

Article

Embedding Strategies in Early Venetan Vernaculars

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to shed some light on the categorial status and syntactic distribution of the subordinators *como* and, more specifically, *quando* as it emerges from some early Venetan texts dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries. The proposed analysis accounts for the semantic ambiguity of these embedding connectors in strictly structural terms. In particular, the pervasive interpretive ambiguity of *come/como* attested in the old Italo-Romance varieties considered here is traced back to a diachronic process of reanalysis affecting its categorial status from specifier to head, which reflects a well attested crosslinguistic tendency. This diachronic change in turn will be shown to be linked to the syntactic distribution of the temporal subordinator *quando*, which can be reduced to general underlying principles of phrase structure building, in the sense that the temporal vs hypothetical interpretive import of *quando* was determined by the particular syntactic configuration involved. The semantic ambiguity of the subordinating connectors analyzed here is explained then in strictly structural terms, adopting a cartographic approach to the functional articulation of the clausal left-periphery.

Keywords: *wh*-words; reanalysis; embedding; subordination; early Venetan

1. Introduction

The concept of 'syntactic analyzability' in a diachronic perspective has relevant implications for our synchronic interpretation of certain expressions, and is strictly functional to our understanding of some basic notions such as grammaticalization, univerbation and recategorization.

Grammaticalization and recategorization in turn are tightly linked to each other, insofar as grammaticalization is generally viewed as a diachronic process creating new grammatical exponents out of existing lexical items; under standard assumptions, this gives rise to categorial reanalysis and lexical splits.

The aim of this work is to shed some light on the categorial status and syntactic distribution of the lexical items *como* and, more specifically, *quando* as they emerge from some early Venetan texts dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries. The proposed analysis accounts for the semantic ambiguity of these subordinating connectors in strictly structural terms; in particular, the work reveals that the old Italo-Romance varieties considered here featured a process of reanalysis affecting the categorial status of *come/como*, while the interpretive import of *quando* was determined by structural factors, namely by the particular syntactic configuration involved.¹

As repeatedly observed in the literature (cf. Roberts & Roussou, 2003; Manzini & Savoia, 2003; among others), declarative complementizers often crosslinguistically display the same morphophonological form as other grammatical items, such as demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, and *wh*-pronouns. Over the last decade, this kind of syncretism has been interpreted from different theoretical perspectives.



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Baunaz and Lander (2018b) view such overlaps as instantiations of cross-categorial syncretism, treating the empirical facts within a nanosyntactic framework (cf. Starke, 2009; Caha, 2009), and arguing that complementizers are not simplex heads of the CP layer, but are actually composed of multiple features, each corresponding to a head in a single functional sequence which is responsible for building demonstratives, complementizers, relativizers, and *wh*-pronouns.²

Poletto and Sanfelici (2018) challenge the dichotomy between relative complementizers and relative pronouns and, on the basis of both synchronic and diachronic evidence from Italo-Romance varieties, argue that this dichotomy does not hold, and that relativizers are *wh*-items which have the lexical property of requiring a nominal restriction.

Roussou (2020) argues that the process of categorial reanalysis may not be so pervasive and that lexical splits may also be interpreted as epiphenomenal facts; she considers precisely the development of Indo-European complementizers out of pronouns, claiming that the innovative element (namely the complementizer) retains its original nominal feature, so that, strictly speaking, there is no categorial reanalysis, but a change in function and selectional requirements, allowing for a clausal complement as well.³

A similar position is taken by Manzini and Roussou (2024), who question the view that takes the complementizer to be a primitive syntactic category, arguing instead that C is a cover term for a variety of lexical items that fulfill the function of introducing a subordinate (and more precisely, complement) clause.

The present discussion will be in a sense orthogonal to these interpretations of cases of syncretism involving the complementizer layer, endorsing rather a purely structural notion of syntactic analyzability in a diachronic perspective. More precisely, it will be argued that the univerbation process producing the form *como* represents a precondition for the application of a spec-to-head reanalysis to this lexical item, as the nominal feature of *modo* makes the derived form compatible with the nominal feature that characterizes the lexical category of complementizers. This possibility is not attested with *quando*, due to its intrinsically adverbial nature.

In particular, the pervasive interpretive ambiguity of *come/como* (and *quando*) reveals that old Italo-Romance varieties featured an ongoing process of reanalysis affecting its categorial status according to a well attested crosslinguistic tendency; this diachronic change in turn will be shown to shed some light on the syntactic distribution of the temporal subordinator *quando*, which can be reduced to general underlying principles of phrase structure building. The proposed analysis will be shown to be fully compatible with the layered articulation of the clausal left-periphery as it has been recently developed within the cartographic project outlined by Cinque and Rizzi (2010).

The article is structured as follows: in Section 2 I describe the syntactic distribution of subordinating *come/como*, discussing the hypothesis that it may have undergone, at least in some embedded contexts, a diachronic process of categorial reanalysis from specifier to head; in Section 3 I analyze the different distributional properties of temporal subordinators in early Venetan texts, including complementizerless *quando* in its temporal use; in Section 4 I examine the hypothetical use of subordinating *quando* accompanied by the complementizer *che*, trying to account for its peculiar interpretive import in structural terms; Section 5 concludes with some summarizing remarks.

2. On Subordinating Come in Early Italo-Romance

2.1. Come in Old Florentine

In this section I will briefly summarize some empirical data and theoretical proposals originally put forth in Munaro (2020, 2022). Unlike what happened in main questions, where the raising of the inflected verb to a left-peripheral functional head was mandatory,

early Florentine embedded questions featured no verb movement to the left periphery, and hence no inversion between subject and inflected verb. As a consequence, the subject, both nominal and pronominal, tended to appear preverbally; in particular, in embedded *wh*-questions the subject intervened between the *wh*-item and the finite verb.

The *wh*-item/phrase could either be preceded or followed by a left-dislocated constituent (presumably occupying the specifier of a Topic projection), as exemplified in (1) and (2) respectively:

- (1) a. Or diciamo *sopra capo che* ha
Now say on head what has
'Now we say what he has on his head'
(Novellino, 28, r. 15)
- b. ...onde non ci n'è poscia rissposto *di questo che* fare si ne possa
...hence not us has then answered of this what do one can
'...hence he has not answered to us what can be done about this'
(Lettera di Consiglio de' Cerchi, ecc., II, p. 2v., rr. 2–3)
- (2) a. ...acciò che ti sappi consigliare *che via sopra i nostri fatti* ti convegna tenere
...so that you-know advise what way about the our facts you should keep
'...so that it can advise you what way about our facts you should keep'
(Bono Giamboni, *Libro*, cap. 69, par. 9)
- b. ...queste tre Virtudi si trassero da una parte a consiglio, per vedere e per pensare *che sopra queste vicende* avessero a fare.
...these three virtues themselves parted from one side to counsel, for see and for think what on these issues had to do
'...these three Virtues retreated, to see and to think what they should do about these issues.
(Bono Giamboni, *Libro*, cap. 49, par. 12)

The contrast between (1) and (2) cannot be easily captured by Rizzi and Bocci (2017)'s layout of the left periphery as reported in (3), where the Qemb projection hosting the *wh*-phrase in embedded questions is not followed by any Topic projection:

- (3) Force > Topic > Int > Topic > Focus > Topic > Mod > Topic > Qemb > Fin

Rather, one would be forced to assume that the *wh*-item occupies a higher position, namely Spec, FocusP, thereby accounting for both (1) and (2), where the specifier of a (recursive) Topic projection is meant to be the landing site of the left-dislocated constituents.

Interestingly enough, it turns out that the possibility of inserting a topicalized constituent between the *wh*-phrase and the verb was particularly frequent in embedded clauses introduced by *come*, as witnessed by the examples in (4) (and discussed in detail by Munaro (2010)):

- (4) a. Mostrami, verace maestra, *come la detta virtù* si puote usare per le dette vie
Show-me, truthful teacher, how the said virtue one can use for the said ways
'Show me, truthful teacher, how the mentioned virtue can be used for the mentioned ways'
(Bono Giamboni, *Trattato*, cap. 20, par. 4)
- b. "Ditemi *come lo giovane è stato nodrito*". Fulli contato *come nodrito* era stato con savi e con uomini di tempo, lungo da ogni fanciullezza
Tell-me how the young is been nourished. Was-him told how nourished was been with wise and with men of time, far from every childhood
(Novellino, 4, rr. 27–29)

- c. . . .ched i' vidi Larghezza/mostrare con pianeza/ad un bel cavalero/come nel suo mistero/si dovesse portare
 . . .that I saw Length show with ease to a beautiful knight how in his mistery himself should bring
 ' . . .that I saw Length show palinly to a beautiful knight how he should behave in his mistery'

(Brunetto Latini, *Tesoretto*, vv. 1365–1369)

Benincà and Cinque (2010) have proposed that the allegedly interrogative embedded clauses in which *come* is followed by a topicalized constituent should in fact be analyzed as relative clauses in disguise. This proposal would be fully compatible with a relatively recent and productive trend of research that views adverbial clauses (and embedded clauses in general) as instances of relative clauses (cf. Arsenijevic, 2009, 2021; Poletto & Sanfelici, 2018, 2019; Sanfelici & Rodeghiero, 2024; among others).⁴

Under this structural interpretation of the data, *come* could be located not in the specifier of the Focus projection, but in the specifier of a higher functional projection, arguably ForceP, situated at the left of all the (recursive) Topic projections and hosting relative pronouns or other elements responsible for clause typing (as originally proposed by Rizzi (1997)):⁵

- (5) a. Mostrami [ForceP *come* [TopP *il padre al figliuolo* [TopP *e il figliuolo al padre* [TopP *e'l cittadino alla sua cittade* [TP *è naturalmente obligato per via di pietade* (Bono Giamboni, *Libro*, cap. 71, par. 9)
- b. Mostrami, verace maestra, [ForceP *come* [TopP *la detta virtù* [TP *si puote usare per le dette vie* (Bono Giamboni, *Trattato*, cap. 20, par. 4)
- c. Et poi che Tullio à pienamente insegnato [ForceP *come* [TopP *per le nostre parole* [TP *noi potemo fare intento l'uditore, sì dirà come noi il potemo fare docile* (Brunetto Latini, *Rettorica*, p. 191, rr. 15–17)

This hypothesis receives support from the interpretive ambiguity that *come* displayed in several contexts in old Florentine, where it could either be analyzed as a *wh*-item, that is, as a maximal projection sitting in Spec, ForceP, or as a subordinating complementizer lexicalizing the corresponding head Force.⁶

2.2. The Spec to Head Reanalysis of Come/Como

The pervasive categorial ambiguity of *come* reveals that old Italian (varieties) featured an ongoing process of reanalysis of this element from specifier to head that corresponds in fact to a crosslinguistically attested diachronic tendency.

Relying on the etymological origin of *come* from the Latin phrase *quo modo* (cf. Rohlf, 1969, § 945), which should be uncontroversially analyzed as a maximal projection, one could surmise that *come* has been initially attributed the same categorial status of XP, as represented in (6):

- (6) [CP *quo modo* [C°]] >>>> [CP *come* [C°]]

Only after this univerbation process has there been a potential reanalysis of *come* as syntactic head, which has determined its categorial (and interpretive) ambiguity, as represented in (7):

- (7) [ForceP *come* [Force°]] >>>> [ForceP [Force° *come*]]

Under the hypothesis that *come* in some embedded contexts can lexicalize the specifier of the Force projection, it becomes extremely plausible for this element to have been subsequently reanalyzed as the head of the same functional projection, namely as a lexicalization of the head Force^o, which is precisely the position occupied by the subordinating complementizer, under current assumptions (cf. Rizzi, 1997).

Indeed, the diachronic categorial change from specifier to head within the complementizer layer seems to be a relatively wide-spread phenomenon. As argued independently by van Gelderen (2004a, 2004b, 2009), there is a strong crosslinguistic diachronic tendency for maximal projections (occupying structural specifier positions) to be reanalyzed as lexicalizations of (lower) functional heads, which she summarizes in the following descriptive generalization:

- (8) *Head Preference or Spec to Head Principle:*
Be a head, rather than a phrase.

Restricting the attention to the left-peripheral layer, Willis (2007) identifies the three following types of diachronic sources for complementizer heads, among which the type exemplified in (9c) is the one relevant for the case under discussion, namely the reanalysis of specifiers of the CP field as C^o heads:

- (9) a. Reanalysis of main-clause phrasal elements as complementizer heads;
b. Reanalysis of main-clause heads as complementizer heads;
c. *Reanalysis of embedded phrases (e.g., specifiers of CP) as complementizer heads.*

The type of change described in (9c) fits perfectly the alleged reanalysis of *come* as a functional head, and in particular as a subordinating complementizer.⁷

Strong empirical support for this hypothesis comes from the possibility for the etymologically related form *como* to be used as a subordinating complementizer, exclusively after the verb 'say/tell', which is independently attested in other early Venetan texts, like the Paduan Bible (dating back to the end of the 14th century):

- (10) a. ...e gridando fortemente el ge dixè *como* l'è fiolo de Rebecha.
...and shouting strongly he him-tells how he-is son of Rebecca
'...and shouting loudly he tells him that he is son of Rebecca.'
(Bibbia, *Genesi* CLVII)
- b. ...e sì ge dixè *como* uno homo de Egypto sì le ha defendù dali pastore. . .
...and so him-tells how one man of Egypt them-has defended from-the shepherds
and so he tells him that one man from Egypt defended them from the shepherds. . .'
(Bibbia, *Esodo* XVII)
- c. ...e sì ge disse *como* Dio sì lo aveva eleto a dovere guidare, reçere e condure el so povolo in la terra de promission.
...and so him-told how God him had elected to have-to guide, rule and lead the his people in the land of promission
'...and so he told him that God had elected him to guide, rule and lead his people to the promised land.'
(Bibbia, *Numeri* CLVIII)
- d. ...e sì ge dixè ordenàmente *como* Raab meretrix li ha honorevolmente ricevuti in chaxa e aschonduti. . .
...and so him-tells plainly how Raab harlot them has honourably received in home and concealed. . .

'...and so he tells him plainly that Raab the harlot has honourably welcomed them home and concealed them...'

(Bibbia, *Giosuè* XII)

e. ...quilli tre agnoli sì disse liberamentre a Abraham *como* li voleva profundare Sodoma e Gomora per quello turpissimo peccà.

...those three angels so told freely to Abraham how them wanted to sink Sodom and Gomorrah for the foul sin

'...those three angels told freely Abraham that he wanted to let Sodom and Gomorrah sink for that foul sin.'

(Bibbia, *Genesi* LXXV)

The verb 'say/tell' seems to represent the only bridging context favoring the reanalysis process of *como*, which was also frequently used in the Paduan Bible as a subordinating element to introduce the title of (sub)sections, where there seems to be an elliptical main clause like *Here it is told that/how*:

(11) a. *Como* Moyses priega mesier Domenedio *che* perdone al povolo, e *che* faça cessare el fogo che più non bruxe né consume el so povolo.

How Moyses prays lord God that forgive to-the people, and that make cease the fire that anymore not burn nor fray the his people

'(That) Moses prays lord God that he may forgive the people, and that he may stop the fire so that his people may not burn and fray.'

(Bibbia, *Numeri* XXXV)

b. *Como* Moyses comanda al povolo de Israel che li se garde da biastemare Dio, imperçonde che çaschauna persona, sì terriera qual forestiera, che biastemerà Dio sì serà morto cum le prie.

How Moyses orders to-the people of Israel that they themselves-look from cursing God, because that every person, so local as foreign, that will-curse God so will-be dead with the stones

'(That) Moses orders his people of Israel that they avoid cursing God, because everybody cursing God, either local or foreign, will be stoned to death.'

(Bibbia, *Levitico* XXI)

c. *Como* Moyses dise al povolo che da parte de Dio li desçaçe fora tuti li homini e femene levrose, açò che li no piye anche illi la levra.

How Moyses tells to-the people that from side of God they chase out all the men and women leper, so that they not get also they the leprosy

'(That) Moses tells his people that in the name of God they should chase away all the leper men and women, so that they may not be infected.'

(Bibbia, *Numeri* VI)

d. *Como* de mercore Dio sì fé el sole e la luna e le stelle, *perché* sì fosse la luxe. . .
How of Wednesday God so made the sun and the moon and the stars, because so were the light. . .

'(That) on Wednesday God made the sun and the moon and the stars, so as to create the light. . .'

(Bibbia, *Genesi* IIII)

e. *Como* Moyses, inanço che 'l morisse, sì dé la soa benedizione al povolo de Israel sul monte Abarim.

How Moyses, before that he-died, so gave the his blessing to-the people of Israel on-the moutain Abarim
'(That) Moses, before he died, blessed the people of Israel on the mountain Abarim.'

(Bibbia, *Deuteronomio XV*)

The usage of *come* as a subordinating complementizer has survived until the present and is still robustly attested in contemporary standard Italian, albeit with some distributional restrictions with respect to the alternative form *che*.⁸

Summing up, the diachronically detectable distributional properties of *come/come* suggest that in some embedded contexts it lexicalizes the specifier of the Force projection, and that it was subsequently recategorized as a lexicalization of the head Force^o in obedience to a strong crosslinguistic tendency for maximal projections (occupying structural specifier positions) to be reanalyzed as lexicalizations of (lower) functional heads.

3. On Temporal Subordinators in Early Venetan Texts

In this section I undertake a detailed description of the temporal subordinators attested in early Venetan texts, with particular reference to the syntactic and interpretive properties displayed by *quando*.

3.1. Temporal Subordinators Other than *Quando*

Temporal subordinators expressing posteriority, anteriority or simultaneity of the temporal clause with respect to the event expressed by the main clause were invariably accompanied by the complementizer *che*, as witnessed by the following examples.

In (12) I report some examples of the subordinating element *da po' che* 'after' expressing posteriority:

- (12) a. E questo disse mesier Domenedio *da po' che* 'l fo morti dal povolo de Israel tuti quilli che aveva habù colpa. . .
And this said lord God after that were dead from-the people of Israel all those that had had guilt. . .
'And this said lord God after were killed by the people of Israel all those who had been guilty. . .'
(Bibbia, *Numeri CLIII*)
- b. *Como* Aaron retornà da Moyses ala porta del tabernaculo *da po' che* 'l fo cessà la ira de mesier Domenedio. . .
How Aaron went-back to Moyses to-the door of-the tabernacle after that was ceased the wrath of lod God. . .
'How Aaron went back to Moses to the door of the tabernacle after the wrath of lord God had expired. . .'
(Bibbia, *Numeri LXXXII*)
- c. E quela superfluitè che roman, *dapò che* li drapi è tincti, ven chiamada lacca.
And that residue that remains, after that the drapes are dyed, comes called lacquer
'And that residue that remains, after the drapes are dyed, is called lacquer.'
(Serapiom, clxxvj)

- d. . . per quello che l'abia fato per lo tempo passà e *dapo' che* l'è sta arcipreve de S.Zuano. . .
 . . .for that which he-have done for the time passed and after that he-is been archipriest of S. John. . .
 . . .for what he has done for the past time and after he has been archpriest of saint John. . .'

(Bertoletti, 79)

In (13) I report some examples in which the embedded clause is introduced by a subordinating element expressing anteriority:

- (13) a. . .no magnare el cavréo *innanço che* l'habia octo dì, imperçonde che 'l serave abomination a magnarlo.
 . . .not eat the kid before that it-have eight days, because that it-were sin to eat-it
 ' . . .do not eat the kid before it is eight days old, because it would be sin to eat it.'
 (Bibbia, *Esodo* 196)
- b. . .debigè rendere le soe vestimente *innanço che* 'l sole stramonte. . .
 . . .must-him render the his garments before that the sun goes-down. . .
 ' . . .you have to give back his garments before the sun goes down. . .'
 (Bibbia, *Esodo* 179)
- c. . . questa Raab fo dela cità de Jericho e sì fo meretrix, *inanço che* la fosse moyere de Salmon, secondo che se contene in lo libro sexto de la Bibia. . .
 . . .this Raab was of-the city of Jericho and so was harlot, before that she was wife of Salmon, after that is contained in the book sixth of the Bible. . .
 ' . . .this Raab was from the city of Jericho and was a harlot, before she was wife of Salmon, according to what is said in the sixth book of the Bible. . .'
 (Bibbia, *Ruth* 44)
- d. E' ò dextrà cun gran desiderio de magnar questa Pasca con vui *enanci ch'e'* mora.
 I have desired with great desire of eating this Easter with you before that I die
 'I intensely desired to eat this Easter with you before I die.'
 (Passione veronese, [21])
- e. *Ançi che* Adam peccasse sape illi lo ben e lo mal. . .
 Before that Adam committed sin knew they the good and the evil. . .
 'Before Adam committed sin, they knew good and evil. . .'
 (Lucidario I, 87)

Finally, in (14) I report examples in which the subordinating element of the temporal embedded clause expresses simultaneity with respect to the event of the main clause:

- (14) a. Et eo cum' me do confortare, *fin k'el* starà de là da mare?
 And I how myself must comfort, until that he will-stay of there from sea
 'And how should I find comfort, until he will be beyond the sea?'
 (Frammento Papafava 7–8)
- b. Mo pensa de trovarlo tu ensteso *enfin ke* tu ei vivo e sano e fresco. . .
 Now think of finding-it you yourself until that you are alive and healthy and fresh. . .
 'Now think of finding it yourself until you are alive, and healthy, and fresh. . .'
 (Giacomino III, 185–186)

- c. ...né 'l dì de san Zeno *enfin* che 'l vicario de palaxio no era tornà dalla festa.
 ...on the day of saint Zeno until that the vicar of the palace not was
 come-back from-the feast
 '...on the day of saint Zeno until the vicar of the palace had come back from
 the feast. . .'
 (Bertoletti, 52)
- d. Po fàla bulire, *perfin* che la scorça se parta da ella.
 Then make-it boil, until that the zest itself part from it
 'Then let it boil, until the zest departs from it.'
 (Serapiom, xxxiiij)
- e. E fa questo tante fiè, *infin* che la no fa più spuma. . .
 And do this many times, until that it not makes anymore foam. . .
 'And do this many times, until it does not produce foam anymore. . .'
 (Serapiom, xxvij)

As correctly pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, unlike *quando*, which derives directly from the Latin temporal *wh*-element *quando*, all the temporal subordinators exemplified in this section consist of periphrases or clusters containing prepositions and/or adverbs followed by the complementizer *che*. This difference in their etymological origin seems to lie at the basis of the obligatory presence of *che*, if one postulates that, owing to its intrinsically temporal nature, *quando*, first merged in the specifier of ForceP, can transmit by spec-head agreement its temporal feature to the head Force^o, thereby dispensing with the lexicalization of that position. On the contrary, the prepositional/adverbial clusters exemplified above are not intrinsically temporal, which induces the overt realization of the complementizer *che* in the same head.

3.2. Temporal Quando (and Como)

In this subsection I take into account another lexical element introducing adverbial clauses in early Venetan vernaculars, namely *quando*, which seems to display an ambiguous syntactic behavior. In its temporal use *quando* is never followed by the complementizer *che*. The following examples of adverbial clauses introduced by *quando* and featuring a verbal form in the indicative have a clear temporal flavor.

The example in (15) is taken from a Paduan text of the late 13th century, while the examples in (16) are taken from Veronese texts dating back to the first half of the 14th century:

- (15) a. ...*quando* per quelly al dito massaro serà stà ordenà over comandà. . .
 ...when for those to-the said farmer will-be been ordered or commanded. . .
 '...when by them to the mentioned farmer will be ordered and
 commanded. . .'
 (Fraglia dei Murari xxv)
- (16) a. Tuta la maior pena ke aba quel meschin sì è *quand* el se pensa ke mai el no dé
 aver fin lo fogo de inferno. . .
 All the major pain that have that miserable so is when he thinks that never
 not must have end the fire of hell. . .
 'All the greatest pain of that miserable is when he thinks that the fire of hell
 will never end. . .'
 (Giacomino II, 281–283)
- b. E i cavaleri, *quando* i avo crucificà Cristo, e i tollo le vestimente soe e féne
 quatro parte.

And the knights, when they had crucified Christ, and they took the garments his and made-of-them four parts

‘And the knights, when they had crucified Christ, took off his garments and divided them into four parts.’

(Passione veronese, [101])

- c. E *quando* la çente oì che Cristo vegniva Ierosolima, i tollo rami de palma e si ge andè incontra.

And when the people saw that Christ came Jerusalem, they took branches of palm and so him-went towards

‘And when the people saw that Christ came to Jerusalem, they took branches of palm and went towards him.’

(Passione veronese, [11])

- d. *Quando* lo to pare morì, tu eri fante, no era consa al mondo ked el amaso tanto quanto el amava te. . .

When the your father died, you were child, not was thing at-the world that he loved much as he loved you. . .

‘When your father died, you were a child, he did not love anything as much as you. . .’

(Leggenda di Santa Caterina 262–264)

The following examples are taken from Paduan texts dating back to the second half of the 14th century:

- (17) a. Como Dio assera de fora la porta del’archa, *quando* ognomo fo intrati dentro. How God closes of outside the door of-the arch, when everybody was entered inside.

‘How God closes from outside the door of the arch, when everybody had entered.’

(Bibbia, *Genesi* XXXII)

- b. *Quando* vu averì passà el fiume çordan, e che vu serì andè in la terra de Canaan. . .

When you wilol-have passed the river Jordan, and that you will-be gone in the land of Canaan. . .

‘When you will have crossed the river Jordan, and you will have entered the land of Canaan. . .’

(Bibbia, *Numeri* 190)

- c. O veramente *quando* el somo pontifico morirà, el porà retornare a stare seguramente a chaxa soa.

Or truly when the supreme pope will-die, he will-be-able to go-back to stay surely at house his

‘Or truly when the supreme pope will die, he will be allowed to go back to his house.’

(Bibbia, *Esodo* 152)

- d. . . tuto quello che la domandava ge serave fato, *quando* Dio ge averà data questa cità de Jericho.

. . . all that that she asked her will-be done, when God her will-have given this city of Jerico

‘. . . all that she asked will be done, when God will have given this city of Jerico.’

(Bibbia, *Giosuè* IX)

- (18) a. ...e *quando* la se mete in l'aqua per molificare, no diventa negra.
 ...and when it one puts in the water for soften, not becomes black
 '...and when you put it in water to soften, it does not become black.'
 (Serapiom, viiiij)
- b. ...*quando* le more descende e va fuora del stomego ananti che le se corrompa,
 le no fa algum nocumento. . .
 ...and when the blackberries go outside of-the stomach before that they
 themselves rot, they not make any harm. . .
 '...when the blackberries sink and go out of the stomach before they rot, they
 do no harm. . .'
 (Serapiom, cxxvj)

Furthermore, the following examples from Paduan texts witness a temporal use of *como* with a meaning very close to 'as'/'as soon as'; significantly, here *como* is never followed by the complementizer:

- (19) a. ...e *sicomo* el serà guario ch'el debia andare a lavorar a corte. . .
 ...and so-as he will-be healed that he should go to work at court
 '...and as soon as he will have recovered, that he should go to work at
 court. . .'
 (Fraglia dei Murari Lxxxiv)
- b. *chomo* vegna a Buda troverò modo de prestarly. . .
 as come to Buda will-find way of lending
 'as I come to Buda I'll find a way to lend. . .'
 (Tomasin 36.4 v.5–6)
- c. ...e *como* e' vederò ensire fora dela cità el so re cum tuto 'l povolo,
 subitamente e' volterò le spale cum tuta la çente che serà cum mi. . .
 ...and as I will-see exit outside of-the city the his king with all the people,
 soon I will-turn the shoulders withall the people that will-be with me. . .
 '...and as soon as I will see the king exit from the city with all his people,
 soon I will turn my shoulders with all the people that will be with me. . .'
 (Bibbia, Giosuè LVII)

Now, one could account for the exceptional behavior of *quando*, namely for the fact that in its temporal use it is never followed by the complementizer *che*, unlike other temporal subordinators, by the hypothesis presented at the end of the previous section.

Alternatively, should we rather surmise that the reanalysis process affecting *come/como* has extended to *quando*, as represented in (20b)?

- (20) a. [ForceP *come* [Force°]] >>>> [ForceP [Force° *come*]]
 b. [ForceP *quando* [Force°]] >>>> [ForceP [Force° *quando*]]?

A potential trigger for this kind of categorial reanalysis of *quando* could be identified in the temporal usage of *come* exemplified in (19) above, which might have favored the spreading of the temporal use of complementizerless *quando*. I will leave the issue open for now, addressing it again at the end of the following section.

4. Hypothetical Quando in Early Venetan Texts

Very interestingly, early Paduan texts also feature some occurrences of *quando* where it is immediately followed by the embedding complementizer *che*; the presence of the complementizer *che* triggers a hypothetical interpretation of the embedded clause. This case is exemplified in (21) with some 13th/14th century Paduan texts:

- (21) a. ...*quando che* algun che habitasse in cassa cum algun della fraia morisse...
 ...when that someone that lived in house with someone of-the fraglia died...
 '...in case someone who lived in the same house with one member of the
 fraglia died...'
 (Fraglia dei Murari Lxxxiii)
- b. ...e s'ì comandà a Eleaçaro sumo sacerdote e a Josuè che, *quando che* li avesse
 fato questo che li prometeva, che li ge concedesse tuto el sovrascrito terren...
 ...and so ordered to Eleaçaro supreme priest and to Josuè that, when that
 him had done this that him promised, that they him granted all the
 mentioned land...
 '...so he ordered to Eleaçaro supreme priest and to Josuè that, in case he had
 done what he had promised, that he granted all the mentioned land...'
 (Bibbia, Numeri CLXXII)
- c. E *quando che* le se cuxe in lo axéo, s'ì desfa le scrovole e le posteme dure.
 and when that them one cooks in the vinegar, so melt the peels and the parts
 hard.
 'And in case you cook them in vinegar, then the peels and the hard parts
 melt.'
 (Serapiom, viiij)

On the other hand, the relatively low frequency of *quando che* may be due to the existence of other competing hypothetical connectors, like the ones exemplified in (22) and (23) respectively with Veronese and Paduan texts of the 13th–14th century:

- (22) a. Item che *se caso avegnisso che* 'l dito maistro Avantin...
 Same that if case happened that the mentioned master Avantin...
 'The same that in case the mentioned master Avantin...'
 (Bertoletti, 13)
- b. Item che *se caso avegnesso*, che Deo no'l voia, *che* per caso fortuito algun danno
 avegnisso ala dita compagnia...
 Same that if case happened, that God not he-want, that for case accidental
 some damage happened to-the said company...
 'The same that in case, God forbid, that casually the mentioned company had
 some damage...'
 (Bertoletti, 13)
- c. ...*en caxo che* ello fiesso trovà colpevolo...
 ...in case that he were found guilty...
 '...in case that he were found to be guilty...'
 (Bertoletti, 66)
- (23) a. E *se chaxo fosse che* 'l no avesse alguno parente e che 'l la vendesse a altra
 persona...
 And if case were that he not had any relative and that he her sold to other
 person...
 'And in case he had no relatives and he sold her to another person...'
 (Bibbia, Levitico 88)
- b. *Se chaxo fosse che* il se imbatesse subitamente sopra algun morto...
 If case were that he himself met soon over some dead...
 'In case he soon came across some dead person...'
 (Bibbia, Numeri 188)

- c. *Se caxo serà che vù abià oro, arçento o vaxi de brondo o ver de ramo o de ferro, queste sì fate cosse vegna consegrà al signore Dio. . .*
 If case will-be that you had gold, silver or vases of bronze or of copper or of iron, these so done things be consecrated to-the lord God. . .
 ‘In case you will have gold, silver or bronze, copper or iron vases, let such things be consecrated to our lord God. . .’
 (Bibbia, *Giosuè XXXV*)
- d. *En chaxo che ‘l no te voya tòre per soa spoxa, e’ te spoxerò mi sença alguna dubitatione, viva el signore Dio!*
 In case that he not you want take for his wife, I you will-marry without any doubt, live the lord God
 ‘In case he does not want to marry you, I will marry you without any hesitation, may our lord God live!’
 (Bibbia, *Ruth XXXIV*)

In order to sketch a formal account of these data, it is now necessary to make a short digression on the distributional properties of conditional clauses in 13th century Florentine, where the conditional clause associated with the embedded clause usually followed the subordinating complementizer *che*, as exemplified in (24):

- (24) . . .pensando *che* se sarà compagno di Dio nelle passioni, Ø sarà suo compagno nelle consolazioni.
 . . .thinking that if will-be companion of God in-the passions, will-be his companion in-the consolations
 ‘. . .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 this example as in (25), where the subordinating complementizer lexicalizes the head Force[°], while the preposed conditional clause targets the specifier of a Topic projection whose head is phonetically empty:

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

However, this was not the only option; another possibility attested in early Florentine, and not attested in modern Italian, is the presence of a single phonetically realized complementizer after the conditional clause associated with the embedded clause, like in the following examples:

- (26) a. . .e dico ben Ø, se ‘l voler non mi muta, *ch’*eo stesso li uccidrò, que’ sconoscenti.
 . . .and say well, if the will not me changes, that I same them will-kill, those louts
 ‘. . .and I say well, if I do not change my will, that I will kill them myself, those louts’
 (Dante, *Rime*, 8, vv. 13–14)
- b. . .per *ch’*io son certo Ø, se ben la difendo nel dir com’io la ‘ntendo, *ch’* Amor di sé mi farà grazia ancora.
 . . .for that I am certain, if well her defend in-the say how I her mean, that Love of itself me will-do grace again

'...therefore I am certain, if I defend her well in saying how I mean her, that Love will favour me again.'

(Dante, *Rime*, 30, vv. 17–19)

- c. Ma so bene Ø, se Carlo fosse morto, *che* voi ci trovereste ancor cagione. . .
But know well, if Charles were dead, that you there would-find still reason. . .
'But I know well, if Charles had died, that you would find new reasons. . .'

(Rustico Filippi, *Sonetti*, 3, vv. 9–10)

According to Meszler and Samu (2010), in all these examples the conditional clause preceding *che* clearly refers to the content of the subordinate clause, and not to the matrix clause, despite the fact that it precedes the complementizer, so that we have to assume that the clausal adjunct preceding *che* belongs indeed to the left periphery of the embedded clause (in their view, the phonetic realization of the lower complementizer makes the overt realization of the higher one superfluous). I would suggest that the complementizer *che* is in fact the lexicalization of the head Topic^o and that the conditional clause has raised to a higher structural position, namely the specifier of TopicP, crossing over the complementizer:

(27) Main clause [ForceP [Force^o Ø] [TopicP conditional clause [Topic^o *che*] . . .]]

Quite interestingly, besides the ordinary structure with one complementizer introducing the embedded clause, in 13th century Florentine we do 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 with the embedded clause:

- (28) a. . .però vi priegho in lealtade e fede *che*, se ttue vuoi del mio avere, *che* ttu ne tolghi.

. . .but you pray in loyalty and faith that, if you want of-the my belongings, that you of-them take

'...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. . .dirai (. . .) *che*, se tuo padre fu loro aspro, *che* tu sarai loro umile e benigno. . .

. . .will-say that, if your father was to-them harsh, that you will-be to-them humble and benign. . .

'...you will say that, if your father was harsh to them, that you will be humble and benign to them. . .'

(*Novellino*, 6, ll. 37–38)

- c. . .e di quella cotale quantità siate sichuri da lloro, sì *che* se'l fatto si potesse fare, *che* nnoi possiamo pagare i denari sicuramente. . .

. . .and of that such amount be sure from them, so that if-the fact one could do, that we can pay the money surely. . .

'...and of such amount be ensured by them, so that if the thing could be done, that we can surely pay the money. . .'

(*Lettera di Consiglio de' Cerchi II*, p. 603, ll. 24–27)

- d. . .ti priego *che*, se egli avviene ch'io muoja, *che* le mie cose ed ella ti sieno raccomandate.

...you pray that, if it happens that I die, that the my things and she you be recommended
ask you that, if it should happen that I die, that my things and she be entrusted to you.'

(Decameron, 2, 7, 84)

Paoli (2005, 2007), discussing similar 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 (cf. also Vincent, 2006):

(29) Main clause [ForceP [Force[°] *che*1] [TopicP conditional clause [Topic[°] *che*2] ...]]

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. More recently, drawing evidence from the distributional properties of preposed conditional clauses in multiple complementizer structures in Romance, Munaro (2016a, 2016b) has argued for a splitting of the Topic field into two subfields, along the lines of Benincà and Poletto (2004); in modern Italian the higher Frame subfield, endowed with a scene setting function, is the landing site of preposed adverbial clauses (and in particular conditional clauses) or of time adverbials; the lower subfield, devoted to the thematization function, hosts primarily topicalized non-clausal argumental constituents of the embedded clause.⁹

Some cases of complementizer doubling similar to the ones reported in (30) are also found in the early Venetan texts analyzed in this article, with a conditional clause appearing between the two occurrences of the subordinating complementizer *che*:

- (30) a. Anchora ordenemo *che* se algun patron dovesse dar dinary ad algun della fraia di murary e non i desse a quello, *ch'*el sia pregà quel paron. . .
Still order that if some master should give money to someone of-the fraglia of murary and not them gave to that, that-he be prayed that master. . .
'Further we order that if any master should give money to anybody of the fraglia di murary and he did not give him any, that that master be asked. . .'
(Fraglia dei Murari xxxxi)
- b. Anchora statuemo e ordinemo *che* se alguno incigniero della fraia dy murary de Padova [. . .], *che* quello inzigniero sia condanà in soldy x. . .
Still decide and order that if any engineer of-the fraglia of murary of Padua [. . .], that that engineer be condemned in money x. . .
'Further we decide and order that if any engineer of the fraglia di murary of Padua [. . .], that that engineer be condemned to pay. . .'
(Fraglia dei Murari xxxvii)

The presence of complementizer doubling in early Venetan provides a possible clue to the understanding of the analysis of the sequence *quando che*, if we interpret structurally the examples in (30) as represented in (31), with the lower *che* lexicalizing the head of a clause typing-related Topic projection specialized for the conditional reading (cf. Munaro, 2005 and subsequent related work):

- (31) a. [TP Anchora ordenemo [ForceP [Force[°] *che*][HypP se algun patron dovesse dar dinary ad algun della fraia di murary e non i desse a quello [Hyp[°] *ch'*][TP el sia pregà quel paron per i gastaldy. . .]]]]
- b. [TP Anchora statuemo e ordinemo [ForceP [Force[°] *che*][HypP se alguno incigniero della fraia dy murary de Padova [. . .][Hyp[°] *che*][TP quello inzigniero sia condanà in soldy x. . .]]]]

In a few occurrences of the complementizer doubling construction the adverbial clause appearing between the two complementizers can be introduced by *quando* (like in the example (21b) above repeated here as (32c) for convenience) and can convey a vaguely conditional flavor:

- (32) a. E comandòge *che* quando el fosse morto, *che* i lo sepelisse in la terra de Canaan cume Abraam e Ysaac so pare.
And ordered that when he were dead, that they him buried in the land of Canaan like Abraam and Ysaac his father
'And he ordered that when he died, that they should bury him in the land of Canaan like Abraham and his father Ysaac.'
(Bibbia, *Genesi*, CCLXXXIII)
- b. Debi dire e comandare ali sacerdoti li quale porta la archa del pato *che*, quando li entrerà cum la archa in lo fiume çordan, *che* li staga firmi e no vaga né in qua né in là.
Must say and order to-the priests the which bring the arch that, when they will-enter with the arch in the river Jordan, that they stay still and not go nor in here nor in there
'You have to say and order to the priests who lead the arch that, when they will enter with the arch into the river Jordan, that they stay still and do not move.'
(Bibbia, *Giosuè* XVIII)
- c. . . e sî comandà a Eleaçaro sumo sacerdote e a Josuè *che*, *quando che* li avesse fato questo che li prometeva, che li ge concedesse tuto el sovrascrito terren. . .
. . . and so ordered to Eleaçaro supreme priest and to Josuè that, when that him had done this that him promised, that they him granted all the mentioned land. . .
' . . . so he commanded Eleaçaro supreme priest and Josuè that, in case he had done what he had promised, that he granted all the mentioned land. . .'
(Bibbia, *Numeri* CLXXII)

That in the alleged doubly filled COMP structures introducing embedded questions the *wh*-item and the complementizer *che* may not be in a spec-head agreement relation has been proposed for example by Pescarini (2025) for modern Northern Italian dialects:¹⁰

(33) [QembP *wh-operator* [Qemb°][FinP [Fin° *che*]. . .]

(adapted from Pescarini, 2025)

If we adopt Pescarini's analysis of (alleged) doubly filled COMP structures, the hypothetical reading conveyed by *quando che* in early Venetan may be due precisely to the fact that, inside the left periphery of the adverbial clause, the lower head Hyp° is (activated and) lexicalized by the complementizer *che*, while *quando* still occupies the specifier of ForceP, as represented in (34):

(34) [ForceP *quando* [Force°][HypP [Hyp° *che*]

On the contrary, the absence of *che* triggers the temporal reading of *quando*, as the relevant head Hyp° is not lexicalized.

The hypothesis of a reanalysis of *quando* as a syntactic head remains however highly dubious, as in contemporary Venetan dialects *quando* (unlike the reduced form *co*) requires the presence of the complementizer *che* when introducing a temporal adverbial clause (unless we adopt a radical version of (33)), as exemplified in (35) with contemporary Bellunese:

- (35) a. *Quando* *(che) te riva, ciameme!
 b. *Co* (*che) te riva, ciameme!
 When (that) you-arrive, call-me
 ‘As soon as you arrive, call me!’

As to the fact that in modern Venetan varieties, unlike in the early stages, the presence of the complementizer *che* is obligatory after *quando*, one could hypothesize a displacement of *che* from the head Hyp° up to the adjacent head Force° , as represented in (36):

- (36) [ForceP *quando* [Force° *che_x*]][HypP [Hyp° t_x]]

Evacuating the head Hyp° (and raising to the interpretively more neutral head Force°), the complementizer *che* is no more specialized for the hypothetical reading and its presence becomes a sort of default marker of subordination.

It seems then that the two basic interpretive features of the subordinator *quando* attested in early Venetan texts, namely the temporal one and the conditional one, can be exhaustively traced back to the particular structural configuration in which this lexical item appeared.

5. Summary

In this work I have tried to shed some light on the categorial status, interpretive import and syntactic distribution of the lexical items *come* and *quando* as it emerges from some early Venetan texts dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries.

The pervasive structural and interpretive ambiguity of *come/como* reveals that the old Italo-Romance varieties considered here may have featured a diachronic process of reanalysis affecting the categorial status of this item, which has been reanalyzed as a syntactic head and recategorized in some embedded contexts as a lexical exponent of the complementizer layer.

In a diachronic perspective, this particular case of recategorization in turn has been shown to be loosely related to the syntactic distribution of the temporal subordinator *quando*, which can have two basic interpretive features and whose semantic contribution can be reduced to the particular syntactic configuration in which it appears.

As to the relevance of the present work to the notion of (loss of) syntactic analyzability, it seems that the etymological origin of the two lexical items considered here, *como* and *quando*, plays a primary role in triggering a potential process of reanalysis. In particular, the univerbation process represented in (6) is a precondition for the application of the spec-to-head reanalysis as represented in (7), in the sense that the original nominal feature of *modo* makes the derived form *como* compatible with the nominal feature that has been ascribed to complementizers (cf. Manzini & Savoia, 2003; Poletto & Sanfelici, 2021) and as such amenable to a structural reanalysis as a head of the C-layer. This is not the case with the temporal adverbial *quando*, which lacks a nominal feature altogether, and therefore is prevented from undergoing the reanalysis process suggested in (20b).

The proposed account provides evidence in favor of a notion of grammaticalization conceived of as a diachronic process creating new grammatical exponents from existing lexical ones, and ultimately giving rise to categorial reanalysis that may produce lexical splits. Under this view, the semantic ambiguity of the subordinating connectors analyzed here has been explained in strictly structural terms, adopting a cartographic approach to the functional articulation of the clausal left-periphery.

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Notes

- ¹ A preliminary version of part of this work has been presented at the 19th *Comparative Italian Dialect Syntax-Morphology Meeting* held at the University of Chieti-Pescara on 8–10 September 2025; I wish to thank the audience of this event as well as three anonymous reviewers for providing insightful comments and suggestions on various aspects of the analysis. For empirical and theoretical issues strictly related to the content of the present article the reader is referred to [Jedrzejowski and Umbach \(2023\)](#).
- ² In other words, rather than analyzing these systematic overlaps in form in terms of (coincidental) homophony, they interpret them as cases of syncretism, defined as a superficial conflation of two distinct morphosyntactic structures ([Caha, 2009](#)), with a single morpho-phonological form applying in more than one morphosyntactic environment or structure. For detailed discussion of related issues the reader is also referred to [Baunaz and Lander \(2018a\)](#).
- ³ According to [Roussou \(2020\)](#), as a complementizer, the pronoun is semantically weakened and phonologically reduced. In its pronominal use, it may bind a variable and defines a prosodic unit. What is generally understood as a lexical split reduces then to a case of different selectional requirements, producing different effects at the level of logical form and phonetic form.
- ⁴ In particular, [Arsenijevic \(2021\)](#) argues that all subordinate clauses are derived by a generalized pattern of relativization in the sense that one argument in the clause is abstracted, turning the clause into a predicate over the respective type and this predicate combines with an argument of that type in another expression and figures as its modifier. He observes that the traditional taxonomy of subordinate clauses maps onto the taxonomy of arguments, one striking anomaly being that five traditional clause types—conditional, counterfactual, concessive, causal, and purpose clauses—are best analyzed as involving abstraction over the situation argument; he proposes a situation-relative analysis of these five types of subordinate clauses, where their distinctive properties range in a spectrum predicted by their compositional makeup, arguing that they all restrict the situation argument selected by a speech act, attitude, or content predicate of the matrix clause, and hence effectively restrict this predicate. On the grammatical notion of ‘subordination’ in a typological and crosslinguistic perspective the reader is also referred to [Cristofaro \(2003\)](#).
- ⁵ Notice that this analysis of the data is compatible with a more restrictive layout of the left periphery such as the one outlined by [Benincà \(2001\)](#), according to which no Topic projection is available under the Focus projection. This proposal also converges with the analysis of [Benincà \(2012\)](#), who observes that in headless relative clauses the verb could raise to the complementizer layer in old Italian (and other old Romance languages), while this was not possible normally in an embedded interrogative clause; she points out that a class of systematic exceptions to this generalization on verb movement are found precisely in embedded interrogative clauses introduced by *come*, and explicitly proposes that these interrogative clauses should in fact be analyzed as headless relatives.
- ⁶ I report here some relevant examples witnessing the interpretive ambiguity of *come* in embedded contexts:
 - (i) a. appresso dico *come altri* si piange de la sua partita. . .
‘next I say how/that others complain about her departure. . .’
(Dante, *Vita Nuova*, cap. 31, par. 7)
 - b. Fammi bene intendere *come l’uomo* è obligato a Dio naturalmente per via di religione.
‘Let me well understand how/that man is naturally bound to God through religion.’
(Bono Giamboni, *Libro*, cap. 71, par. 5)
 - c. Al padre furono raccontate tutte queste novelle, e *come il suo figliuolo* avea dispensato tutto quello oro. . .
‘The father was told all these stories, and how/that his son had bestowed all that gold. . .’
(*Novellino*, 7, rr. 45–47)
- ⁷ From a typological point of view, it is interesting to notice that in Basque the interrogative word *nola* ‘how’ can be used to introduce subordinate clauses with causal interpretation, as observed by [Hualde and Pérez Saldanya \(2019\)](#).
- ⁸ *Come* displays some distinguishing properties with respect to *che*, the most evident of which is that, if used as subordinator, it requires obligatorily the subjunctive mood in the embedded clause it introduces, while no such restriction is attested with *che*:
 - (i) a. Gianni mi raccontò *che* Alberto aveva/*avesse incontrato il suo amico.
 - b. Gianni mi raccontò *come* Alberto avesse/*aveva incontrato il suo amico.
‘John told me that/how Albert had met his friend.’

Moreover, unlike *che*, *come* as subordinator seems to be limited to contexts in which the main verb entails a transfer of knowledge, while it is excluded with other types of predicates:

- (ii) a. Suppongo *che*/**come* i tuoi amici siano arrivati in treno.
'I assume that your friends have arrived by train.'
- b. Maria sostiene *che*/**come* Alberto sia una persona onesta.
'Mary claims that Albert is an honest person.'
- c. Mi dispiace *che*/**come* Gianni sia partito all'improvviso.
'I regret that John left suddenly.'

On the other hand, exactly like *che*, *come* preferably precedes left-dislocated constituents, which confirms the hypothesis according to which it occupies the head Force^o, situated at the left of the Topic projections hosting topicalized elements:

- (iii) a. Gianni ci ha riferito *come*, ad Anna, Alberto abbia regalato una preziosa collana.
'John told us how, to Ann, Alberto has donated a precious necklace.'
- b. ??Gianni ci ha riferito, ad Anna, *come* Alberto abbia regalato una preziosa collana.

A final peculiarity regards the impossibility for an embedded clause introduced by the complementizer *come* to appear in preverbal subject position and, analogously, the impossibility for the embedded clause to be fronted across the main clause (a possibility that exists instead for clauses introduced by the complementizer *che*):

- (iv) a. E' strano *che*/*come* Gianni sia partito all'improvviso.
'It is strange that/how John left suddenly.'
- b. *Che* Gianni sia partito all'improvviso, è strano.
'That John left suddenly, is strange.'
- b' **Come* Gianni sia partito all'improvviso, è strano.

- ⁹ The respective lower boundary of these two subfields could be lexicalized in early Italo-Romance by the second (and third) occurrence of the complementizer in multiple complementizer constructions, a possibility which is still attested in modern Ibero-Romance languages. From a diachronic perspective, it is possible to determine a relation between the presence of complementizer doubling on the one hand and the relative freedom of placement of 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 conditional clauses within the left periphery.
- ¹⁰ [Pescarini \(2025\)](#) examines cases of Doubly Filled COMP, i.e., the co-occurrence of *wh*-elements and finite complementizers in embedded and, to a lesser extent, main interrogatives. His study is based on data from northern Italo-Romance varieties, drawn from the Syntactic Atlas of Italy (ASIt) database. He undertakes an exploratory quantitative analysis with the aim of testing and revising previous descriptive generalizations, and proposes a formal analysis capitalizing on [Cecchetto and Donati's \(2010\)](#) labeling algorithm, confirming [Bayer's \(2015\)](#) hypothesis that DFC results when *wh*-elements do not carry a {C} feature.

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