

The status of complementizers in the left periphery

M. Rita Manzini- Leonardo M. Savoia (Firenze)

Recent works, based in part on the lexical identity of complementizers with *wh*-words in, say, Romance languages have taken them to be *wh*-(like) operators (Arsenijevic 2009, Kayne to appear). We will provide empirical evidence in favour of this conclusion, based on Romance varieties with two finite, declarative complementizers. We will conclude our discussion by addressing Haegeman's (2007, 2009) attempt at deriving the absence of MCP in embedded clauses from the idea that complementizers, being *wh*-(like) operators, move subject to Minimality.

1. Two *ãthat*õs. On the basis of historical data, Ledgeway (2005) argues that in Southern Italian dialects, the two complementizers *ke* and *ka* map to the C-force and C-fin position in Rizzi's (1997) hierarchy respectively. In his corpus of 11 early texts, he finds that out of a total of 327 examples of [*ka*]-clauses a mere 10.1% were found to contain one or more elements in the left periphery, whilst from a total of 1061 examples of indicative clauses introduced by [*ke*], 41.8% were found to host one or more elements in the left periphery. If *ke* is associated with C-force it will be able to precede topics and foci, while *ka* will not be able to do so if it is in C-fin. One hitch in the theory is that *ka* seems to be constrained to indicative sentences; for Ledgeway (2005) this means that *ka* and *ke* in fact are both generated in C-fin, but then they move to C-force in the presence of topics and foci, and there they are spelled out as *ke*. There are many technical problems with this account (e.g. no morphological or syntactic theory has the ability to change a lexical item into another) but what we are interested in is the 10% of occurrences of *ka* with following left-peripheral material (as opposed to the 40% of occurrences with *ke*). Is the imbalance in the occurrences of left peripheral material with the two complementizers (1:4 on a possible count) a true reflex of grammatical competence? Though we cannot further question historical texts, we can consider modern day Southern Italian dialects with the same complementizer system. The result is that native speakers accept both topics and foci embedded under *ka*, as in (1a), (1b) from the variety of Guglionese (Molise region). Example (1c) establishes that the *ke* complementizer alternates with *ka* with embedded subjunctives, in which case it can also of course precede topicalizations/ focalizations.

- (1) a. m anne dette ka u keʃe se l anne tote i gwajeune
 to.me they.have said that the cheese it they.have taken the boys
 b. m anne dette ka u keʃe s anne tote i gwajeune
 to.me they.have said that the cheese they.have taken the boys
 c. vuje ka/ke kre pure lore menessene
 I.want that tomorrow also they came(subj)

We conclude that the lexicon of Romance (modern-day and by projection medieval Romance) has no dedicated C-force entry though Ledgeway's discussion shows how it could have one. Generalizing this result, there is no evidence that the overall organization of Rizzi's (1997) hierarchy has any correspondence in the lexicon of natural languages. While this is not incompatible with the hierarchy, it eliminates an important potential argument in its favour.

2. The nature of complementizers. The question of what is the proper treatment of the two *ãthat*õs of Romance (Force and Fin? or other?) depends on the more fundamental question of what complementizers are (dedicated C categories? or other?). Specifically, are we to treat the coincidence of, say, French complementizer *que* with relative pronoun and interrogative *que* as mere homophony or are we to provide a unified lexical entry for them? Kayne's (1976) classical idea is that the relative *que* of French is really the *que* complementizer; however this seems very difficult to extend, say, to Italian *che* *wh*-determiners, embedded within a DP, rather than a sentence, as in (2).

- (2) Che libro leggi?
 what book you.read (õWhich book are you reading?õ)

Kayne (to appear) stands his earlier claim on its head, claiming that *that* isn't a complementizer. The *that* that introduces sentential complements is really a relative pronoun. In particular sentential complements are accompanied by a head noun raised from within what in reality is a relative clause typically a silent noun. Arsenijevic (2009) has a comparable proposal.

We contribute an empirical argument in favour of the conclusion that descriptive complementizers really are wh-phrases and not viceversa (i.e. descriptive relative and interrogative pronouns are not real complementizers). We have data for several dozens Romance varieties with double complementizers (including Sardinian ones, cf. Damonte 2006, and Calabrian ones, cf. Ledgeway 2009). In all of them, if there is some overlapping between the complementizer and the wh- system, it is the complementizer selecting the subjunctive (e.g. *ke* in (1c)) that coincides with a wh- operator, as shown for Guglionese in (3). In no language we know is there any coincidence between the other complementizer (e.g. *ka* in (1a-b)) and some wh-word.

- (3) a. *ke* *fi*
 what *you.do* (‘What are you doing?’)
 b. *e* *kulle* *ke* *vade* *sembre*
 he.is *the.one that* *I.see* *always* (‘He is the one that I see all the time’)

This state of affairs is (relatively) easy to account for if *ke* is a wh- operator. We will say that the variable introduced by ‘wh-word’ *ke* in (3) ranges over individuals, while the one introduced by ‘complementizer’ *ke* in (1c) ranges over situations/ possible worlds. We can take it that the *ke* variable is incompatible with indicative contexts, like (1a)-(1b), in that those denote a definite situation/ world. The *ka* complementizer can then be characterized as a definite quantification over possible worlds; crucially, its definite nature will exclude *ka* from introducing questions, accounting for its non-overlapping with ‘interrogative pronouns’. As for relative clauses, there are (Sardinian) varieties where *ka* introduces non-restrictive relatives (4b), while *ki* (the Sardinian counterpart to *ke*) introduces restrictive relatives (4a), more or less as we expect on the basis of a definiteness characterization for *ka* vs. *ki*.

- (4) a. *es* *kussu* *ki* *bio* *sempere*
 he.is *the.one that* *I.see* *always*
 b. *dzuanni* *ka* *esti* *ammigu meu*
 John *that* *is* *friend mine* (‘John, who is my friend, is’)

If questions and (restrictive) relative clauses were just introduced by a complementizer, à la Kayne (1976), it would be difficult to imagine why this should be *ke/ ki* in (3)-(4a) and in particular since indicatives are involved in all examples.

3. Complementizers and MCPs. Recent work by Haegeman (2007, 2009) argues that treating sentence introducers as operators accounts for the impossibility of embedding left-peripheral material, in particular under temporal adjuncts and hypotheticals. A classical argument from the ambiguity of temporal introducers such as *when* suggests that they move (Larson 1987) and one can then claim that by minimality they cannot move across (certain) left peripheral material. The same can be extended to hypothetical *if* whose ‘free relative’-like status has independently been argued for (Larson 1985, Bhatt-Pancheva 2006). It is in principle possible that the wh-like treatment of so-called finite, declarative complementizers gives a handle on the exclusion of MCP movements in (certain) embedded clauses.

In the final part of this paper we will argue that the Kayne/ Arsenijevic execution of the idea that ordinary complementation involves relativization is not sufficiently restrictive. In particular, it depends on having at one's disposal abstract nouns (‘claim’ and the like) to head the relative clause introduced by *that*. We argue that there is no source for these nouns in the embedded sentences; and that there is no way of restricting those empty nouns to exactly the range required. We therefore argue in favour of extending to all complementation the free-relative like structure proposed in the literature for ‘*if*’ clauses.