement into the CP domain has not applied, but some CP projection contains a strong feature specification. In embedded interrogative sentences, where the verb does not move to C, there subject cannot occur in its preverbal position. This is clear in Northern Italian dialects where the C position of the embedded interrogative sentence is filled by a complementizer, and not by the verb.

(51) ??Me domando cossa che Nane ga fato
    (I) me ask what that John has done

In (51) the subject cannot occur after che 'that' and before the verb. Both in standard Italian and in Northern varieties the judgement changes if the verb is inflected with a subjunctive, a conditional or a future:
Complementizer Deletion and Verb Movement in Italian

(52)  a.  ?Mi chiedo cosa Gianni faccia adesso
     (I) me asked what John do(Subj.) now
   b.  Mi chiedo cosa Gianni avrebbe fatto in quel frangente
     (I) me asked what John do(Cond.) now
   c.  Mi chiedo cosa Gianni farà mai in quel frangente
     (I) me asked what John do(Fut.) now

(53)  a.  ?Me domandavo cosa che Nane fasesse casa
     (I) me asked what that John do(Subj.) at home
   b.  Me domando cosa che Nane gavaria fatto casa
     (I) me asked what John do(Cond.) now
   c.  Me domando cosa che Nane farà casa
     (I) me asked what John do(Fut.) now

Note that cases parallel to (54) can be found also in Standard Italian, and precisely in exclamatives:

(54)  ??Che furbo che Gianni è
     How clever that John is

In (54) the C position is filled by the complementizer. Nevertheless, the subject cannot appear in the preverbal position. It is thus possible to conclude that the effect that blocks the preverbal position in interrogative and exclamative contexts is independent from verb movement to C°.

The same effect is found in relative clauses, where the preverbal position is not the preferred one:

(55)  ??La torta che Gianni ha mangiato,...
     The cake that John ate,...

Hence, we can conclude that a strong feature inside the CP domain (which can be realized by a complementizer or by the verb) has effects on the subject position. Note however, that both in embedded interrogatives and in relative clauses where the verb has not moved into the CP domain, the effect on the subject is weakened with respect
to main interrogatives and exclamatives where the verb has moved into the CP domain.

Let's now sum up in a schema all the cases we have reviewed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(56)</th>
<th>preverbal subject</th>
<th>postverbal subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aux to C</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participial clauses</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main interrogatives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclamative contexts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embedded interrogatives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relative clauses</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD contexts for class I speakers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD contexts for class II speakers</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The situation represented in (56) is very complex: Aux to C and participial clauses only admit a postverbal subject, CD contexts for class II speakers only admit preverbal subjects, while interrogative, exclamative, relative clauses and CD contexts for class I speakers do not admit any on the two. We have seen that the position of the subject depends neither (1) on the presence of the verb inside the CP domain (cf. relative and embedded interrogative clauses) (2) nor on the type of inflection moved (cf. the contrast between subjunctive forms in Aux to C and in CD contexts).

As mentioned above, the possibility of splitting the CP domain into more than one

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19. With the label postverbal position we do not refer to the postverbal position inside the VP, but simply to the order of the two elements subject and verb.
projection could help us to explain this intricated distributional pattern. In a speculative vein, we could assume that CPs that contain an operator in their specifier position cannot license a lexical subject neither in the preverbal nor in the postverbal position, hence neither through spec-head agreement nor through government (this would include, interrogatives, exclamatives, relative clauses and CD contexts for class I speakers). Those CPs where a strong feature is realized on the head (but not in their specifier) therefore triggering verb movement can licence a subject. This would include Aux to C, participial clauses and CD contexts for class II speakers into one class. However, the difference between Aux to C and participial clauses which require a postverbal subject and CD contexts which require a preverbal subject remains to be explained.

Alternatively, one could imagine that each CP “chooses” the type of configuration in which it assigns case to a lexical subject (spec-head agreement, government or none of the two). Again, this leaves unexplained why Aux to C and participial clauses have postverbal while CD contexts for class II speakers have preverbal subjects, as they are both located in the Fin⁰ head (the lowest of the CP domain). A possible solution would be to split FinP into two projections, one which contains the modal feature and the other which contains the feature (presumably a tense feature of anteriority) of the Aux to C and participial clauses. As I do not have evidence for such a move, for the moment I will leave the problem of the distribution of lexical subjects in the contexts we have examined open for future research.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have considered cases of CD in standard Italian. I have proposed to treat the CD phenomenon as an instance of V to C movement within a split CP perspective as the one proposed by Rizzi (1995). The inflected verb moves into the lowest head of the CP domain as the matrix verb selects a [-realis] modal feature.

20. Following this hypothesis the difference between class I and class II speakers could be due to the presence of a modal operator in the specifier position of the relevant CP.
which must be realized in the CP domain. This explains why the matrix verb must be of a particular class and why the embedded verb must have a particular type of inflection, which must be compatible with the modal feature.

The arguments given to support this idea are four: the parallel between the Italian construction and embedded V2 in Germanic languages, the position of epistemic and evaluative adverbs, the typological observation that in the Northern varieties all types of V to C movements are disappearing on a par with CD, and the fact the for a class of speakers no lexical subject can be realized in CD contexts, exactly as in other cases of V to C movement (cf. main interrogatives and exlamatives). I leave two questions open: (1) the differences noted with respect to the subject position whithin the class of constructions that require V to C or realize a strong feature in a CP projection and (2) the distinction between class I and class II speakers regarding the subject position in CD contexts.
References


